

Are You Prepared for Christ?

Prepared for Christmas? Prepared for Christ?

- Ready for Xmas? 2 wks, to day. Everything on to-do list crossed off (shop, bak, dec, carol, wrap)? Got everything done? I don't; some done, more do. You? Feel prep'd for Xmas come? Suppose better: are you prep'd for Xp come? In Adv we prep hearts for Xp come: born as baby in Bthlm – yes, but already hap, 2k yrs ago – prep for ann celb. But in Adv, also prep for Xp come end world, on J-Day. That day yet to come. And we need be prep'd, bec J is coming soon; don't know when arrive. But we need be prep'd for Xp! Are you?

Jesus, the Messenger of the Covenant

- You prep'd Xp come? That's urgent qstn Lord compels us consider, when says thru prophet Mal: **vs. 1a**. God wants us prep'd for Xp. So sends someone ahead J, get us ready for arrvl. Like cents ago when ancient kings enter town: send msngers/heralds go ahead, prep people. Msngr God sent ahead J: JB. Heard re JB past Sun (every Adv). Came in camel's hair wardrobe, called people brood vipers, urged people repent sins, turn, fruit of rpntnc in goldly lives. JB: kind of scary figure w/ dire warnings re being cut down, throw fire. Yet, was **"voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him'"** (Mt 3:3). In Mal: **vs. 1a** – that's JB, who preps us for J's coming.
- But 2nd msngr: **vs. 1bc**. This 2nd msgr, MC – that's J! And says'll come: **"suddenly,"** w/o warning. Did 1st time: Angel Gab cert caught M&J off guard; angels in sky surprised shepherds. After 1000s yrs waiting, when J came 1st time as baby: suddenly. And when comes 2nd time: equally sudden. J will come again, on Last Day, J-Day, end world. In Lk, J: **"That day will close on you suddenly like a trap... Be always on the watch"** (Lk 21). And 2 Pt speaks re day Lord coming like thief; heavens disappear w/ roar; elements destroyed fire; everything laid bare (2 Pt 3). That's 2nd coming of Xp, on J-Day – come suddenly! But J will also come for us individually, at end lives. We mortal; will die; unless J-Day 1st, we will all see death, and that J's 2nd coming for us. We do not know when happen! May die at old age, after long life; or prolonged illness; or suddenly in tragic accident. We don't know. But whether we're thinking re the Last Day or our last day, need be prep'd!
- But don't need scared. Remem: **vs. 1bc**. We want J come; Sav; came die on cross take sins away; loves us; and he's MC. Cvnt normally agrmnt/contract betw 2. Sort thing shake hands over; deal: sell/buy. That's deal/cvnt. But when comes us dealing w/ God, bring nothing to table; have nothing to offer. So God makes special kind cvnt w/ us, 1-sided, where he: I do/give for you, for free; you don't have pay for it at all. That's grace (God's undrvd love, w/ no strings attached); that's his 1-sided cvnt, his promise, thru JC, MC. J's sinless life – part of cvnt; inncnt death cross – part cvnt; res from dead – part cvnt. Forgiveness all our sins, cancelling our guilt, our eternal life heaven – those, terms of cvnt. That's what God brings to deal. There's nothing you can do to match that; no terms you can negotiate to make equal exchange. All grace; saved by grace, thru 1-sided cvnt, from God, to you. **Vs. 1bc** – that's J, MC.

Jesus, the Launderer and Refiner of Hearts

- So: are you prepd for him come? In heart, ready for J? This is time year: houseguest come over – Xmas/NY parties. And we get ready for these guests by cleaning up house. Vacuum, tidy things up, get everything clean. What re heart; how clean heart? J wants in heart. You prepd for J come?
- Mal: **vs. 2a**. Don't want J find dirty heart. Demands clean heart. And if not clean, he'll clean for you! **Vs. 2b-3ab**. 2 graphic pics how J cleans house & preps hearts. 1st pic: laundry. What do when huge stain on clothes? Shout it out; use stain stick or laundry detergent; wash in laundry. 2nd pic: refining silver. 2019 Silver Eagle. Official silver \$ of US Mint. Beautiful; pure silver. But silver doesn't start this way. When mined, lot impurities: dross. So to refine silver, heat to over 1K°C. Melts into white hot liquid; dross burns away; eventually left with pure, precious silver – can be minted, like coin.
- That, says Mal, is how J cleans hearts. **Vs. 2b-3ab**. J runs our sin-stained hearts thru heavy duty wash cycle; melts them in his refiner's furnace to burn away our impurities. That can be painful process – when J puts us thru fire, allows setbacks/diffs of life test our faith. Why do this to us? To prep us. To wash away stains, burn away our dross, so that we're prepd for his coming.
- Once he's done that, then **vs. 3c-4**. Not just offs in off plate. Lives of Christian faith lived to glory of God. **“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship” (Rom 12:1)**. The way be prepd for J come on the Last Day or our last day: trust in J by faith and live truly Xian lives of repentance/faith – that's what makes us prepd for Xp!

You Are Prepared!

- Are you? Prepd for Xmas? If not, only have 2 wks left. More imply, prepd for Xp? You've been laundered, refined. And J, the MC, has come 1st time; and he is upholding his side of 1-sided agreement – his cvnt of grace to you. He's coming again, and you need be prepd. Put faith in J; trust in Xp as your Sav. Then you are prepd.

Malachi 3:1-4

“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.