

“Under Construction”

Baruch 5 1-9, Malachi 3 2b-3, Luke 1 68-79, Luke 3 6, Philippians 1 6

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Construction is often messy, difficult, provides surprises and tests one's patience. Construction is full of choices of design, materials, and colors. Usually construction creates a wonderful space.

Each of us is under construction. God will complete you. We are taking off garments of sorrow and affliction. We are in the process of putting on forever the beauty of the glory of God. God is a cleaner, craftsman, purifier and refiner. God is an artist who is making you magnificent.

We are incomplete, unfinished, underdeveloped, in progress, and in process. We are under construction. We live between the two advents. We celebrate the first Advent of Jesus birth, God putting on human flesh, to reveal God's love to us, to enable us to glimpse how we are becoming peaceful, loving, and joyful and to glimpse who God's grace is bring us all together in one complete loving family. We anticipate the second advent, the fruition of God's construction of us and the world, the fulfillment of God's kingdom.

Each of us, and the entire world, is like a demolished, barricaded church entry way, with a hole of slimy water becoming a bright, welcoming, secure, accessible entry way. We are like a house gutted, the rot removed, the imperfections discarded becoming a comfortable, safe, pleasing home. We are like a road dug out becoming smooth, flat and efficient. We are like a demolished lot, a pile of rubble becoming a fun soccer stadium.

Each of us is under construction. Our families are under construction. The world is under construction. We are encouraged to let go of our sorrow, disappointment, and hopelessness by realizing we are under construction. You are unfinished. Each of us is falling way short of the person God created us to be and probably the person you want to be as well. The world is unfinished. We have not yet come together as one worldwide, loving community that values and celebrates every individual.

In the midst of construction one can become frustrated, impatient, lamenting the demolition, grime, and ugliness or be grateful for progress, hopeful, visualizing the goodness that is coming. In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in identifying what we need to demolish such as fear, hate, arrogance, jealousy, vices, addictions, and crutches. Instead of complaining about our incompleteness or being apathetic to our predicament, God invites us to partner with God in rolling up our sleeves to demolish all that diminishes life and to complete all that enhances life.

In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in getting rid of blame, guilt, shame, criticism. We welcome God's grace that is forgiving, healing and renovating.

In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in being an agent of transformation, shifting our focus, thoughts, speech and action from the broken to the wholeness of shalom. We celebrate the glorious person we are becoming. We celebrate that we will not be defined by our mistakes, imperfections, sickness, deficiencies, health. We celebrate that we are defined by being a beloved, cherished child of God, a sibling to all people. We share stories and sing of goodness. We share dreams and visions of the spectacular person God is constructing everyone to be and the harmony that God is constructing between all people and the cosmos. We celebrate being continually reclaimed by God's grace that enables us to be gracious.

In the midst of our construction we partner with God in refining, purifying, and nurturing. We identify gifts that have become weathered, worn, abused, and let God restore, enhance, and develop them. You are becoming infinitely more wonderful than you can dream or imagine.

In the midst of our construction we partner with God in choosing the type of magnificent person we will become for eternity. God gives each of us free will to choose. When we choose poorly, God's grace forgives, heals, purifies and gives us a fresh choice. When we choose wisely, that goodness becomes a part of us forever. God made you unique, your personality will never be duplicated, and you get to choose an abundant array of choices that is making you even more unique, special, and precious. Every goodness, love, joy, and delight is eternal and will be celebrated by you, God, and all of heaven for eternity. God abundantly blesses us. You get to choose your humor that brings joy. You get to choose how you will encourage others. You get to choose how

you will build others up into the likeness of Jesus. You get to choose the goodness and beauty you will share in your compliments. You get to choose your attitude. You get to choose to fill your life with sights, sounds, tastes, sensations, and smells that fill you with wonder. You get to choose what you will discover, learn, develop, and share. You get to choose what you think, listen to, watch, and say. You get to choose the delights, joys, and loves that will endure and be savored by you for eternity. Advent is a time to imagine the glorious person you are becoming and to celebrate every goodness you have already competed.

In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in building synergy: intertwining the gifts of every era, utilizing every style and uniting all.

In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in creating: in thoughts, feelings, and actions you are creating an abundance of goodness. Together we are creating the kingdom of God. God is the master artist who inspires us. God adorns creation with our wholesome creations.

In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in nurturing loving relationships. Each of us has difficult relationships, because everyone is incomplete; so, our relationships are incomplete and constantly evolving. Part of our incompleteness is not being in relationships with people who are different from us, see the world differently, and perceive God differently. All of us will be in perfect harmonious relationships with all people for eternity. God is filling us with grace to construct deeper, meaningful loving relationships today. We are created in the image of God, designed to forgive, to see the goodness in others, and to be in relationships of pure joyful love that makes us all one like the Trinity, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, three unique persons one God by love. View your relationships as under construction. Each person is being constructed at a different speed. Our incompleteness, and roughed in, but unfinished love, will come out wrong, hurting each other. Yet, we keep loving to build relationships. God never gives up on anyone. If someone gives up on us on earth or if we give up on someone, God will construct a wonderful, life-enhancing relationship. Each of us will have opportunities this Christmas to enhance our relationships with family and friends, to live into our future of loving unity.

In the midst of our construction, we partner with God in expanding. Each of us is designed to expand in love and joy for eternity.

There is a religious, churchy word for our construction; repentance. The kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news. Instead of running from God, embrace God. Instead of fear, be at peace. Instead of hate, love. Instead of dwelling on the brokenness, partner with God in making all complete. Jesus has a glorious blueprint for you and the world. You get to enhance God's blueprint of you with Jesus. We get to enhance God's blueprint of the world with Jesus. And we right now are in the process, in progress, in construction of our perfect life and perfect cosmos.

Throughout history, humanity gets discouraged. God is constantly communicating that each one of us is becoming glorious and the cosmos is becoming glorious. Scripture proclaims, **"All flesh shall see the salvation of God."** Luke 3:6 **"God is like a refiner. God is like the strongest soap"** Malachi 3:2 **"Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God."** Baruch 5:1 **"God will show you splendor."** Baruch 5:3 **"Through the heartfelt grace of our God, God's Sunrise will break in upon us, shining on those in the darkness, those sitting in the shadow of death, then showing us the way, one foot at a time, down the path of peace."** Luke 1:78-79 **"I am confident of this, that God who began the good work within you will bring you to completion."** Philippians 1:6 Amen