

Bethany Bible Study & Discussion



Malachi Part-5 (chapter 3) KJV

12.6.2023

3:1-12

Two messengers | Two questions | Return to God

TWO MESSENGERS: Who are the two messengers? What is their role? (1)

TWO LINGERING QUESTIONS (2:17): How are the two questions resolved?: where is the God of justice? Why do evil people prosper? (2-5)

UNCHANGING GOD: How does “unchanging” character of God work in Israelites favor? (6)

RETURN TO GOD: What is the path to returning to God? What are the blessings associated with returning to God (7-12)

REFLECTION: *Are you still questioning God’s ways and timing in your life? In what area(s) do you need to return to God?*

Malachi 2:17

2:17 Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, **Wherein have we wearied him?** When ye say, Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, **Where is the God of judgment?**

Where is the God of Justice? Why is Justice delayed?

Why do the wicked prosper while righteous suffer?

God's response in Chapter 3

Messengers will be sent to save and to judge

Two messengers (1)

Who are the two messengers?
What is their role?

Two messengers

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts

Messenger #1

John the Baptist (fulfilled after 400 years of silence)

Mark 1:2-3 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. ³ The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (Isaiah 40:3)

Two messengers

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts

Ministry of John the Baptist

Introduce Jesus Christ | Call to confession, repentance and baptism

John 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:6-7 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

Mathew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ⁵Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, ⁶And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

Two messengers

... and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts (1)

Messenger #2 ...Lord Jesus Christ (Prophecy fulfilled)

Purpose: For the Son of man is come to **seek and** to **save** that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)

Jesus comes to the temple and replaces the temple sacrifices

Jesus institutes the new covenant and becomes the mediator between God and man.

Hebrews 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

2nd Coming of Christ as a Judge

² But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

³ And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

⁴ Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

⁵ And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

Second Coming and Refining leading to Righteous offering

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap

2nd coming of Christ as a Judge

As a judge ... a dreadful day of **fire and fury** to **purify**

Christ oversees the refining of sons of Levi... by taking the dross from the silver and purge them as gold & silver, and washing stains with fullers' soap

Second chance given to bring acceptable offerings ... acceptable offering not possible without refining/washing.

Purification of priests and people will lead to righteous offering and be pleasant unto the Lord (3-4) (Blemished offerings were condemned in chapter 1)



Perplexing questions

Why do the wicked prosper?

Why do the wicked go unpunished?

Why do wicked prosper?

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

Question fully answered when we take an eternal perspective

God will judge evil in His time. He will ‘come near to you to judgment’ (5)

We need to trust God’s timing for justice

Why aren't the sinners being punished?

- Question answered when we go to the scriptures
- Question answered when we take an eternal perspective

Psalms 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

Psalms 37:37-38 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: For the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together:

Sufferings of the righteous are temporal while the suffering of sinners will be everlasting!

Material blessings of sinners are temporal! So don't envy when the wicked prosper!

**FINAL
JUDGEMENT
...NO ENTRY
for SINNERS**

I CORINTHIANS 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

EPHESIANS 5:5-7 no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Revelation 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. ⁸ But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Why doesn't God judge immediately?

God is waiting as both sinners & believers need time

- God is merciful to sinners ... giving time to sinners to repent!
- God is merciful to believers ... giving time to believers to repent!

Lamentations 3:22 It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³ They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

II Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Unchanging God (6)

(our covenant keeping God)

How does 'unchanging'
covenant work in Israelites
favor?

Unchanging God ... unbroken covenant

6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

While Israelites were unfaithful, God remained faithful to his covenant to the ones he had chosen. Therefore, Israelites not consumed!

Deuteronomy 4:30 When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; ³¹ (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Leviticus 26: 44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God.

Psalms 89:34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips

Addressed as “sons of Jacob” (maybe with an emphasis on past character) rather than Israel ... **Name change and restoration is possible** when we repent and turn to God (Jacob became Israel, Genesis 32:28, Saul became Paul).

Covenant of God

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie;

Covenants made to all

Covenant with Adam (Genesis 1:28, Genesis 3:15)

Covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:11)

Covenant with Believers (Hebrews 8:8, 10:16-17)

Covenants made to Israel

Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4)

(conditional) covenant with Moses (Ten commandments and 600 laws)

Covenant with David (II Samuel 7:8-16)

Return to God (7-12) (Tithing)

What is the path to
'returning'? What are the
blessings of 'returning'?

2:7-12

⁷ Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. **Return unto me**, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, **Wherein shall we return?**

⁸ Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. ⁹ Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

¹⁰ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

¹¹ And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

¹² And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

Return to me!

God: Return to me

People: How? (claiming ignorance of having fallen)

God: Return connected to faithfulness in tithing. Tithing used to show the condition of their heart and need to return.

Returning connected to faithfulness in tithing

Our attitude towards money reveals the condition of our heart and stewardship of what God has given us. He is the source of all gifts in our life.

What is the condition of your heart and attitude with money ... **Are you ?**

generous		Misers
spender		hoarder
content		covet
honest		crooked
Lender		borrower
Builder		Destroyer
Trusting		Worrying

Robbers

“for ye have robbed me,
even this whole nation” (9)

Robbing → Taking something that does not belong to you.

Whole nation guilty of robbing God (of tithes)!

Tithing in Old Testament

Tithes

Pre-mosaic laws | Laws | New Testament

Pre-mosaic:

Abraham (gave tithes of all) to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18)

Law:

Leviticus 27: 30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. ³¹ And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. ³² And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord.

Tithing in New Testament

And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's
(**Luke 20:25**)

10% or more or less?

Giving in NT

Give Generously: For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required (**Luke 12:48**)

Give Cheerfully: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver (**II Corinthians 9: 7**)

Give Secretly: But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (**Matthew 6: 3-4**)

Why Tithe?

4 M's

Tithing/Offering is God's plan to provide for:

- Ministries
- Ministers
- Maintenance
- Members in-need

If tithe not given, all of the above will suffer.

Numbers 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, [even] the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Why Tithe?

II Chronicles 31:4-10

Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD. 5 And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel **brought in abundance the firstfruits** of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; **and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.** 9 Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10 And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, **Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty:** for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that **which is left** is this great store.

Proverbs 3:9

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase.

God's challenge & Blessings of Returning

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹ And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. ¹² And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.

God challenges to test Him on tithing ... if we obey, He will respond by blessing us beyond imagination

- Heavens opened to pour out abundance of blessing
- Protection of harvest
- Acknowledged as a blessed nation by other nations
- A land of delight

Similar blessings & restoration are promised when we “return to God”

Blessings of Tithing/Giving in NT

We will grow in our faith as we tithe 10% and learn to trust in the Lord with 90%

We will be blessed by God when we bless others

Give and it shall be given unto you ... Luke 6:38;

sow bountifully and reap bountifully ... II Corinthians 9:6

OT and NT Blessings

OT focused on material blessings.

Abraham was an exception “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10)

NT focuses on Spiritual blessings

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: (Ephesians 1:3)

Consequences of not tithing

Curse of God (10) (Deuteronomy 28:15-)

No spiritual riches or ministry

Luke 16:¹¹ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?



Reflection

Do you question God's ways and timing in Judgement?

Have you robbed God ... In what area(s) do you need to return to God?

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