

Malachi Chapter 3

- Chapter 2 ends with a question: “Where is the God of justice?” - well it’s funny that you should ask...

V: 1 “Behold, I send My messenger,” -

- Jesus quotes this very verse and explains that it is referring to John the Baptist and his ministry as a herald of the soon coming Messiah. (Malachi)

Context: John the Baptist

Matthew 11:10 “For this is he of whom it is written: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face who will prepare Your way before You.””

- John’s mission and ministry was to prepare the people, for the coming of the Messiah - which he was faithful to do - warning the people to “repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Isaiah spoke of the same thing:

Isaiah 40:3 “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.””

- All of this predicting the coming of that herald which we see fulfilled in John the Baptist:

Matthew 3:1-3 “¹In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²saying, “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand! ³For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.””

Mark 1:4 “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

Luke Ch. 1: The Arch angel Gabriel speaks of the miraculous birth of John the baptist to Mary the mother of Jesus as he describes Mary’s ministry, and again to John’s father Zacharias.

John 1:6 “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”

“And the Lord, whom you seek...”

- First subject, the messenger, John the Baptist. Second subject, the object of the message, the Lord whom we seek - our Lord Jesus.

Haggai 2:7 “And I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of all Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory, says the LORD of hosts.”

Luke 2:22 “Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.”

- Messenger of the covenant: (H-1285) “beriyt” - covenant, treaty, alliance, agreement.

Jeremiah 31:31 “Behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

- The OT was the covenant of the Law, the NT is the covenant of blood.

Matthew 26:28 “For this is My blood of the new covenant (testament - KJV), which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Hebrews 12:24 “To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

- Testament / Covenant (G-1242) “Diatheke”

“In whom you delight. (I pray that we do) Behold, He is coming...”

Revelation 22:20 “He who testifies of these things says, “surely I am coming quickly.” Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

1 Corinthians 16:22 “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!” (Maranatha!)

- “Maranatha” - “Our Lord comes, or is coming” The implication being that He will judge those who have set Him a naught.
- The first verse speaks of His advent, His first coming into this world, into the temple, but then blends into His second coming depending on your perspective.
- From the OT perspective He hasn’t come yet, so when He does it’s a reference to His advent, His first coming at the Nativity. From a NT perspective, He’s already come once at His birth and earthly ministry. So when He comes or is coming - to us it will be His 2nd coming - which is described more directly in the next verse.

V: 2 Speaking of His return, His 2nd coming when He comes to judge and make war.
“Who can endure? Who can stand when He appears?”

Malachi 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up, says the LORD of hosts, that will leave them neither root nor branch.”

Revelation 6:17 “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

V: 2b-3 Refiner’s fire, launderers’ soap, purifying, and purging.

- Washing, cleansing, removing the impurities. In this case the sons of Levi, the priesthood is going to be purified, the heat is about to get turned up!
- Refiner’s fire:
- The priesthood is going to be purified so that they can offer offerings in righteousness.

Proverbs 17:3 “The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the hearts.”

Psalm 24:3-4 “³Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? ⁴He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.”

V: 4 After being refined, purified, and purged of their sin - then their offering will be pleasant to the LORD just like in the days of old.

- Remember in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple how things were set up?
- Starting from the inside: The holy of holies with the Ark of the testimony / covenant, the mercy seat and the Shekinah glory of God, His presence hovering over the mercy seat.
- Then the veil separating the holy of holies from the holy place. Directly in front of the veil was the altar of incense where prayers were offered daily. To the right was the Menorah, the candle stick with 7 branches, with 7 lamps burning 24 / 7 - opposite that was the Table of show bread with 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes of Israel.
- Then just outside the Holy Place there were two main features, a little farther out was the brazen altar of sacrifice, and in between the altar of sacrifice and the Tabernacle of meeting was the brazen laver.
- What was the purpose of the brass laver? For the priests to wash in, under penalty of death.

Exodus 30:20 “When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die.”

Isaiah 56:7 “Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

V: 5 He’s coming in judgment to deal with those who are left behind after the rapture because those that repented of these things and sought His face were caught up already to be with Him. So now He’s come back to judge those who are engaging in these activities.

- Sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers, those who exploit workers, widows, and orphans, those who reject strangers or aliens.
- This is nothing new, He’s warned us repeatedly:

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:3-5, Colossians 3:5-6,
1 Thessalonians 4:3-6, Revelation 21:8**

- Why did they and why do they do these things? Because they don’t fear God! They reject His Word!

Proverbs 16:6 “In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil.”

Psalms 98:9 “For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity.”

Proverbs 13:13 “He who despises the Word will be destroyed, but he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.”

V: 6 God doesn’t change. God’s Word doesn’t change. God’s standard doesn’t change - His standard is perfection.

Genesis 17:1 “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be perfect.”

- God doesn’t change: He is immutable.

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Hebrews 6:17-18 “¹⁷Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: ¹⁸That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” (God doesn’t change, He doesn’t lie.)

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”

- Because God doesn't change, He will keep His Word, keep His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - and even in his sinfulness Jacob will not be utterly consumed, there will be a remnant that turns to Him.

Lamentations 3:22 “Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.”

Jeremiah 32:40-42 “⁴⁰And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. ⁴¹Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul. ⁴²For thus says the LORD: just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them.”

V: 7 They have been rebellious since the days of their fathers, they too need to repent. “*Return to Me, and I will return to you,*” says the LORD of hosts....”

- They have turned away from His ordinances, rejected His Word.

Zechariah 1:3 “Therefore say to them, thus says the LORD of hosts: return to Me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.”

James 4:8 “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

- They ask the question, “*how have we turned away from you?*”
- **Chapter 1: they have not honored God, they have despised His name.** They offered inferior sacrifices of the lame, sick, and stolen.
- **Chapter 2: They've dealt treacherously with their wives, divorcing them.** They've married foreign, pagan, idol worshipping women.

Now in Ch. 3

V: 8-10 **They've robbed God of His tithes and offerings.** Because of this, they have brought a curse upon themselves. They are cursed with a curse.

- ¹⁰He commands them to bring all the tithes to His house.
- As believers we are called to the same thing, we are to tithe of our increase, this started in Genesis:

Genesis 14:18-20 “¹⁸Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹And he blessed him and said: blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God

Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he gave him a tithe of all." (10th)

Proverbs 3:9 "Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase."

- Why is this required? It's part of trusting the Lord in a practical real life personal kind of way, it's also acknowledging Him as we'll see.

Hebrews 11:6 "For without faith it is impossible to please God..."

- Proverbs mentions the "*firstfruits*" - for most of us that is the gross amount before Caesar takes his due, leaving us with what is left.
- We shouldn't be giving God the "leftovers" He should get the best, the first part.
- The first fruits, the best part, trusting that God will replace what is needed.
- Giving God the "first fruits" is acknowledging that it came from God to begin with, that it all came from Him, and we're simply giving back to Him what was His anyway.

James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

- If we don't faithfully give to the Lord, it is evidence that we don't really trust the Lord. We're called to trust the Lord, depend on Him, lean on Him, acknowledging where it all came from... (Christian maturity)
- As carnal creatures we tend to be selfish, greedy, and materialistic all of which we have to fight. God is a giver and guess what He wants us to be?
- Our tithes and offerings aren't "payment" for His blessings; rather, they're evidence of our faith and obedience.
- Christian industrialist R.G. LeTourneau used to say, "If you give because it pays, it won't pay." We give out of love, obedience, appreciation, acknowledgement, and faith. (Or not.)

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

- Giving is one of those areas in our walk with the Lord where He challenges us to see what will happen if we do it.

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it, it will be measured back to you.”

- Or as Malachi puts it: (read V: 10)
- There are many who seek to justify their not giving by saying that they can't afford to do so. It's like any other sin, either we rationalize it or we repent of it. I was there for a season, then I learned that I can't afford not to give.
- When we don't it's amazing how it all slips through our fingers anyway and we seem to get no where financially. But when we do seek to honor the Lord with our increase how he stretches what is left, even to an abundance at times.

The prophet Haggai addresses part of this:

Haggai 1:6-7 “⁶You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.” ⁷Thus says the LORD of hosts: “consider your ways!”

- This is a heart issue - as Paul would later describe.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 “⁶But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

- We're to honor the Lord, giving of the first fruits of our increase. “*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house...*”

V: 11-12 If you do that... then I will rebuke the devourer and not allow him to destroy your crops, the fruit of your land - all nations will call you blessed - they will see the blessing that the Lord pours out upon you.

Jeremiah 33:9 “Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.”

V: 13-14 4th rebuke: **They have spoken harsh words against God** saying it's useless to serve God. “Oh what's the use!” We need to be careful not to “poor mouth” God.

- A Godly man by the name of Asaph had that thought:

Psalm 73:1-19 (Turn to / read)

V: 15 Like we read in Psalm 73 - thinking that the wicked are being blessed.... no the Devil always exacts a price.

- They tempt God and go free... no, they seem to go free - but nobody gets away with anything, all will be held to account.

Romans 12:19 "Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord."

Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed for men once to die, but after that the judgment."

V: 16 The Lord our God is omniscient - He is all knowing, He knows and hears everything - but He particularly listens in on things when we talk about Him.

Psalm 66:16 "Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul."

Psalm 22:22 "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You."

- Different books of God described in the Bible:

1. **The book of tears: Psalm 56:8** "You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book?"
2. **The book of men's deeds: Isaiah 65:2-6** (Turn to / read)
3. **God's Book of Humanity:**

Psalm 139:13-16 "13For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mothers womb. 14I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. 15My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."

4. **God's book of remembrance: Malachi 3:16**

5. **The Lamb's Book of Life: Revelation 13:8, 20:12-15, 21:27, 22:19**

V: 17 They / these / those who fear the Lord - shall be Mine.

- His jewels, and He will spare them:

Romans 5:9 “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”

1 Thessalonians 5:9 “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 3:10 “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

V: 18 Then, after all these things - once you've been refined, purified, and purged - then you'll be able to discern between the righteous and the wicked. Those that serve the Lord and those that don't.

Speaking of the priests:

Ezekiel 44:23 “And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”