Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Righteousness Shall Rise**

**Malachi 4:1-6**

Populus Zion – Advent 2

12.05.2021

The end of the world is coming. Don't believe me? Turn on your TV. Soon the polar bears will have no ice to live on (by the way, it was predicted to have happened by 2013 – of course, then Mr. Gore changed it to 2014. Oooops again! But, the commercials still beg for your money to save the polar bears, even though satellite picture show the polar ice packs are growing, not shrinking.

I watched some video models that progressed through the next five years on the computer the other day. These models projected what is going to happen to certain land masses that abut oceans or other bodies of water. For example, Venice is going lose building, and certain tropical islands are going to disappear underwater. I enjoy the movie Waterworld, but it is a propagandist film warning how man’s foolishness is going to bring about such terrible global warming that all but Mount Everest will be covered by water.

I can guarantee that the world will not be destroyed by water. I can state unequivocally that flood waters will not cover the entire Earth. How can I say that? Because it's not ***me*** who says it! God declared it! And every time you see a rainbow in the sky, that is His reminder of that declarative promise.

It is evident that the words of Jesus in our Gospel lesson are being fulfilled today. Every time I turn around there is someone screaming about how we are ruining the earth. There regular conferences going on, people losing their mind, some people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what's going to come on the earth.

Personally, I'm looking forward to the end of the world and Christ’s return. Think about it, no more having to put up with all the silliness. No more pain and sorrow. And the best is that it will be the day of the coming return of Christ. On that day, all the dead will be raised, their bodies and ours will be glorified, and the eternal Kingdom of God's peace and glory will be the new home of all believers. What's not to look forward to?

Oh yeah, I almost forgot about that reading from Malachi you heard earlier! “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the arrogant and all evil doers will be stubble. The day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.”

Who are the arrogant? Who are the evildoers?

There are those of us who are sinners – all of us, to be more specific. Because of our sinfulness, we are the doers of evil. How we treat our neighbors is vile. Our belief and attitude toward God is despicable. Taking the time to consider God’s expectation of us, and what He considers evil – and then doing an honest assessment of our own live, it is easy to see that we are evil doers.

There are other days we arrogant. How often do we know the better way of doing something than “the idiot” who has completed the job in a different – and obviously wrong – way. We are so much better and superior than they are. But our arrogance is not just exhibited in our attitude toward strangers, too often, our arrogance tears down even our own family members.

So, are we are the arrogant and evildoers that are mentioned in this passage of Malachi? Most definitely we are sinners. We are certainly deserving of nothing less than God's wrath and eternal punishment. But, are we the arrogant and evil doers who be set ablaze, and turned to stubble?

No! These arrogant are those who do not believe in God. These arrogant are those who think they have no need for God. They ***know*** that Jesus was not truly God in human flesh. They have risen above the need for any sort of organized religion. They are the masters of their own destiny.

The evildoers spoken of here are those who see what God calls sinful as just an alternative lifestyle choice. They do not believe they are doing anything wrong, so they have no need for God. They especially have no need for the Son of God to save them from sin and death. Death is just what happens to all people.

But you, my dear friends, are different! You fear the Lord. You have an intimate awareness of your sinfulness. And, out of you great respect for God's holiness, you also have a healthy fear of His righteous wrath which will be meted out upon the ungodly on the last day.

You are also those who know His great love for you in sending His only begotten Son into the world to redeem sinners. You fully and firmly believe He was sent to purchase your forgiveness giving His perfect, holy, innocent life unto suffering and sacrificial death.

It is these two things together which are called repentance. Repentance is sorrow over sinfulness, a burning desire that sin no longer rears it's ugly head in your/my life – and it is this repentance which trusts that in Christ there is forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Your righteousness and mine does not come from within. Righteousness shall arise with healing!

Today we celebrate Populus Zion, the 2nd Sunday in Advent. The cry of Advent is, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.” Hosanna means simply, save now!

Advent is all about the expectation of the Coming One.

It is about the arising of the Son of righteousness coming to save us now.

The coming One has already come, laying down His life unto death upon the cross to purchase forgiveness.

On the third day He rose again.

He ascended after forty days to the right hand of the Father.

He is still the coming one.

He is the Righteousness that arises in the waters of baptism, coming with forgiveness and granting new life.

He is the coming One, Righteousness that arises in you unto salvation in the word of absolution.

He is the coming One, Righteousness that arises in you unto forgiveness and eternal life as you eat His very flesh pierced for you; and drink His very blood shed to bring you peace.

He is the coming One, Righteousness that arises in you to love your neighbor and care for them as He has sacrificed Himself in love to care for you.

He is the coming One. He is the Son of Righteousness who will arise on the last day with healing. He will gather you, me, and all those who have already gone before us, raised and perfected in holy bodies. We will leap forth in life and joy as a calf is first released from the stall.

With 20 days left before Christmas, ***ALL*** this is what we are preparing to celebrate. We will not just celebrate the birth of a little baby. That Child is the Son of God, come into our flesh for a specific reason. He is the arising of God's righteousness for you, for me, and for all. Let us look forward to rejoicing in complete understanding of what that great day of Joy truly means for your life now, and for your life forever. In the name of Jesus. Amen