

ADVENT VESPERS

National Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC, November 30, 2016

Micah 5:2-4 Coming To Take Care Of His Flock

2But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

3Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth;

- then the rest of *his kindred shall return* to the people of Israel.
- 4And *he shall stand and feed his flock* in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
- And *they shall live secure*, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Malachi 3:1-4 Coming to Refine

3See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple.

The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

2But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap;

- 3he will sit as a refiner and *purifier* of silver,
- and he will *purify* the descendants of Levi
- and *refine* them like gold and silver,
- until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness.

4Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Zephaniah 3:14-19 Coming to Make Things Right

14Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

- 15The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
- he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;

- you shall fear disaster no more. 16On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: *Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.*

17The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;

- he will rejoice over you with gladness,
- he will renew you in his love;
- he will exult over you with loud singing 18as on a day of festival.
- I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- 19I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.
- And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
- and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

I. Micah 5 Coming as Shepherd

- (1) he gathers the flock together into a community,
- (2) he feeds and nourishes them,
- (3) he protects them.

I have come that they may have life and have it in all its abundance" (John 10:10)

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs

the Messiah provides for *the three most basic needs* of all people:

5. *Self-Actualization/Creativity*

4. *Esteem: prestige, accomplishment*

3. Relationships: Belonging and Being Loved

2. Safety and Security

1. Physiological Needs: food, water, shelter, warmth, rest

II. Malachi 3:1-4 Coming to Refine

.. effectiveness and character often come through hard times . . .

Galatians 5:22-23

the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control*

John 15:1-2,5

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower.

Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

Hebrews, 12:7, 10

Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children. What child is there whom a parent does not discipline – God disciplines us for our good, so that we may share his holiness.

James (1:2-4)

Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, 3because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance;

4 . . . so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing

1 Peter (1:6-7)

for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

III. Zephaniah 3:14-19 Coming to Make Things Right

All that is wrong in the world –

pain, suffering, enemies, disasters, defeat, sadness, lovelessness, illnesses, weaknesses; all that is mysterious, incomprehensible, becomes clear.

A "good judge" is one who sorts things out, sees through the complexities of a situation, to see/ know what's really going on -- *and then does what is just and fair* . . .

- The Messiah does some of this at his *first coming* . . .
- **And all of it** at his *second coming* - at the end of time.