

MALACHI: The Final Warning

Chapter 3

Introduction:

1. We have learned five lessons so far from the first two chapters, all of which are valuable for our lives.
2. The Lord expects us to see and appreciate the gracious differences He has made among men (1:1-5).
3. The Lord expects worship to be full of fervent zeal for Him, as anything less is unacceptable (1:6-14).
4. The Lord expects His ministers to fear Him and be faithful to Him in conduct and teaching (2:1-9).
5. The Lord expects happy and holy marriages where He can seek a godly seed from them (2:10-16).
6. The Lord is a God of judgment, and only foolish, sinful mockers would presume otherwise (2:17).

LESSON #6: Jesus Christ's first coming was in judgment for the mocking wicked (3:1-6).

- A. God answered the foolish words of the mocking Jews with a prophecy of Jesus Christ (3:1).
 1. When there is a BEHOLD like this introducing judgment, all wise men will pay attention.
 - a. There is a repetition of this word to remind you again of taking heed to the words.
 - b. The verse concludes with a sure declaration of performance by the LORD of hosts.
 2. The previous verse condemned profane Jews for mocking the God of judgment (2:17).
 - a. Note two occurrences of *behold*. God does not waste words. He marks a great event.
 - b. Those who denied or questioned the God of judgment should wisely note the event.
 - c. God promised to send the Lord of judgment, after a messenger, to prove them wrong.
 - d. Notice the contrast of this passage with that of 4:1-3 where the righteous are included.
 - e. The gospel was preached worldwide for all to see God's great judgment (Matt 24:14).
 3. The descriptors *seek* and *delight* are to sarcastically mock these foolish Jews (Is 5:18-19).
 - a. We must understand this verse in the context of the words and character preceding it.
 - b. Priests and people broke His covenant to get the messenger of the covenant (2:4,10)!
 - c. God's judgment for sin is the clear subject before (2:17) and after (3:2-6) this verse.
 - d. The two occurrences of *behold* indicate judgment when compared to the use in 2:3.
 - e. They *sought* Him foolishly by profanely asking, "Where is the God of judgment?"
 - f. They *delighted* in Him falsely, as they really only wanted a carnal prince for Messiah.
 - g. *Suddenly* coming to His temple was not to surprise His good children with rewards.
 - h. The second-person, plural pronouns *ye* are evil Jewish rebels, not saints (2:17; 3:5-6).
 - i. His judgment got God glory from Gentiles (2:11,14 cp Matt 24:14 cp Acts 13:45-48).
 4. Such a place for a prophecy of Jesus Christ is not unusual for God's prophets (Is 7:1-14).
 5. The messenger sent before Jesus was John (Mat 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lu 1:76; 7:27; Jn 1:6-8).
 - a. All modern Bible versions in Mark 1:2 falsely credit Isaiah with Malachi's prophecy.
 - b. John is the certain and only fulfillment of Elijah (4:5-6; Matthew 11:7-15; 17:10-13).
 - c. He prepared the way before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:13-17).
 - d. Jesus said he was the greatest man ever born, but the least reader is greater (Lu 7:28)!
 - e. The Jews could not grasp similitudes and assumed Elijah would come (John 1:19-23).
 - f. C.I. Scofield and other followers of Jewish fables still think Elijah will yet come.
 6. John prepared the way for Jesus to come by preaching repentance and revival to Israel.
 - a. He preached the kingdom as imminent and the necessity of repentance (Matt 3:1-2).
 - b. John's baptism was of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 19:4).
 - c. He preached restored relationships to ready the people for Christ (4:6; Luke 1:17).
 - d. Wise men will realize how important relationships are to please God (I Peter 3:7).

7. Jesus surely came to the temple in Jerusalem on various occasions for various purposes.
 - a. He visited the temple shortly after His birth (Luke 2:27) and at twelve (Luke 2:46).
 - b. He visited it also during His ministry (Luke 19:45-48; 20:1; 21:5-6,37-38; 22:52-53).
 - c. This was by glorious prophecy of the *Desire of all Nations* coming to it (Hag 2:7-9).
 8. Coming *suddenly* describes judgment from the *Lord* certainly coming to the temple.
 - a. This *Lord* coming is not the LORD, but rather Messiah and King (Ps 110:1; Ac 2:36).
 - b. Suddenly may only mean quickly and with surprise (Num 6:9; Josh 10:9; Luke 2:13).
 - c. Suddenly may mean coming in judgment (Num 12:4; Deut 7:4; Ps 64:7; Pr 24:22).
 9. Jesus was the Messenger of the covenant: John was the preparatory messenger to present Messiah to Israel (Luke 1:68-75; 22:20; John 1:6-8,19-34; Hebrews 8:6; 12:24; 13:20).
 - a. Daniel foretold He would confirm the covenant with many for one week (Dan 9:27).
 - b. Jesus instituted communion to remember the new covenant He executed (I Co 11:25).
 10. The LORD of hosts guaranteed the performance as elsewhere (Is 9:7; 37:32; Haggai 2:7).
 11. Scofield wrote this verse could not apply to Christ's first coming, but what else do we expect from a teller of Jewish fables looking for a millennium. See either of his "Bibles."
 12. Jesus definitely came the first time for judgment also (Matt 3:7-12; 21:33-46; 22:1-7; Luke 19:41-44; John 5:22,27,30; 9:39; 12:31; Luke 2:34-35; Acts 2:40; I Thess 2:14-16).
 13. For more about C.I. Scofield heresies and lies ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/scofield-lies.pdf.
- B. The first coming of Jesus Christ was not a pleasant or survivable event for the wicked (**3:2**).
1. The two clear rhetorical questions demand negative answers: the wicked will not stand.
 2. Jesus was a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to those Jews appointed to death.
 3. His life and words cut the religious hypocrites deeply (Matt 22:46; John 2:12-20; 8:9,44).
 4. As John made clear, Jesus came to baptize Israel with fire of God's wrath (Matt 3:7-12).
 5. When He was done, Jerusalem was a desolation (Dan 9:26-27; Luke 19:43-44; 21:20-22).
 6. Refiners purify metals and fullers purify material. Jesus purified the Jews by preserving the elect saints among them and destroying the wicked reprobates (Matthew 24:15-22).
- C. Jesus prepared a new order of priests to offer up acceptable sacrifices in righteousness (**3:3**).
1. Do not give heed or thought to Jewish fables, for these priests are New Testament priests.
 2. In a time context of John and Jesus, there is no reason to think about Jewish priests at all.
 3. Every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, is a priest, yea a king-priest (I Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).
 4. Jesus did not purify the Levitical priesthood literally, for He abolished it (Heb 7:11-18).
 5. Jesus made believers kings and priests by His one sacrifice (Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22).
 6. Their sacrifices are righteous in Him (I Pet 2:5; Ro 12:1; 15:16; Phil 4:18; Heb 13:15-16).
 7. Jesus Christ makes our worship acceptable to God through the Holy Ghost (I Cor 6:11).
- D. Jesus would restore a righteous priesthood and worship that please the Lord like before (**3:4**).
1. Contrary to their present unacceptable worship (1:9-11; 2:1-3), Jesus would change and restore worship to be pleasing to God as it had been with Abraham and Moses and others.
 2. The celebratory worship of David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Josiah would be comparable.
 3. The context of John and Jesus absolutely prohibit any idea of animal sacrifices enhanced.
 4. Judah and Jerusalem are understood in a N.T. context as the combined kingdom of God.
 5. The New Testament is full of excellent worship (Rom 15:8-12; Heb 12:28-29; 13:15-16).

- E. Almighty God promised to come in judgment against all sinners that did not fear Him (3:5).
 - 1. If the Jews, as stated in 2:17, thought God overlooked evil and liked sinners, get ready!
 - 2. If the Jews, as stated in 2:17, thought God was no longer the God of judgment, get ready.
 - 3. He was not a God afar off; He was at hand and near, and He would judge (Jer 23:19-32).
 - 4. He would testify against all kinds of sinners that they had presumed to justify (2:17).
 - 5. Notice how His name the LORD of hosts is invoked again for the certainty of judgment.
 - 6. John and Jesus told the sinful Jews they would be judged (Matt 3:7-12; 12:39; 23:31-36).
 - 7. James matched this prophecy by repeating a very similar warning to the Jews (Jas 5:1-9).

- F. God will come in judgment. He does not change. But He is longsuffering with plans (3:6).
 - 1. In response to their profane presumption, God had promised to come in judgment (3:1-5).
 - a. God Jehovah is unlike all other gods – He does not change (Num 23:19; I Sa 15:29).
 - b. The coordinating conjunction *for* tells His identify and immutability is for judgment, which is thus a rebuff and rebuke of those profane presumptions of 2:17 about them.
 - 2. If God is holy Judge against sinners (3:1-5), how did His immutability preserve the Jews?
 - a. The text sounds difficult, given a context of judgment, but you should understand it.
 - b. Who is the LORD? What is He like? Exodus 34:5-7 and Nahum 1:1-3 for judgment!
 - c. Yet longsuffering, keeping mercy for thousands, but He will not clear the guilty at all.
 - d. His coming judgment is because He does not change, but so His longsuffering mercy.
 - e. The next verse, describing mercy, tells His patient longsuffering for repentance (3:7).
 - f. In the midst of great judgment, Jeremiah spoke of Jehovah’s compassion (Lam 3:22).
 - 3. The sons of Judah were preserved for Him to fulfill His promise of Jesus through them, for as soon as the Son of God was come, He cursed and consumed the majority of them.

- G. Do not let any circumstances at all lull you to sleep or cause you to think God does not judge.
- H. View His longsuffering mercy for what it is and repent (Ps 130:3-4; Rom 2:4; II Pet 3:9,15).
- I. Jesus Christ is much more than the humble Nazarene or crucified Saviour. See His judgment.
- J. Jesus will come anytime in different ways (Luke 13:6-9; Revelation 2:5,16; 3:3; I John 2:28).

LESSON #7: A man cannot outgive God when it comes to financial ordinances (3:7-12).

- A. God identified rebellion against His ordinances, yet He offered mercy upon repentance (3:7).
 - 1. It was a character trait of the nation to rebel against God’s ordinances of all kinds, which various judges and kings corrected with revivals, indicating that many things had slipped.
 - a. This was not new for Malachi’s generation; the Jews had rebelled from their fathers.
 - b. Hezekiah and Josiah had to reinstitute temple worship and even the Passover Feast.
 - c. Ezra’s preaching identified 1000 years of not keeping feast of booths (Neh 8:13-18).
 - d. When Baptists identify two ordinances, they show their allegiance to Rome, for they refer to the two of Rome’s seven sacraments that they still exalt to sacramental status.
 - e. Everything God appoints or teaches us to do are His ordinances, and we should not be presumptive to emphasize just two (Acts 16:4; Rom 13:1; I Cor 2:7; 9:14; Eph 2:10).
 - 2. In spite of their national history and current rebellion, God was willing to take them back.
 - a. It could not be easier. The LORD Jehovah will respond to any man returning to Him.
 - b. Jeremiah showed superiority to man in forgiveness (Jer 3:1; Ezek 16:60; Is 55:6-9).
 - c. Testing God’s longsuffering is risky; it will not last forever (Prov 29:1; Rev 2:21).
 - 3. In their haughty manner and response, so typical of this book, they denied their rebellion.
 - a. Instead of taking the merciful offer from their great God, they proudly denied any sin.

- b. This was not a humble request for God to examine like David (Ps 26:1-2; 139:23-24).
 - 4. Our practical relationship and fellowship with God is based on keeping His ordinances.
 - a. Jesus told His apostles to teach all things whatsoever He had taught (Matt 28:18-20).
 - b. Jesus said that loving Him is known by keeping His commandments (Jn 14:15,21-24).
 - c. N.T. ordinances include hair length, work ethic, etc. (I Cor 11:14-15; II Thes 3:6-14).
- B. The specific ordinance of God they had departed from at this time was financial giving (**3:8**).
 - 1. God and His prophets do not play – God and Malachi charged them with robbing God.
 - 2. It is hard to imagine robbing Almighty God – He is God in heaven and men are on earth.
 - a. But if you stop giving what you should, you are robbing God of what is rightly His.
 - b. Nehemiah recorded the Jews neglect of giving for God's service (Neh 13:10-14).
 - c. Money was and often is an obstacle for many to worship God rightly (I Tim 6:6-10).
 - d. The charge carries such a stigma that any sensible person would avoid it at all costs.
 - 3. A tithe is 10% the Jews owed God, and offerings are individual freewill gifts beyond that.
 - a. A tithe is not taught in the N.T., but the Law and the fathers did it (Gen 14:20; 28:22).
 - b. Neither does the N.T. teach spanking, marital pleasure, big families, etc., etc., etc.
 - c. With the blessings of the N.T., we should want to give more (Heb 8:6; Luke 12:48).
 - 4. The first use of income is to give the Lord His portion, then live on the rest (Prov 3:9-10).
 - 5. For more about giving, tithes, and offerings ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/practical/tithing.php>.
- C. God had cursed His nation, His people, yea, His church, for their lack of proper giving (**3:9**).
 - 1. Anything you have is from God, and He asked Israel for at least 10% of it back. Easy!
 - 2. Not giving God the little thanks, worship, and ministerial support He asks for is robbery.
 - 3. What happens when you are cursed for not giving rightly? It leads to financial problems.
 - a. First, you miss His financial blessings, which are sweet and wonderful (Prov 3:9-10).
 - b. Second, He blows against your efforts so you cannot get ahead any way (Hag 1:3-11).
 - c. Third, He will reject the rest of your worship, for it is contaminated (Hag 2:10-17).
 - 4. Fools say they cannot afford to give, but they cannot afford not to give (Prov 11:24-25).
- D. God challenged or dared Israel to test Him by giving and measuring the certain results (**3:10**).
 - 1. Tithes and storehouse were support of the Levites, which was not given (Neh 13:10-14).
 - 2. Israel had multiple tithes that amounted to 23 1/3% annually, and He wanted them all.
 - 3. Proving God is putting His word to the test by obeying Him and looking for the results.
 - 4. Those who have proved God in this or related ways have found Him abundantly true.
 - 5. The LORD Jehovah does not have to bless giving, since we owe Him the giving anyway.
 - 6. He promised a blessing they would not be able to receive within present storage means.
 - 7. This kind of proving God is so certain, He told them to mark calendars (Haggai 2:18-19).
 - 8. If you want to argue against such words, read God's opinion of you (II Kgs 7:1-2,17-20).
 - 9. God dares His people to try to outgive Him – you can only win (Luke 6:38). Prove Him!
 - 10. R.G. LeTourneau, among other encouraging statements, said, "It is not how much of my money I give to God, but how much of God's money I keep for myself."
 - 11. Liberal giving has enormous benefits both here and hereafter (Is 32:8; I Tim 6:17-19).
 - 12. Note giving of David (I Chr 29:28 cp 29:1-5), Jacob (Gen 30:43 cp 28:20-22), and others.
 - 13. The difference between God's curse and His blessing for your giving is truly enormous.
 - 14. For more about blessing for giving ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/03_09.php.
 - 15. For more about blessing for giving ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/03_10.php.

16. For more about blessing for giving ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/11_24.php.
17. For more about blessing for giving ... http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/commentaries/11_25.php.

- E. God promised to overrule forces of nature, sin, enemies, and statistics that cost Israel (**3:11**).
1. He had promised to pour them out a blessing that they would not have room to receive.
 2. Now He promised that the enemies of production would be held back from destroying.
 3. Though the things mentioned are ordinary roles of natural causes, God can restrain them.
 4. God knows geometric returns by increasing both the supply and reducing related losses.
 5. God blessed helpless Israel with a supply of manna and a reduction of need (Ex 8:3-4).
- F. The visible result of God's favor would cause observing nations to know His blessing (**3:12**).
1. As in the introduction, the difference from Israel's border would be visible (Malachi 1:5).
 2. An increase relative to previous returns might not be great, but this change would be.
 3. God liked objective comparison to other nations (De 4:6-7; I Kgs 4:29-34; II Chr 32:23).
 4. Has there ever been a nation as blessed as God-fearing America was in her obedience?
 5. You should follow the challenge of this passage personally and so should your church.

LESSON #8: Seeing circumstances had made them consider God's worship vain (3:13-15).

- A. God charged them with stout words against Him by denying any value in serving God (**3:13**).
1. As was Malachi's style, he charged the nation for using stout words against the LORD.
 2. **Stout.** Proud, haughty, arrogant. Compare Bible usage in Isaiah 10:12 and Daniel 7:20.
 3. God does not take it kindly when His character is maligned by scorners (Ezek 18:1-3,25).
 4. As was the nation's character, they responded to the charge by denying any such thing.
- B. They declared that God's worship was vain by the lack of profit in His ordinances (**3:14**).
1. If it was due to His curse on them (3:9), it was their fault for not correcting all things.
 2. Only a fool would perform at 50% or even 80% and expect God to pour out blessings.
 3. This claim is similar to approving the wicked and denying the God of judgment (2:17).
 4. Wise men make judgments by faith, not by circumstances, like Elihu did (Job 32:1-3).
 5. But Job and his three friends reasoned from circumstances (Job 21:7-15; 34:9; 35:3).
 6. Solomon summarized that circumstances will not reveal God's love or hate (Eccl 9:1-3).
 7. These Jews saw no advantage or reason to serve God based on the circumstances of life.
 8. Whether God gives or takes away – our duty remains to fervently worship (Job 1:20-22).
- C. They declared that the proud were happy, the wicked promoted, and sinners delivered (**3:15**).
1. Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked, and it almost cost him the truth (Ps 73:12-14).
 2. Jeremiah complained of the same contradiction he saw in circumstances (Jer 12:1-3).
 3. Habakkuk complained against God using the wicked Chaldeans as judges (Hab 1:12-17).
 4. If you measure God by circumstances, you will compromise (Psalm 37:1-3; Pr 24:19-20).
 5. Worrying about temporary goodness to the wicked is way too shortsighted (Ps 37:34-38).
 6. God will sometimes allow or send prosperity simply to deceive the wicked (Prov 1:32).
 7. He may allow accumulation of more sins for greater wrath (Matt 23:34-36; I Thess 2:16).

LESSON #9: There is surely a reward for fearing the Lord along with others (3:16-18).

- A. Another segment of the nation feared God, and He showed Himself attentive to them (3:16).
1. There was a division in the nation of those who did and did not fear God (Mal 3:5; 4:2).
 2. The fear of the LORD is the reverent care for His worship and delight in His person.
 3. These God-fearing people, so far from neglecting God's worship, spoke often about it.
 4. The true worship of God is not only done individually, privately, exclusively, or alone.
 5. God showed His care for these saints by writing their names in a book of remembrance.
 6. God has more than the book of life. He has other books (Exodus 32:32-33; Ps 139:16).
 7. He has all our wanderings and tears in His book of providence and memory (Ps 56:8).
 8. Our speech with one another of the fear of the Lord is special (Psalm 66:16; Heb 3:13).
 9. The LORD takes delight in those that fear His name above other blessings (Ps 147:11).
 10. The Psalmist speaks of choosing his companions from those feared God (Ps 119:63).
 11. A true church of Christ speaks often of Him (Acts 2:41-47; Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25).
 12. Jesus has promised where even two or three are gathered, He will be there (Matt 18:20).
 13. Notice it is a *one another* action meaning one-on-one to as many as are in the group.
- B. God declared He would remember these God-fearing folks in the day of His judgment (3:17).
1. In distributing an estate, fathers have at least one great day to manifest their affections.
 2. Those who trust and obey Him are His peculiar treasure (Ex 19:5; Deut 7:6; Titus 2:14).
 3. The church is His royal diadem and the apple of His eye (Isaiah 62:1-5; Zech 2:8; 9:16).
 4. When destroying Jerusalem, the Lord spared His jewels from destruction (Matt 24:22).
 5. But He confirmed His judgment of the wicked (Gen 18:25; Ps 58:10-11; Isaiah 3:10-11).
 6. In the destruction of Jerusalem, all Christians escaped to Pella and were preserved there.
 7. Despised by the Jews, these faithful ones were God's jewels and treated like dear sons.
 8. For more about Jerusalem's destruction ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/prophecy/70ad/sermon.php>.
- C. In the day of God's judgment the righteous would see the difference God would make (3:18).
1. The righteous are not always visible by their circumstances, but they will have their day.
 2. God's judgment will make obvious His clear classification of the righteous and wicked.
 3. The connection between this chapter and the next shows the role and event of judgment.
 4. The context requires this day of distinction between righteous and wicked to be 70 A.D.
 5. The righteous had safety and truth; but the Romans destroyed the wicked with vengeance.
 6. There may be times of discouragement, but let your fear and trust remain (Isaiah 50:10).
 7. It is not vain at all to serve the Lord, for He will surely reward the righteous and wicked.
 8. There shall be another great day as well with a great division visible (II Thess 1:7-10).