

A stylized background illustration featuring a dove in flight on the left and a flame on the right, both in a golden-brown color. In the center, behind the text, is a light blue stylized plant or leaf design.

MALACHI

**“Where Is the
God of Justice?”
Malachi 2:17-3:5**

¹⁷You have wearied Yahweh with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of Yahweh, and He delights in them," or, "Where is the God of justice?"¹"Behold, I am going to 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 Yahweh of hosts. ²"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?"
Malachi 2:17-3:5

For He is like a smelter's fire and like fullers' soap. ³And 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 Yahweh offerings in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to Yahweh as in the ancient days and as in former years.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
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B. They had worked hard at reconstructing the temple, restoring the city, and repairing its walls. They had been given great hopes regarding the success of their efforts.

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D. So they asked, “Where is the God of justice?” Where is the justice He promised to establish in the world? Are we not God’s people? Why does He bless our enemies and overlook us?

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E. We, like the Israelites, ask this question at times. It can be worded differently, but it's essentially the same question. Why me? Why us? Why him and not me? (Psalms 37 and 73)

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F. The ways of God won't make sense to us until we learn to view them through the lens of Christ.

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G. Big Idea: The just God always fulfills His word in accordance with His plan.

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H. The God of justice has come in the person of Jesus Christ. The world only makes sense when we look at what God has done and will do through the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. God Hears Our Complaints (2:17)

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Malachi 2:17

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B. "When the prophet described the all-powerful God as being wearied, he was anthropomorphically describing God's frustration with the people's attitude and his disappointment over the endless complaining of his people" (Gary Smith and Timothy Sprankle).

I. God Hears Our Complaints (2:17)

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D. The people countered with a cynical response. "How have we wearied Him?" In their minds they had done nothing wrong.

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E. Malachi replied to them: “In that you say, ‘Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of Yahweh, and He delights in them,’ or ‘Where is the God of justice?’”

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F. They complained about God not judging every evil person for their actions. It seemed to them that God treated these evil people with too much patience. They did not believe God was acting like a just God.

I. God Hears Our Complaints (2:17)

G. Their complaints led Malachi to engage in theodicy. Theodicy is the vindication of God's goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil. In other words, if God is good why is there evil in the world?

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G. Their complaints led Malachi to engage in theodicy. Theodicy is the vindication of God's goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil. In other words, if God is good why is there evil in the world?

H. We need to be equipped to be able to give a biblically informed theodicy.

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J. They questioned God's character. They judged God by their circumstances. They mistakenly believed you couldn't trust God to do what is right.

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K. We too tend to judge everything by our circumstances and measure God by what we're going through. Christian, we must be trained to judge everything in light of who God is. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

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L. "Where is the God of justice?" God is going to reveal His plan to them through the prophet Malachi.

I. God Hears Our Complaints (2:17)

M. Remember, God hears our complaints.

II. God Reveals His Plan (3:1-2b)

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¹“Behold, I am going to 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 Yahweh of hosts. ²“But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?

Malachi 3:1-2b

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**A. In chapter 3 God answered the question
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**B. God made a promise that He would send a
forerunner and a Messiah. The God of justice
was on the way.**

II. God Reveals His Plan (3:1-2b)

**C. “Behold, I am going to send My messenger,
and he will prepare the way before Me.” John
the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus
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II. God Reveals His Plan (3:1-2b)

C. “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.” John the Baptist was the forerunner for Jesus (Matthew 11:10; Isaiah 40:3).

D. “And the Lord (sovereign ruler), whom you seek, will suddenly come to the temple.” The Messiah, Jesus, will suddenly come to His temple.

II. God Reveals His Plan (3:1-2b)

E. “The messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says Yahweh of hosts.” This was sarcasm. They didn’t actually delight in Him. These sinful people were not delighting in God then, nor would they when He came in judgment on their hypocritical worship and cleanse the temple (John 2:13-25).

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G. When Yahweh comes He will deal with ALL sin. That means He will deal with the sins of those who think they’re ok. (Romans 3:10, 23)

III. God Purifies His People (3:2c-4)

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For He is like a smelter's fire and like fullers' soap. ³And 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 Yahweh offerings in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to Yahweh as in the ancient days and as in former years.

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A. Yahweh is coming not to annihilate but to refine, “like a smelter’s fire and like fullers’ soap.”

B. The fire will burn off the dross of iniquity and the soap will wash out the stain of sin.

C. God will remove all of the impurities from His people. God will do whatever it takes to make you pure.

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E. They needed to be purged because they had sinned by disobeying God's Law and engaging in casual worship. They were largely to blame for the people's sinful practices.

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F. God will refine and purge them. He who sees all things as they truly are will transform the unfaithful priests into priests who bring offerings to Yahweh in righteousness.

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G. The church will not rise above its leadership. If there's going to be revival in the church, there must first be refining in the leaders.

III. God Purifies His People (3:2c-4)

H. The purpose of this purification is to enable acceptable worship. (John 4:23-24; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6)

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I. We should prepare for His coming with repentance. “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

IV. God Holds Unrepentant Sinners Accountable (3:5)

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A. No one sins and gets by with it.

B. “Sorcerers”—practiced various types of divination and witchcraft and attempted to control the future by repeating magical incantations and various rituals.

C. “Adulterers”—failed to control themselves and engaged in sexual activity outside of marriage.

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- D. “Those who swear falsely”—violated the truth and profaned the name of Yahweh.**
- E. “Those who oppress”—didn’t pay a worker his wages, or shamefully oppressed the powerless widow, orphan, and alien.**
- F. “And do not fear Me”—the root of all of their sin.**

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- G. God’s judgment includes blessing for the righteous and punishment for the unrighteous.**

IV. God Holds Unrepentant Sinners Accountable (3:5)

G. God's judgment includes blessing for the righteous and punishment for the unrighteous.

H. Your sin will be either pardoned in Christ or punished in hell.

Conclusion

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B. Are you ready to appear before Him?

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B. Are you ready to appear before Him?

C. “So then each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

Conclusion

D. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

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E. The Gospel Definition

The gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin (repentance) and believes in Him (faith) will be reconciled to God forever.