

Malachi 3:1-3, 4:5-6

1 See, 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. **2** But 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; **3** he 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.

5 See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. **6** He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

Luke 3:1-18

1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, **2** during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. **3** He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, **4** as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. **5** Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; **6** and all flesh shall see the

salvation of God.' " **7** John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **8** Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. **9** Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." **10** And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" **11** In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." **12** Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" **13** He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." **14** Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." **15** As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, **16** John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **17** His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." **18** So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.