

Messengers*Malachi 3:1-4*

The time of Advent is a time of preparation is clear to all who take this time of year seriously. It is a time to listen out for God's messengers, who carry God's message, so that we might hear, and wonder, and reflect, and act if called.

We don't know much about Malachi, where he lived or worked, or indeed if he was a real person, the name 'Malachi' means 'God's messenger'. God's word comes to Malachi as a word of promise. That promise comes as good news to us; but there is also a degree of uneasiness in the promise. There are some elements we'd love to see happen, and others we'd like to postpone.ⁱ We long for God to be with us, but we know that things will need to be transformed.

We want to see the day God returns; we want to see things made right, the way God intended; we want the world sorted out, and the people in it. But we don't want go through too much change or pain to see it happen.

Advent is about the tension between joy and apprehension. It is the tension that surrounds moving into a new home or new area; it is the tension that surrounds leaving an old job and starting a new one; it is the tension that surrounds walking in to a room full of strangers; it is the tension that surrounds a birth.

As we read this passage, we might honestly reflect on our church and society. What might be refined and purified in God's promised refining fire, and us? What will look different in our church, in our society, and in our reflection when we look at it in the mirror? Advent makes us ponder these things.

Joyful or apprehensive, this time will come. God's promise is sure, and it is good news. We will be re-formed in God's image, and it will be good. No matter how we feel about it now. No matter what we may be afraid of now. When we, and our church, and our world, are purified as God promises, it will be good.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

ⁱ Seth Moland Kovash, Feasting on the Word, Year C Vol 1, p27