

Scripture: The Law (Ex. 20) – Malachi 4 & Matthew 25:1-13

Singing: 448:1, 3 – 328:3, 4 – 90:1-5 – 363:1-3 – 236:1-4

Intro: The parable of five wise and foolish girls is searching and hammers on one question: *Are you ready for Jesus' return?* (Matt 25:13)

- A. Malachi's concluding message implies the same question: Mat. 4:1-3
1. Many in post-exile 'church' were *formal professors without new hearts*
 2. Yet there were also those who 'feared the Name of God'

The LORD's Promise of Healing (1)

- I. The address of His promise II. The content of His promise
III. The experience of His promise

I. The address of the LORD's promise

- A. Malachi must proclaim God's comforting promises to a **select** group
1. This is the Biblical model each preacher is to *follow* Is. 3:10-11 (HC 84)
 2. None should appropriate the content of His promise if not identified as the addressee: *those that fear My Name*
 3. Yet all who are 'identified as addressed' are to appropriate the promise

B. The origin of "the fear of My Name"

1. The fear of God's Name is a *fruit of God's Work* (compare Rom. 3:18)
 - a. Eph. 2:1-3: *the spiritually dead do not fear God*
 - b. Acts 9:3: *the spiritually quickened 'walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost'*

C. What is 'to fear my Name'?

1. 'to fear my Name' in the NT language is *to love the Lord Triune*
 - a. it is known by its *actings and effects within your heart*
 - b. known by its *outflow into all of your private & public life*
 - c. known by its *draw to and esteem of the Word of God*

2. the fear of God is further described as

- a. the *beginning of knowledge* (Prov. 1:7)

- b. *the fountain of life* (Prov. 14:27)

- c. the *fruit of faith* in God's Word (Heb. 11:7)

- d. the *emotional or experiential* side of knowing Him (Is. 66:2; Ezra 9:6; Matt. 5:3-9; 1 Kings 19:14; 2 Cor. 7:11)

- e. flowing from *a sense of God's love in grace* (Ps. 130:3-4)

Personal Reflection: *Do I have the evidence of a new heart?*

A. The fear of God is *fruit of God's gracious covenant mercies*: Jer. 32:37-40

B. The *practical syllogism* (Canons Head V, rej. 5; Head I, art 12)

1. Major Premise: *The childlike fear (esteem, love, joy) of God is the work of God's saving grace in a sinner's heart.*

2. Minor Premise: *I cannot deny that within my heart I see a growing desire and love for God, which I want to express in a daily devotion of my heart, my words, my actions and all my existence before Him and others though all is imperfect.*

3. Deduction (conclusion):

C. "But I still find so much sin within me: how can I be such if saved?"

1. Gal. 5:17 & Romans 7:14-25 is *daily diary of the born again*

2. Malachi 2:2-3 is the *promise of Jesus' final healing!*