

**Standing, we sing:** Psalm 145:4

- 4 The LORD is just in all His will and way,  
And all His works His steadfast love portray.  
All men who seek His mercy find Him near;  
He satisfies all those who Him revere.  
He hears the cry of those who seek Him truly  
But shall destroy the wicked and unruly.  
My mouth to Him its praises shall deliver  
And all flesh bless His holy Name forever.<sup>i</sup>

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth<sup>ii</sup>. Beloved, grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>iii</sup>. By the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Psalm 33:1

- 1 Rejoice ye in the LORD, O righteous,  
And let a new song fill the air.  
Praise is becoming to the up right;  
With harp and lyre His fame declare.  
For the LORD has spoken  
Words of truth unbroken;  
He is faithful still.  
Righteousness He treasures;  
Earth is with the measures  
Of His goodness filled<sup>iv</sup>.

Apostles Creed<sup>v</sup>

The Law<sup>vi</sup>

Psalm 118:1

- 1 Give thanks to God for all his goodness:  
"His love forever is the same."  
Give thanks to God, O holy nation:  
"His love forever is the same."  
Give thanks to God, O holy priesthood:  
"His love forever is the same."  
Give thanks to God, all those who fear Him:  
"His love forever is the same."<sup>vii</sup>

Prayer

- **Doxology:**
- **Worship:**
- **Confession:**

**Supplication (for pardon of sins):**

- **Thanksgiving:**
- **Intercession (for the need of the congregation, the church, authorities, sinful world and appeal to the promises of God)**
- **General supplication:**
- **Illumination of the Holy Spirit (necessary for the ministry of the Word):**

**Amen.**

Psalm 47:2

- 2 God ascends amid great resounding cries,  
With the blast of the trumpet see Him rise!  
Sing to God, all your praises to Him sing,  
Let your praises be rendered to our King!  
For our God is the Ruler of the earth;  
Sing His praise, sing to Him with Psalms of mirth!<sup>viii</sup>

Scripture reading: Malachi 4

Text: Malachi 4:5, 6

**<sup>5</sup>Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: <sup>6</sup>And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.**Malachi 4:5, 6 (KJV)

It is an art to be so honest in your life that you can experience how lost in sin you are. And in your need, to then be led by the Holy Spirit and God's Word, to meet the Lord on the day on which He executes His judgment.

In this sermon we pay attention to the Lord's instruction with regards to the law and His promise regarding Elijah.

On the day of the Lord we stand in the hall of judgment in front of His throne.

- We have already seen that in those moments, those who did not live aright will endure much anxiety.
- What then must one do?

Think of the law that the Lord gave at Horeb.

- This law is synonymous with the covenant.
- Therewith the Lord announces that He will send the prophet Elijah before the dawn the terrible day of the Lord.

It is important to notice that these two things go together, namely the Lord's law and a representative of the prophets, namely Elijah.

- Also notice that the prophecy is here used merely to impress upon us the law's place.
- The one who prepares the way for the Lord, is thus the one who announces that the Fulfiller of the law is on his way!

The first matter is terribly important.

- A person meets the judgment of the Lord with His law in your heart and in your hands.
- The Lord's law can never be separated from the prophets' preaching, because the law was expressed in the lives and preaching of the prophets.
- That is why, together with the exhortation to keep the Lord's law, it is added that the Lord will send the prophet Elijah.
- This prophesy goes back to what is written in Malachi 3:1: A messenger is on the way and he will prepare the way for the Lord's coming.

Who is this Elijah who was to come? The old Rabbis and a certain group of Jews understood it to be Elijah who would himself return to earth. (Mathew 17:10<sup>x</sup>; John 1:21<sup>x</sup>).

The fact that Elijah is specifically mentioned as representative of the prophets and their preaching, is because he was God's first ambassador, he preceded the series of prophets who came after him.

- Add to that the words that Gabriel spoke to Zechariah when he announced John's birth (Luke 1:17):  
**<sup>17</sup>And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**" (Luke 1:17 KJV)

With these words the New Testament lets us see the fulfilment of Malachi 4:6 in John the Baptist.

- Thus the expression **the prophet Elijah** points towards a prophetic figure in the future.
- Once Jesus spoke of John the Baptist and said:

**This is the one about whom it is written: " 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' <sup>14</sup>And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come.** (Matthew 11:10, 14 KJV)

Verse 6 describes the content of the labour of the one who prepares the way: He will let the hearts of the parents unite with the children.

- It therefore has to do with the restoration of the relationship between parents and children.
- The question is: What type of discord is it that drives parents and children apart, and how are families restored?

In order to answer the question we must return to Elijah's time to see what was going on then.

- In Elijah's time there was great division between parents and children because it was a time during which many young adults married unbelievers.
- It was a time of major religious division – think only of Ahab who himself married a heathen (Jezebel) who worshipped Baal and the grove.

Family division was at root a division between those who still held to the covenant of the Lord and those who rejected it.

- The emphasis is thus that the people were torn apart and formally split up around the covenant.
- The minister of the Lord would repair this splintering.

*With his mighty stature Elijah announced the divine judgment over an ungodly dynasty, while he wrestled for the preservation of the soul of his people (1 Kings 18:20-46).*

Exactly the same happened in the preaching and person of John the Baptist.

- The prophesy of Malachi was fulfilled therein that John the Baptist (like Elijah) again restored the covenantal reconciliation between God and the people.
- The heart of an ungodly posterity he thereby brought into unison with the hearts of the forefathers with whom God entered into a covenant at Horeb.

Now the question is: Why is this restoration of the covenant so terrifically important?

- Because in Malachi 2:12 it is written that the Lord recalled His promise of salvation and started executing His judgment of the people.

Where in this process do we stand?

- The same rules apply to us as did to the then covenant people.
- By repentance (application of the Lord's law) and obedience to the total Word of God, the power of sin and the curse of our disobedience will be broken.
- In place thereof, we will experience the powerful unity of God's blessing and His covenant of redemption.
- In this way the hearts of fathers and children will return to each other.

The fulfilment thereof we have in Jesus' merit on the cross.

- John did say that the axe is laid to the root.<sup>xi</sup>
- The Lord came to punish and splinter the power of hell.
- Together with this dark force, the Lord Jesus will destroy also the power of everyone who conspires with the forces of disobedience.

But you have to realise that we cannot live with the expectation that the one who prepares the way for the Lord, is still to come.

- His time passed in the history of John the Baptist.
- Only one thing remains now – namely the day of the Lord.

Stated differently:

- All that remains is the Second Coming when the judgment of God becomes reality.
- Malachi teaches that being unrepentant results in the utter destruction of the entire land and all its people.

Naturally judgment and salvation go together – so long as we remember that the redeemed ones approach this day in complete obedience to the law of the Lord and with a firm confidence in the Lord's covenant of redemption.

- We, who live under the reconciliation of Jesus Christ, must especially subject us ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- If we do so, the Lord Himself carries us back to the position of perfect salvation by virtue of the covenant, which he established with the blood of His Son.

Remember that the Second Coming towers above all the prophecies and promises.

- On the Lord's clock this is the only of the named matters, which is yet to be fulfilled.
- Let us meet this day with great expectation – in obedience to all the commandments of the Lord and with faith in His gospel.

**Amen**

Prayer

Psalm 68:2

2 But let the just with joyful voice  
In God's victorious might rejoice;  
Let them exult before Him!  
O sing to God, His praise proclaim  
And raise a Psalm unto His Name;  
In joyful songs adore Him.  
Lift up your voice and sing aloud  
To Him who rides upon the clouds  
High in the spacious heavens.  
The LORD, that is His glorious Name.  
Sing unto Him with loud acclaim;  
To Him be glory given.<sup>xii</sup>

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace<sup>xiii</sup>.

**Amen.**

**Dr MJ du Plessis**  
**Reformed Church Bellville**  
**Date: 11 July 2010**

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs145\\_Westra.HTM](http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs145_Westra.HTM)

<sup>ii</sup> Psalm 124:8

<sup>iii</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:3

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs033\\_vanderKamp\\_Helder.HTM](http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs033_vanderKamp_Helder.HTM)

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/apostles.creed.html>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2020:1-17&version=KJV>

<sup>vii</sup> [http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs118\\_Wiersma.HTM](http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs118_Wiersma.HTM)

<sup>viii</sup> [http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs047\\_Koyzis.HTM](http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs047_Koyzis.HTM)

<sup>ix</sup> And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

<sup>x</sup> And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

<sup>xi</sup> Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:9

<sup>xii</sup> [http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs068\\_VanOene.HTM](http://www.genevanpsalter.com/attachments/GenPs068_VanOene.HTM)

<sup>xiii</sup> Numbers 6:24-26