

Bethany Bible Study & Discussion



Malachi Chapters 1-4

KJV

12.20.2023

Review & Reflection

Context and Role of Prophet Malachi

Five Burdens of God

Character of God as seen in Malachi

YOUR REFLECTION



Context and Role of Prophet Malachi

Malachi

Malachi means **My messenger**

Message given to Israelites

Time: around 450-400 BC

- After the return of Israelites from exile
- Temple has been rebuilt

Role of Malachi, Prophet of God

Be a messenger of God (sharing the complete truth, without editing or interpreting)

- To point failures of Israelites in obeying the law (moral failures, ceremonial failures, civic failures)
- To show a path for reconciliation with God leading to restoration
- To warn of God's severe justice on the wicked
- To answer questions and explain God's character and plans
- To restore former glory of God's chosen people and the Temple

Burden of God

Burden of God

Malachi 1:1 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel

God's burden

1. Failing to understand His love for Israel
2. Blemished sacrifices offered at the altar
3. Immoral lifestyle of Priests
4. Disobedience (in tithing)
5. Murmuring about God's injustice



#1 God's Burden:
Failing to Understand
God's Love (1:2-5)

**Failing to
Understand
God's Love
(1:2-5)**

Statement (by God):

I have loved you (1:2)



Objection (by people):

Wherein hast thou loved us? (1:2)




Response (by God):

I loved Jacob and I hated Esau
(1:2-5)

God's election

- God chose Jacob before his birth (God's choice not based on Jacob's works)
- God has the right to decide. We may not fully understand nor agree with God's decision.
- BUT we must submit to God's ways without asking questions.



Is God inclusive or exclusive in choosing?

Exclusive:

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you (John 15:16)

Inclusive:

For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13)

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; ⁴ Who will have all men to be saved, (1 Timothy 2:3-4)



#2 God's Burden:
Offering Blemished
Sacrifices (1:6-14)

Statement (by God):

Priests have despised my name (1:6) Ye offer polluted bread (1:8)



Objection (by people):

Wherein have we despised thy name? (1:6) Wherein have we polluted thee? (1:8)



Response (by God):

Consider the quality of your sacrifices... ye offer blind, lame and sick (1:7-8)

Blemished Sacrifices

Blemished Sacrifices

Deuteronomy 15:21 And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God.

We cannot please God with blemished sacrifices.

Blemished sacrifices show disobedience to laws and lack of reverence for God


It is better not to sacrifice than to carry on with vain traditions in a spirit of hypocrisy.



Today we don't need
human priests &
animal sacrifices...


Christ became the
perfect sacrifice & is
our High Priest

What sacrifices
does the Lord
expect from us?



We need to **offer our first and best** to the Lord, in everything!

We must **offer ourselves** as a living sacrifice in response to God's love.



#3 God's Burden:
Corrupt and Immoral
Priests (2:1-9, 11-16)

Failures of Corrupt Priests

Did not listen

Lead others astray and caused to stumble

Corrupted the covenant of Levi

Partial in application of law or in their role as judges

Did not glorify God

God's curse on corrupt priests

Blessings (sacrifices & gifts) not accepted and turned to curse

Seed corrupted (curse continued to next generation)

Dung thrown on faces (maybe symbolic)

Priests will be disposed off with the dung (or lose their positions and honor)

How are Godly Priests different from corrupt priests?

Godly Priests (Levites) characterized by:

Reverential fear of God

Truth in mouth and no iniquity in lips (deliver God's message without editing)

Walk in peace and equity (integrity, character)

Turn people from iniquity or sin (focus of the messages)

Possess knowledge of Word

Sought by people because of their knowledge

**Immoral
Priests**

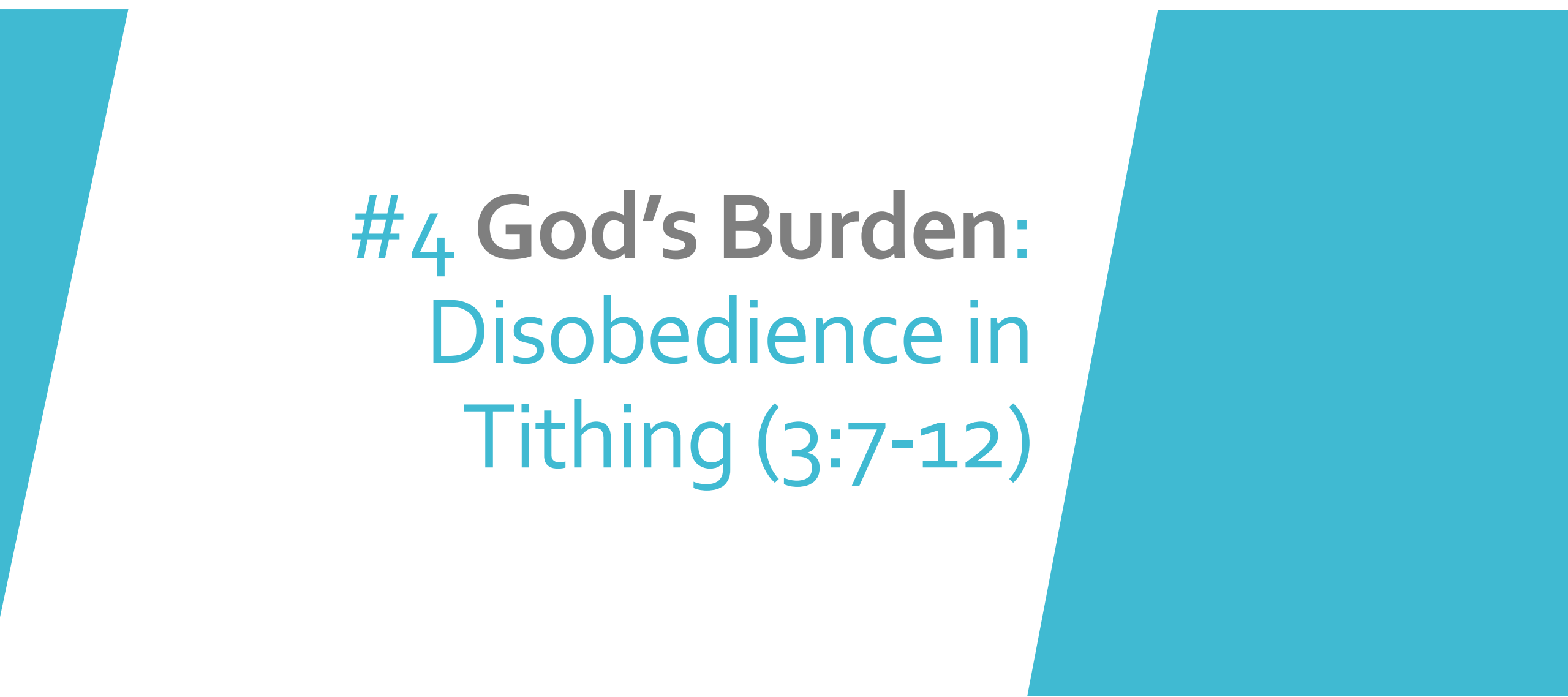
Divorced their wives to
marry pagan women



Double sin of Divorce &
unequally yoked

On Marriage, Remarriage and Divorce


1. Marry likeminded believers to avoid compromises in spiritual life and hindrances to fulfilling God's calling
2. Must leave, cleave, and become one
3. Husband and Wife are equal but have distinct roles
4. Love & Respect your spouse
5. Make Christ central to married life
6. Christ is witness to the marriage covenant
7. Any intimate relationship outside of marriage is sin
8. Marriage is a lifetime commitment, even if married to an unbeliever (exceptions: death of spouse, adultery, voluntary departing of unbelieving spouse, physical abuse?)
9. God desires a godly seed from marriage
10. God desires our marriage to reflect the relationship of Christ (Bridegroom) to Church (Bride).
11. **Marriage in trouble?** Don't walk away ... consult God and Godly couples with the goal to reconcile.




#4 God's Burden: Disobedience in Tithing (3:7-12)

Tithing

Statement (by God):
Ye have robbed me (3:8)



Objection (by people):
Wherein have we robbed thee
(3:8)



Response (by God): In tithes and
offerings (3:8)

Disobedience (in Tithing) & Blessings of Obedience

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 (~spiritual blessings)
- Protection of harvest (~ material blessings)
- Acknowledged as a blessed nation by other nations (~ honor)

Continued disobedience (in tithing and other areas) will lead to curse of God and loss of ministry to God (through disobedience we become unprofitable vessels)

Corrupt followers: Serving God for profit

(3:13-15)

Doing all the right things

BUT with wrong motive

God is not pleased with such followers

God does not honor ministry done with
monetary or self-glorification motive

Mark of True Followers (3:16-17)

True followers **feared the Lord** (reverential fear and respect for God)

- Such fear leads to a life of obedience and fellowship with others

Blessings: God hears them, God honors them, God considers them his precious possession, keeps a book of remembrance

Lamb's book of life: For redeemed saints


#5 God's Burden:
Murmuring about God's
Injustice (2:17, 3:1-6, 4)

Murmurings on Injustice of God

Statement (by God):
Ye have wearied the Lord (2:17)



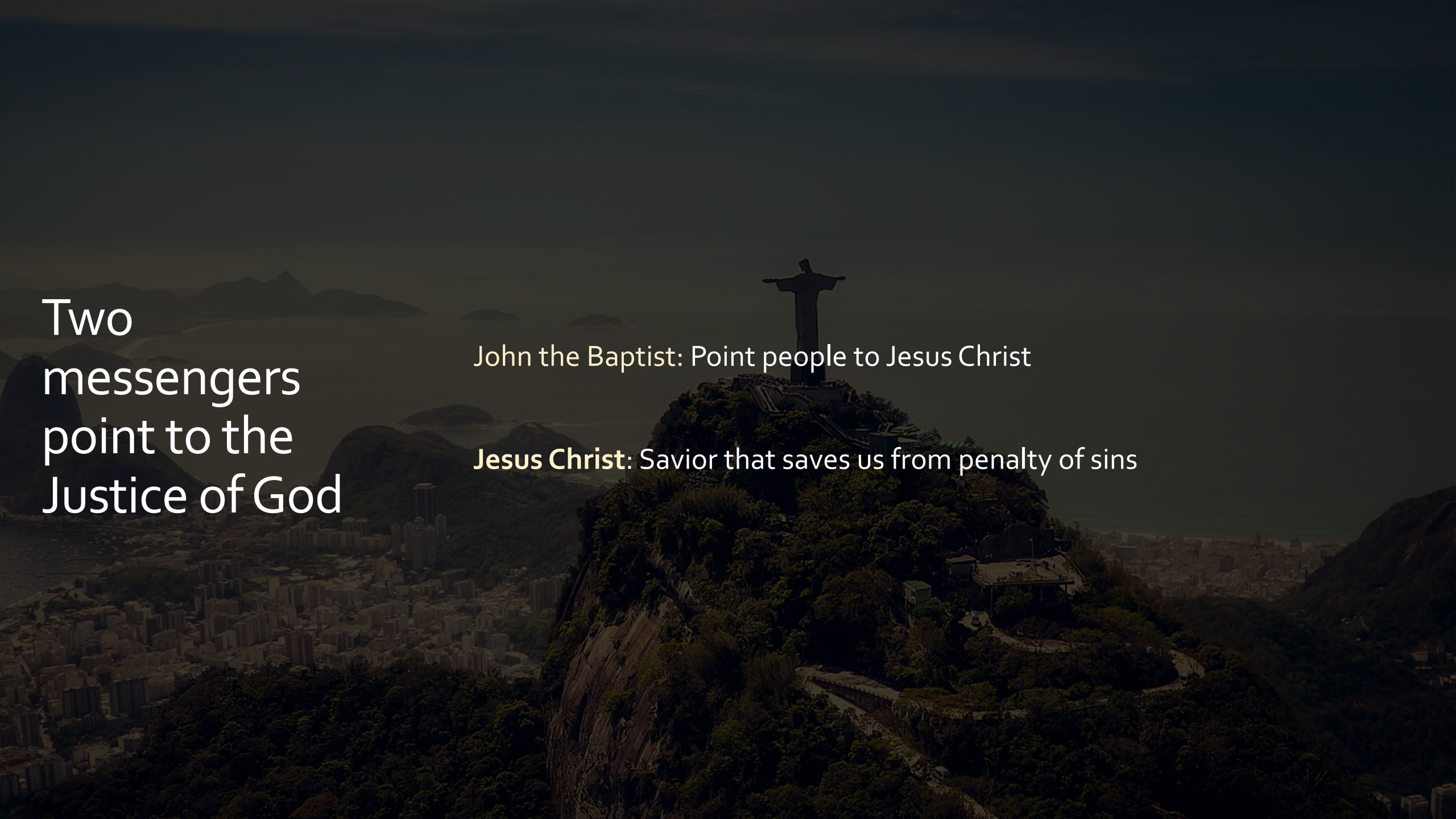
Objection (by people):
Wherein have we wearied him
(2:17)



Response (by God):
Second coming of the Lord and
final Justice

Why are the
righteous suffering
and wicked
flourishing in this
world?





Two
messengers
point to the
Justice of God

John the Baptist: Point people to Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ: Savior that saves us from penalty of sins



Justice of God

Justice of God can only be understood from an eternal perspective.

We must believe God is just. If not, we will be discontent, miserable, jealous, covetous, angry, murmuring Christians.

Answer to what seems like injustice: Consider the final eternal destination of the wicked and the righteous



Justice of God: Why is it delayed?

God is patient in delaying his final justice and wrath so that more may repent.

- **1st Justice** (Rapture): Only believers taken away at rapture
- **2nd Justice** (Great Tribulation): Only for Unbelievers
- **Final justice** (Second coming): Wicked punished; righteous enjoy millennium and spend eternity with God.



**We saw 5 burdens of
God ... what is God's
burden about us?**

Character of God as seen in Malachi

God is Love

God is Holy

God is Just

God is faithful

God never changeth

Malachi's
prophecy
followed by
400 years of
silence

Bible Study Starts again:

God willing, January 10, 2024

Acts | Philemon | Colossians | Ephesians |
Sermon the mount | Daniel | James | Discipling in Love
I and II Thessalonians | Deuteronomy | Malachi | ?

What must we do with the Word of God?



Hear



Study, Meditate, Understand



Apply to our lives and to guide our decisions



Teach others



Testify of life changing power of God's Word through our spoken words and lifestyle.