

A READING FROM THE PROPHET MALACHI

I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant whom you desire, will come, says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?

For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...Then the Lord will have those who will bring him offerings of righteousness. And the offerings will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, and as in former years.

So I will come to put you to trial. You have said, "It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty." But now we call the arrogant blessed; certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it."

Then those who revered the Lord talked with each other. And the Lord listen and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who revered the Lord and honored his name. On the day when I act, says the Lord Almighty, they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares the son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

For surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be as stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty. Neither root nor branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.