

Lectionary Texts for December 9, 2018 • *Second Sunday of Advent* - Year C
Malachi 3:1-4 • Luke 1:68-79 • Philippians 1:3-11 • Luke 3:1-6

Malachi 3:1-4

Malachi, 1308-1311 by Duccio Di Buoninsegna,
Italian, c.1255-1260 – c. 1318-1319
Tempera on wood
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy

Malachi, the name meaning “my messenger” or “my angel,” one of the twelve minor prophets, prophesied in Jerusalem in the 400’s BC. The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi recounts a priesthood that was forgetful of its duties, a Temple underfunded because the people had lost interest in it, and a society in which Jewish men divorce their Jewish wives to marry outside of their faith. “See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble...” begins the last chapter. Today’s reading focuses on the coming Lord, coming to His Temple, who will “...purify the descendants of Levi...” so that their offerings “...will be pleasing to the LORD...”

Duccio Di Buoninsegna, an Italian painter active in Siena in the late 13th and early 14th century, participated in decorating many important works in government and religious buildings in Italy. Little is known of his life other than through archival records, which indicate that he had difficulty managing his life and money, and through works that can be attributed to him with certainty, of which about 13 survive today. In 1308 the city of Siena commissioned Duccio, as he is generally known, to prepare an altarpiece for the Cathedral of Siena. Consisting of many individual paintings, the front panels include a large enthroned Madonna and Child with saints and angels, and the reverse has 43 small scenes of the Life of the Virgin and the Life of Christ.

— *Art curated and narrative provided by Norman Mahan*



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Malachi 3:1-4

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.

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

Luke 1:68-79

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Philippians 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Luke 3:1-6

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, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 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. 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; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"