

MALACHI- CHAPTER 3

Read: Malachi 3:1-7

- How did Chapter 2 end? What were the people complaining about?
 - o Complaining about the absence of God's judgment
 - o **Malachi 2:17-** "Where is the God of justice?"
- Chapter 3 is God's answer to their complaint- judgment is coming

Mal 3:1 *"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.*

I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me

- Who is the messenger? **Isaiah 40:3, Luke 1:76, Matthew 11:7-11**
- What was his job? **Matthew 3:1-2**, to preach repentance
 - o Repentance is the preparation for Christ!

And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple

- What state is the temple currently in?
 - o They have defiled it- God wants them to shut the gates!
 - o What does Jesus do when he walks into the temple?- **John 2:13-17**

and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming

- Notice, there are two messengers here:
 - o The Lords' Messenger (John the Baptist)
 - o The messenger of the covenant they delight in (**Gen 22:17-18, Gal 3:16**)

Mal 3:2 *"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.*

Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?

- They asked for judgment, judgment is coming. How did Jesus fulfill this?
 - o **Matthew 21:43, Matthew 23:37**
- Who can stand when He appears?
 - o Some do stand: Nicodemous (**John 3, John 7:46-52, John 19:39**)
 - o Zaccheus, Martha, The woman at the Well

TWO FORMS OF CLEANSING MENTIONED:

For He is like a refiner's fire

- Precious metals are refined by fire
 - o Melted down and then the impurities separate and can be removed
 - o The result: purer and more precious metal

and like fullers' soap.

- **Fulling: a step in the making of wool cloth**
 - o Involves cleansing cloth to eliminate oils, dirt, bugs, and other impurities until the material is pure, white, and made thicker
 - o Process involves cleansing and a beating of the fibers until they reach a consistent and acceptable condition.
- **Fullers Soap: was not ordinary soap**
 - o Contained alkaline substances that removed oil
 - o Usually: garments/cloth were placed in tubs of water containing this soap; and the garments were stomped on or beaten with bats
 - o Put off a strong odor- historian mentioned that the work was often completed outside of the city
- Likely what is being referenced here: **Rev 3:4, 3:18, 19:7**

This is not an image of destruction- but of purification/renewal

- **The purification process starts with separation! The impurities must be removed**
- So everyone has a choice to make:
 - o Am I the impurity that gets burned away/the filth that is washed out?
 - o OR- am I going to be part of what remains

Mal 3:3 "He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.

The Lord is going to clean house

- Smelting: process of applying heat to ore in order to extract base metal
 - o Always results in **two groups**:
 - That which is more pure, valuable
 - The slag- by product- left over after desired metal is separated
- **What is He going to purify?** The priesthood is going to be cleansed
- **What will be the result?** They will present offerings in righteousness
 - o If the priesthood is righteous- the offerings will be right as well

How does the priesthood change after Jesus shows up?

- **Qualifications: Who is a Priest?**
 - **OLD TESTAMENT:** all the qualifications are physical; not spiritual
 - **NEW TESTAMENT:** Christian=Priest
 - Qualifications: Faith, Repentance, Immersion, faithfulness
 - Result: Priesthood presenting offerings in righteousness

Mal 3:4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years

- This tells us that at one time, they did this in a way that pleased the Lord.
- This is true for the Church as well. We can read the book, at one point the Church was moving in the right direction
 - Christians had the right attitude, committed to the right things
 - Paul ordained elders in every city- must have been qualified men there
 - Church was growing- not shrinking
 - The word was going forth, number of disciples kept on increasing
 - Which Means: It can work, it has worked
 - The problem isn't the system, it's us!

Mal 3:5 "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts.

When the Lord comes: going to be two groups

- **V 4-** One will be purified
- **V5-** The other will be judged

Who is he drawing near to judge?

- List has some real despicable things
- But look at the last one: "those who don't fear Me"

Jesus is going to show up- what are the options?

- Either we get better: process of purification
- Or we get swift judgment
 - What makes the difference? Do you fear the Lord?

Mal 3:6 "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

- The only reason they are not consumed: The Lord does not change
- **Ephesians 1:3-8, Galatians 3:16-**
 - o God is keeping them around to continue His plan of bringing Christ into this world.

Mal 3:7 "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. "But you say, 'How shall we return?'"

God says: "Return to Me, and I will return to You"

- The people respond by asking for directions: "How do we return?"
- In the letters to the Churches of Revelation: 5 out of 7 need to repent
 - o Find out in those letters that there is work involved in coming back

In Malachi 3:7- WHO HAS LEFT?

- They left God, and God has left them
- Both have the potential to leave
- Israel, as well as the Church- must learn to recognize when God is not there!