**Advent Vespers I,**

 **The First Sunday in Advent,**

28 November 2021.

 *Concordia Lutheran Mission,*

Terrebonne, Oregon.

**“Malachi Prophesied St. John the Baptist**

**and His Work to Prepare Jesus’ Way through the Gospel.”**

**Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.**

**Malachi 3:1**.[[1]](#footnote-1)1

**Introduction**.

How does one prepare the way of the Lord to come to His Temple? *Obviously, one would prepare the people for the coming or advent of the Holy Lord through the Remission of sins*. In Israel the Lord’s Temple was made holy and sanctified by the Levitical Priesthood, who sacrificed for the sins of the people. These sacrifices were the Forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake.[[2]](#footnote-2)2 The Lord’s Temple is holy and the people who comprise His Temple[[3]](#footnote-3)3, i.e., His dwelling place, must likewise holy. Fallen men are sinful. Sinful men are made holy through the Free Remission of all sins for Christ’s sake.

 Making people holy through the Forgiveness of sins is exactly how St. John the Baptist made holy (sanctified) the people so they could meet their Lord.[[4]](#footnote-4)4 St. John the Baptist prepared the people for the Lord by Baptizing them for the Remission of sins.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

 Thus the Lord came to His Temple, i.e., His Church, with the people well-prepared to receive their Lord and Salvation through the Remission of sins through St. John the Baptist’s Baptism, namely, through the Gospel.

**I. Malachi Prophesies St. John the Baptist and His Work.**

**A. Malachi 3:1-4 is a Messianic prophecy.**

 During this season of Advent we will be mediating on **Malachi 3:1-4**. **Malachi 3:1-4** is a Messianic prophecy foretelling the coming of Christ our Savior in His First Advent.[[6]](#footnote-6)6

 Malachi was working around 430 BC during the return of Judah from the Babylonian exile.[[7]](#footnote-7)7 Many of the Jews’ work and effort had grown slack and the Prophet Malachi exhorted them to return to the faithful discharge of their duties so the Temple and Jerusalem could be rebuilt.

 Like all prophets the Prophet Malachi addressed the concerns of the time but did not neglect to direct people to the coming of the Messiah to inspire and encourage them. Luther writes of this pattern of the prophets to address the issues of their time followed by turning people to the coming of Christ in apocalyptic [revelatory] sweep[[8]](#footnote-8)8 of human life in order to inspire and to encourage the people of Judah that they were working for a greater purpose than just earthly concerns but for eternal and glorious purposes. In the following passage Luther describes this pattern in the prophet Joel:

28. *And it will come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit*. Here the real prophecy begins, which we must clearly separate from what has gone before. Peter has treated this in Acts 2:17 ff. First we must speak about the transition of the prophet. If readers of the prophets do not understand it, it offends them very much. You see, it is the custom of the prophets that when have declared that prophecy for which they had been sent, they put aside what has taken place after the revelation of their prophecy and immediately go on to prophecy about Christ. Although all the prophets were sent to announce some temporal punishment, yet they would always connect something about Christ to it too. Here the prophet Joel did the same thing. He quickly passes across from the Jews to the future people of Christ, and he meanwhile skips everything that took place after the declaration of the prophecy here. Thus when he says “afterwards,” we must not apply this to the destruction at the hands of the Assyrians. Rather, it is the custom of the prophets at this point to omit certain events that have taken place and to go on to announce other things that are going to happen much later. After all, that revelation of the Holy Spirit about which the prophet speaks here occurred long afterwards.[[9]](#footnote-9)9

 **Malachi 3:1-4** is a Messianic prophecy, teaching Judah and all men about the Person and Work of Christ to save men from their sins. Luther writes:

He [Malachi] is a fine prophet, and his book contains beautiful sayings about Christ and the gospel. He calls it “a pure offering in all the world,” for by the gospel the grace of God is praised, and that is the true pure thank-offering. Again he prophesies of the coming of John the Baptist, as Christ himself in Matthew 11[:10, 14] interprets that of which Malachi [3:1; 4:5] writes, calling John his messenger and Elijah.1[[10]](#footnote-10)0

**B. The Prophet Malachi prophecies Jesus’ forerunner, St. John the Baptist, who prepared Christ’s way through the Remission of sins, namely, the Gospel.**

Attendant to Jesus’ First Advent was His forerunner who prepared His way. The Prophet Malachi writes:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ... , saith the LORD of hosts.1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

 St. John the Baptist was also foretold elsewhere. In **Malachi** **4** St. John the Baptist is prophesied:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers1[[12]](#footnote-12)2, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3

 St. John the Baptist is identified as the great Prophet Elijah because he like Elijah returns the people of Israel to God’s Word and the faith of their fathers. Jesus says:

For this is *he* of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is last in the kingdom of heaven is greater then he.1[[14]](#footnote-14)4 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.1[[15]](#footnote-15)5 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.1[[16]](#footnote-16)6

Likewise, the angel Gabriel told St. John the Baptist’s father, the priest Zacharias:

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of he altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and far fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice in his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb. And man of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.1[[17]](#footnote-17)7

 Finally, St. John the Baptist was confirmed to be God’s prophet by signs, wonders, and miracles. Luther writes:

Although he performed no miracles, the angel sent by God to Zacharias bore this fine testimony concerning him even before his conception, that he would be great before the Lord (Luke 1:15). He was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother’s womb. His conception and birth were miraculous, since his mother Elizabeth was by nature barren and also well advanced in years. When his father doubted the angel’s message, he was struck dumb (Luke 1:20) and did not regain his speech until after the child’s birth (Luke 1:64). All these facts had been noised abroad and were common knowledge among the Jewish people, as we can gather from Luke 1:65.1[[18]](#footnote-18)8

**C. St. John the Baptist prepared the people of Judah for the First Advent of Christ through the Gospel, namely, the Remission of sins for Christ’s Sake.**

The Prophet Malachi prophesies that St. John the Baptist would prepare the way of the Lord, the Angel of the Lord Himself. How did St. John the Baptist prepare the way of the Lord? He did so through the Remission of their sins. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.1[[19]](#footnote-19)9

Because St. John the Baptist prepared the people to meet the Lord through the Remission of their sins, Luther calls St. John the Baptist a preacher of grace:

Accordingly, he also bore an appropriate name, namely, John, which means “rich in grace.” ... Thus John does not have this name because of his person; he has it because of his office and his testimony. For he was not to preach and testify of himself, of his food and raiment, but of Christ, who had now appeared, for the salvation and consolation not only of the Jews but of the entire world. Therefore he points at Christ with his finger and says: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). By virtue of this testimony and proclamation he deserves to be called a delightful preacher, rich in grace, one who does not preach the Law — through which comes knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20) and which makes sin abound (Rom. 5:20), which strikes terror into the heart and provokes it to wrath — but the Gospel of God’s mercy for the sake of Christ, who bore our sins and rendered satisfaction for them.2[[20]](#footnote-20)0

 By preaching God’s Grace in Christ, St. John the Baptist removed the guilt of sin and prepared the people perfectly to receive their God by faith in Christ. Nothing could better prepare someone to receive the Holy Lord than faith, because faith justifies and makes holy. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.2[[21]](#footnote-21)1

 Remarkably, this forgiveness that prepared Christ’s Way was Fashioned by Christ’s Passion. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us ... .2[[22]](#footnote-22)2

 Christ is God’s Mercy who, as Jesus noted earlier, is “least in the Kingdom of Heaven”. Even though Christ is God’s Son, God’s Dayspring from on High, nevertheless He is the least because He suffered to bear the guilt, sin, and condemnation of all men. Jesus says in the midst of His Passion:

But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.2[[23]](#footnote-23)3

Luther writes of Christ’s Suffering being the least of all men because of His suffering for all men:

He himself says in Matthew 11[:11] that among those born of women there did not arise a greater one than John the Baptist; nevertheless the smallest in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. This smallest one is none other than Christ. No one has ever been humbled so deeply, no one has made himself smaller than did Christ, and for this reason, too, he alone may say: “Learn of me, I am meek and lowly in heart.” Such words no saints have ever said or been able to say, nor could they compare themselves to his perfect lowliness and meekness. [[24]](#endnote-1)1

 St. John the Baptist prepared the people for the First Advent of the Lord through the Remission of sins won by Christ’s Passion.

**II**. **Christ Prepares Men for His Second Advent like He had St. John the Baptist Prepare Men for His First Advent, namely, through the Remission of Sins.**

 **A. Christ prepares men for His Second Advent through the Remission of sins**.

 Not surprisingly, Christ prepares men for His Second Advent through the Remission of sins, just as did St. John the Baptist for His First Advent. This Preparation Christ accomplishes through the Preaching of the Gospel by the Church. The Evangelist St. Luke writes:

Then opened he [Jesus] their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.2[[25]](#footnote-24)4

The Rev. Dr. Luther Reed writes of Christ’s various Advents to us:

Lossius2[[26]](#footnote-25)5, the friend of Melancthon2[[27]](#footnote-26)6 and the editor of a famous Reformation cantionale, speaks of a threefold advent – his coming in the flesh, his return to judgment, and his daily coming in the ministrations of the Word and Sacraments.2[[28]](#footnote-27)7

Whether it be His First Advent, His daily Advent to us in Word and Sacrament, or His Second Advent on the Last Day, Christ always prepares men through the Gospel, through the Remission of sins. That Preparation makes sinners perfectly prepared to meet their Holy Lord because no sin remains and only the Righteousness of Christ.

**B. Christ dwells with men now and forever.**

Because Christ dwells with men now by the Gospel through faith, they are already dwelling with Him when He returns again in glory on the Last Day. Hence, they are prepared for His Second Advent and the close of the age because they dwell with Him already now and will do so forever. The Apostle. St. Matthew writes:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.2[[29]](#footnote-28)8

**Conclusion**.

 The Prophet Malachi prophesied over five centuries earlier St. John the Baptists’s work to prepare the people for Christ’s First Advent. St. John the Baptist fulfilled that prophecy and prepared the people through the Remission of their sins, namely, through the Gospel and faith.

 So also Christ prepares men for His Second Advent in the same way. By the Gospel through faith Christ Forgives and Sanctifies so He dwells with us now and also on the day of His Second Advent to gain life forever in His everlasting Kingdom.

 ***Amen.***

1. **1The Prophet Malachi was working around 430 BC. The Rev. Dr. Douglas Judisch, *The Pre-Exilic Books of Prophecy*, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, third edition, 1999, 227.**

 **“Christology [of Malachi]: ... comes back to idea of Haggai. ... 3:1-4 -- Chief Messianic prophecy. -- send My messenger (John the Baptist) -- clear My way before Me. -- Lord whom you such (Desire of All Nations) -- will suddenly come to His temple -- Messenger of the {berith (covenant)} -- He is the one who announces the New Testament -- He would refine the nation of Israel. v. 3 -- talks about the priests (purify sons of Levi) ... purification of the clergy -- found ministry of the New Testament -- preaching of the pure doctrine. 4 -- offering of Judah and Jerusalem -- ‘the whole church.’ ... 4:5 -- another prophecy of John the Baptist. -- comes with [the] same authority as Elijah and same vigor as Elijah.” The Rev. Dr. Douglas Judisch from notes by Willis Jenson from his *Old Testament Studies II* class at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, c. 1988, amplification in brackets and transliteration and translation of the Hebrew in braces added.**

 **“Christology [of Haggai]. ... 2:6-9 -- central part of the book. ... :6 -- shake all nations -- political commotion which would precede the Messiah; destruction of Perisan & Hellenistic [empires] before Rome. ... :7 {*chamdah* (desire)} -- object of desire or delight -- speaking [of] the Messiah ... they shall come to The Desire of All Nations. people from every nation will come to faith through the preaching of the Gospel. ... v. 9. glory [of] this latter house -- ‘the literal second temple.’ -- this temple will be given for more glory, because here the Messiah will come.” The Rev. Dr. Douglas Judisch from notes by Willis Jenson from his *Old Testament Studies II* class at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, c. 1988, amplification in brackets and transliteration and translation of the Hebrew in braces added.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2“The sacrifices of the Old Testament could, in themselves, not atone for sin, but being shadows of Christ’s sacrifice, they offered in advance, as it wee, to the people that forgiveness of sins which Christ would procure on the cross. Like a check, properly signed and secured by sufficient funds in the bank, is worth all it says, so the Old Testament sacrifices were checks which God himself issued to the people, and which were secured by the treasure Christ earned by His life and death. In appearance they were sacrifices, but in reality they were Sacraments, through which grace and forgiveness was offered to the people.” The Rev. Edward W. A. Koehler, *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, Edited by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, with Additional Notes for Students, Teachers, and Pastors* *by Edward W. A. Koehler*, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1981, p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3“That we may obtain this faith, *the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted*. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ’s sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake.” *The Augsburg Confession*, **Article V: Of the Ministry**.1-3, *Triglotta*, p. 45, underscore added.

 “*Of the Use of the Sacraments* they teach that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them.” *The Augsburg Confession*, **Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments**.1, 2, *Triglotta*, p. 49, underscore added.

 “Although *the Church* properly is the congregation of saints and true believers, nevertheless, since in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use Sacraments administered by evil men, according to the saying of Christ: *The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat*, etc. Matt. 23, 2. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.” *The Augsburg Confession*, **Article VIII: What the Church Is**.1-2, *Triglotta*, p. 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our ?God; whereby the dayspring from high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* he shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” **St. Luke 1:76-79**. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” **St. Mark 1:4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6“Prophecy of John and Christ, and both’s Office.” *The Bible or the entire Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments, according ot the German Translation of Dr. Martin Luther,* St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897, p. 915, translation from the German is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7“Concerning the person of Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, so little is known that some people have even insisted that it was not the name of a person at all, but only a title, for Malachi means messenger of Jehovah [or “My Messenger”]. However, all the reasons advanced for this supposition are so weak that it seems beset to hold, with the majority of orthodox teachers, that there was actually a prophet who bore that name, and that he wrote under his own name. The period of Malachi’s activity must be placed in the days of Nehemiah, very likely before the second visit of Nehemiah in Jerusalem. Cp. Neh. 13. His rebukes and admonitions evidently concern the same deplorable conditions which the leaders of the people found it necessary to correct with such emphasis, among these being sacrifices of poor quality, neglect in paying tithes, marriage with heathen women. All this is further substantiated by the fact that Malachi refers to himself as the last prophet of the Old Covenant, chiefly in prophesying of the forerunner of the Messiah and in stating that the New Dispensation was to be expected very soon. The Book of Malachi may readily be divided into two parts, chapters 1 and 2 dealing of the love of God to the children of Israel and reproving the sins of the priests and of the people, and chapters 3 and 4 comforting the God-fearing Jews with promises of the two-fold coming of Christ. The style of the book is animate, but less grand and the rhythm less marked than in some of the older prophets.” The Rev. Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, Vol. II, *The Poetical and the Prophetical Books*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924, pp. 719, 720. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8Thes expression “apocalyptic sweep” describing this prophetic pattern originated with the Rev. Dr. Douglas Judisch, professor of Old Testament exegesis at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, c. 1989.

 “The purpose of Daniel in writing the book known by his name was to encourage the people of God in the midst of all possible opposition. The theme, correspondingly, of the Book of Daniel may be stated thus: The God of Israel is in complete control of history. The Book of Daniel is the archetypal exemplar in the Old Testament -- and, indeed, in the Bible as a whole -- of the genre of literature known as apocalyptic. Even the Book of Revelation assumes a prior familiarity with Daniel and builds on the foundation laid there. The apocalyptic genre may be defined as a variety of prophecy will reveals to human view the whole future course of human history on the basis of the plan of God.” The Rev. Dr. Douglas Judisch, *Exegetical Notes on Daniel 12:1-3*, underscore added, [**http://www.projectwittenberg.org/etext/judisch/dan12.htm**](http://www.projectwittenberg.org/etext/judisch/dan12.htm) .

 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 18, pp. 105, 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 35, p. 332, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11**Malachi 3:1**. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12“That is, he [St. John the Baptist] would caus them to embrace again thee faith and reverence of the patriarchs. Malachi calls this ‘converting the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.’ For the fathers, whom the Jews were always flaunting, would not acknowledge the children as their own blood because of the difference of faith and religious scruples, nor were they able to truly boast that they had Abraham as their father because they were not following his faith, Rom. 4:16, nor were they doing his works, John 8:39. That is why the Baptist says, Mat. 3:7: ‘You are the offspring not of your fathers but of vipers. Don’t say: “We have Abraham as our father.” In brief, Gabriel wants to say this: ‘With his ministry, John will restore harmony and mutual agreement between the faith and religion of the fathers and the children.’” Martin Chemnitz, *Harmony of the Gospels*, Vol. 1, Book 1, tr. the Rev. Dr. Richard J. Dinda, Malone, TX: 2009, p. 88, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13**Malachi 4:5-6**. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14Christ here refers to Himself because He suffered to bear the sins of all men and became lower than all men. “But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” **Psalm 22:6**. Yet Christ is greater because He is the Son of God.

 “He himself says in Matthew 11[:11] that among those born of women there did not arise a greater one than John the Baptist; nevertheless the smallest in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. This smallest one is none other than Christ. No one has ever been humbled so deeply, no one has made himself smaller than did Christ, and for this reason, too, he alone may say: ‘Learn of me, I am meek and lowly in heart.’ Such words no saints have ever said or been able to say, nor could they compare themselves to his perfect lowliness and meekness.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 52, pp. 3, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 15“The Lutheran teachers appeal in support of these expressions to such Scripture passages as the following: Rom. 5:11: ‘Receiving the atonement’; Rom. 9:30: Attaining to righteousness’; John 1:12 and Col. 2:6: ‘Receiving Christ Jesus’; Is. 55:6: ‘Seeking the Lord’; John 6:44: ‘Coming to Him’; Is. 2:2: ‘All nations shall flow unto it’; v. 3: ‘Going up to the mountain of the Lord’; 55:5: ‘Running unto the Lord’; 1 Cor. 6:17: ‘Joined unto the Lord’; Gals. 3:27: ‘Putting on Christ.’ All these terms, including the figurative ones, denote the *fides actualis* [faith acting or doing], which with cordial trust lays hold of Christ and His forgiveness and with heartfelt confidence relies on Him. Faith in the forgiveness of ins is certainly not an ‘idle quality’; indeed, ‘the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force’ (Matt 11:12). ... Luther sets forth that by faith in the Gospel the nations ‘flow unto’ the mountain of the Lord and then adds: ‘Christ further explains this Matt. 11:12: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” That is to say: “Men are not coerced by force to receive the Word, but they apply force to themselves.”’ ... Thus also Chemnitz ... . Dannhauer, referring to Matt. 11:12, calls the *apprehensio fiducialis fidei* [the apprehension of confidence {in Christ} by faith] as an act of force by which the believer, while no violence is ever exerted upon him, drives with eager longing upon his object, as the eagle sweeps down upon his food ... .” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 435, translation of from the Latin in brackets is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 16**St. Matthew 11:10-15**, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 17**St. Luke 1:11-17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 18Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 22, p. 44.

 “Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called *Baptist*; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away, [or remission] of some sins [only,] but for the purification of the body supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.” The Antiquities of the Jews, *Josephus, Complete Works*, tr. William Whiston, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, reprinted 1985, Book XVII, Chapter V, p. 382.

 “JOSEPHUS, or more accurately Joseph ben Matthias, was born the year Gaius (better known as Caligula) ascended to the throne of the Roman Empire, A.D. 37, and died sometime after A.D. 100. He was the son of a priestly family and through his Hasmonean mother could boast of royal blood. ... In brief we can divide his life into two parts, each about thirty-three years in length: the first half could be described as the life of Joseph ben Matthias and Jewish priest, general, and prisoner; the second half, with some reservations, as the life of Flavius Josephus the Roman citizen and author. In all fairness we must add that even the Roman Josephus was a Jew and was doubtless writing to honor his fellow countrymen and to defend Judaism. He never regained the confidence of his own people, however, and even down to modern times has been looked upon as a renegade.” *Josephus: Complete Works*, tr. William Whiston, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publishing, rpr. 1985, Foreword, p. VII. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 19**St. Luke 1:76-77**. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 20Martin Luther,*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 22, p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 21**Romans 3:28**. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. 22**St. Luke 1:77-78**. “**WHO IS THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH?** ANSWER: With Zacharias we praise Christ, the Son of David and the Dayspring from on high, ‘who arises from the Father, even like the first morning rays of the sun, because His being does not first begin here on earth when He was conceived, He comes from on high, down from heaven.’ Luther. Yes, through the heartfelt mercy of God the Dayspring from on high has visited us, God in Christ having visited and redeemed His people.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Wisdom for Today*, Vols. II & III, tr. the Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, no date, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. 23**Psalm 22:6**. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. 1.Luther, M. (1999, c1974). Vol. 52: Luther's works, vol. 52 : Sermons II (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (Vol. 52, Page 3-4). Philadelphia: Fortress Press. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
25. 24**St. Luke 24:45-47**. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
26. 25“**Lossius**, **Lukas**, 1508 (or 1510)-82; assisted in introducing the Reformation to Luenburg; later rector of school in Lueneburg ... .” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, s. v. “**Lossius**, **Lukas**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
27. 26“**Melancthon** (*Schwarzerd*), **Philip**; b. February 16, 1497, at Bretten, in Baden ... D. April 19, 1560.” *Concordia Cyclopedia*, eds. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927, p. 450, s. v. “**Melancthon** (*Scharzerd*), **Philip**.” [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
28. 27The Rev. Dr. Luther Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 466, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
29. 28**St. Matthew 28:18-20**. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)