

# Sunday School Lesson

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Swannanoa, N. C.



## GOD'S RETURNING CALL TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Golden Text: "Have we not all sinned?" hath not one God father? why do we deal abominably every man against his brother?" Malachi 2:10

Malachi describes Malachi as the last prophet of the Old Testament. He is like a late rain which brings a long day of blessing, but he is also like a lightning bolt which brings with it the judgment of a new and more severe day. He is the last prophet to arise in Israel until the time of John the Baptist.

Times of Malachi  
The little city of Jerusalem from the foundation of the Temple in 516 B.C. to the coming of Nehemiah in 445 B.C. The people became indifferent in their religion and their enthusiasm lost its glow. As a result, the people became bitter, and the Temple itself was in a state of decay. The coming of Malachi was a divine rebuke to the people for their unfaithfulness. He called them to return to God and to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He promised that if they did so, God would bless them and make them a great nation again.

Coming Messenger (Mal. 3:1-6)  
The Lord is coming to His temple. He will be preceded by a messenger who will prepare the way for Him. This messenger was John the Baptist, whose preaching was preparatory to the coming of Christ. When the way was fully prepared, the Lord would come.

## LEGAL NOTICES

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE  
Having this day qualified as administrator (C.T.A.) of the Estate of James E. Sylvester, deceased, late of Buncombe County, North Carolina, this is to notify persons having claims against the estate to present them to the undersigned, duly verified, on or before one year from the date of this notice, or else this notice will be void in bar of recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

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8, 15, 22, 29; Oct. 6, 13.  
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session and that we are gems with which He shall make up His crowns. We do not deserve this highest of honors, but God honors us because of His Son, Jesus our Lord and Master. The wicked seem to prosper materially and the servant of God often asks, "What's the use?" Yet, the righteousness for rewards materially speaking. Righteousness itself is its own best pay. God promises to keep in His book of memory every trial and heartache and triumph of the Christian's progress. In his own good time He will more than repay him who walks with God in fellowship and in righteousness.

To enjoy this fellowship with God we must recognize that some things are forever wrong and we must be on the right side, God's side. We should not try to get Him on our side so much as we ought always to be on His side, regardless of the consequences. In a day when sin is turned out of social life so easily we should hold fast to God's standards of holiness and righteousness. He ought also to walk ever in Him walked" (I John 2:6). "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:7-9)

Where Judgment Is To Begin (Mal. 3:2-4)  
The Jews made the serious mistake of expecting judgment upon others before themselves. They were mistaken. Whenever we feel that others are the guilty ones we are in danger. May God give us the grace to see ourselves and our own need before we judge others! Malachi asked, "Who shall stand when He appeareth?" that is, who will be able to endure His judgment? Surely, no ungodly person shall stand. God's judgment will come upon the priests and the people who are leading sinful lives and this judgment will melt them and purify them so that they then will be better prepared to serve God. As it was, their lives and their service were of no spiritual value.

Some Specific Sins (Mal. 3:5-6)  
Adultery became widespread as the Jews intermarried with the heathen women. This was not pleasing to God. Divorce is an abomination in the sight of God and presents a serpent's nest of problems, even today. Adultery destroys the happiness and sanctity of home life. The seriousness of this sin is seen in Leviticus 20:10. "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." The innocent always suffer with the guilty—the children bearing a great deal of the shame. Jesus did not relax the seriousness of this sin when he forgave the woman taken in adultery in John 8, for He said to her, "Go and sin no more."

Robbing God (Mal. 3:8-10)  
"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, 'Wherein have we robbed thee?' In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. BRING YE ALL THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." These people felt no guilt about this sin (Mal. 3:7). The people were robbing God either by not paying the tithes at all or by not paying them as they should into the house of God, the storehouse. Consequently, God's blessings were withheld from them. Great blessings are promised to faithful tithers, even the opening of the windows of heaven in showers of blessings. God doesn't need our money so much as we need the discipline and the grace to give at least a tithe unto Him. Christians under grace should not fall shorter than that. By faithfully tithing our income we learn to trust God for our needs, both spiritual and temporal, and thus grow in the Christian life.

Complaining (Mal. 3:13-14)  
Though the Jews suffered for their sins, they had no right to complain, neither do we. God had been good to them. He called attention to the fact that though they were taken into Babylon as captives yet they were better off than the Edomites who were destined to be permanently punished (Mal. 1:2). There are always others in worse condition than we, and besides God has proved His love and care in so many ways we are never to complain, yet how many of us fall short! "Impatience often leads to a false accusation of God," said someone, and this is true. Instead of airing our doubts of God and others we should speak secretly to God about them and He will exchange His peace and truth for all these waterless clouds.

They complained that their offerings were not accepted at the altar, and Malachi reminded them that a holy God could not accept offerings from the hand of those who were living sinful lives, robbing God, divorcing their wives, etc. Such willful and open sin could never receive the smile of God's blessings.

God's Promise To The Faithful (Mal. 3:17)  
God is more concerned in purifying and improving His people than He is in bringing judgment upon them. "God is not willing that any should perish," God will spare those who love and serve Him faithfully because they are His sons and they serve Him obediently (3:17). It is worth all the world has to offer to know that we are a people of God's full pos-

## Poel's Corner

Conducted by  
Anne K. Sharp, Chairman  
Creative Writing Group

I NEVER FEAR THE NIGHT  
I never fear the night—because I know  
That I shall love the dawning  
all the more,  
I never dread the raindrops, for I look  
To see a rainbow stretched the whole world o'er.

When winter snows are wrapped about the earth,  
I know it is a blanket for the flowers—  
And soon the Spring sunshine will melt it all  
And leave the summer with more golden hours.

that obedience to God will produce peace of mind. Only the right relationship to God and the right conduct which grows out of it produce peace of mind. God gives peace to the soul that is united with Christ by faith. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). "The peace of Christ in the soul and is not something to be gained by mere human striving." —C. A. Trencham  
"Couldst thou in vision see thyself  
The man God meant;  
Thou never more wouldst be,  
The man thou art—content."  
—Emerson

We cannot have peace with God if we seek that selfishly. When the desire to have right conduct is uppermost it is then that peace will come. A good resolution has been quoted often before, "Re- do right; resolved, second, that whatever anyone else may do, I will do right." Malachi believed

I do not fear the sorrows and the griefs  
That overshadow all our earthly race—  
I do not shrink from death—  
knowing at morn  
I shall awake—and then behold His face.  
—Lucille Belk Armistead  
Creative Writing club

The Creative Writing club extends an appreciative welcome to its latest member and thanks her for this inspirational poem which will comfort us and strengthen our faith. "I Never Fear the Night" was published in the "Christian Observer", Louisville, Ky.  
—Anne Kendrick Sharp, Chr., Poet's Corner, Creative Writing club.

—Extension Agricultural Engineer H. M. Ellis warns that too many farm families continue to step up the use of electricity without assuring that their wiring can take new loads safely.

—Horses have been rapidly decreasing in North America and Western Europe in recent years, but show increases in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.



LIBRARY HOURS:  
Tuesday and Thursday  
10 A. M. — 6 P. M.  
Saturdays — 1 - 6 P. M.

"The Story of Eli Whitney", by Jean Lee Lattam.

Eli was one of those boys who are always making something new and different. But the way to success was not easy. In 1780 people did not take kindly to new-fangled ways. When his cotton gin was nearly perfected, thieves pirated his invention. He became involved in costly law suits over his patent. Work he could have done in two years, took eight.

His ideas were as fantastic in his day as space ships are now. But Whitney said, "Fantastic means to me, just something that hasn't happened yet." So,

through his efforts, the South grew rich on cotton, and the government had plenty of muskets from the first assembly line ever invented.

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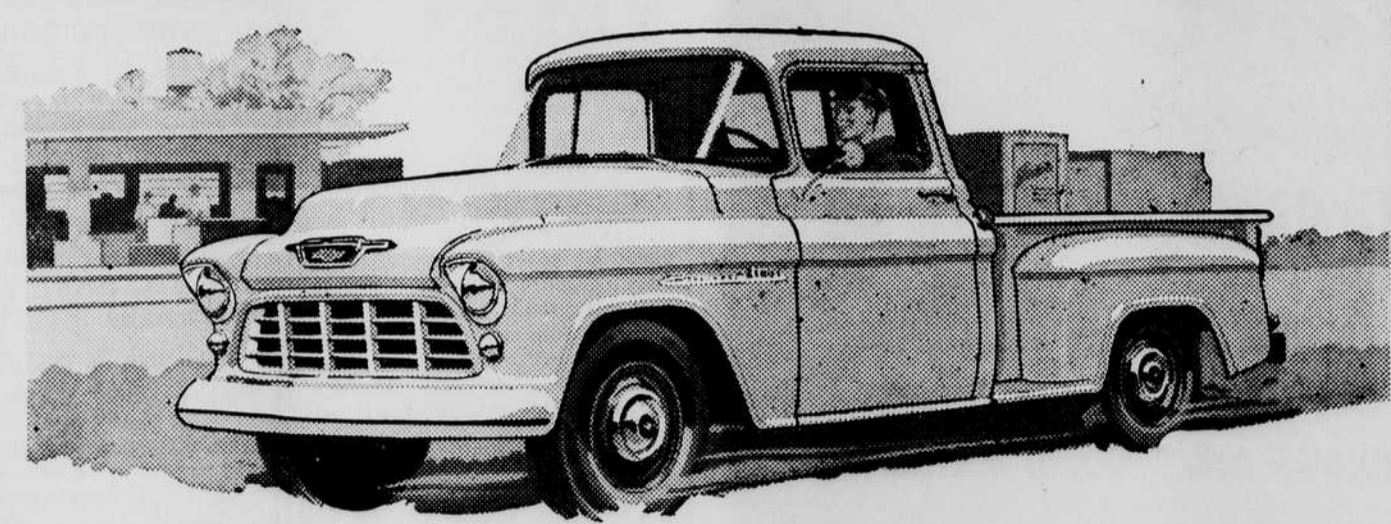
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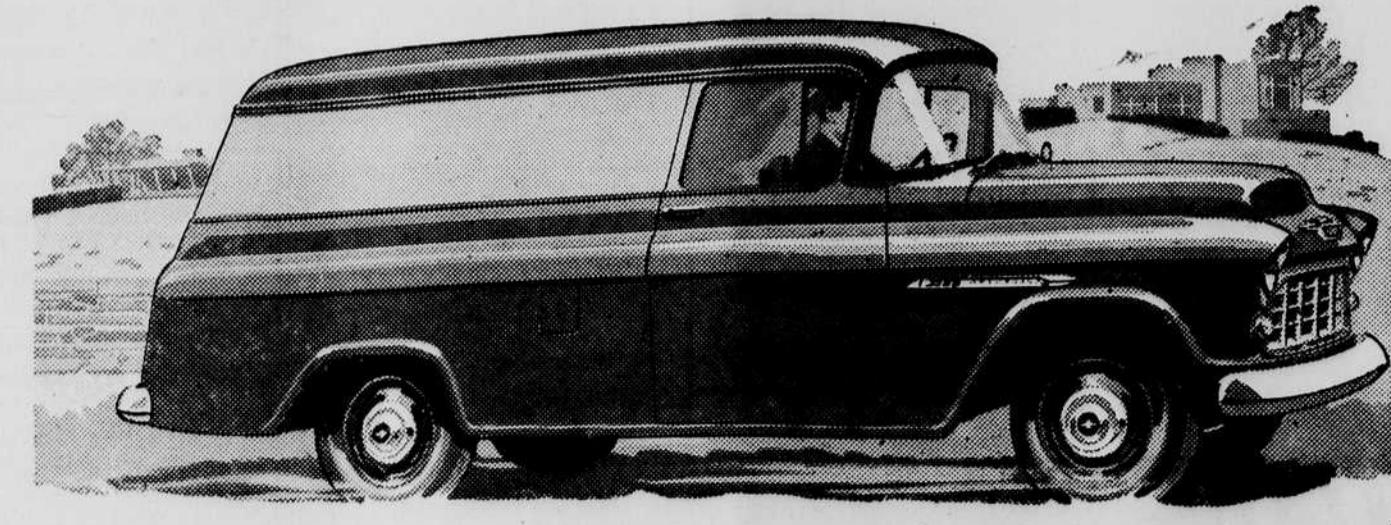
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