

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

December 2025

God's peace to all!

During most of this month, we are in the Advent season. "Advent" means "coming". During this time of year, we look forward to Christmas, when we remember the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. We also await His imminent second coming in power and glory. With that in mind, let us consider some passages in God's Word.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Malachi 3:1-4

Here the children of Israel were seeking for the Lord's appearing. The prophet is telling them that it would not be what they expected. He comes not to affirm us in our fallenness, but as a consuming fire which burns everything that it touches. We also may be looking for the coming of God, to know His presence. When He comes with His Word and Spirit, we find that we are consumed in the greatness of His holiness and glory. We come to confess with the Apostle Paul in Romans 7, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." (verse 14); and, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (verse 24). This is repentance. That brings us to the next passage I would like to consider.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1-4

This is faith. God knows that we fall short of His glory and would never be able to attain to it without His intervention. He sent His perfect Son, not in sinful flesh, but in its likeness, to pour out His consuming fire against our sin which God laid on Him. Now we are able, through faith in His redeeming blood, as "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5b) May we proclaim the glorious truth of the life-transforming Gospel of Christ as we await His second coming, being diligent to "be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." (2 Peter 3:14b)

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20

Merry Christmas and God's blessings in the New Year!

Ivan Niemela