

**There is a battle raging in our world**

**We see this in nature**

**The four seasons battle with each other**

**Life gives way to death and hibernation**

**We call it the dead of winter for a reason**

**Then life gains hold in the spring**

**We see it in our lives**

**There will be wars and insurrections**

**Earthquakes, famines and plagues**

**Beneath human history is God's story**

**A love story and a war story**

**At times one or the other might seem to be more in focus**

**But there is a constant current beneath**

**So we know that what is here today**

**Will not go away entirely**

**But will go beneath the surface**

**Until it is pushed to the top once again**

**This story has roots before humankind**

**God creating everything for one reason**

**Because of His love**

**The angels dividing into 2 camps**

**One with Michael**

**The other siding with Satan**

**Adam and Eve in the Garden**

**Falling to temptation and original sin**

**God sending His Only Son**

**Only to fall to the crucifixion**

**And then to rise from the dead**

**The battle continues to our own day**

**WW I, WW II, Vietnam, Korea, ISIS, abortion, euthenasia**

**Times of war**

**Times of peace**

**All part of a love story**

**A story of salvation history written by the hand of God**

**Played out in the history of mankind**

**As we read and live this story**

**We are called to avoid 2 mistakes**

**One is to deny this worldview**

**That this end of time thinking is just hysteria**

**It is meaningless to our life**

**The other temptation is to focus entirely on the end time**

**And forget to engage in the battle at hand**

**We see this in our reading from Malachi**

**The Israelite community had been in exile**

**They were slaves in Babylon, far from the Promised Land**

**But now they were back home**

**But they don't know what to make of this situation**

**The Book of Malachi is a series of 6 disputations or disputes with God**

**The people asking how God could treat them this way**

**The sixth dispute precedes our reading today**

***It is vain to serve our God***

***What is the good of keeping his charge?***

***We deem the arrogant blessed***

***The evildoers not only prosper***

***But when they put God to the test, they escape***

**Does this seem familiar to anyone today?**

**Where is the justice?**

**Where are the blessings that were promised?**

**Our reading today is God's response to this dispute**

**It is a response of punishment and mercy**

***The day is coming***

***When all evildoers will be stubble***

***But for you that fear my name***

***There will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays***

**Although not in our reading today**

**In Malachi 3:16, he speaks of a book of remembrance**

Similar to the one we use to pray for our loved ones

God has a book of remembrance

To record the name of those that serve Him in this life

We see Christ warning of similar things in our Gospel

People were commenting on the beauty of the Temple

The costly stones

The votive offerings

For the Jews, it was the pinnacle of their faith

The place where God literally met with man

A microcosm of the universe

The place of God's glory

But by the time of Christ

It had become an empty symbol

For many, their faith was mostly external obligations

All done for show

And now Christ tells them

*There will come a day*

*When it will all be gone*

*Not one stone left upon another*

They had to ask themselves

If this is the case with the Temple

What does it mean of us as God's Chosen Ones?

**And why does the Temple have to be destroyed?**

**Wouldn't it be nice to go visit it today?**

**We can and do visit the Temple at every Mass**

**Not the old temple of Israel**

**But the living Temple of the New Covenant**

**The Temple of the resurrected Christ**

**We see this in the Eucharist**

**The Temple in which we are the living stones**

**Created in His image and likeness**

**This is the Temple where God meets his children**

**The Mystical Body of Christ**

**Where our sins have been atoned for**

**Not by the blood of animals**

**But by the Blood of the Innocent Lamb**

**The Blood of Christ**

**What Malachi's warning teaches us**

**What Christ's warning teach us**

**All this is pertinent to our times**

**We are called to live today**

**To build His kingdom**

**Reading and watching the news we can become pessimistic**

**We all saw this leading up to our last election**

**No matter which side you might have been on**

**As Catholic Christians we need to take in the big picture**

**We have a savior**

**And it is not the democratic or the republican party**

**What is here today**

**Will be gone tomorrow**

**Only to return at another time**

**That has been going on since the dawn of time**

**There is a battle that is being waged right now**

**It is constantly going on beneath the surface**

**At times it rages all around us in the physical world**

**Through all of this we are called to join the battle**

**Follow Paul's advice to the Thessalonians**

**Do not sit on the sidelines**

**Do not act as busybodies**

**But become busy living**

**Work quietly for the kingdom**

**But work**

**Waiting in idleness is Satan's trap**

**Just as a woman expecting her child is busy preparing for the baby**

**Preparing for new life**

**We are called to work and prepare for the coming of the kingdom**

**We know not the day not the hour**

**But we do know it will arrive**

**For some here it will undoubtable arrive this year**

**Are you ready?**

**It is certain that every one of us will experience it at some point**

**Are we ready?**

**God is in control**

**Yesterday, today and tomorrow**

**No amount of suffering, persecution or human trial will change this**

**If we stay united with Christ**

***By your perseverance you will secure your lives***

**In his sacraments**

**Especially baptism, the Eucharist and confession**

**In the end his love, his justice**

**His mercy will write the last chapter**

**This is the promise of Advent begins in only 2 weeks**

**It is the anticipation of the ultimate triumph of God**

**Over chaos, sin and death**

**The triumph of God in this little child Jesus Christ**

**On Christmas morning**

**When there will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays of mercy**