

The Book of Malachi

Chapters 3 and 4

Chapter 3

- We closed Chapter 2 with the people asking God, “Why do the evil prosper? Where is God? Where is justice?” His answer is here: “I am coming, and all will be made right.”
- vs. 1 – The first messenger is John the Baptist – Matthew 11:9-10, Mark 1:2, Luke 7:27, John 1:23 (which quotes a similar prophecy in Isaiah 40:3-5)
- vs. 1 – the second messenger “of the covenant” is Christ, the fulfillment of all promises made to Israel.
- J. Vernon McGee wrote: “Therefore, this is God’s answer to the people of Israel: God will send Him [Christ] first as a Savior because He is gracious and He wants to save. But that doesn’t end it all: He is coming again as the messenger of the covenant, that is, to execute justice and judgment on this earth.”
- vs. 2-4 – This is prophetic of Christ’s refining judgment at His Second Coming. Israel will be purified to serve God in holiness.
- vs. 5 – These are likely the ones that whose prosperity was complained about in 2:17. God is just, and they will get what is due to them.
- vs. 6 – “Because Jehovah is unchangeable in His purposes, and Israel as the people of God is not to perish, therefore will God exterminate the wicked out of Israel by means of judgment, in order to refine it and shape it according to its true calling.” – *Commentary on the Old Testament by Keil & Delitzsch*
- vs. 7 – Dialogue #6 – Returning from Backsliding
 - Israel had backslid in the past, was backsliding right then but did not recognize it.
- vs. 8 – Dialogue #7 – Offerings and Robbery
 - The tithes and offerings that God had been received could include:
 - Firstfruits offering – Leviticus 23:9-14
 - Annual half-shekel – Exodus 30:13-15
 - Ordinary offerings or gifts, such as found in Exodus 35:5 or Ezra 8:25
 - Tithe of the tithes for the priests – Numbers 18:26-29
 - The portions of offerings set aside for priest, such as in Leviticus 7:14-15
 - Various other tithes: Leviticus 27:30-33, Deuteronomy 12:18, 14:18-29
- vs. 9-12 – God’s promise and the experience of countless believers both show that 90% with God’s blessing is greater than 100% without God’s favor upon it.
- vs. 11-12 – These verses may be anticipating the Millennial Kingdom
- vs. 13-15 – Dialogue #8 – Benefits of Serving God
 - Similar to the question in 2:17 but now looking primarily on the supposedly unblessed righteous instead of the prosperous wicked.

- vs. 16 – God keeps a record book (probably not literal because He knows all!) and one day the true score will be tallied. Judging between the states of the righteous and the wicked now is like declaring a football game over at half-time.
- vs. 17 – What a wonderful picture of mercy and grace! God spares from wrath and grants us incalculable value. The wonderful illustration of a father and son has shadows of Calvary to it.
- vs. 18 – One day it will all be made clear as to who is truly blessed by God.

Chapter 4

- vs. 1 – Pictures the fierce judgments of the Tribulation period that obliterate the enemies of God.
- vs. 2 – A.C. Gaebelien: “The Sun of Righteousness is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the beautiful symbol of His personal, visible, and glorious coming to usher in that day, which will last for a thousand years, in which He will rule in power and glory. The Old Testament knows nothing of His coming as the Morning Star. That coming is exclusively revealed in the New Testament in relation with the Church. The Morning Star precedes the sunrise. Even so, before that day comes, before the great tribulation, with wrath poured out, He comes for His saints as the Morning Star. The Church does not wait for the rising of the sun, but for the rising of the Morning Star. While the world sleeps, and the world-church dreams its idle dreams, true believers look for the Morning Star. Some day we shall see that glorious Morning Star, when suddenly He descends with that long promised shout.”
- vs. 3 – Who are the prosperous ones now?
- vs. 4 – As the revelation and message of the Old Testament closes, Heaven will be silent for 400 years until the coming of Christ. What are the standing orders for Israel during those silent years? Continue to serve God as He had instructed them through Moses.
- vs. 5 – There appears to be a *double fulfillment* to this verse. First, in John the Baptist who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Matthew 17:10-13). Second, the actual Elijah as one of the two witnesses of (Revelation 11:3-12).
- vs. 6 – The effect of John’s or Elijah’s ministry brings a repentance to the Jews to turn back to the faith of the fathers. Were those warnings to go unheeded they will be cursed or lost.