

Saturday, December 8th, 2012

The Rev. Al Schartner '56, Retired CEO of Presbyterian Senior Living. Distinguished Alum '08

Scripture:

Malachi 3: 1-4

1 "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.

2 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. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.

Devotional:

Malachi serves as a messenger of Jehovah commanding our attention and announcing fulfillment of re-echoed ancient prophecy focused on the coming of a new age heralded by Messianic prophecies affirming God's grace. This expectation is later announced by John the Baptist. It then was dramatically affirmed years later when Jesus stepped into the temple and displayed righteous anger likened to refiner's fire which cleanses and enables response and offering that are pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.

Some biblical scholars describe Malachi as a hortatory discourse. This gives license for the Advent message to be both announcement and encouragement to respond in a manner "pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old".

Advent is about rejoicing in both the centuries old revelation of the Messianic prophecy, thankfulness for the messengers who foretold His coming and the amazing fulfillment of this expectation in the birth of the Christ-child in Bethlehem. Let us give thanks and rejoice!

Prayer:

Almighty God, thank you for your enduring faithfulness and love. May our praises be not only of our lips but also of our hearts. Amen.