

Turn in your Bible tonight to Malachi Chapter 2. We will look at the last verse of Chapter 2, verse 17, and the first five verses of Chapter 3.

As we started this series, Matthew noted why we named the series, "Malachi: My Messenger" because that's what Malachi means, "My Messenger." Given that that's what his name means, some scholars question whether that's even his name. Once again there is not much we know about Malachi other than he is a prophet and he has been commanded by God to preach repentance to the nation of Israel. Verse 1 of Chapter 1 shows us this.

Malachi 1:1

The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

The other bit of information we know about Malachi is that he is the next to last Old Testament prophet. Some of you may say what? How is he the next to last? Well, not only was he to preach repentance to Israel for all the sins we have shared over the past few weeks and will continue to until the end of this series. Malachi is to prophecy of two other messengers.

In our verses tonight we see where the first messenger is one that is described as a messenger that prepares the way before the other messenger. The second messenger Malachi describes as Lord.

Spoiler alert! Because many of you know this already. But that first messenger is John the Baptist, who is the last Old Testament prophet. The second messenger is the awaited, sought after, hoped for, prayed for Messiah, Savior of the world, The Lord Jesus Christ!

But before we get into that there is still some more business that God has to deal with Israel about. So, let's read our verses for this evening and let's begin with Malachi Chapter 2 verse 17, and verse 1 of Chapter 3.

Malachi 2:17 – Malachi 3:1

¹⁷ You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

¹ "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare 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.

In verse 17 of Chapter 2 we see number 5 of 8 questions that the nation of Israel posed against God. Traditionally it is said that there are 7 questions because there appears to be actual dialogue between God, the priests, and the people of Israel. I added one because in verse 13 and 14 of Chapter 2, there is the question of why by the people of why God is not accepting their sacrifices! Obviously because of them living in known sin. What are those 8 questions?

1. *How have you loved us? Malachi 1:2*
2. *How have we despised your name? Malachi 1:6*
3. *How have we polluted you? Malachi 1:7*
4. *Why does he not? Malachi 2:14*
5. *How have we wearied him? Malachi 2:17*
6. *How shall we return? Malachi 3:7*
7. *How have we robbed you? Malachi 3:8*
8. *How have we spoken against you? Malachi 3:13*

For tonight! *How have we wearied him?* Look at verse 17 again.

Malachi 2:17

¹⁷ You have wearied the Lord with your words. But you say, “How have we wearied him?” By saying everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them.” Or by asking, “Where is the God of justice?”

In Psalm 121 verse 4 we are told, “Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” Though we see that as a promise to Israel in that verse. Since God does not change that is a comfort we can take also. God sees our every move; he knows our every thought. Remember a couple of weeks ago during our Shoebox dedication service we sang the song, He Knows My Name! Here are a few words from that song.

***He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And He hears me when I call***

That brings comfort doesn't it. Knowing God is always there! But it also should bring conviction! If there is known sin in our lives it should bring us to repentance. If we are disobeying God's Word, if we are twisting Scripture to meet our lifestyle or give excuse to our sin, then prayerfully that truth would bring us to repentance. Once again, we see that is the issue with Israel.

The word wearied here is the Hebrew word, yaga! Meaning to grow weary, to toil! God is running out of patience. God is continuously having to deal with the obstinate actions of Israel towards him. God is having to deal with the same issues over and over and over! Because what they are showing is their total lack of trust and faith in the very character of God.

The Nation of Israel had come out of the 70 years of captivity and because of the promise and the hand of God many have returned to their homeland and to Jerusalem. But all around them the pagan nations seem to continue to prosper but also sin continues to be rampant among their own people. Where is this God of justice? Why are these people not experiencing God's judgment?

As we read in this verse, they are accusing God of pretty much not caring. God must delight in the wicked as much as he does the righteous. They are forgetting two things about God here. God is a God of justice. The wicked will be punished. They should know that themselves because of their recent captivity. That was judgment upon their sin.

In Isaiah 5 verses 20-23 it is very clear that God does not delight in the wickedness of man.

Isaiah 5:20-23

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! ²² Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, ²³ who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!

What have we learned here? It is not God who is delighting in the sin and wickedness. It is the Israelites who are delighting in their sin! They are the one's calling good evil and evil good! And God says, "No sin goes unpunished!" What ought to be realized here is that God is patient, warning and giving opportunity of repentance. I relate to what is going on here to what Peter addressed in 2 Peter.

In Chapter 2, Peter is addressing the false teachers that will come and in Chapter 3 he confronts what he calls as scoffers who come with scoffing about the promise of the return of Jesus Christ. In verse 4 Peter writes, ***they will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."***

If Jesus is coming? Where is he? If he is going to judge this world? When is this going to happen? People are being born, people are dying, life just continues to be moving right along, business as usual! But also, what is going on is that people are being saved! Amen! Because God is patient! Look at verses 9 and 10 of 2 Peter.

2 Peter 3:9-10

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Aren't you thankful for God's patience? I am! What we see here also is that there is an abruptness to God's patience. The scoffers can scoff all they want, they can just live life and say there is no God, there is no salvation, they can say Jesus is not coming back and then in an instance it all changes.

In 1 Corinthians 15:52 – ***In a moment, in a twinkling of the eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.***

Everybody blink for me! That quick! We can be going along as if everything is business as usual and then, blink, all has changed! So, with that thought in our minds. Is there anyone here tonight that has not come to the point of true repentance of your sin towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? There are two things we do not know. When we are going to die and when God's patience ends.

It has been 2000 years since Jesus died and rose again and he promised to come back. 2000 years is a lot of patience. Could it be tonight? Could it be tomorrow? Jesus promised!

John 14:1-4

¹ "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going."

That can happen any time! So, to fulfill the promise and the covenant God made with Israel he sends two messengers.

Malachi 3:1

¹ “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare 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.

God answers the question that has been posed by the people. Here, as Malachi, being the messenger before the nation of Israel now. There is a messenger coming. Pay close attention to the description. ***This messenger will prepare the way before me!***

Some 250 years earlier the Prophet Isaiah prophesied of one to come using the same description that Malachi uses here. In Chapter 40 and verse 3 of Isaiah, he wrote: ***A voice cries; “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.***

After Malachi, there came what is called the 400 years of silence. Why was it called the 400 years of silence? Because God did not send anymore prophets during this time. Also, there was no new revelation to the people of Israel. This is Dale, though it is considered the silent years because of what I just described. God was far from silent. For the majority of that time the priesthood was still intact. The promises of God were still intact.

Here God is warning the nation to repent and turn to him. There was still forgiveness of sin through repentance available. There was still opportunity to seek him with all their heart and be obedient to him and God would be found. But the majority of the nation still stayed in their sin. They did not make great use of their time as they awaited these two messengers.

Who fulfilled this first prophecy? Turn in your Bibles to Matthew Chapter 3. You shouldn't have to turn far. We are at the end of the Old Testament and if you turn to the left a couple of pages you should be in Matthew.

Matthew 3:1-3

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”

John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy. In the Gospel of Luke, you can read even how John's birth and life was foretold to his father Zechariah as Zechariah was serving in the Temple. We will touch more on that later in our study but not tonight. We are focusing on the fact of John was preparing the way for the other messenger.

What was John's message? Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand! John was preparing the way for the next messenger, so let's look at how John describes who he is preparing the way for. Look at verses 11 and 12 in Matthew 3.

Matthew 3:11-12

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Turn back to Malachi Chapter 3 and let's see how this matches up to what God told Malachi to say. Look at verse 1 again.

Malachi 3:1

¹ “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare 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.

Did you catch the first sentence? “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before **ME!**

This next messenger is God himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ! John 1:1, says, ***In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.***

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

We are getting ready to celebrate Christmas and we sing several songs with this word that describes Jesus Christ! Immanuel! God with us! Just as was prophesied by Isaiah! Once again ladies and gentlemen we see the fact that Jesus is God. Jesus is not a mere man, and Jesus is not just one of many good teachers! He is God who came with all grace and truth and that message was to make a path to salvation. For salvation is only through Jesus Christ.

As we have studied the nation of Israel came out of captivity, back to Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple to establish once again the Old Covenant before God and man.



The sacrifice of spotless lambs to show obedience, repentance, purity. The lamb’s blood sprinkled upon the altar. The Old Covenant a picture, a mirror of the messiah to come who would shed their own blood for repentance of sins. As it says in verse one this messenger is the one who you seek! Look at verse 1 again.

Malachi 3:1

¹ “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare 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.

We have established now that it is Jesus Christ who is this second messenger. But again, don't miss the wording! Suddenly, he will come to his temple. Remember the last week of Jesus' life? Where did he spend most of this time? In the temple!



That week began with his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He came in to purify the temple! He threw out all those that were selling animals for the sacrifices and the money changers who were selling these sacrifices at exorbitant prices. Jesus taught the people in the temple. What did he bring with him? The message of the New Covenant!

But let's first look at the Old Covenant. In short, the Old Covenant is based off the Mosaic or Levitical law God gave Moses. Strict obedience and daily animal sacrifices were to be presented before God by the priest in the temple for repentance of sin and a sign of a desire to live a holy life before the Lord. All those sacrifices were all a picture, a mirror of the sacrifice to come.



Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection presenting Jesus as the mediator of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:6

⁶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

Jesus is the messenger described in verse 1 who brings the covenant in which the Jews are seeking and in whom they will delight! In Jesus' sacrifice we do see God's love for mankind. ***Romans 5:8 God showed his love towards us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!***

But what is the purpose behind Jesus's sacrifice. This is not a covenant that just let's you look at the cross of Jesus and say, thank you Jesus, I appreciate that and then go on living anyway you want. Just as Matthew shared last week. God created us, male and female, marriage between a man and woman to have a bunch of children. What was to be unique about that creation! A people that were to be Godly, Holy, seeking after him, wanting to live for him.

Jesus' ministry was a purifying work that was to bring us to a point of repenting of sin. Remember, God defines sin. Not man. We are to live on the truth of God's Word. Remember what we read from Matthew 3 and John the Baptist's description of Jesus? That he was coming with winnowing fork in his hand. To separate the wheat and the chaff he (Jesus) will burn with an unquenchable fire.

Let's look at how that compares to Malachi's words given to him by God.

Malachi 3:2-5

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. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. 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. ⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Jesus as he came the first time, he came in the likeness of man but fully God! But who can stand against or endure the authority he came with? No one! No man or woman in their wisdom can stand against the Lord Jesus! Yes, Jesus came in love, grace, and mercy. But he came to purify a sinful life. To make the hardness of a sinner's heart into a heart of flesh seeking him.

Jesus came as a refiner's fire and like a fullers' soap. When gold or silver is refined, what is the purpose behind the refining process? It is to bring out the impurities. The most used method is called the Miller method. The gold and silver are put in bubbling chlorine gas at a temperature of 400 degrees F or hotter. The impurities, also called dross, floats to the top and it is skimmed away. The gold floats to the bottom and is formed into bars.

The fuller's soap is an alkali substance that was used to scrub garments to whiten and make clean.

That is what Jesus Christ came to do! He came to purify a sinful, wicked people.

1 John 1:7

⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we have truly repented of our sins, confessed, then we don't go off and live however we want. These verses show there is a lifestyle of holiness that Jesus seeks. Jesus, said, ***"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me!"***

Meaning, just as those verses revealed to us is that we walk, live in obedience to Jesus, we have fellowship with him, and we have fellowship together as fellow believers. We will confess, repent of our sin and we will mourn over our sin.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. ⁷ For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.

Get the impurities out, the sin, skim the dross off the top, dispose of it and live holy according to God's Word. I want you to turn to one other place so we can see what the purifying work of Jesus does in our lives. Turn to 1 Corinthians Chapter 6. Chapter 6 of 1 Corinthians is a rebuke for the sin that the many of the people in the church of Corinth were living in. The Apostle Paul reminds them of what their repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ works in our lives.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God.

From God's Word I just read a list of lifestyles that God calls sin. Jesus came to die for each of them. Through the purifying work of Jesus Christ, we can be washed, cleansed from those sins, and have victory over them. Though Satan may continue to tempt us. Through Jesus, we can walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and though the temptation may come we have a way of escape through prayer and through God's Word.

Stand firm in the power of God and put on the armor of God! Ephesians 6!

As we have studied, God came in the flesh through Jesus Christ. Jesus came to die for our sins. He fulfilled all the prophecies of the Old Covenant and ushered in the New Covenant of repentance of sin and faith in his sacrifice on the cross. Yes, he came in love and mercy but also to show judgment is coming and the blood he shed was to purify us from our sins.

Jesus promised he was coming again! As I mentioned earlier, the Jews were questioning, well where is this God of justice? All our around seems to be going on as normal! There were 400 years between Malachi and John the Baptist and Jesus coming. The Jews did not make beneficial use of the time.

We read from 2 Peter Chapter 3 of how in the last days there would be scoffers of saying, “When is Jesus coming back? Where is he?” Jesus’ second coming is a little different than the first. It does come suddenly; it does come like a thief in the night! The question for each of us is are we ready!

If so? How are we making use of our time? We may die before Jesus comes back. Are we letting the purifying work of Jesus work in our life? Are we living holy before the Lord Jesus and the world? Are we letting him refine us and get rid of the dross? Are we perverting his word? Saying what he says is sin is not sin and we are living a life that is completely contrary to his word.

Verse 5 says that Jesus will draw near to you in judgment, and it will be swift. That is Jesus speaking, not me! What I am saying is repent and turn before it is eternally too late!