

Malachi and the Middle

A study of the final book of the Old Testament and brief overview of the Intertestamental Period

Chapter 3

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty. ² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. ⁵ “So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty. ⁶ “I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty. “But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’ ⁸ “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty. ¹² “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty. ¹³ “You have said harsh things against me,” says the LORD. “Yet you ask, ‘What have we said against you?’ ¹⁴ “You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?’ ¹⁵ But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.’ ” ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. ¹⁷ “They will be mine,” says the LORD Almighty, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

1. Who is the messenger? See **Matthew 11:9-11** and **Luke 7:27**.

- Who will come suddenly? Why is the way he’s referred to very important?
- What is the nature of both the first and second arrival of the Lord? Think about some of the Lord Jesus’ parables to help with his second.

2. Answer the questions posed in **v. 2**. As what two things are the arrival of the Lord depicted and why these things? See the Luther quote on the screen.
 - What's the Lord's purpose in doing this? How did God initially purify us and how does he keep us purified?
3. To really clarify, for what stated purpose does the Lord come near in **v. 5**? God, who knows all things, will do the testifying. Against what and whom does he testify? See **I Peter 4:17** and **James 3:1**.
 - Against what did Jesus testify in the gospels?
4. Why is it comforting that God doesn't change? (**v. 6**) How can this be when factoring in the person of Jesus?
5. How was God being robbed? Do we ever do the same? What's often the response of people who receive such an accusation from God?
6. When God invites us to test him in his generous providence, we should accept! In what visceral forms does God promise to bless them in **vs. 10-12**?
7. Why does **v. 14** sound so familiar to us? Be honest, it certainly does!
 - Is **v. 15** true? Is that how it goes?
 - How does God answer this plea of his people and maintain justice? Consider the selected verses from **Psalms 73**.
8. Those who fear the LORD talk it out and God hears their discussion, of course. Who are the people and what is the "scroll of remembrance"?
 - What is compassion? How does God show compassion to us? How do we show compassion to others?
 - A treasured possession! Why does it feel so good and comforting to be called that by God?
 - Since only God can see faith, how can we see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked?