

# Malachi 3 Commentary

MALACHI 2

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### THE ORACLE OF THE WORD OF JEHOVAH THROUGH MALACHI

(Malachi 1:1)

(Malachi means "My Messenger" or "Messenger of Jehovah")

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Mal 1:1-5	Mal 1:6-2:9	Mal 2:10-3:15	Mal 3:16-4:3	Mal 4:4-6
<b>Love of God for Israel Rejected!</b>	<b>Rebuke of Sins of Priests:</b> Illicit Practices Indifference	<b>Rebuke of Sins of People:</b> Mixed Marriages Divorces Robbing God	<b>Blessing to All Who Fear Jehovah God's Wrath on the Wicked</b>	<b>Remember the Law Promise of... Elijah, Restore Hearts Warning of... Day of the Lord</b>
<b>PRIVILEGE OF ISRAEL</b>	<b>POLLUTION OF ISRAEL</b>		<b>PROMISE TO ISRAEL</b>	
<b>PAST CARE</b>	<b>PRESENT COMPLAINT</b>		<b>FUTURE COMING</b> (See also Mal 3:1-6)	
<b>GOD'S COMPASSION for Israel</b>	<b>GOD'S COMPLAINT Against Israel</b>		<b>GOD'S CONSOLATION to Righteous Remnant GOD'S CONDEMNATION of Wicked</b>	
			Mal 3:16 Book of Remembrance	Mal 4:1 Coming of Messiah
				Mal 4:4 Coming of Elijah
	GOD'S LOVE SADLY SPURNED!		GOD'S GRACE STILL OFFERED!	
PLACE: JERUSALEM				
TIME OF WRITING: Difficult to Date but... Circa 445-420BC				

### God's Declaration Israel's Refutation God's Rebuttal

Israel's priest and people repeatedly failed to see their sin against God and their need to confess so that they might experience His mercy and forgiveness. As **Wiersbe** wisely points out "*It is a dangerous thing when people argue with God and try to defend their sinful ways.*"

## ISRAEL'S REFUTATION OF THEIR SIN

<b>1</b>	<b>Mal 1:2</b>	<b>But</b> you say, "How hast Thou loved us?"
<b>2</b>	<b>Mal 1:6</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How have we despised Thy name?'
<b>3</b>	<b>Mal 1:7</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How have we defiled Thee?'
<b>4</b>	<b>Mal 2:14</b>	<b>Yet</b> you say, 'For what reason?'
<b>5</b>	<b>Mal 2:17</b>	<b>Yet</b> you say, "How have we wearied Him?"
<b>6</b>	<b>Mal 3:7</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How shall we return?'
<b>7</b>	<b>Mal 3:8</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?'
<b>8</b>	<b>Mal 3:13</b>	<b>Yet</b> you say, 'What have we spoken against Thee?'

Israel doesn't even reply to God's accusations by "Yes, but" but only "But!" There is no "Yes," no acknowledgement whatsoever of their guilt before a holy God. This reflects their intractably stony hearts, their immutably stiff necks, their unresponsive rebellious spirits! A sad state indeed, for a people chosen by God to be lights unto the Gentiles!

Here is a summary of truths about the Day of the Lord in Malachi 3 and Malachi 4:

THE DAY OF THE LORD IN MALACHI 3-4	
MALACHI 3	MALACHI 4
<p>3:1 Who can endure &amp; stand in the <b>DAY</b> of His coming? (Joel 2:11 "who can endure?")</p> <p>3:1 <b>Day of Lord's coming ~ Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming</b></p> <p>3:1 Suddenly (cf "like a thief" 1Th 5:2, 2Pe 3:10)</p> <p>3:2 Lord's 2<sup>ND</sup> Coming is like Refiner's Fire, Fuller's Soap</p> <p>3:3 As a Smelter &amp; Purifier of Silver – He will purify &amp; refine sons of Levi for righteous offerings = <b>MILLENIUM</b></p> <p>3:4 Offering of Jews will please Lord = <b>MILLENIUM</b></p> <p>3:5 <b>Day of Lord</b> brings judgment on sinners in Israel</p> <p>3:6 "I do not change" - Israel is not consumed</p> <p>3:16 Those who feared the LORD were remembered</p> <p>3:17 <b>ON THAT DAY</b> (DOL) They will be His own special treasure</p> <p>3:18 Will distinguish righteous and wicked</p>	<p>4:1 <b>DOL</b> – Coming, Burning Like a furnace</p> <p>4:1 All arrogant &amp; evildoer chaff → burn (destroy)</p> <p>4:2 Those who fear His Name – healed by Sun of Righteousness = <b>MILLENIUM</b></p> <p>4:2 They will skip about like calves = <b>MILLENIUM</b></p> <p>4:3 Righteous will tread down the wicked</p> <p>4:5 Will send Elijah before the <b>Day of the Lord</b></p> <p>4:5 Great &amp; Terrible <b>Day of the Lord</b></p> <p>4:6 Elijah's coming brings reconciliation</p>

Zechariah 13:8-9 "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That **two parts in it will be cut off and perish**; But the **third will be left in it**. 9 "And I will bring the **third part through the fire**, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Here is a summary of truths on the Day of the LORD from the New Testament and 4 other Old Testament books...

2 Th 2:1-12	Acts 2:15-21	1Th 4:13-5:11	2Pt 3:1-13	Isaiah 13	Obadiah	Amos 5	Joel 1-3
<p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>1 The APOSTASY</p> <p>2 Restrainer removed</p> <p>3 M of Lawlessness REVEALED (S of D)</p> <p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>1 The APOSTASY removed</p> <p>3 Man of Lawlessness REVEALED (S of D)</p> <p>4 Opposes/exalts self over "gods"</p> <p>5 Takes seat in Temple – "God"</p>	<p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>20 Sun → Dark Moon → Blood</p> <p>Great &amp; glorious</p> <p><b>DAY OF THE LORD:</b></p> <p>21 Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved (rescued).</p>	<p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>1 Like a thief in the night (surprise) (v2)</p> <p>2 THEY saying peace &amp; safety (v3)</p> <p>3 Suddenly – like labor pains (v3)</p> <p>4 No escape (v3)</p> <p>9 Believer's Destiny: NOT for wrath</p> <p><b>THEREFORE</b></p> <p>11 Encourage &amp; build up ONE ANOTHER</p>	<p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>7 Heavens &amp; earth reserved for fire</p> <p>7 Day of judgment</p> <p>7 Destroy ungodly</p> <p>9 Repentance</p> <p>10 Like a thief</p> <p>10 Heavens pass away with a roar</p> <p>Elements destroy Earth/works → burn</p> <p><b>DAY OF GOD</b></p> <p>12 Heavens → burn</p> <p>Elements → melt</p> <p>11 Application: -Holy/godly</p> <p>12 Looking → Living</p> <p>13 Looking for NH</p> <p><b>RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS (VERTICAL VISION)</b></p>	<p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>6 Wail/howl</p> <p>6 Near</p> <p>6 Destruction</p> <p>6 From Almighty</p> <p><b>Reaction to DOL?</b></p> <p>7-8 All men hands limp, hearts melt, terror, pain &amp; anguish, writhe like labor pains, aghast, flushed</p> <p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>9 Coming, cruel, fury, burning anger, land desolate, sinners exterminated.</p> <p>10 Cosmic signs – stars, sun, moon</p> <p>11 Punish world</p> <p>12 Men scarce</p> <p>19 – Babylon like Sodom &amp; Gomorrah</p> <p>20 – Never inhabited, no tents</p>	<p><b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>15 Near for all nations</p> <p>15 Pay back</p> <p>16 All nations cease to exist</p> <p>17 BUT - On Mt Zion escapees, 17 Mt Zion holy</p> <p>17 Jacob possess possessions (<b>Millennium</b>)</p> <p>18-Israel like fire</p> <p>No survivor-Edom</p> <p>19-20 – Extent of Israel's possessions</p> <p>20 The Kingdom will be the LORDS (<b>Millennium</b>)</p> <p>Cf Rev 11:15 "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."</p>	<p>722BC</p> <p>Assyria takes Israel exile = NEAR</p> <p>FULFILLMENT of D.O.L.</p> <p>18 Foolishly longed for <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>18 Darkness, not light</p> <p>18 Gloom, no brightness</p> <p>19 No escape</p> <p><b>Way of Escape</b></p> <p>3x- Seek the Lord that you may live (5:4, 6, 14)</p>	<p>1:15 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>Near, destruction, from the Almighty</p> <p>2:1 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>2:2 Darkness, gloom, clouds &amp; darkness, army like dawn on mts.</p> <p>-Never anything like it, nor will there be after it. (cf Mt 24:21)</p> <p>2:11 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>Great &amp; very awesome; Who can endure???</p> <p>2:12-18 Tells who can endure! (return "repent")</p> <p>2:19ff THEN – Lord zealous for Israel → will never make them a reproach among the nations (<b>Millennium</b>)</p> <p>2:28-31 – See Acts 2</p> <p>2:31 <b>DAY OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>32 Call → Delivered</p> <p>3:1 Restore fortunes of Israel (<b>Millennium</b>)</p> <p>3:2 God gathers nations to Valley of Jehoshaphat for judgment (See next chart)</p>

Here are the youtube discussions based on the Precept study of Revelation Part 4, lessons 7 and 8...

- [What the Bible Teaches About the Day of the Lord - Part 1](#)
- [What the Bible Teaches About the Day of the Lord - Part 2](#)

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, **I am** going to send **My** messenger, and he will clear 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. (**Words in red** = Jehovah speaking)

- **I am going:** Mal 2:7, 4:5 Mt 11:10,11 Mk 1:2,3 Lk 1:76, 7:26-28 John 1:6,7
- **he will clear:** Isa 40:3-5 Mt 3:1-3 17:10-13 Lk 1:16,17 3:3-6 John 1:15-23,33,34 3:28-30 Ac 13:24,25 19:4
- **and the Lord:** Ps 110:1 Isa 7:14 9:6 Hag 2:7-9 Lk 2:11,21-32,38,46 Lk 7:19,20 19:47 John 2:14-16
- **The Messenger:** Ge 48:15,16 Ex 23:20 Isa 63:9 Ho 12:3-5 Ac 7:38
- **He is coming:** Hag 2:7
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GOD HIMSELF RESPONDS: "I AM COMING BACK"

LXE Malachi 3:1 Behold, I send forth My messenger, and he shall survey the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into His temple, even the Angel of the covenant, Whom ye take pleasure in: behold, He is coming, saith the Lord Almighty.

**Context = In light of their serious accusations, God Himself responds to their questions in Malachi 2:17-.**

**Behold** (02009) (hinneh) - **Listen up! Pay attention!** I the LORD am now going to speak! This interjection is found some 994 times in the OT (First use - Ge 1:29 spoken to Adam; Ge 6:12-13) and always serves to call the reader's attention to something. In this context Jehovah is going to address their blasphemous questions in Malachi 2:17-note and His reply should get their attention! **Behold** is used twice in this verse, first to alert them to Messiah's messenger and then to alert them to the coming of Messiah Himself.

**Phillips** - Suddenly Malachi's attention was drawn away from the drab sins of his day to a glorious vision of a coming day. The same vision had thrilled many other Old Testament prophets and now it enraptured Malachi. (Exploring the Minor Prophets)

**I am going to send My messenger - Who is speaking?** Clearly it is the **LORD of hosts**, which in context is **Jesus** (see discussion below). The Hebrew phrase for **my messenger** is "mal'akhi" which is the same form as "**Malachi**" the writer of this book. It should be noted that some think it is the Father speaking, but notice the phrase "My messenger and he will clear the way before Me." While "**before Me**" could be before the omniscient gaze of the Father, it makes more sense to see this as Jesus.

**McKay** - The imagery (**He will clear the way**) is drawn from the practice of ancient kings, who would inform their subjects in a province of their empire that they were about to come on a state visit, so that adequate arrangements might be made. This would include 'preparing the way' for the royal procession, by removing from it anything that would impede progress. It would thus be straight, level and free of obstacles (Isa. 40:3-4; see also Isa. 57:14; 62:10). The preparations that had to be made before the coming of the LORD were, of course, spiritual rather than physical. This was achieved through John's ministry, which called for repentance because the kingdom of heaven was near (Mt. 3:2). He had a wide impact (Mk. 1:5), and provided the basis for Christ's ministry (Jn. 1:35-37; Acts 19:4). That such a forerunner was necessary was also a warning to the people of Malachi's day that whatever they might think, they were not ready for the arrival of their king.

**Cole** - The imagery of preparing **the way before** the Lord came from the custom of clearing the road and preparing a town for the visit of the king. Before the king traveled, he sent out messengers who proclaimed his coming. They didn't have road crews back then to keep the highways in good shape. So when the townspeople heard that the king was coming, they would go out and fill in the ruts and potholes, and clear away rocks and debris. They got everything ready for the coming of their king. God in His grace does not come upon us unannounced. If He did, He would often find our lives in shambles. We get sloppy about sin. There are potholes and ruts, with rocks strewn all over the place. So He graciously sends His messenger to proclaim, "The Lord is coming! Get ready! Fill in the potholes of sin! Clear out the rocks of self-centeredness and pride. Repent and bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance" (see Matt. 3:2, 8). Although I am a far, far lesser voice than John the Baptist or Elijah, I hope that you will listen when I tell you, "Prepare yourself! Get ready! The King is coming!" As 1 John 3:3 tells us, "Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." ([Malachi 2:17-3:6 What to Do When Evil Prevails](#))

**Spurgeon on Messenger of the covenant** - Christ was the great messenger of the covenant, the messenger of mercy; and the Lord's own people, even in that ancient time, delighted in anticipating the coming of the Christ of God, the anointed and appointed messenger of the Lord of hosts.

**Spurgeon's** devotional on **Messenger of the covenant** - The Lord's people delight in the covenant itself. It is an unending source of consolation to them so often as the Holy Spirit leads them to its green pastures, and makes them to lie down beside its still waters. They can sweetly sing of it from youth even to hoar hairs, from childhood even to the tomb, for this theme is inexhaustible. They delight to contemplate the antiquity of that covenant, remembering that before the day star knew its place, or planets ran their round, the interests of the saints were made secure in Christ Jesus. It is peculiarly pleasing to them to remember the sureness of the covenant. They love to meditate upon 'the sure mercies of David.' They delight to celebrate the covenant in their songs of praise, as 'signed and sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well.' It often makes their hearts dilate with joy to think of its immutability, as a covenant which neither time nor eternity, life nor death, things present, nor things to come, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, shall ever be able to violate—a covenant as old as eternity and as everlasting as the Rock of ages. They rejoice also to feast upon the fulness of this covenant, for they see it in all things provided for them; God is their portion, Christ their companion, the Spirit their comforter, earth their lodge and heaven their home. They see in it not only some things, but all things; not only a help to obtain some desirable possessions, but an inheritance reserved and entailed to [bestowed on] every soul that has an interest in this ancient and eternal deed of gift.

See also Spurgeon's Sermon - [The Messenger of the Covenant](#)

**My messenger - To whom does this refer?** Without doubt this refers to John the Baptist. Comparing Malachi 4:5+ with Matthew 11:14, 17:11-12, Lk 1:17+ supports this interpretation (remember the best "commentary" on Scripture is to compare Scripture with Scripture) because John the Baptist came in the "spirit and power" of Elijah.

**"Behold**, I am going to send you **Elijah the prophet** before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. (Malachi 4:5+)

"A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God." (Isa 40:3)

For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'" (Mt 3:3+)

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John.14 "And if you care to accept it, **he himself** (John the Baptist) **is Elijah**, who was to come. (Mt 11:12-14)

**Comment:** MacArthur says that "Because they (THE JEWS) did reject both John the Baptist and Jesus, there will be another who will come in the spirit and power of Elijah before the **Second Coming** of Christ (ED: See chart on the identification of the two witnesses in Rev 11:3-6+. Many interpret one of these witnesses as Elijah)." ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**MATTHEW RECORDS:** And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that **Elijah** must come first? (ED: The disciples had just seen Elijah in the Transfiguration and they knew the Old Testament prophecy in Mal 4:5-6. So obviously Peter, James and John were wondering how the Elijah they had just seen fit with Malachi's prophecy that Elijah would appear before the Messiah appeared. In other words, they believed Jesus was the Messiah, but where was Elijah who was supposed to precede Elijah? It is a good question.)" And He (JESUS) answered and said, "**Elijah** is coming and will restore all things;12 but I say to you, that **Elijah already came**, and they did not recognize him (ED: Jewish leaders failed to recognize John the Baptist as the one prophesied about in Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3-4), but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist (ED: A truth the religious leaders missed that John the Baptist had come not as the actual person Elijah but in the "spirit and power of Elijah" - see below). (Matt 17:10-13)

**LUKE RECORDS:** For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. 16 "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in **the spirit and power of Elijah**, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Lk 1:15-17+) (See summary of



John the Baptist)

**The Messenger (malak) of the covenant** (Angel of the Covenant) - While His title "**Adonai**" points to Messiah's role as King, "**Messenger**" points to His role as Prophet. Indeed, Messiah presented the message, and at the same time was the personification of the message (Jn 1:1, 14+)! So here we see that the Messiah would be the One to present the message about the covenant and would Himself inaugurate the **New Covenant in His blood** (Lk 22:20+, 1Cor 11:25), the New Covenant promised in the Old Testament (Jer 31:31-38+; see also discussion of the New Covenant in the Old Testament). (See also Angel of the LORD)

He ("The Messenger of the Covenant") is the Mediator (mesites) of a **new (kainos) covenant (diatheke)**, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption (apolutrosis) of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Heb 9:15-note, cf Heb 7:22-note, Heb 8:6-note, Heb 12:24-note)

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of **the eternal covenant**, even **Jesus our Lord**,<sup>21</sup> equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20-21-note)

**Walter Kaiser** sees **covenant** here as a more general reference - "The covenant referred to here is the single plan of God contained in the succession of covenants beginning with the covenants made with Eve (Ge 3:15), continuing with the covenants with Shem (Ge 9:27), Abraham (Ge 12:1-3), Moses (Ex 6:2-8), and David (2Sa7:12-19) and concluding with the renewal of that same, but progressively enlarged, covenant for the age to come (Jer 31:31-34)."

See **Henry Mahan's** message below on [The Messenger of the Covenant](#)

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### **John Piper on Malachi 3:1 - Three Individuals Mentioned**

**The first individual mentioned is "I"**—"Behold, I send" - This "I" is identified at the end of the verse: "Says the Lord of hosts." The speaker is Jehovah, God the Father. (ED: BUT OTHERS WOULD INTERPRET IT AS THE LORD JESUS).

**The second individual mentioned is Jehovah's messenger who prepares the way.** "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me." Who is this? Well the New Testament quotes this very verse to identify John the Baptist, the one who came to prepare the way for Christ (Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27+).

But you don't have to read in from the New Testament that this is a kind of prophet whom God would raise up in the last day. It says in Malachi 4:5+, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." So the first messenger mentioned in Mal 3:1 that God will send to prepare his way is a kind of Elijah or one like Elijah. That is why Luke 1:17+ says that John the Baptist went before Jesus in the Spirit and the power of Elijah.

The third individual mentioned in Mal 3:1 is "the Lord who comes to his temple." "And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight."

### **The Identity of the Third Individual**

This is another messenger, different from the first. Who is this person? Three things point to the divine Son of God and Messiah.

1. He is called "**Lord**"—a term that Malachi would not apply to Elijah or John the Baptist. This person is someone greater.
2. The temple is said to belong to him: He will suddenly come to **HIS temple**." Of whom could you say that he is the owner of the temple of God?
3. This person seems to be almost identical with Jehovah, not only because Jehovah's temple is his temple, but also because he seems to take the place of the word "me" in the first half of the verse. It says, "Behold, I send my messenger [Elijah = John the Baptist] to prepare the way before ME." But then he switches without any difficulty and instead of saying, "And I will suddenly come to my temple," he says, "And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple." It looks as though "me"—Jehovah—is virtually interchangeable with this other person called the Lord, who owns the temple of God.

So I conclude that the **messenger of the covenant**, the Lord, the owner of the temple of God, is none other

than the Son of God, who is with God and is God, and who came into the world and made himself known to us personally in Jesus Christ. ([He Is Like a Refiner's Fire](#))

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**Devotional - Messenger of the Covenant** - Malachi is the last of the Old Testament writing prophets; his messages are filled with rebuke and instruction for priests and laity alike. But his messages build to this climax of the prophecy of the coming of the Lord, using the title "the messenger of the covenant." This title harmonizes with the theme of the book, for Hebrew "Malachi" means "my messenger." Malachi is a messenger of the LORD, the priests are messengers of the LORD, and then here we have two more messengers to come.

The New Testament makes it certain that the prophecy of first messenger in this verse is going the forerunner, whom we know to be at the first advent of Christ, John the Baptist. Jesus said that this passage was referring to him in Matthew 11:10. So John was the LORD's messenger preparing the way before Him. That preparation involved preaching repentance so that people would be ready for the Messiah.

Then Malachi focuses on the Messiah: "Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple." He calls him the Lord (Adoni) (i.e., sovereign), not "LORD" here (which would mean Yahweh). But this Lord, this sovereign, is the one that they have been desiring for ages. He is the promised Messiah that they kept looking for from age to age. But amazingly Malachi says that He will come to "His temple." The temple was always "the house of the LORD" (that is, Yahweh God). Now it is Messiah's house. Here is a hint that this Lord is the LORD who will come into the world, fulfill the desires of the nation, and come to His temple. Jesus makes sure that the point is not missed, for when He quoted the verse in Matthew 11 He changed the pronoun: He said: "I send my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you." Jesus has deliberately changed the pronoun to show that John was preparing the way before Him, Jesus, whereas in Malachi Yahweh was saying the forerunner would prepare the way before Him, Yahweh. What Jesus was doing was showing that if John fulfilled the prophecy of the forerunner, then He, Jesus, fulfilled the prophecy of the Lord coming to His temple.

Malachi also refers to Him as the messenger of the covenant. The Messiah will bring the New Covenant into fulfillment when He comes into the world. That covenant will be the sure word of God that promises the blessings of salvation. Christ will deliver it by His death on the cross at His first coming, and then by His establishing eternal righteousness and peace at His second coming. This is the hope that will be fulfilled by the Messiah.

Throughout the passage we find that the LORD God is speaking and promising to send His messengers--John and Jesus. But when you get to Malachi 3:5 He says, "Then I will come near to you for judgment." Is the LORD God sending or coming? That would have been hard for people to sort out if they only had this text. One could say that the LORD God was "coming" in or by sending the messengers. But now that we know about the incarnation, we know that God would actually come into the world in the person of Jesus, and as Lord would come to His temple.

**The passage then foretells the coming of John, the coming of Jesus, His Lordship, and His deity. The first verse of the chapter finds fulfillment at His first coming; the rest awaits His second coming.** (Alan Ross)

**Related Resource:**

- [Who is the promised messenger of Malachi 3:1?](#)

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**Covenant** ([01285](#))(See discussion of [berit/berith/beriyth](#)) was the strongest agreement that could be made and was considered inviolable.

**Related Resources on covenant:**

- Covenant: Why the New is Better
- Covenant: Abrahamic vs Old vs New

**Messenger** ([04397](#)) (**malak**) is one who bears a message (a notice, word or communication, written or verbal, sent from one person to another) or does an errand. Malak is most often translated as **angel**.

**1828 Webster - Messenger** - 1. One who bears a message or an errand; the bearer of a verbal or written communication, notice or invitation from one person to another, or to a public body; one who conveys dispatches from one prince or court to another. 2. A

harbinger; a forerunner (cf Mal 3:1, 4:5); he or that which foreshows (shows beforehand, foretells).

## Dictionary Articles on Angel -

- [Easton's](#), [ISBE](#), [Naves](#); [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary](#)

About one half of the uses of **malak** refer to human messengers used to carry messages between individuals (Jacob, Esau Ge 32:3, 6, announced good news = 1Sa 6:21, threats = 1Ki 19:2, 1Sa 11:3, 4, 9; cf. 2Sa 11:19; 2Ki 5:10) or who function as the channels of diplomatic communication between national leaders (Moses, king of Edom - announced requests = Nu 20:14, cp Nu 22:5, Jdg 7:24, see also malak used for diplomatic representatives = Jdg 11:12-14, 2Sa 5:11, 1Ki 20:2). **Malak** is used of God's **prophets** sent as His representatives to bring His word to His people Israel (2Chr 36:15-16; Jer 25:4; Hag 1:13, Isa 44:26, Mal 3:1). **Malak** applies to **priest** once (Mal 2:7, possibly Eccl 5:6). The entire nation of Israel is referred to as God's messenger (Isa 42:19). A malak could be sent to spy (Josh 6:25), to kill (1Sa 19:11, 2Ki 6:32), to summon someone (Bathsheba in 2Sa 11:4).

About 1/3 of the 'angelic' occurrences refer to finite, created messengers whom the LORD employs (Ge 19:1,15 to rescue Lot, Zech 1:9; 5:5, Ps 103:20). Angels were often responsible for aiding, protecting, and fighting for those who trusted in the Lord (Ge. 24:7; Ex. 23:20; 33:2; 1Ki. 19:5; Ps. 34:7; protection = Ps 91:11, cf NT use in Heb 1:14). Angels also acted as instruments of divine judgment, meting out punishment on the rebellious and the guilty (2Sa 24:16, 17; Ps 35:5, 6; Ps 78:49; Isa 37:36). Finally angels actively praised God (Ps 148:2, cf Isa 6:3).

The remaining uses of **malak** rendered as **angel** refer to the **Angel of the LORD** (see study), a reference to the pre-incarnate Christ (see **Christophany**), the first 3 uses of **malak** in Scripture used of the **Angel of the LORD** (Ge 16:7, 9,10,11, cf Angel of God Ge 21:17, 31:11, Ex 14:19, Jdg 6:20, 13:6,9, 2Sa 14:17, 20, 19:27).

**Malak** - 196 verses in OT - **NASB Rendering**: ambassadors(2), angel(101), angels(9), envoys(1), messenger(24), messengers(76). **The KJV renders malak** - angel 111, messenger 98, ambassadors 4, variant 1; 214 Ge 16:7, 9,10,11; Ge 19:1, 15; 21:17; 22:11, 15; Ge 24:7, 40; Ge 28:12; Ge 31:11; Ge 32:1, 3, 6; 48:16; Ex 3:2; 14:19; 23:20, 23; 32:34; 33:2; Nu 20:14, 16; 21:21; 22:5, 22, 23, 24, 31, 32, 34, 35; 24:12; Dt 2:26; Josh 6:17, 25; 7:22; Jdg 2:1, 4; 5:23; 6:11,12, 20, 21, 22, 35; 7:24; 9:31; Jdg 11:12, 13, 14, 17, 19; 13:3, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21; 1Sa 6:21; 11:3f, 7, 9; 16:19; 19:11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21; 23:27; 25:14, 42; 29:9; 2Sa 2:5; 3:12, 14, 26; 5:11; 11:4, 19, 22f, 25; 12:27; 14:17, 20; 19:27; 24:16f; 1Kgs 13:18; 19:2, 5, 7; 20:2, 5, 9; 22:13; 2Ki 1:2f, 5, 15, 16; 5:10; 6:32, 33; 7:15; 9:18; 10:8; 14:8; 16:7; 17:4; 19:9, 14, 23, 35; 1Chr 14:1; 19:2, 16; 21:12, 15f, 18, 20, 27, 30; 2Chr 18:12; 32:21; 35:21; 36:15, 16; Neh 6:3; Job 1:14; 4:18; 33:23; Ps 34:7; 35:5, 6; 78:49; 91:11; 103:20; 104:4; 148:2; Pr 13:17; 16:14; 17:11; Eccl 5:6; Isa 14:32; 18:2; 30:4; 33:7; 37:9, 14, 36; 42:19; 44:26; 63:9; Jer 27:3; Ezek 17:15; 23:16, 40; 30:9; Hos 12:4; Nah 2:13; Hag 1:13; Zech 1:9, 11, 12,13, 19; 2:3; 3:1, 3, 5f; 4:1, 4, 5; 5:5, 10; 6:4, 5; 12:8; Mal 2:7; 3:1

Jesus quotes Malachi's prophecy in Matthew 11 as He confirms the unique nature and mission of John the Baptist...

This is the one about whom it is written, **BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.** 11 "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Mt 11:10-11, Mk 1:2+, Lk 1:76+, Lk 7:27-28+)

**Comment:** The NAS helps identify OT quotes by placing them in all caps (something ESV does not do, but would be a nice feature). This quote is from the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) of Malachi 3:1 (except that the Lxx uses *exapostello* instead of *apostello*).

**John the Baptist** (see summary) appeared (Mt 3:1-2+) with a prophetic word (cf "the word of God came to John," Lk 3:2+) giving the message that God was about to act again in world history. The prophetic spirit was once more active, after a 400 year period of silence during which much of Judaism had come to feel that God had withdrawn His hand from them. John's ministry prepares the way (Mt 3:3+) for THE WAY, for Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father but through Him. (Jn 14:6). John is the forerunner of the Messiah, and Jesus is the Messiah.

**Criswell** writes - The preparation work of John was that of calling the people to repentance. Repentance (*metanoia*, Gk.) means a "change of mind and heart which alters the conduct" (cf. 2Cor. 7:10). In the phrase "for the remission of sins," the preposition "for" (*eis*, Gk.) can be understood a number of ways. It can refer to purpose ("leading to"); cause ("because of"); or goal ("with the end result of"). It seems best understood as meaning that remission (lit. a "sending away" or "cancellation") of sins is the end result of repentance. The physical rite of baptism does not bring about remission of sins, but is rather a visible, public testimony that repentance has taken place. Cf. Matt. 3:6-11+, especially Mt 3:11+, where *eis* is translated "unto." John demanded a visible demonstration of repentance (**Ed**: "Fruit" that was evidence that there was a genuine soul saving "root" - cp Mt 3:8+, Lk 3:8-14+, cf

Acts 26:20+. Remember the fruit is not the change of heart, but the acts which result from it) before he would baptize.

**He will clear the way before Me** - John the Baptist will clear the way for the Messiah.

Again let us read Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3+ and Mark 1:3+ quote only Isaiah 40:3 but Luke quotes the entire passage)...

A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. 4 "Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isa 40:3-5)

Play **Ian Bostridge's** incredible rendering of Handel's

**" [Every valley shall be exalted](#) ."**

**He will clear the way before Me... says the LORD of hosts** - Clearly Jesus is Jehovah (See **Jehovah = Jesus**) because here He is called **Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies)** - see study. (cf Zechariah 14:17+ refers to Jesus as "the King, the **LORD of hosts**" at His **Second Coming**, at which time He rules and reigns the world from Jerusalem) In one of the great descriptions of Messiah, the prophet Daniel writes...

I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days (God the Father) and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. (Da 7:13-14+)

**Wiersbe-** Malachi was the last prophet Judah heard until John the Baptist came and the prophecy of Mal 3:1 was fulfilled. His messages against "the sins of the saints" needs to be heeded today.

**Walter Kaiser** - Leveling the road and straightening out the path are metaphors for the necessary preparatory spiritual work of repentance and faith. The Hebrew idiom for "clearing up" the ground was also used in Psalm 80:9 and Genesis 24:31.

**John Piper** - This is another **Messenger**, different from the first. Who is this person? Three things point to the divine Son of God and Messiah. - He is called "**Lord**" -- a term that Malachi would not apply to Elijah or John the Baptist. This person is someone greater. The temple is said to belong to him: He will suddenly come to "**HIS temple**." Of whom could you say that he is the owner of the temple of God? This person seems to be almost identical with Jehovah, not only because Jehovah's temple is his temple, but also because he seems to take the place of the word "**me**" in the first half of the verse. It says, "**Behold, I send my messenger** (John the Baptist) **to prepare the way before ME ...**" But then he switches without any difficulty and instead of saying, "**And I will suddenly come to my temple ...**" he says, "**And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple**" It looks as though "**me**" -- Jehovah -- is virtually interchangeable with this other person called the Lord, Who owns the temple of God. ([He Is Like a Refiner's Fire](#))

**[MARANATHA](#)**

**THE LORD COMES**

1 Cor 16:22

**The Lord** is **adon** which when preceded the definite article (*hā'ādôn*, cf use in Mal 1:6) always signifies deity (cf Ex. 23:17; 34:23; Is. 1:24; 3:1; 10:16, 33). **Adonai** (Lord, Master) in Ps 110:1 ([note](#)) refers to the Messiah, the rightful Owner of everything that exists (cf Zech 6:5 = Adonai)! Pious Jews refuse to pronounce the name **Jehovah** (Yahweh) when reading the OT - when they come to the Name Jehovah, they will read it as "**Adonai**". In the **Septuagint (LXX)** Adonai (and Jehovah) are translated with the same Greek noun **kurios** which signifies sovereign power, supreme authority, absolute ownership. In the NT, Jesus is referred to <20 times as Savior (soter) and over 700 times as Lord (kurios)! When the two titles are mentioned together, Lord always precedes Savior. Adonai depicts the Sovereign Master and implies a submissive servant, because Adonai speaks of His right to rule over us. Lordship conveys a sense of complete possession of the servant by the master and complete submission of the servant to the master. Nathan Stone writes that Adonai "signifies ownership or mastership and indicates "the truth that God is the owner of each member of the human family, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all."

**SUDDENLY!**

**UNEXPECTEDLY!**

**CAUSING SURPRISE!**



**Will suddenly come to His temple** - When the forerunner has cleared the way, the King enters the stage of human history! Malachi's prophecy has a double fulfillment - Jesus came to earth as the God-Man, when "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:1<sup>+</sup>, Jn 1:14<sup>+</sup>) Jesus came into the Temple the first time as an **Infant** (Simeon and Anna in Lk 2:27-38+), then as a young **Boy** (Lk 2:46-47+) and finally as a **Man** as He began His ministry (Jn 2:13-19+). The final fulfillment will be when Jesus returns suddenly as the glorified **God-Man, the King of kings and Lord of lords**, at which time He will take up His throne in the Temple in Jerusalem (Rev 1:7<sup>+</sup>, Rev 19:16<sup>+</sup>, Mt 25:31-46, Zech 14:5, 9+).

**Suddenly!** You are asking for the God of justice and here is your answer - He will come suddenly! Suddenly yes, but not without warning. This passage in Malachi is ample evidence of ample warning! If you **really** seek Him, you had better prepare yourself to meet Him!

**Steven Cole** illustrates "**Suddenly**" - You may wonder, "How can the Lord's coming be sudden when it has been announced by His messenger?" Let me answer with an illustration. Some of you recall when [Mount St. Helens](#) blew its top in 1980. Geologists knew that something was brewing. They could see the bulge on the side of the mountain and they could measure the increasingly threatening tremors. They warned the local residents to get out of there. But did they leave? Some did, but others didn't. There was one old man named [Harry Randall Truman](#) who had lived there for decades. When the newscasters interviewed him, he said that the mountain had been there for centuries. He didn't believe that it would blow up, so he wasn't going to move. But **suddenly, one morning the mountain exploded**. Harry R Truman and others like him who had ignored the warnings perished. Destruction came on them suddenly. ([What to Do When Evil Prevails Malachi 2:17-3:6](#))

**Suddenly** (06597) (**pithom**) means happening or coming unexpectedly and instantaneously, not immediately. All at once, in an instant or a flash. It is something marked by or manifesting abruptness. It refers to that which occurs all at once, surprisingly, all of a sudden! It describes something happening without previous notice or without warning. **Suddenly** stresses unexpectedness and sharpness or violence of action. In fact, if you review the following passages (in context), it becomes obvious that every use except 2 Chr 29:36 is associated with either disaster or judgment!

As **John MacArthur** emphasizes "To come **suddenly** does not mean immediately, but instantaneously and unannounced. It usually refers to a calamitous event (cf. Is 47:11; 48:3; Jer 4:20, etc.). When all the preparations are completed, the Lord will come, not to Zerubbabel's temple, nor in partial fulfillment to Herod's temple (see notes on Jn 2:13-24+), but finally to that millennial temple which Ezekiel describes in Ezekiel 40-48. The unexpected coming of Christ, partially fulfilled at His first advent, will be accomplished in full at His **Second Coming** (cf. Mt 24:40-42). (MacArthur Study Bible)

**Pithom** - 25 verses - Nu 6:9 (= death); Nu 12:4 (= Word from God); Josh 10:9; 11:7; 2Chr 29:36; Job 5:3; 9:23; 22:10; Ps 64:4, 7; Pr 3:25 (= unexpected onset of fear, ~ a "panic attack" so to speak! cf Job 22:10); Pr 6:15 (= calamity); Pr 7:22 (= sudden falling for the **Femme fatale**! Only one antidote for this "suddenly" = Flee!); Pr 24:22; Eccl 9:12 (= a catastrophe, calamity); Isa 29:5; 30:13; 47:11; 48:3; Jer 4:20; 6:26; 15:8; 18:22; 51:8; Mal 3:1. **Usage**: immediately(1), sudden(2), suddenly(22).

The people of Malachi's day were like those of Amos' day, waiting for the day of the LORD, assuming His intervention in power would be a blessing, but Amos warned...

Alas, you who are longing (Lxx = [epithumeo](#) = strongly desiring, present tense = continually) for the day of the LORD, for what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; (Amos 5:18)

**Amos** went on to give a proper perspective of their heart in his day, a perspective those in Malachi's day also needed...

"I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:21-24)

**Peter** describes the Lord's "sudden" coming in graphic terms...

But the day of the Lord will come **like a thief**, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10+).

**Comment** - The day of the Lord is not a single day but an extended time period which points to the special intervention of God in human history for the purpose of judgment. It will include Jesus' Second Coming and then at the end of His 1000 year reign, which precedes the creation of the new heavens and

new earth.

**He is coming** - The Lxx translates "come" with the Greek verb erchomai in the **present tense**, indicating His coming is continual. In other words Malachi pictures Messiah as already in the process of coming. His coming is imminent in our day (see discussion of **Imminent** or **imminency**) and it will be swift and sudden. **Jesus Himself testifies repeatedly in His final Revelation...**

**"I am coming quickly"**

(Rev 3:11<sup>±</sup>, Rev 22:7, 12, 20<sup>±</sup>)

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' words beg the question dear reader - Are you ready to meet the King "Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom?" (2Ti 4:1+)

**Haggai** records Jehovah's promise "And I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations; and I will fill this house (the Temple at Jerusalem) with glory (ultimately the glory of the presence of Jesus!),' says the LORD of hosts (Jesus)." (Hag 2:7)

**BEHOLD HE  
IS COMING!**

Revelation 1:7-[note](#)

**In Whom you delight, behold, He is coming** - The description of their "**delight**" seems to introduce a touch of divine irony (use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning), because, given Israel's general state of disobedience and their blasphemous questions (Mal 2:17), they would hardly **delight** in the One Who was coming to Judge the living and the dead (cf 2Ti 4:1+)! **Walter Kaiser** agrees that those who are not among the "**righteous remnant** " (see [Jehovah's description of this group beginning in Mal 3:16](#)) "would not enjoy the day of the Lord's coming. To them the day would be a nightmare rather than a day of restored prosperity." And in fact it seems that "**delight**" is contrasted in Mal 3:2 with "who can endure." So it will not be a **day of delight** but a **day of destruction** for all not "hidden with Christ in God!" (cf Col 3:3+).

**Malachi 3:2 "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.:**

- **who can endure:** Mal 4:1 Am 5:18-20 Mt 3:7-12, 21:31-44, 23:13-35, 25:10 Luke 2:34 Luke 3:9,17, 7:23, 11:37-47,52-54, 21:36 John 6:42-44 8:41-48,55, 9:39-41, 15:22-24, Ac 7:52-54 Ro 9:31-33 Ro 11:5-10 Heb 10:28,29, 12:25 1Pe 2:7,8 Rev 1:6,7, 6:17
- **for:** Isa 4:4 Zec 13:9 Mt 3:10-12 1Co 3:13-15 Rev 2:23
- **like fullers':** Ps 2:7 Isa 1:18 Jer 2:22 Mk 9:3 Rev 1:5, 7:14, 19:8
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Malachi 4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."

Amos 5:18-20 Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; 19 As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. 20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it?

Zechariah 13:9 (WHEN MESSIAH RETURNS AS DELIVERER - Ro 11:26) "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Daniel 12:10 "Many (JEWS IN GREAT TRIBULATION) will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

**PURIFYING FIRE  
CLEANSING SOAP**

**But** (see **term of contrast**) - Draws a dramatic contrast! Introduces a question we all do well to ponder, to make sure we are in

Christ, for only one who is safe in the "Ark," safe in Christ, will be enabled to endure the Day of God, that time when He finally and fully pours out His righteous wrath against sin and Christ rejecters.

Malachi offers two rhetorical questions, to cause the readers to pause and ponder and search their own hearts (cp Ps 139:23-24).

**THOUGHT** - Is such "heart searching" not always one of the great benefits of the reading of the inspired Word of God?

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb 4:12+, Heb 4:13+).

**Who can endure** ([kul](#))(who can stand) - This rhetorical question indicates that Messiah's coming is not a matter with which one should trifle or remain nonchalant. The question begs each reader (in Malachi's day and our day!) to do a serious personal inquisition and inventory - Will I be able to endure? Will I be able to stand? Only those who have by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9) put on the "full armor of God" (Eph 6:13+) and who have "clean hands and a pure heart." (Ps 24:3-4+) will be able to endure His coming.

The prophet **Joel** asked a similar question...

And the LORD utters His voice before His army; Surely His camp is very great, For strong is he who carries out His word. **The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it?** (Joel 2:11+)

**Jeremiah** declares

**BUT** (What is the **contrast?** - see Jer 10:8-9) the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, **and the nations cannot endure His indignation.** (Jer 10:10)

The prophet **Nahum** asked...

**Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger?** His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him. (Nahum 1:6)

Then **Nahum** answered his own question declaring that...

The LORD is good, a Stronghold in the day of trouble (Hebrew = [tsarah](#) = distress, affliction; Lxx = tribulation = thlipsis), and **He knows those who take refuge in Him.** (Nahum 1:7)

**Comment:** Jehovah knows those intimately and personally (cf the contrasting groups in Ps 1:6-note) who know Him (by grace through faith - Eph 2:8-9)!

**The day of His coming** - Whose coming? Not John the Baptist but Messiah's coming. And this refers primarily to Messiah's **Second Coming**. **Henry Morris** however sees "The **sudden** coming of the Lord Jesus to cleanse His temple (Jn 2:13-16) was a **precursive type of His future coming** to cleanse the world." (See also The Day of the LORD; Three Divine Days). I would not argue with that interpretation.

**Steven Cole** - God has a plan to right every wrong and punish all evildoers. That plan centers in His Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will suddenly come into His temple. "But," Malachi asks, "are you sure that you want Him to come?" "Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears?" (Malachi 3:2). It's easy to say, "Won't it be great when Jesus comes again?" But if our personal and family lives are not right with God, we will be terrified at Jesus' coming, because He is holy and He will judge everyone.

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**Endure (stand)** ([03557](#))([kul](#)) means to hold, to supply (give sustenance necessary for physical survival, 1Ki 20:27), to comprehend, to contain, to seize. To endure or bear up (undergo especially without giving up) (Jer 10:10; Joel 2:11; Am 7:10, Pr 18:14; Jer 20:9; Mal 3:2).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **kul** in Mal 3:2 with **hupomeno**. In Joel 2:11 **kul** translated as **endure** is translated Lxx by **hikanos** and in Amos 7:10 by **hupophero**.

**Mackay** - '**Stand**' (**endure**) does not mean appear before the investigating magistrate (Deut. 19:17) — in that sense all will stand before the Judge of all the earth — but is rather a military analogy (2Ki 10:4; Amos 2:15). 'Who will stand his ground?' Before the searching scrutiny of this judge none will be able to maintain a successful defense. 'If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord,

who could stand?' (Ps. 130:3-[note](#); see also Rev. 6:16–17-[note](#)).

**John Oswalt** - The primary meaning of this root is "to contain as does a vessel. (as 1Ki 7:26, 38; 8:64; 2Chr 4:5; 7:7)... Jeremiah then uses the word in a figurative sense when he expresses the impossibility of containing within himself the Lord's fury which is like a burning fire (Jer 6:11; 20:9). In a somewhat similar vein. Solomon remarks in his prayer at the dedication of the temple that it is silly to think of that house as containing God since the heaven of heavens cannot contain him (1Ki 8:27; 2Chr 2:6; 6:18). As a logical extension of the above meanings are those which express the possibility or impossibility of enduring (or containing) something (Pr 18:14; Joel 2:11; Amos 7:10; Mal 3:2). Two of these (Joel 2:11 and Mal 3:2) express the impossibility of enduring God's wrath when he comes and are reminiscent of Rev (Rev 6:15, 16, etc.). (TWOT)

**Kul** - 36 verses - calculated(1), contain(4), contains(1), endure(5), had to provide(1), held(1), hold(4), holding(2), maintain(1), provide(4), provided(6), provided them with sustenance(1), provisioned(1), sustain(3), sustained(1), sustainer(1). Gen 45:11; 47:12; 50:21; Ruth 4:15; 2 Sam 19:32f; 20:3; 1 Kgs 4:7, 27; 7:26, 38; 8:27, 64; 17:4, 9; 18:4, 13; 20:27; 2Chr 2:6; 4:5; 6:18; 7:7; Neh 9:21; Ps 55:22; 112:5; Prov 18:14; Isa 40:12; Jer 2:13; 6:11; 10:10; 20:9; Ezek 23:32; Joel 2:11; Amos 7:10; Zech 11:16; Mal 3:2

**Malachi 3:3 "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 the LORD offerings in righteousness.:"**

- **sit:** Ps 66:10 Pr 17:3 25:4 Isa 1:25 48:10 Jer 6:28-30 Eze 22:18-22 Da 12:10 Zec 13:9 Lk 3:16 Eph 5:26,27 Tit 2:14 Heb 12:10 1Pe 1:7 4:12,13 Rev 3:18
- **the sons of Levi:** Mal 1:6-10 2:1-8 Isa 61:6 66:19-21 Jer 33:18-22 Eze 44:15,16 Rev 1:6 5:10
- **and:** Mal 1:11 Ps 4:5 50:14,23 69:30,31 107:21,22 116:17 141:1,2 Ho 14:2 Jn 4:23,24 Ro 12:1 15:16 Php 2:17 4:18 2Ti 4:6 Heb 13:15,16 1Pe 2:5,9
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS THE REFINER OF HIS PEOPLE

**He will sit as** (term of comparison// simile) **a smelter and purifier of silver** - Jesus here is characterized as like a smelter and purifier, not to destroy but purify His people Israel (cf Zech 13:1-note "that day" referring to Messiah's Second Coming). **Has Messiah come as a smelter and purifier yet?** No. Most **sons of Levi** are still counting on their own righteousness (or their relation to "father" Abraham - cf Mt 3:9+), not the imputed righteousness of Christ available by grace through faith in Yeshua. And so here Malachi refers to a future event, which in context is best interpreted as taking place at Messiah's **Second Coming**. Refining is frequent metaphor in the prophets (Isa 1:25; Isa 48:10; Jer 6:29–30; Ezek 22:17–22; Zec 13:9-note).

Zechariah 12:10-commentary describes a future purification (see also Daniel 12:10-[below](#))...

And I (God) will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that (here is the purpose of the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit) **they will look on Me** (Messiah - see below for Rev 1:7) **whom they have pierced** (dāqārû = "drive through, pierce, stab, run through, i.e., make physical impact with a sharp implement"); and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born. (Zech 12:10 - see John MacArthur's sermon - [Zechariah 12:1-14 Israel's Final Deliverance](#))

**BEHOLD**, HE (Messiah) IS COMING (Dt. 18:15-18; Ps 2; 22; 118:26; Isa 9:6; 48:16; 53; 61:1; Jer. 23:5-8; Dan. 9:25; Mic 5:2; Zec. 2:8-11; 6:12-15; etc) WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced (Greek verb in the NT only here and Jn 19:23) Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen. (Rev 1:7-[note](#)) (Related resource - [Imminency](#))

**Sit** implies the refining requires great care. MacKay explains that "The silversmiths of the time sat looking into their small metal furnaces to determine from the colour of the metal if it was pure (Ps. 12:6; Prov. 17:3; 1 Pet. 1:7). It was more technically intricate than the process used for gold. When the silver ore is molten, it gives off oxygen. It was treated with charcoal to prevent it re-absorbing the oxygen from the air as it cooled. If it did, it would lose its lustre. The process of purifying was complete and the dross all burnt away when suddenly the silver became a liquid mirror in which the refiner could see his own reflection."

The silversmith would put the crude silver ore in a crucible in the smelting furnace, subject it to intense heat in order to liquefy the solid ore. In the liquid state, the worthless impurities in the silver ore would rise to the surface and be skimmed off as dross (the scum that forms on the surface of molten metal). When the silversmith was able to see his face reflected in silver remaining in the

crucible, he would remove it from the fire, for he knew that he had pure silver. So our Lord keeps us in the furnace of suffering until we reflect the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ. Christ-likeness is God's ideal for His child. Christian suffering is one of the tools He uses to bring about that result.

## CLEANSING PICTURED BY FIRE AND SOAP

**Smelter** (06884)(**tsaraph**) means to refine, test, try, purge away. As a participle **tsaraph** was used for goldsmiths and silversmiths. **Tsaraph** describes the process of refining metals before worked into fine vessels (Pr 25:4). **Tsaraph** means to test, examine, refine, to try to learn the information about the true nature or moral purity of an object, as a figurative extension of refining metals (Jdg 7:4; Ps 17:3; 26:2; 66:10) **Tsaraph** means to purify, purge, figuratively to be or become morally pure and without moral blemish through a process of testing or trial (Isa 1:25; Isa 48:10; Jer 6:29, cf Da 11:35, 12:10-note, Zech 13:9-note) A very significant use of **tsaraph** is to describe the Word of God as flawless, perfect, pure, formally, tested and refined, i.e., to be pure and without flaw, with a focus on moral purity (2Sa 22:31; Ps 18:31; Pr 30:5).

**John Hartley** comments that "Various aspects of the refining process are vividly used for judgment on and purification from sin; e.g. a blazing furnace, bellows, lead, dross, refuse silver (e.g. Isa 1:25; Jer 6:27–30; Ezek 22:18–22). God seeks to remove from his people all wickedness and sin so that they can endure his holy presence. Man has the responsibility of purifying himself so that he can be refined; i.e. he must respond obediently to God's word in order to experience cleansing (Dan 12:10). Further, when his people are wayward and violate the covenant, God seeks to bring them back by refining them (Jer 9:7). God tries them in the furnace of affliction (Isa 48:10). Although they have to endure difficult circumstances, as long as their faith in him remains firm, they will eventually experience deliverance (Ps 66:6–12). Between the promise and its fulfillment, the word itself tests and refines the one who has heard it (Ps 105:19). However, sometimes the people become so obstinate that no matter how intense the refining fire becomes, it is in vain (Jer 6:27–30). Then God must come against his people in judgment. But in the midst of this judgment, God is still preparing a people for himself. Those who undergo the judgment as a refining shall turn to God and enter into covenant with him once again (Zech 13:9-note). According to Mal, God shall refine the Levites as gold and silver; then they will offer the sacrifices correctly and these sacrifices will be accepted (Mal 3:2ff.). The climax of God's refining process will result in the establishment of a city over which he has complete rule; that city shall be called "the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa 1:25f.). (TWOT)

In the **Septuagint (Lxx)** **tsaraph** is often translated with the verb **puroo** meaning to heat fiery hot (as in refining metals).

**Refine** - To purify, to clarify, to free (as metal, sugar, or oil) from impurities, extraneous or unwanted material; remove impurities in metal to make the precious metal pure; to free from moral imperfection

**Smelt** - to melt as ore for the purpose of separating the metal from extraneous substances. ([Smelting](#))

**Purge** - to free from guilt or moral or ceremonial defilement; to make free from something unwanted; To cleanse or purify by separating and carrying off whatever is impure, heterogeneous, foreign or superfluous; to remove by a cleansing process

**Tsaraph** - 29x - goldsmith(5), goldsmiths(2), pure(1), refine(3), refined(5), refiner's(1), refining goes(1), silversmith(2), smelt(1), smelter(2), smith(1), test(2), tested(4), tried(2).

**Judges 7:4-note** Then the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will **test** (Lxx = ekkathairo = clean out, cleanse, purge out) them for you there. Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

**Judges 17:4-note** So when he returned the silver to his mother, his mother took two hundred pieces of silver and gave them to the **silversmith** who made them into a graven image and a molten image, and they were in the house of Micah.

**2 Samuel 22:31** "As for God, His way is blameless; The Word of the LORD is **tested** (**puroo** - make fiery hot speaking of tested and refined metals; **perfect tense** = permanence of the effect of this testing); He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

**Nehemiah 3:8** Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah of the **goldsmiths** made repairs. And next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

32 Between the upper room of the corner and the Sheep Gate the **goldsmiths** and the merchants carried out repairs.

**Psalm 12:6-note** The words of the LORD are pure words; as silver **tried** (**puroo** and dokimion = process or



means of determining the genuineness of something) in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.

**Psalm 17:3-note** You have tried (bachan; Lxx = dokimazo) my heart; You have visited me by night; You have **tested** (tsaraph; Lxx = **puroo** - make fiery hot speaking of tested and refined metals) me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

**Psalm 18:30-note** As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is **tried**; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

**Ps 26:2-note** **Examine** (bachan; Lxx = dokimazo) me, O LORD, and **try** (nasah) me; **Test** (tsaraph) my mind and my heart. (Red = imperatives!)

Comparison of **nasah**, **tsaraph**, **bachan** - all conveying some aspect of "to test"...

- 1). **Nasah** = an attempt to prove the existence of a particular quality in someone or something.
- 2). **Tsaraph** = "to refine," usually indicating the purifying result of divine judgment.
- 3). **Bachan** focuses attention on an examination to prove the existence of some spiritual quality, such as integrity.

**Psalm 66:10-note** For You have tried us, O God; You have refined (tsaraph; Lxx = **puroo**) us as silver is refined (tsaraph; Lxx = **puroo**) .

**Psalm 105:19-note** Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the LORD **tested** (**puroo** - make fiery hot speaking of tested and refined metals) him.

**Psalm 119:140-note** Your word is very **pure** (**puroo** - make fiery hot speaking of tested and refined metals; **perfect tense** = permanence of the effect of this testing), Therefore Your servant loves it.

**Proverbs 25:4** Take away the dross (Heb = sug, Lxx = adokimos) from the silver, And there comes out a vessel for the **smith**; (perfectly purified)

**Proverbs 30:5** ([Charles Bridges' note](#)) ([Comment](#)) Every word of God is **tested** (**puroo** - burned with fire and thereby tested and refined); He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

**Isaiah 1:25-note** "I will also turn My hand against you, And will **smelt** (**puroo** - burn with fire) away your dross as with lye And will remove all your alloy.

**Isaiah 40:19** (Description of making of an idol) As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, **Agoldsmith** plates it with gold, And a **silversmith** fashions chains of silver.

**Isaiah 41:7** So the craftsman encourages the **smelter**, And he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, Saying of the soldering, "It is good"; And he fastens it with nails, So that it will not totter.

**Isaiah 46:6** "Those who lavish gold from the purse And weigh silver on the scale Hire **agoldsmith**, and he makes it into a god; They bow down, indeed they worship it.

**Isaiah 48:10** "Behold, I have **refined** you, but not as silver; I have tested (bachar) you in the furnace of affliction.

**Jeremiah 6:29** The bellows blow fiercely, The lead is consumed by the fire ; In vain the **refining goes on**, But the wicked are not separated.

**Jeremiah 9:7** Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, I **will refine** them (**puroo** - burn with fire) and assay (bachan; Lxx = dokimazo) them; For what else can I do, because of the daughter of My people?

**Jeremiah 10:9** Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of a craftsman and of the hands of a **goldsmith**; Violet and purple are their clothing; They are all the work of skilled men.

14 Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge; Every **goldsmith** is put to shame by his idols; For his molten images are deceitful, And there is no breath in them.

**Jeremiah 51:17** All mankind is stupid, devoid of knowledge; Every **goldsmith** is put to shame by his idols, For his molten images are deceitful, And there is no breath in them.

**Daniel 11:35-note** "Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to **refine** (tsaraph), purge and make them pure (laben - make white) until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.

**Daniel 12:10-note** "Many (speaking of the Jews in the end times - Daniel is not speaking to the church -- this does not mean that they will not be many non-Jews saved at this time of the end because there will be - read Rev 7:9-note then Rev 7:14-note) will be purged (barar = purge; Lxx = peirazo), purified (laben - to be white) and **refined** (tsaraph), but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand (this is surely a description of the righteous **remnant** of Israel - they will be supernaturally enabled to understand the significance of the end time events).

**Zechariah 13:9-commentary** "And I (God) will bring the third part (of the nation of Israel alive at time of the Great Tribulation) through the fire, **Refine** (tsaraph; Lxx = **puoo** - burn with fire) them as silver is **refined** (**puoo** - burned with fire), And test (bachan; Lxx - dokimazo - test to see if they are genuine - true believers in Messiah) them as gold is tested. (Here is the "fruit" that proves they are born again Jews) They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'" (cf Jer 31:31-32, 33-34)

**Comment:** Zechariah is not speaking of the church but of literal Israel, those Jews who are alive just prior to the **Second Coming** of the Messiah. The "one-third" are the "Many (who) will be purged, purified and refined." (Da 12:10)

**MacArthur:** From the midst of their fiery refinement, the elect **remnant** of Israel will see Jesus Christ, their Messiah and call on Him as their Savior and Lord. Israel will thus be saved and restored to covenant relationship with the Lord. ([Read MacArthur's sermon on "The Cleansing of Israel"](#))

**Jamieson** (one of the best, literal older commentaries - much better than Matthew Henry on prophecy) - It hence appears that the Jews' conversion is not to precede, but to follow, their external deliverance by the special interposition of Jehovah; which latter shall be the main cause of their conversion, combined with a preparatory inward shedding abroad in their hearts of the Holy Spirit (Zec 12:10-14); and here, "they shall call on My name," in their trouble, which brings Jehovah to their help (Ps 50:15).

**Malachi 3:2** "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.<sup>3</sup> "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 the LORD offerings in righteousness.

**Purifier** ([02891](#))(**taher**) commonly refers to ritual purity or cleanness in the OT. In fact except for Job 37:21 and Mal 3:3, **taher** almost exclusively of ritual or moral purity. To be clean, be pure, innocent, righteous. To make clean, purify. To be cleansed **Taher** is the antonym of the Hebrew word "tame" (unclean) Those who contracted impurity, TAME' ([02931](#)), were not permitted to participate in the rituals until they were purified (Lv 22:4-7). Disqualification might be due to afterbirth (Lv 12:7, 8) or other bodily discharges (Lv 15:13). Priests were to be medical examiners to determine when lepers were 'cleansed' (Lv 14:8ff.). In the first use in (Gen 35:2) we read "So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments;

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** often translates **taher** with the verb **katharizo** which describes cleansing from ritual contamination or impurity (Acts 10:15). **Katharizo** was used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 8:2-3, et al)

**Taher** - 79x - become clean(2), becomes clean(2), becomes cleansed(1), clean(25), cleanse(15), cleansed(19), cleansing(1), cleared(1), pronounce him clean(6), pronounce the clean(1), pronounce clean(2), pronounces him clean(1), pronouncing it clean(1), pure(2), purge(1), purged(2), purified(5), purifier(1), purify(5), purifying(1), remain(1), unclean\*(1).

Gen 35:2; Lev 11:32; 12:7f; 13:6, 13, 17, 23, 28, 34, 37, 58f; 14:4, 7ff, 11, 14, 17ff, 25, 28f, 31, 48, 53; 15:13, 28; 16:19, 30; 17:15; 22:4, 7; Num 8:6f, 15, 21; 19:12, 19; 31:23f; Josh 22:17; 2Kgs 5:10, 12ff; 2Chr 29:15f, 18; 30:18; 34:3, 5, 8; Ezra 6:20; Neh 12:30; 13:9, 22, 30; Job 4:17; 37:21; Ps 51:2, 7; Pr 20:9; Isa 66:17; Jer 13:27; 33:8; Ezek 22:24; 24:13; 36:25, 33; 37:23; 39:12, 14, 16; 43:26; Mal 3:3

## SONS OF LEVI

**He (Messiah) will purify the sons of Levi** - He specifies **Sons of Levi** rather than the priests (not all Levites were priests, but all priests had to be Levites), the ones against whom the charge of Mal 1:6-2:9 had been rendered. While we see a "partial fulfillment" of this prophecy in passages like Acts 6:7 ("a great many of the *priests* were becoming obedient to the faith" where *priests* = tribe of Levi), the final and full fulfillment of this prophecy is at the end of this age and the dawn of the New Age, the **Millennium!** In fact, in our day, the Church age, a Jewish man cannot even determine his tribal lineage (the ancestral records were destroyed with destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70AD - cf John's description of the recognition of members of the Tribe of Levi in the

end times - Rev 7:4-6, 7-[note](#))!

As a side note, it seems fair to say that by way of application this purification of the **sons of Levi** would also apply to the other Jews who are part of the righteous **remnant** gathered together at Messiah's **Second Coming**. (Zech 12:10+, Zech 13:9+ Daniel 12:10+ cf Malachi's contextual use of the more all inclusive term "**sons of Jacob**" in Mal 3:6)

**Refine them like gold and silver** - Again Malachi uses a **term of comparison**, specifically a **simile** to paint the picture of what will transpire in the future. Even as a fiery furnace and crucible are not used to destroy gold or silver, so too, the "divine refining fire" is not meant to destroy the **sons of Levi**.

**Refine** ([02212](#))(**zaqaq**) means strain, filter, refine (qal), refine (piel), filtered, refined (pual) and is used predominantly in the context of the process of refining a precious metal such as gold or silver to its purest form.

**Zaqaq** - 7x -Usage: distill(1), refine(2), refined(4).

1 Chronicles 28:18 and for the altar of incense **refined** gold by weight; and gold for the model of the chariot, even the cherubim that spread out their wings and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD

1 Chronicles 29:4 namely, 3,000 talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and 7,000 talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the buildings;

Job 28:1 "Surely there is a mine for silver And a place where they **refine** gold.

Job 36:27 "For He draws up the drops of water, They **distill** rain from the mist,

**Comment:** Describing how God vaporizes water and it becomes mist or rain.

Psalms 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, **refined** seven times.

Isaiah 25:6 The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And **refined**, aged wine.

Malachi 3:3 "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 the LORD offerings in righteousness.

### Why does Jesus carry out refining and purifying?

**So that** ([term of purpose or result](#)) - This phrase (occurs 580x in the NAS) always expresses purpose and should cause us to pause and ponder what is the purpose and how is the purpose accomplished. The purpose is that God might observe His image, "the image of His Son" (cf Ro 8:29+), reflected in us, for then He knows our "trial by fire," our time of suffering, has accomplished its work, that we might "be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (cf James 1:2-4+)

**Walter Kaiser** - What fire did in separating slag from metal and soap did in separating dirt from clothes, God's cleansing action would do for His people. Only dirt and slag had anything to fear; only the wicked should be frightened by the prospect and experience of that day.

**T V Moore** - Afflictions are God's refinings. The purer the gold, the hotter the fire; the whiter the garment, the harder the washing,

**They may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness** - So in this verse God's purpose is to make it possible for them to offer righteous offerings, something only possible from those Jews ("sons of Levi" - speaking primarily of the Jewish priesthood) whose stony, hard, rebellious hearts have been spiritually, supernaturally circumcised by the Spirit of Christ (See excursus on Circumcision), resulting in their justification, and declaration of righteousness by grace through faith (Ro 3:24-25+, et al). The only way to offer righteous sacrifices is from a heart that has been declared "right" (righteous) by grace through faith. (cf Ps 51:16-17<sup>±</sup>). As noted above, the timing of this event is future, at the Second Coming of Messiah (see Malachi 1:11+ which also describes an "end times" pure offering).

**David** links faith with offerings in righteousness exhorting his readers to...

Offer the sacrifices of **righteousness**, and **trust** in the LORD. (Ps 4:5<sup>±</sup>)

**Spurgeon comments** - When the Jew offered sacrifice righteously, that is, in a spiritual manner, he thereby set forth the Redeemer, the great sin-atonement Lamb; there is, therefore, the full gospel in this exhortation of the Psalmist. O sinners, flee ye to the sacrifice of Calvary, and there put your whole confidence and trust, for he who died for men is the LORD JEHOVAH.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Why is silver mentioned in the refining process? The process of refining silver is more delicate and anxious than the process of refining Gold. "When the silver becomes molten it gives off some twenty times its own volume of oxygen with a noticeable hissing and bubbling. This phenomenon is known as 'spitting'. But the task is not yet finished. Unless the molten silver is treated with carbon (charcoal was used by the ancients), the silver re-absorbs oxygen from the air and loses its sheen and purity." The refiner knows that his metal is pure when he can see his own reflection in the mirror-like surface of the metal. In the same way, God will know that His work has been completed when He sees reflected in the Christian soul HIS own image.

**Warren Wiersbe** aptly describes the process of divine testing writing that "When God puts His own people into the furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much. (If we rebel, He may have to reset the clock; but if we submit, He will not permit us to suffer one minute too long. The important thing is that we learn the lesson He wants to teach us and that we bring glory to Him alone.) We may question why He does it to begin with, or why He doesn't turn down the heat or even turn it off; but our questions are only evidences of unbelief. (Job 23:10-note) is the answer: "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (NKJV). Gold does not fear the fire. The furnace can only make the gold purer and brighter." (Wiersbe, W. Be Patient. An Old Testament study. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

**Alan Robinson** - There is a dramatic moment when [the refiner] knows that all dross has gone from [the silver]. Peering over it, the silver suddenly becomes a liquid mirror in which the image of the refiner is reflected. Then he knows that his task is done.

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**The Uses of Affliction** "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"—Mal. 3:3 When Mr. Cecil went to college, he had much to bear, both from severe conflicts in his own mind, and also from insulting treatment at the hands of his profligate and ungodly companions. Not yet accustomed to the yoke, these things troubled him more than they would have done afterwards, and he went to walk one day, under their influence, very heavy and sad in heart. The Physic Gardens was the scene which he chose for meditation and relief; and here he observed a very fine pomegranate tree, cut almost through the stem, near the root. Struck with this singular sight, he asked the gardener for an explanation. "Sir," said the man, "this tree used to shoot so strong, that it bore nothing but leaves. I was therefore obliged to cut it in this manner; and when it was almost cut through, then it began to bear plenty of fruit." The answer produced a deep impression upon Mr. Cecil's mind, and he went back to his rooms comforted and instructed. It was then he received his first lesson in the usefulness of trial.

**Malachi 3:4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.:"**

- **the offering:** Isa 1:26,27 56:7 Jer 30:18-20 31:23,24 Eze 20:40,41 43:26,27 Zec 8:3 14:20,21
- **as:** 1Ch 15:26, 16:1-3, 21:26 29:20-22 2Ch 1:6 7:1-3,10-12 2Ch 8:12-14 29:31-36 30:21-27 31:20,21 Jer 2:2,3
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD'S DESIRE RIGHTEOUS WORSHIP**

**Then** - This **expression of time** is easy to overlook but should always be **observed** and **interrogated**, for in many passages it helps clarify the sequence of events, especially in eschatological (prophetic, future events) passages! Don't go over "then" too quickly. Always pause and ponder "What time is it?" (so to speak).

**Judah and Jerusalem** - This would expand "**sons of Levi**" to non-Levitical Jews and presumably speaks of the refining of the entire nation as occurs when the Lord returns -

Ro 11:25-27+. For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so **all Israel will be saved**; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, **HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.**" 27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, **WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.**"

Parallel passages

Zechariah 12:10-14+, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

11 "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12 "The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.

Zechariah 13:1+ "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

Zechariah 13:8-9+ "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; But the third will be left in it. 9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God (THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW COVENANT!).'"

And once they are "**refined**" they will offer righteous offerings!

**Offering... pleasing**-Righteous offerings from righteous offerers, offerings from a people now rightly related to Jehovah-Jesus by grace through faith in His Gospel.

**T V Moore** - The prayer that rises from the broken and contrite heart is often the sweetest offering to God. The incense must be put on the burning coals before its fragrant smoke will ascend; the sandal wood must be crushed and bruised before it will give out its sweetest odor

**Will be pleasing (06149)(arab)** describes that which is sweet (agreeable), pleasant (having the quality of tending to give a sense of gratification or joy) or satisfying (supplying to the full extent of one's desire). The idea is that which is something is acceptable (received with pleasure) or desired by someone. Things described as pleasing - meditation (Ps 104:34), sleep (Pr 3:24, Jer 31:26), a desire realized (Pr 13:19), sacrifices (Jer 6:20, Hos 9:4, Mal 3:4).

Arab - 8 verses - Usage: pleasant(1), please(1), pleasing(3), sweet(2), took pleasure(1).

Psalms 104:34 Let my meditation be **pleasing** (Lxx = eduno = to please, gladden, be sweet) to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD.

Proverbs 3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be **sweet**. (Lxx = edeos = with pleasure, pleasant).

Proverbs 13:19 Desire realized is **sweet** (Lxx = eduno = to please, gladden, be sweet) to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to turn away from evil.

Jeremiah 6:20 "For what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba And the sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable And your sacrifices are not **pleasing** (Lxx = eduno = to please, gladden, be sweet) to Me."

Jeremiah 31:26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was **pleasant** (Lxx = edeos = with pleasure, pleasant) to me.

Ezekiel 16:37 therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you **took pleasure**, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated. So I will gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness.

Hosea 9:4 They will not pour out drink offerings of wine to the LORD, Their sacrifices will not **please** (Lxx = eduno = to please, gladden, be sweet) Him. Their bread will be like mourners' bread; All who eat of it will be defiled, For their bread will be for themselves alone; It will not enter the house of the LORD.

Malachi 3:4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem **will be pleasing** (Lxx = aresko) to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

**Be pleasing to the LORD** - Notice that this is future tense and is therefore a prophecy of a time when Levites (and all Israel) would be enabled to offer pleasing sacrifices to the Lord. This should be the goal of all our offerings! His glory, and amazingly our gain! Yet never offered with a desire to merit His favor.

This passage reminds us of the charge to believers...

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, **acceptable (euarestos = well pleasing)** to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And (this



connects the following closely with our "pleasing sacrifice" to God) **do not be conformed** (present imperative with a negative) to this world, but **be transformed** (command is present imperative = calls for this to be our Spirit enabled lifestyle) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:2-note)

David adds "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. 18 By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then **You will delight in righteous sacrifices**, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar." (Psalm 51:17-19-note)

**As in the days of old and as in former years** - Offerings had been pleasing when the offerer was righteous (like Abraham - by faith - Ge 15:6) and presented his heart and then his offering (cf 2Cor 8:1-4, 5 "they first gave themselves" - the key to any offering that is pleasing to the Lord). Wholehearted (Spirit enabled) obedience is the quality which God desires in sacrifices. He makes the point many times in the Old Testament, notably, in 1 Samuel 15:22; Isaiah 1:11-14; and Amos 5:21-22.

**D. Greg Ebie:** The people in Malachi's day did not see their need for God. With prideful hearts they would bring their offerings to God fulfilling their religious duty, but they didn't want God to change them. Instead they wrongly accused God of not loving them of not being fair or just... Offerings don't make the worshiper acceptable to God; the worshiper makes the offering acceptable through humility and brokenness. We need the power of God to transform our lives! God has achieved His purpose when we reflect His image. The beauty of Jesus is seen in all we do and say. Occasionally reflecting the image of Jesus is not enough; God wants to purify our lives so we reflect Him in everything.

**Malachi 3:5 "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 wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts.:**

- **I will draw near:** Mal 2:17 Ps 50:3-6 96:13 98:9 Eze 34:20-22 Heb 10:30,31 Jas 5:8,9 Jude 1:14,15
- **swift:** Mal 2:14 Ps 50:7 81:8 Jer 29:23 Mic 1:2 Mt 23:14-35
- **the sorcerers:** Lev 20:6,10,27 Dt 5:11,17-21 Jer 7:9,10 Eze 22:6-12 Zec 5:3,4 1Co 6:9,10 Gal 5:19-21 Heb 13:4 Rev 21:8 22:15
- **against those:** Ex 22:21-24 Lev 19:13 Dt 24:14,15,17 27:19 Pr 22:22,23 23:10,11 Jer 22:13-17 Jas 5:4,12)
- **oppress:** 1Th 4:6
- **fear:** Ge 20:11 42:18 Ex 1:17 18:21 Ne 5:15 Ps 36:1 Pr 8:13 16:6 Lk 23:40 Ro 3:8
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DIVINE JUDGMENT IS SWIFT AND SURE**

Malachi turns from the previous description of the blessing of future purification to the certainty of the dispensation of His justice (cf Mal 2:17) Messiah's return for some will bring refinement and righteousness, but for others retribution and recompense (punishment). This will culminate at the end of this present age in the time of the [Great Tribulation](#) (Begins - Mt 24:15+, named Mt 24:21+) which Jeremiah describes as follows

"Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is **the time of Jacob's distress**, But he will be saved from it (1/3 of Israel will be saved according to Zech 13:8-9+)." (Jeremiah 30:7+).

**Then** - Always take note of (prayerfully pause to ponder the passage) expressions of time (**See expressions of time**), for example asking questions such as "*To what time does this refer?*" As you develop this discipline of questioning (interrogating) the Biblical text, you will find yourself growing in your ability to understand and interpret the Scriptures (on your own, without consulting commentaries first), as you learn to let the text answer your questions (of course, in prayerful, humble submission to and under the tutelage of your Teacher the Holy Spirit, cp 1Cor 2:12-16, 1Jn 2:20, 27). In this case God says the "**then**" is when He **will draw near to them (Israel) for judgment**. which takes us back to the description of God as **like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap** in Malachi 3:2. In short, the **then** refers to the **Second Coming of Israel's Messiah**.

**I will draw near to you for judgment - Who is speaking?** Messiah is still speaking. Recall that in Malachi 2:17 they had asked "**Where is the God of justice?**" and here He answers clearly. **Be careful what you ask God for!** Note that to in contrast to those who will be enabled to make righteous offerings at the Second Coming, here His coming brings only His righteous wrath against sin. While we may not always see the dispensation of God's justice, we can be assured it will be meted out in full, perfect measure (cp

Ro 12:17-19-note)! As someone once said...

### **The Mill of God's Justice Grinds Slowly, But Exceedingly Fine!**

**When will Messiah draw near?** In context refers to **Second Coming** of Christ (see comments above [on Malachi 3:1-2](#))

**I will be a swift witness against** - The Righteous Judge Himself also serves as the perfect Witness, an all seeing One (Pr 15:3, cf His witness in Mal 2:14-note) listing **seven representative sins**.

Malachi's description is reminiscent of Paul's charge to Timothy to encourage him to always strive to "Preach the Word" (2Ti 4:2-note)...

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of **Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead** and **by His appearing** (Which will be "swift"! ) and His kingdom (2Ti 4:1-note)

**(1) The sorcerers** - The Hebrew word **kashaph** is translated in the Lxx with the noun **pharmakos** (Ex 7:11; 9:11; 22:17; Dt 18:10; Mal 3:5; Da 2:2, 27; 5:7-8; Rev 21:8-note; Rev 22:15-note, see study of cognate - **pharmakeia**). **Pharmakos** is "one who prepares and uses drugs for magical purposes or ritual witchcraft sorcerer, poisoner, magician." (Friberg) This word **pharmakos** (which gives us our word pharmacology) shows a clear link between drugs (including so-called "recreational drugs" which are epidemic in the United States and are ravaging countless individual lives and entire families!) and the spirit world. As a physician, I have no doubt that the use of recreational drugs opens the door for the user to encounter the demonic world (not saying all users become "possessed" but that illegal drug use is especially dangerous because it provides an entree for the forces of darkness).

**Tony Garland** has an interesting commentary on **sorcery** (pharmakon) as used by John in Revelation 9:21 ("and they did not repent of their murders nor of their **sorceries** nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.")

**Sorcery** was forbidden by the Law of Moses (Ex. 22:18; Dt. 18:10-11) as were all practices which involved communication with the dead such as conjuring spells (Dt. 18:11), consulting mediums (1Sa. 28:3-9), spiritism, or calling up the dead (really the demonic realm). This included all forms of magic (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; Lev. 20:6, 27; 2Chr. 33:6; Mal. 3:5). God condemned all of these practices and was indignant that men would "seek the dead on behalf of the living" (Isa. 8:19). Instead, they were to seek the living God.

One need only view modern cartoons on television or observe the recent Harry Potter phenomenon to observe how the foundation continues to be laid for subsequent generations who will have little reservation to participate in these forbidden practices.

That people are today [1983] being prepared for an irruption of demons, however, seems very probable. The plethora of movies, television programs, and books with demonic themes, along with the latter-day mushroom growth of occult religions and practices, are all surely conditioning men to a widespread belief in Satan and his demons. Furthermore, none of this is driving men to refuge in Christ, as one might at first suppose it would.

Drugs are used in association with sorcery because they place the practitioner into an altered state of consciousness whereby he or she becomes more open to contact with the demonic realm. The following account of a shaman from the Yanomamo tribe illustrates the connection between drug use and the demonic realm—a connection well-known even among "primitive" peoples:

I recently interviewed a man who had spent most of his life communing with spirit entities. There is no doubt as to his "authenticity." He was a shaman, a medicine man and chief of his Yanomamo tribe, which resides deep in the Amazonian rain forest of Venezuela. At odds with the lie promoted in anthropological circles that the lives of primitive tribes-people are pure, natural and Eden-like and therefore best kept from outside influence —Chief Shoefoot and his peoples violent, fear-filled existence is documented in a book titled *The Spirit of the Rain Forest*, written by Mark Ritchie ...

As a young boy, Shoefoot was singled out as one sensitive to the spirit realm and subsequently initiated into the sorcerers world. Again, a shaman is one who, through knowledge and power obtained from the spirits, heals and guides his people. Although the initial process of enabling him to contact the spirits was brutal, involving days of food and water deprivation and having someone force hallucinogenic drugs into his system by blowing them up his nose, the spirits he met were at first benign and curiously captivating... Shoefoot increased his drug intake in order to go deeper into the spirit world to find more trustworthy and benevolent spirits. That led to even more wicked spirits (Luke 11:26), greater frustration, and intense

despair.127 [emphasis added]

Some, who deny the reality of the spiritual realm, believe experiences such as those of this shaman are brought on by natural causes, such as drug use:

I asked Shoefoot through interpreter Mike Dawson, Joe's son, who grew up among the Yanomamo, how he would answer a skeptic who thought his experiences with the spirits were nothing more than hallucinations brought on by the drugs he took. Shoefoot's 70-something-year-old eyes sparkled at the question; he enjoys responding to challenges by skeptics, especially when he speaks to university anthropology students. Its ironic that this "primitive" man considers the highly educated anthropologists who study his people naive at best, deceived at worst. He told me of knowing shamans who had many of the same spirits he had had, yet, unlike him, they did not come to know them as a result of taking drugs. Whether the contacts were made with a clear mind or in a drug-induced state, descriptions and details were nearly always identical they all communed with the same spirits.128

During the awful days of the tribulation, the breakdown of law and order will mean that there will be no more restraints on drug use. Furthermore, the fearful judgments on the earth will drive many to drugs as a form of escapism. The merchants of the earth will gladly cooperate because of the great profits involved [Rev. 18:13].

Interestingly, Jezebel of the church of Thyatira apparently taught believers to experience "the depths of Satan" (Rev. 2:24), much like her namesake in the OT practiced witchcraft (2Ki 9:23). As we discussed previously, Jezebel at Thyatira can be seen as a type for the church which enters the Great Tribulation (Rev. 2:22) whereas those who overcome and reject her teaching will receive "the morning star" (Rev. 2:28, which see). Those who practice sorcery will also have their part in the second death (Rev. 21:8) and will never enter through the gates of the eternal city (Rev. 22:15). ([A Testimony of Jesus Christ - 3.9 - Revelation 9](#))

**(2) Adulterers** - This sin was forbidden in Ex 20:14, Dt 5:18 - Both parties were to be put to death (Lev 20:10; Dt. 22:22). The mention of adultery would seem to especially point out those who had divorced their wives (Mal 2:16) and "replaced" them with pagan idolaters ("married the daughter of a foreign god" Mal 2:11)!

**(3) Swear falsely** - swore falsely in name of God, a sin repeatedly condemned in the OT (Ex 20:7, 16; Lev 19:12; Dt 19:16-20, Pr 19:5, Jer 5:2; 7:9, 29:23; Zec 5:3, 4).

**(4) Oppress the wage earner in his wages** - These and the orphan and widow are generally helpless before the more powerful and are easily taken advantage of, but here God says they have an excellent Lawyer, the Judge of all Creation who will rule in their favor and execute judgment on their oppressors! (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15).

**Oppress** (06231)(**ashaq**) means to exhort others (obtaining money, property, etc, from others by force, intimidation or illegal power), to wrong them (malign them; treat disrespectfully or dishonorably, inflicting injury either unmerited or out of proportion to that deserved). **Ashaq** speaks of the abuse of power and authority, ill-treating those of lower status.

**Ashaq** - 35 verses - Lev 6:2, 4; 19:13; Deut 24:14; 28:29, 33; 1 Sam 12:3f; 1 Chr 16:21; Job 10:3; 40:23; Ps 72:4; 103:6; 105:14; 119:121f; 146:7; Prov 14:31; 22:16; 28:3, 17; Eccl 4:1; Isa 23:12; 52:4; Jer 7:6; 21:12; 50:33; Ezek 18:18; 22:29; Hos 5:11; 12:7; Amos 4:1; Mic 2:2; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5 **Usage:** crushed(1), defrauded(2), extorted(1), got(1), laden(1), oppress(11), oppressed(9), oppresses(3), oppressor(2), oppressors(2), practiced(2), rages(1), rob(1).

**T V Moore** - The helpless, who have no human protector, have a mightier and surer one in God. He may allow them to be oppressed for a time, but in the end will visit swift and terrible judgment on their oppressors.

**Wages** ((07939) (**sakar** from the verb **sakar** = to hire) is masculine noun indicating wages, a reward, pay. Sakar refers either to monetary pay or pay with goods (Ge 30:28, 32, 33; Ex. 2:9; Nu 18:31). In Ge 15:1 **sakar** is the **reward** (Lxx = **misthos**) from God to Abraham for faithfulness. **Sakar** can refer to the amount paid to rent or hire a person or object (Ex. 22:15). **Sakar** refers to the costs of maintenance or travel (Jonah 1:3; Zech. 8:10). The psalmist says Jehovah's gift of children is a **reward** (Lxx = **misthos**) (Ps 127:3). In an eschatological passage (somewhat mirroring Rev 22:12) Isaiah records "**Behold (hinneh)**, the Lord GOD will come with might (His **Second Coming**), With His arm ruling for Him. **Behold (hinneh)**, His **reward** (Lxx = **misthos**) is with Him, and His recompense before Him." (Isa. 40:10).

**Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition** - hire, wages: (1) Wages (2) reward, pay (3) fare, fee, passage-money

**Cleon Rogers** - The basic idea of the word is engaging the services of a person in return for pay. The various contexts in which this verb appears adds the color to the meaning. It is used of hiring an army to help deliver one from his enemies (2Sa 10:6; 2Ki 7:6; 1Chr 19:6; 2Chr 25:6)... The word is used of hiring skilled workers for a particular job (2Chr 24:12; Isa 46:6) or counselors for advice (Ezra 4:5). Leah "hires" the privilege of sleeping with her husband, Jacob, by giving Rachel the mandrakes of Reuben (Ge 30:16). Balaam is hired to curse Israel (Deut 23:5; Neh 13:2) and thereby becomes an example of false religious leaders who proclaim a message for money (Jude 1:11). God's prophet preaches his truth and is not "for hire." Pr 26:10 warns against hiring a fool for any kind of work. The Niphal indicates that one hires himself to another for a price (1Sa 2:5) and the reflexive idea of receiving wages for one's work is found in Hag 1:6. It is interesting to note that God never hires His servants; they work for Him freely out of love and thanksgiving and he rewards them for faithfulness out of His grace. (TWOT) (**Note:** While God never hires them as Rogers say, the amazing truth is that He does reward them in time and eternity! Amazing grace indeed.)

**Swanson** (summarized) - **1. wage**, i.e., the amount offered and given for services rendered as a just recompense (Ge 30:28, 32, 33; 31:8; Ex 2:9; 22:15; Nu 18:31; Dt 15:18; 24:15; 1Ki 5:6; Eze 29:18, 19; Zec 8:10; 11:12; Mal 3:5); **2. reward, pay back**, i.e., what is a just recompense for services or loyalty to someone (Ge 15:1; 30:18; 2Ch 15:7; Ps 127:3; Eccl 4:9; 9:5; Isa 40:10; 62:11; Jer 31:16); **3. fare**, i.e., the price charged to transport a person (Jonah 1:3)

**NAS Usage:** compensation(1), fare(1), hire(1), reward(6), rewarded(1), service(1), wage(2), wages(15).

**Sakar** - 25v - Gen 15:1; 30:18, 28, 32f; 31:8; Ex 2:9; 22:15; Num 18:31; Deut 15:18; 24:15; 1Ki 5:6; 2Chr 15:7; Ps 127:3; Eccl 9:5; Isa 40:10; 62:11; Jer 31:16; Ezek 29:18f; Jonah 1:3; Hag 1:6; Zech 8:10; 11:12; Mal 3:5

(5) **The widow and the orphan** - Two of most vulnerable groups in society. (Zech. 7:10 , Ex. 22:22–24; Lev. 19:10; Dt. 24:19–22).

(6) **Those who turn aside the alien** - deprive aliens of justice. (Dt 24:17, 27:19)

## NO FEAR OF THE LORD

(7) **Do not fear Me** - They had professed fear of God in **Malachi 1:6KJV-note**. All of the preceding sins reflected a lack of fear of the LORD, the Master. As Paul declared in Romans, the absence of **fear** of God sums up the basic "heart defect" (so to speak) which underlies the litany of preceding sins in Ro 3:10-17.

"THERE IS **NO FEAR OF GOD** BEFORE THEIR EYES." (Ro 3:18-note)

Israel's deeds are clear evidence that they did not reverence Jehovah. Is that not true in our case when we willfully, wantonly commit evil, even doing so before His very eyes (Pr 15:3)!

**Fear of God** motivates one to hate evil and delight in God's commands...

Ge 22:12 And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you **fear God**, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

**Comment:** Abraham's obedience did not save him, but it did demonstrate that his faith was genuine and his righteousness was not his but Christ's (cp Ge 15:6, Gal 3:8, 16).

Ps 112:1 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who **fears the LORD**, Who greatly delights in His commandments.

Pr 8:13 "**The fear of the LORD is to hate evil**; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate.

**Mackay** sums up this passage - What is needed is that reverential fear of God that shows a heart submissive before Him, and trusting in Him (**Ed:** Messiah) and His provision for all our needs. Then we can stand before Him at His coming, not on the basis of our achievements but in what is ours in Christ (cf 1Cor 1:30, 2Cor 5:21-note Php 3:7-9-note).

**Calvin:** We then see the purpose of this passage, which is to show that the Jews were ungrateful to God, because they mingled with heathen nations, and knowingly and willfully cast aside that glory by which God had adorned them by choosing them, as Moses

says, to be to him a royal priesthood... He therefore condemns them for this ingratitude, because they had not only departed from the covenant which the Lord had made with their fathers, but had also neglected and despised that gratuitous love, which ought to have softened even their iron hearts. For if God had found anything in them as a reason why he preferred them to other nations, they might have been more excusable, at least they might have extenuated their fault; but since God had adopted them as his peculiar people, though they were unworthy and wholly undeserving, they must surely have been extremely brutish, to have thus despised the gratuitous favor of God. Their baseness then is increased, as I have said, by this circumstance, -- that so great a kindness of God did not turn their hearts to obedience.

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**True Courage** "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers."—Mal. 3:5

The boldness of Latimer in rebuking even the king's majesty himself, for conscience sake, is shown in a well-known anecdote. At the time of Henry's neglect of Queen Anne Boleyn, and his undisguised preference for Jane Seymour, the bishops brought, according to custom, their New Year's gifts to court. "Some," says the old chronicler, "did gratify the king with gold, some with silver, some with a purse full of money; some one thing, some another. But Master Latimer, being Bishop of Worcester, then among the rest presented a New Testament for his gift, with a napkin having this motto upon it, 'Fornicadores et Adulteres judicabit Dominus'—'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.'" (Clerical Library)

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**Malachi 3:5 "Financial Immorality"** - A CHURCHGOING businessman and his attorney wife, respectable and wealthy people, asked me to recommend a household employee who could work from eight to five every day caring for two children, cleaning the house, and preparing the evening meal.

They told me the amount they would be willing to pay—and it wasn't very much. I said simply that I didn't know anyone who could fill that role. Inwardly I seethed at their blatant desire to exploit a needy person. They each earned more in thirty minutes than they were willing to pay for a full day's work.

God is just as concerned about financial injustices as He is about abortion, adultery, deceit, and dishonesty. He is grieved when He sees the rich and powerful take advantage of the poor and helpless.

While relatively few of us are in positions to change the conditions of society at large, all of us can change a small part of it—the part that we encounter every day. We can treat fairly those with whom we deal—babysitters, delivery people, clerks and cashiers, salespeople, parking attendants, waiters and waitresses. In God's eyes, financial immorality is just as despicable as sexual immorality.—H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Malachi 3:6 "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed:**

- **I the LORD:** Ge 15:7,18 Ge 22:16 Ex 3:14,15 Ne 9:7,8 Isa 41:13 Isa 42:5-8 Isa 43:11,12 Isa 44:6 Isa 45:5-8 Jer 32:27 Ho 11:9
- **Do not change:** Nu 23:19 1Sa 15:29 Ps 102:26 Heb 6:18 Heb 13:8 Jas 1:17 Rev 1:8 Rev 22:13
- **Therefore:** Ps 78:38,57 Ps 103:17 Ps 105:7-10 Isa 40:28-31 La 3:22,23 Ro 11:28,29
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DIVINE IMMUTABILITY ASSURES BOTH DIVINE JUSTICE & DIVINE MERCY**

**For** (see additional note on "for" below) - Always take note of this **term of explanation** and use it as an opportunity to pause (Slow down! Stop speed reading! Cp Ps 46:10,11-[see Spurgeon's note!](#)) In **context**, God is explaining why He must draw near to them for judgment -- He does not change. He is forever the reliably righteous Judge. Those who **do not fear** Him are destined to be judged (justly and without partiality) and be condemned to a Christ-less eternity (Read 2Th 1:8, 9). But notice that even in this somewhat "depressing" context of explaining His righteous wrath, He immediately moves to remind Israel of His mercies, as so beautifully proclaimed by Jeremiah...

The LORD'S lovingkindnesses (Plural!) indeed never cease (Note this **expression of time**), **for (term of explanation)** = explaining why Jehovah's **lovingkindnesses never cease!** His compassions never fail (Note this second **expression of time**). 23 They are new every morning (Note this third **expression of time!**). Great is Thy faithfulness. (Lam 3:22, 23, Be sure to read the **context** - Lam 3:18-21 - [What was Jeremiah's](#)



**mental/emotional state? What did he choose to do?** Be sure to carefully track his going from "no hope" to possessing "hope!")

## OUR IMMUTABLE JESUS

### Hebrews 13:8-note

**For** - There is another way to interpret this "**for**" - In view of the truth that God does not change, He will remain faithful to His covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and thus they will not be utterly destroyed, despite their recalcitrant rebellion. John Phillips agrees commenting that "The only reason the brazen skeptics of Malachi's day were not destroyed for their insolence was the integrity of God. "I change not.""

In his 1856 commentary **T V Moore** explains **for** this way...

It must be taken as a causal particle (expressing cause), introducing a reason for, or an inference from what precedes. The connection is probably as follows:—In view of this prevalent wickedness, there were two conclusions that might be drawn. **First**, that of the skeptic—that God had ceased to punish sin, since the sinning people still continued to exist; and **secondly**, that of the timid believer—that with so much sin, Israel must be destroyed. God replies that neither of these conclusions is correct. "They are spared and not consumed, because I am Jehovah, the covenant God of their fathers, and they, sons of Jacob, to whom I am bound by covenant; and **while I spare them, I will also punish them, and while I punish them, I will also preserve them from total extinction!**" The stress of the verse, then, is found in the meaning of the name **Jehovah**, which was the covenant Name of God to the Jews, as is clearly proved by the remarkable... passage, Ex 6:3; and is here used in antithesis (**Ed**: A rhetorical contrast - Jehovah's faithfulness versus Jacob's unfaithfulness) with Jacob, the covenanting head of the visible theocracy... The immutability of God, then, is at once the guarantee that His people shall be cast into the furnace, and also that they shall not be consumed."

**I, the LORD, do not change** - This divine attribute ought to evoke a heart felt "Hallelujah!, thank You Jesus!" As **Walter Kaiser** remarks "Even when Israel had "*violated*" and profaned the covenant of God (Mal. 2:10), God had refused to "*violate*" His promise to Israel (Ps. 89:34; the same Hebrew word for "*violate*" is used in both texts)."

The **New English Bible** rendering is interesting - "I am the Lord, unchanging; and you, too, have not ceased to be sons of Jacob." **J. Baldwin** adds that "He who once loved Jacob (Mal 1:2) did not cease to love his sons, though they continued to take after their father and were cheats and supplanters (Ge 25:31–33; Ge 27:18–29, 36; cf. Mal. 3:5). The antithetic parallelism accentuates God's goodness." God's unchangeable goodness contrasted with Israel's persistent deceitfulness (Ge 31:20, 26).

**Immutability** means that God is not subject to change through time or circumstances. He is invariable. In His nature and character, God is absolutely without change. In God's essence, attributes, consciousness and will, He is unchangeable. Ponder the significance of this truth, in light of other truths about God such as "God is love." (1Jn 4:8, 16). What does the truth of immutability add to the truth that God is love? Below is C H Spurgeon's "answer" to this question...

Every Christian is to be a testifier. He is to be a witness with heart and lips. All the other creatures speak not with words. They may sing as they shine, but they cannot sing vocally. It is the believer's part in the great chorus to lift up voice and heart at once, and as an intelligent, living, loving, learning witness, to testify to God. In the first place we have known that God's love to us is undeserved. Another thing we can bear testimony to, is this — that the love of God is unconquerable. We strove against God's love, but it conquered us. We can say concerning His love that it has never been diminished by all the sins we have ever committed since we believed. We have often revolted, but we have never found Him unwilling to forgive.

We have known and we have believed  
the love of God to us to be perfectly immutable.

I will make but one other remark here, and that is, we can bear our willing witness that the love of God to us has been an unfailing support in all our trials. This great truth is the groundwork of Christian encouragement.

The trustworthy 1915 edition of the ISBE says **Immutability** "is the perfection of Yahweh that He changes not in character, will, purpose, aim." (Orr, James. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

Warning! Beware of the radical (and radically heretical) false teaching that is being propounded by some so called "process theologians" who hold the belief that God's own nature is evolving. They are directly refuted with God's our Word of Truth "I, the LORD, do not change." (Malachi 3:6).

Watch and listen to Charles Haddon Spurgeon's message on "The Unchangeable Christ" ([The Unchangeable Christ, A Sermon No. 2358](#)) (Here is the text of his sermon --Hebrews 13:8 [The Unchangeable Christ](#))

**Therefore** - A term of conclusion. Whenever you encounter a "therefore", pause and ponder, taking the opportunity to interrogate the text! You can always ask "What's it *there for*?" Or you can amplify your probing of the passage with questions like --**What is Malachi's conclusion? What is the basis for his conclusion?** The basis is the immutability of God. Because God does not change, Israel would not be destroyed, as explained in the next paragraph.

In **Malachi 2:10-note** we see that Israel **profaned the covenant** -- the word "**profane**" in Hebrew is **chalal**, the same word translated **violate** in Psalm 89 where God declares..

"My covenant I will not **violate**,  
Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips."  
(Psalm 89:34-[note](#))

God is a God Who "**not change**" (Malachi 3:6-[note](#)), so that even though Israel "**violated**" which explains why the "**sons of Jacob are not consumed!**"

**Consumed** ([03615](#))(**kalah**) is used 200x in the OT and conveys such meanings as annihilate, destroy, devour and perish. Had God been a mutable (fickle, changeable) God, Israel would have been annihilated! The Lxx uses the verb *apecho/apechomai* one meaning of which is to receive in full what is due! Israel deserved to be annihilated, but because of Jehovah's covenant lovingkindness, they did not receive what they fully deserved! And neither have we, beloved! We deserved Hell, but God graciously granted us Heaven in Christ! Praise God that He does not change, but is forever faithful to His covenant (Play [Forever by Chris Tomlin](#)).

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that "Twice Moses used this truth about God (His immutability) as his argument when he interceded for the nation (Ex. 33:12–23; Num. 14:11–21). The same principle applies to believers today, for 1John 1:9 states that God is "faithful and just to forgive our sins." God is faithful to His promises and just toward His Son who died for our sins that we might be forgiven. (See also Num. 23:19; Deut. 4:31; and James 1:17.) (Be amazed)

**You O sons of Jacob are not consumed:** The implication is that because of their stubbornness and rebelliousness against God and His covenant, Israel should have been completely **consumed**, wiped out, annihilated as a distinct ethnic group! And yet they were not consumed because God had cut an unconditional covenant with their fathers, **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel)**. As everyone knows from personal experience (both good and bad!), a promise is only as good as the person who makes it. The immutable God will keep His promise to the nation of Israel. His promise will not change, because His Word, like Himself, will not change. This truth is the basis for Israel's hope (not "hope so" but an absolute assurance that God will do them good in the future! **See discussion of The Messianic Hope of Israel**). And so we see that Moses records...

Deut 4:31 "**For (Term of explanation** [Always pause to ponder the "for's" - your efforts will be rewarded by your Teacher the Spirit!] - What is Moses explaining? See Dt 4:29, 30 predicting Israel's future return to Jehovah in the last days. Why? That is what the rest of this verse explains.) the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you **nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them (See Abrahamic versus Mosaic Covenants)**. (Deut 4:31, see parallel promise regarding Israel's sure future in Ezekiel 36:22-32-note)

**Comment:** To reiterate, God is a covenant keeping God which is every believer's assurance that He will keep the everlasting [Heb 13:20-note, Jer 32:40, Ezek 37:26-note] New Covenant [See **Abrahamic vs Old vs New Covenants**] which we as believers have entered into! See Ro 11:29-note).

**Paul George** - The Lord immutability asserted by Himself, no word that He has spoken shall fall to the ground. He is a just revenger of those that rebel against him. He is the rewarder of those that diligently seek him. In both these He is unchangeable. Though the sentence passed against evil works (v. 5) is not executed speedily, yet it will be executed, for He is "the Lord" and He does not change. He is an enemy to sin and impenitent sinners will find him so. His judgment is never antiquated, or out of date, but against those that go on still in their trespasses the curse of his law still remains in full force, power, and virtue. The Israel had reason to say that the Lord is unchangeable because of His faithfulness. If the Lord had not be faithful His covenant with them and their fathers they would have been consumed long ago and cut off from being a people. They had been unfaithful and the Lord would have been just if He abandoned them, and then they would have been consumed and ruined, but because the Lord remembered His covenant and would not violate His covenant or alter it they were preserved from ruin. It was purely because he would be as good as his word (Deuteronomy 7:8; Leviticus 26:46).

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## Malachi 3:6 C H Spurgeon Morning and Evening

### “I am the Lord, I change not” — Malachi 3:6

It is well for us that, amidst all the variableness of life, there is One whom change cannot affect; One whose heart can never alter, and on whose brow mutability can make no furrows. All things else have changed—all things are changing. The sun itself grows dim with age; the world is waxing old; the folding up of the worn-out vesture has commenced; the heavens and earth must soon pass away; they shall perish, they shall wax old as doth a garment; but there is One who only hath immortality, of whose years there is no end, and in whose person there is no change. The delight which the mariner feels, when, after having been tossed about for many a day, he steps again upon the solid shore, is the satisfaction of a Christian when, amidst all the changes of this troublous life, he rests the foot of his faith upon this truth—“I am the Lord, I change not.”

The stability which the anchor gives the ship when it has at last obtained a hold-fast, is like that which the Christian's hope affords him when it fixes itself upon this glorious truth. With God “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” What ever his attributes were of old, they are now; his power, his wisdom, his justice, his truth, are alike unchanged. He has ever been the refuge of his people, their stronghold in the day of trouble, and he is their sure Helper still. He is unchanged in his love. He has loved his people with “an everlasting love”; he loves them now as much as ever he did, and when all earthly things shall have melted in the last conflagration, his love will still wear the dew of its youth. Precious is the assurance that he changes not! The wheel of providence revolves, but its axle is eternal love.

“Death and change are busy ever,  
Man decays, and ages move;  
But his mercy waneth never;  
God is wisdom, God is love.”

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### Malachi 3:6 A God Of Absolutes

READ: Malachi 3:6-12

I am the Lord, I do not change. —Malachi 3:6

I am dubious about the accuracy of our bathroom scale. So I've learned to manipulate it in a self-satisfying manner. The little adjustment knob serves to vary the register, and if that becomes too much bother, I just lean a certain way. The idea is to get a favorable reading—hopefully one that is a few pounds less.

We live in an age when many people believe there are no absolutes. Self-serving behavior is rampant and tramples the moral law given for the protection of society. Our culture prides itself on “freedom” that is actually slavery to sin (Romans 6:16-17).

But there is a God of absolutes whose scales never lose their adjustment. With Him, a pound is a pound, right is right, and wrong is wrong. He says, “I am the Lord, I do not change” (Malachi 3:6).

For us as believers, this puts steel into our spiritual backbone. We gain confidence in the face of difficulty and are assured of the fulfillment of every divine promise.

If God were easily moved by every whim or notion, our eternal destiny would be in constant jeopardy. But because He is the Unchanging One, we “are not consumed” (v.6). “His compassions fail not. They are new every morning” (Lamentations 3:22-23).—Paul Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Unchanging God who reigns above,  
His truth remains forever;  
And from this faithful God of love  
No earthly trial can sever.  
—D. De Haan

Earth changes, but God and His Word stand sure! —Browning

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### Malachi 3:6. Octavius Winslow. Daily Walking with God

It is no small attainment to be built up in the faithfulness of God. This forms a stable foundation of comfort for the believing soul. Mutability marks everything outside of God. Look into the Church, into the world, into our families, ourselves, what innumerable changes do we see on every hand! A week, one short day, what alterations does it produce! Yet, in the midst of it all, to repose

calmly on the unchangeableness, the faithfulness of God. To know that no alterations of time, no earthly changes, affect His faithfulness to His people. And more than this- no changes in them- no unfaithfulness of theirs, causes the slightest change in God. Once a Father, ever a Father; once a Friend, ever a Friend. His providences may change, His heart cannot. He is a God of unchangeable love. The promise He has given, He will fulfil; the covenant He has made, He will observe; the word that has gone out of His mouth, He will not alter. "He cannot deny Himself." Peace then, tried believer! Are you passing now through the deep waters? Who kept you from sinking when wading through the last? Who brought you through the last fire? Who supported you under the last cross? Who delivered you out of the last temptation? Was it not God, your covenant God- your faithful, unchangeable God? This God, then, is your God now, and your God forever and ever, and He will be your guide even unto death.

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### Malachi 3:6 Our Changing World

READ: Psalm 102:25-27

I am the Lord, I do not change. —Malachi 3:6

Change is one thing we can be sure of in this life. Our relationships change as we move to new places, experience illness, and ultimately face death. Even the cells in our bodies are always in the process of change. When cells wear out, most are replaced by new ones. This is especially noticeable with our skin—we shed and regrow outer skin cells about every 27 days.

Yes, change is the one certainty in our world. Henry Lyte's melancholy line in his hymn "Abide With Me" is true: "Change and decay in all around I see." But the hymn immediately adds, "O Thou who changest not, abide with me!"

By faith in Jesus Christ we can have a relationship with the unchanging God, who says of Himself in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord, I do not change." We can depend on God to be the same forever, as the psalmist says (Psalm 102:27). Hebrews 13:8 adds this reassuring testimony: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He is our firm foundation, who can give us confidence and security in this changing world.

We creatures, caught up in the swirling tide of time, can rest our souls on the everlasting arms, which will never let us go.—Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see—  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!  
—Lyte

To face life's changes, look to the unchanging God.

**Malachi 3:7 "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. "But you say, 'How shall we return?':"**

- **from the:** Dt 9:7-21 31:20,27-29 Ne 9:16,17,26,28-30 Ps 78:8-10 Eze 20:8,13,21,28 Lk 11:48-51 Ac 7:51,52
- **Return to me:** Lev 26:40-42 Dt 4:29-31 30:1-4 1Ki 8:47-49 Ne 1:8,9 Isa 55:6,7 Jer 3:12-14,22 Eze 18:30-32 Ho 14:1 Zec 1:3 Jas 4:8)(but you say: Mal 3:13 1:6 Isa 65:2 Mt 23:27 Lk 15:16 Ro 7:9 10:3,21
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE RIGHTEOUS ONE REACHES OUT TO THE UNRIGHTEOUS

T V Moore summarizes Malachi 3:7-12

- I. A general charge of disobedience and degeneracy, and a call to reformation, (Mal 3:7.)
- II. The specific sin of neglecting tithes and offerings adduced in answer to the challenge of the people, (Mal 3:8.)
- III. A call to reformation in this particular, and a promise of blessings in that event, (Mal 3:9–12.)

**From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them-** This indictment sweeps back

to the beginning, to the very birth of the nation of Israel. They were repeatedly and persistently disobedient. **Ezra** declares "Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder and to open shame, as it is this day." (Ezra 9:7)

**Turned aside** (cf Mal 2:8) ([05493](#)) (**sur**) means to depart from the way, something Israel had been clearly instructed not to do (cf depart = Dt 4:9, turn aside = Dt 5:32). The verb **sur** is used to describe how Israel "quickly **turned aside** quickly from the way which" the LORD had commanded them by making a golden calf (Dt 9:12, 16). Israel had been clear warning "Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not **turn away** (**sur**) and serve other gods and worship them." (Dt 11:16, cf Dt 11:28) (Note the inevitable, unavoidable downward spiral from turning away from the truth, to become a slave to a lie (idols) and to worship them!" And again Moses instructed them "You shall not **turn aside** from the word which they (Levitical priests) declare to you, to the right or the left." (Dt 17:11)

**Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition of sur** - to turn aside, depart. (1) (Qal) - (a) to turn aside, turn in unto (b) to depart, depart from way, avoid (c) to be removed (d) to come to an end. (2) (Poel) to turn aside (3) (Hiphil) to cause to turn aside, cause to depart, remove, take away, put away, depose

In Mal 3:7 the Lxx uses **ekklino** here from ek = out, out from + klino = incline, bend, turn aside or away) which means to lean in the wrong direction, to bend out of the regular line, to bend away, to turn aside or deviate from the right way or course (exemplified by the use in the Septuagint of Malachi 2:8, Deut 5:32)

In Malachi 2:6 this same Hebrew verb (**sub**) is used with the opposite sense speaking of Levi who "turned many back from iniquity." Here in Mal 3:7 they are turning aside from God's statutes! Sur is used with a positive sense in Mal 3:18 ("**will again...** ") and Mal 4:6 ("**restore** the hearts of the fathers to their children.")

They had **turned aside** but God **had not changed** (Mal 3:6) gracious call to sinners in need, calling them to return. As **Walter Kaiser** says "The message of all the previous prophets could be summarized in the single word **"return"** (Zech. 1:3-4), the Old Testament word for **repentance**. The word invites the listeners to turn 180 degrees, reversing their direction. Instead of heading off toward sin, self, and contemporary idols, Israel is urged to turn around and look in faith to the Man of Promise." How tragic that she rebuffs such a gracious invitation from "the LORD who rules over all" (NET), replying "**How shall we return?**" The implication is that they sensed no need to return! **Kaiser** adds that "Israel fails to acknowledge her problem; she gives instead a whimper of innocence by saying, in effect, "Who? Us? We need to repent? Why do we need to turn back to God? We never went away from Him, did we?"

**Return to Me** - We see the same divine accusation and offer echoed in another post-exilic book, Zechariah recording

The LORD was very angry with your fathers. Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, **"Return to Me,"** declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts. (Zech 1:2-3)

**Return** ([07725](#)) (**shub/sub**) is a common verb (over 1000x) meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder.

See the **NAS usage** list below for the many ways **shub/sub** is translated in the OT and this will give you a good sense of the various nuances of meaning (the most common uses are highlighted in **bold font**).

Another way to get a good "feel" for this very common Hebrew word is to read the Scriptures in which it is used **Here is a relatively quick and easy way to do this = [Click Here](#)**. Then scroll to **"Frequency/Word"**. Select translation preferred and then select the book of the Bible you want to examine. **Pray** for the Spirit to "unfold" His Word (Ps 119:130) and then begin your journey of exploration! Notice that the Hebrew word translated in English is **highlighted** for easy identification. **I can guarantee that you will be quite pleasantly amazed at how much insight the Spirit will give you as you carry out this simple exercise as you rely on His teaching. A few of the passages are discussed below to give you a sense of how rewarding this exercise can be.**

Some contexts mean to **turn from** God and so to apostatize. In other contexts such as this passage in Mal 3:7 we see the opposite sense which is **to turn back** (return) to God, in effect to repent. As an aside, these "opposite" meanings emphasize the vital importance of carefully examining the context of the many uses of **shub/sur** in order to derive the correct sense of the word. In Isa 55:11 God says His Word "will not **return** to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

In Mal 3:7 the **Lxx** translates **shub/sub** (for both uses of return) with **epistrepho** which means to revert, to turn about, to turn around, to turn toward, to return and figuratively to convert. The idea is a definite turn to God in conduct as well as in one's mind (cf a command to **"return"** [**epistrepho**] in Acts 3:19, but notice the reward for returning! **This truth can be applied to believers who wander from God [all of us!], for each time we wander away, we must repent and return to Him. Praise God for the gift of the Spirit's giving us the desire and the power to repent and return! And for the times of refreshing [Luke uses anapsuxis {only use in Bible}**



which is derived from anapsucho] **we then experience**. See Ro 2:4-note, Php 2:13-note).

The first use of **shub/sub** is Ge 3:19 - "By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you **return** to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall **return**." The books with the greatest number of uses of **shub/sub** are Genesis (60), Psalms (65) and Jeremiah (92), but almost every book has some usage. In Ge 8:3 the water "receded" (or returned) and the dove returned to the ark because she found no resting place (Ge 8:9). In a prophecy to be fulfilled at the end of this present age we read that "Afterward the sons of Israel will **return** and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days." (Hosea 3:5) Hosea in fact has 21 uses of shub/sub in only 14 chapters, so has one of the more "concentrated" uses in Scripture. Hosea 6:1 invites the readers "Come, let us **return** to the LORD. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us." In Hosea 6:11 God says " I **restore** the fortunes of My people." We see another invitation in Hosea 12:6 - "Therefore, **return** to your God, Observe kindness and justice, And wait for your God continually." and Hosea 14:1-2 "**Return**, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity... Take words with you and **return** to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity And receive us graciously, That we may present the fruit of our lips." And for those who return we read God's promise in Hosea 14:4 - "I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, For My anger **has turned away** from them." **Hallelujah!**

**Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition of shub/sub**- to return, turn back. (1) (Qal) (a) to turn back, return, (b) to turn back; (c) to return, come or go back (d) to return unto, go back, come back (e) of dying (f) of human relations (fig) (g) **OF SPIRITUAL RELATIONS** (figuratively) = to turn back (**from** God), apostatize; to turn away (of God); to turn back (**to** God), repent; turn back (from evil). (h) of inanimate things (i) in repetition (2) (Polel) - (a) to bring back (b) to restore, refresh, repair (fig) (c) to lead away (enticingly) (d) to show turning, apostatize (3)(Pual) restored (participle) (4) (Hiphil) to cause to return, bring back (a) to bring back, allow to return, put back, draw back, give back, restore, relinquish, give in payment (b) to bring back, refresh, restore (c) to bring back, report to, answer (d) to bring back, make requital, pay (as recompense) (e) to turn back or backward, repel, defeat, repulse, hinder, reject, refuse (f) to turn away (face), turn toward (g) to turn against (h) to bring back to mind (i) to show a turning away **to reverse, revoke** (2) (**Hophal**) to be returned, be restored, be brought back (2) (Pulal) brought back

In his discussion of **shub/sub**, **Victor Hamilton** writes that "The Bible is rich in idioms describing man's responsibility in the process of repentance (**Ed**: The examples Hamilton gives do not however use sub/shub). Such phrases would include the following: "incline your heart unto the Lord your God" (Josh 24:23): "circumcise yourselves to the Lord" (Jer 4:4); "wash your heart from wickedness" (Jer 4:14); "break up your fallow ground" (Hos 10:12) and so forth. All these expressions of man's penitential activity, however, are subsumed and summarized by this one verb **sub**. For better than any other verb it combines in itself the two requisites of repentance: **to turn from evil and to turn to the good.**" In the Qal stem it has been suggested that there are ten different meanings for šûb with subdivisions within each, plus a few uses difficult to pinpoint (Holladay, p. 59ff.). Of these two or three merit special observance. To begin with, the basic meaning of šûb "to (re)turn" implying physical motion or movement appears over 270 times. A few times God is the subject, "At the appointed time I will **return** to you (Sarah)," (Ge 18:14). Most often the subject is a person: "I (Abraham) and the lad (Isaac) will go yonder and worship, and **return** to you" (Gen 22:5). In the Hiphil there are eighty-seven occurrences of šûb in the sense of "bring back, carry back."

Second, often (over 120 times) šûb acts as a sort of an auxiliary verb whose function is to repeat the action of the second verb: "and 'again' Isaac dug the wells (wayyāšōb yīāq wayyapōr," Ge 26:18).

The third important use of šûb in the Qal, and theologically the most crucial, is in passages dealing with the covenant community's return to God (in the sense of repentance), or turning away from evil (in the sense of renouncing and disowning sin), or turning away from God (in the sense of becoming apostate). In such contexts šûb in the Qal is used 129 times. By contrast, in the Hiphil šûb is used only eleven times when discussing the divine-human relationship. "turn back (Qal imperative) and 'let yourself be turned from your idols' (Hiphil) from your idols" (Ezek 14:6).

Taking all stems into consideration, Holladay (p. 117) concludes that there are a total of 164 uses of šûb in a covenantal context. The majority of them, as one might expect, are to be found in the classical/literary prophets 113 times, with Jeremiah leading the way (forty-eight times). By way of contrast with Jeremiah, the covenantal usage of šûb is found only six times in the first thirty-nine chapters of Isaiah (maybe only five if we read Jer 30:15 not, "in returning (to God) and rest shall you be saved," but "in sitting still yāšab, i.e. abstention from foreign alliances, resting shall you be saved"). In the remaining twenty-seven chapters it is found only four times: Jer 44:22; 55:7; 57:17; 59:20. Thus, we encounter the interesting phenomenon of two prophets back to back in the canon, the first virtually silent on the subject and the second quite vocal. Perhaps the paucity of references in Isaiah is the prophet's way of saying the die has already been cast. Quite poignantly God says to Isaiah, "Make the heart of this people fat ... lest they be converted (šûb) and healed." A point of no return has been reached. God has foreseen the stubbornness of his people and has incorporated it into his plan. The prophet, therefore, is not to be frustrated (Mt 13:13ff.).

It should be noted that in a number of places šûb means "to return from exile." In the Qal: naturally in Ezra and Neh (Ezra 2:1; Neh

7:6); also Isa 10:22; Jer 22:10; Zech 10:9, inter alia; in the Hiphil: 1Ki 8:34; Jer 12:15, inter alia. The association between the ideas of a return from exile and a return to the covenant should be obvious. A return from exile was reclamation as much as a return from any form of sin. That God should permit either return is corroborative of his covenantal faithfulness.

To be sure, there is no systematic spelling out of the doctrine of repentance in the OT. It is illustrated (Psalm 51 - see also sub in Ps 51:13) more than anything else. Yet the fact that people are called "to turn" either "to" or "away from" implies that sin is not an ineradicable stain, but by turning, a God-given power, a sinner can redirect his destiny. There are two sides in understanding conversion, the free sovereign act of God's mercy and man's going beyond contrition and sorrow to a conscious decision of turning to God. The latter includes repudiation of all sin and affirmation of God's total will for one's life. ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament- R Laird Harris, Gleason L Archer Jr., Bruce K Waltke](#))

**Return** (a command) **to Me, and I will return to you** - What a gracious invitation! But how do recalcitrant rebels **return** to the Righteous One? God foresaw Israel's disobedience and provided a "way of escape" even before they had disobeyed...

**Lev 26:40-42** - If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me—41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their **uncircumcised heart** becomes **humbled** so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember My covenant with **Jacob** (unconditional, albeit it did call for exercise of personal faith in the promises of God - cf Ge 15:5-6), and I will remember also My covenant with **Isaac**, and My covenant with **Abraham** as well, and I will remember **the land**.

**Comment:** Clearly their uncircumcised (proud) heart was a figurative description of an unrepentant, rebellious, faithless heart (**See excursus on Uncircumcised Heart versus Circumcised Heart**).

Beloved, don't miss the last part of this promise **"I will remember the land."** - God will indeed remember **the land**, the land which was promised to Jacob, Isaac and Abraham, **not** to the church. If one reads the Scripture literally, Israel remains national "Israel" and has not been "replaced" by the Church (See discussion of **Israel of God**)! In Leviticus Moses clearly documents that God promises to keep this aspect of His unconditional covenant cut with their fathers. The righteous remnant will be restored to the promised land when the Messiah returns. GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH ISRAEL or the prophetic promise in Lev 26:42b is "null and void," but God is not a man that He should lie!

**Dt 4:29-31** - **But** (this term of contrast forces us to examine the preceding context - Dt 4:23-25, 26-28) from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him **IF** you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. 30 When (A very important - expression of time. **To what time does Moses refer?**) you are in **distress** (so it is specifically a time of tribulation - **Lxx** translates Hebrew word for *distress* with **thlipsis**, the same word in the phrase "*Great Tribulation*" in Mt 24:31, Rev 7:14) and all these things have come upon you (the "curses" in Dt 4:23-28), in the latter days (Another important expression of time - I believe this "distress" is at the time of the **Great Tribulation**, when Satan's wrath "channeled" through the Antichrist will be directed with full force against the Jews, bringing about a veritable "global holocaust"), **you will return to the LORD your God and listen** (Hebrew verb conveys not just the hearing, but hearing with attention and giving obedient assent) **to His voice** (Recall that this answers to God's invitation in Mal 3:7 = "**Return to Me and I will return to you!**"). 31 **For** (term of explanation - **What is Moses explaining?**) the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) which He swore to them.

The writer of Hebrews alludes to Israel's lack of genuine faith "from the days of (their) fathers," writing

For indeed we (first century Jews) have had good news (the Gospel) preached to us (cp Gal 3:8), just as they (Israel in the OT) also; but the Word they heard did not profit them (**Why not? What key ingredient was missing?**), because it was not united by **faith** (it is not enough to **hear** the Gospel - it is necessary to **believe** it = John 5:24; Jas 1:22-note) in those who **heard**. (Heb 4:2)

**Henry Morris** - The "gospel" is not just a New Testament revelation, for it was preached to the children of Israel in the wilderness, in types and prophecies, at least. In fact, it is "the everlasting gospel" (Revelation 14:6,7), and the first promise of redemption (Genesis 3:15) is commonly known as the protevangel (first Gospel). In its essence, the Gospel (good news) is the message that the Creator is also our Redeemer and coming King, and that true faith in Him--**faith** which produces salvation--will also produce **loving obedience** to His Word. (cf God's declaration here in Mal 3:7 that Israel had persistently turned aside and did not keep [obey] God's statutes.)

**See Related Discussion: Relationship of faith and obedience and Obedience of faith - What does it mean?**

"We must come back to God if we would have God come back to us, for it is we who have changed, and not God; He is the same."  
(Moore)

**Shub/sub in NAS Usage:** again(53), answer(4), answer\*(5), answered(5), averted(1), back(7), back again(2), bring(1), bring her back(1), bring him back(2), bring it back(1), bring me back(2), bring the back(1), bring them again(1), **bring them back(14)**, **bring you back(5)**, **bring back(14)**, bring presents(1), bring... back(4), bringing(1), bringing the back(1), brought(2), brought him again(2), brought him back(3), brought it back(3), brought me back(4), brought the again(1), brought them back(2), brought us back(1), brought again(1), **brought back(17)**, brought... back(1), call(1), came again(1), came back(1), cause(1), certainly bring(1), certainly bring them back(1), come back(10), converted(1), deluded(1), desist(2), draw and turning(1), draw it back(1), drawn(1), drew back(1), drives(1), ever go back(1), fro(1), forth(1), gave... return(1), get(1), get it back(1), give(2), give a answer(1), give it back(1), give them back(1), give back(2), gives(2), go(1), go on back(1), **go back(10)**, go\*(1), going back(1), gone back(1), indeed(1), indeed bring(1), indeed bring me back(1), indeed return(2), indeed turn away(1), keeps(2), make them return(1), make restitution(1), paid(2), pass your again(1), pass away(1), pay(1), pays us back in full(2), punishing(1), put(3), put his back(1), put the back(1), put back(1), rebuilt\*(2), recall(2), recalls\*(1), receded(1), recompense(1), recompense\*(1), recompensed(4), recovered(4), refreshes(1), refund(3), refuse(4), refute(1), regain(1), remade\*(1), **render(8)**, repaid(1), repay(5), repeatedly(2), repeats(1), repel(1), **repent(6)**, repent and turn away(2), repentant(1), repented(1), replace(1), reply(6), reply\*(1), reported(1), reported\*(1), repulse\*(2), rescue(1), respond(1), restitution may be made(1), restitution which is made(1), **restore(58)**, **restored(17)**, restorer(2), **restores(7)**, restoring(1), restrain(2), restrained(2), retire(1), retreat(1), **return(261)**, **return and take back(1)**, **return\*(1)**, **returned(151)**, **returned\*(1)**, **returning(2)**, **returns(9)**, reverse(1), revived(1), revoke(10), revoked(1), sent back(1), set(1), spent(1), still(3), subsides(2), surely return(4), take(4), take it back(1), take me back(1), take my back(2), take your back(1), take back(2), there(1), took back(2), **turn(49)**, turn and and withdraw(1), turn her away(1), turn his away(1), turn it back(1), turn me into again(1), turn them back(1), turn to you again(1), turn you about(1), turn you around(1), turn you back(2), turn your away(1), turn again(1), turn aside(1), **turn away(24)**, turn away and not repent(1), **turn back(20)**, turn... back(1), **turned(16)**, turned them back(1), turned around(1), **turned away(9)**, **turned back(16)**, turned... back(1), turning(2), turning away(1), turns(7), turns again(1), turns away(5), unleash(1), went back(5), went\*(1), withdraw(4), withdrew(1).

**Shub/sub** is found in 948 verses (with many verses having more than a single usage) -Gen 3:19; 8:3, 7, 9, 12; 14:7, 16f; 15:16; 16:9; 18:10, 14, 33; 20:7, 14; 21:32; 22:5, 19; 24:5f, 8; 26:18; 27:44f; 28:15, 21; 29:3; 30:31; 31:3, 13, 55; 32:6, 9; 33:16; 37:14, 22, 29f; 38:22, 29; 40:13, 21; 41:13; 42:24f, 28, 37; 43:2, 10, 12f, 18, 21; 44:8, 13, 25; 48:21; 50:5, 14f; Exod 4:7, 18ff; 5:22; 10:8; 13:17; 14:2, 26ff; 15:19; 19:8; 21:34; 22:26; 23:4; 24:14; 32:12, 27, 31; 33:11; 34:31, 35; Lev 6:4; 13:16; 14:39, 43; 22:13; 25:10, 13, 27f, 41, 51f; 26:26; 27:24; Num 5:7f; 8:25; 10:36; 11:4; 13:25f; 14:3f, 36, 43; 16:50; 17:10; 18:9; 22:8, 34; 23:5f, 16, 20; 24:25; 25:4, 11; 32:15, 18, 22; 33:7; 35:25, 28, 32; Deut 1:22, 25, 45; 3:20; 4:30, 39; 5:30; 13:17; 17:16; 20:5ff; 22:1f; 23:13f; 24:4, 13, 19; 28:31, 60, 68; 30:1ff, 8ff; 32:41, 43; Josh 1:15; 2:16, 22f; 4:18; 5:2; 6:14; 7:3, 26; 8:21, 24, 26; 10:15, 21, 38, 43; 11:10; 14:7; 18:8; 19:12, 27, 29, 34; 20:6; 22:8f, 16, 18, 23, 29, 32; 23:12; 24:20; Judg 2:19; 3:19; 5:29; 6:18; 7:3, 15; 8:9, 13, 33; 9:56f; 11:8f, 13, 31, 35, 39; 14:8; 15:19; 17:3f; 18:26; 19:3, 7; 20:48; 21:14, 23; Ruth 1:6ff, 10ff, 15f, 21f; 2:6; 4:3, 15; 1 Sam 1:19; 3:5f; 5:3, 11; 6:3f, 7f, 16f, 21; 7:3, 14; 9:5; 12:3; 14:27; 15:11, 25f, 30f; 17:15, 30, 53, 57; 18:2, 6; 23:23, 28; 24:1; 25:12, 21, 39; 26:21, 23, 25; 27:9; 29:4, 7, 11; 30:12, 19; 2 Sam 1:1, 22; 2:26, 30; 3:11, 16, 26f; 6:20; 8:3, 13; 9:7; 10:5, 14; 11:4, 15; 12:23, 31; 14:13, 21; 15:8, 19f, 25, 27, 29, 34; 16:3, 8, 12; 17:3, 20; 18:16; 19:10ff, 14f, 37, 39, 43; 20:22; 22:21, 25, 38; 23:10; 24:13; 1 Kgs 2:16f, 20, 30, 32f, 41, 44; 8:33ff, 47f; 9:6; 12:5f, 9, 12, 16, 20f, 24, 26f; 13:4, 6, 9f, 16ff, 22f, 26, 29, 33; 14:28; 17:21f; 18:43; 19:6f, 15, 20f; 20:5, 9, 34; 22:17, 26, 28, 33; 2 Kgs 1:5f, 11, 13; 2:13, 18, 25; 3:4, 27; 4:22, 31, 35, 38; 5:10, 14f; 7:8, 15; 8:3, 6, 29; 9:15, 18, 20, 36; 13:25; 14:14, 22, 25, 28; 15:20; 16:6; 17:3, 13; 18:14, 24; 19:7ff, 28, 33, 36; 20:5, 9ff; 21:3; 22:9, 20; 23:20, 25f; 24:1; 1 Chr 19:5; 20:3; 21:12, 20, 27; 2 Chr 6:23ff, 37f, 42; 7:14, 19; 10:2, 5f, 9, 12, 16; 11:1, 4; 12:11f; 14:15; 15:4; 18:16, 25ff, 32; 19:1, 4; 20:27; 22:6; 24:11, 19; 25:10, 13, 24; 26:2; 27:5; 28:11, 15; 29:10; 30:6, 8f; 31:1; 32:21, 25; 33:3, 13; 34:7, 16, 28; 36:13; Ezra 2:1; 6:21; 9:14; 10:14; Neh 1:9; 2:6, 15, 20; 4:4, 12, 15; 5:11f; 6:4; 7:6; 8:17; 9:17, 26, 28f, 35; 13:9; Esth 2:14; 4:13, 15; 6:12; 7:8; 8:5, 8; 9:25; Job 1:21; 6:29; 7:7, 10; 9:12f, 18; 10:9, 16, 21; 11:10; 13:22; 14:13; 15:13, 22; 16:22; 17:10; 20:2, 10, 18; 22:23; 23:13; 30:23; 31:14; 32:14; 33:5, 25f, 30, 32; 34:15; 35:4; 36:10; 39:4, 12, 22; 40:4; 42:10; Ps 6:4, 10; 7:7, 12, 16; 9:3, 17; 14:7; 18:20, 24, 37; 19:7; 22:27; 23:3; 28:4; 35:13, 17; 44:10; 51:13; 53:6; 54:5; 56:9; 59:6, 14; 60:1; 68:22; 69:4; 70:3; 71:20; 72:10; 73:10; 74:11, 21; 78:34, 38f,

41; 79:12; 80:3, 7, 14, 19; 81:14; 85:3f, 6, 8; 89:43; 90:3, 13; 94:2, 15, 23; 104:9, 29; 106:23; 116:7, 12; 119:59, 79; 126:1, 4; 132:10f; 146:4; Prov 1:23; 2:19; 3:28; 12:14; 15:1; 17:13; 18:13; 19:24; 20:26; 22:21; 24:12, 18, 26, 29; 25:10, 13; 26:11, 15f, 27; 27:11; 29:8; 30:30; Eccl 1:6f; 3:20; 4:1, 7, 9; 5:15; 9:11; 12:2, 7; Song 6:13; Isa 1:25ff; 5:25; 6:10, 13; 9:12f, 17, 21; 10:4, 21f; 12:1; 14:27; 19:22; 21:12; 23:17; 28:6; 29:17; 31:6; 35:10; 36:9; 37:7f, 29, 34, 37; 38:8; 41:28; 42:22; 43:13; 44:19, 22, 25; 45:23; 46:8; 47:10; 49:5f; 51:11; 52:8; 55:7, 10f; 58:12f; 59:20; 63:17; 66:15; Jer 2:24, 35; 3:1, 7, 10, 12, 14, 19, 22; 4:1, 8, 28; 5:3; 6:9; 8:4ff; 11:10; 12:15; 14:3; 15:7, 19; 16:15; 18:4, 8, 11, 20; 22:10f, 27; 23:3, 14, 20, 22; 24:6f; 25:5; 26:3; 27:16, 22; 28:3f, 6; 29:10, 14; 30:3, 10, 18, 24; 31:8, 16ff, 21, 23; 32:37, 40, 44; 33:7, 11, 26; 34:11, 15f, 22; 35:15; 36:3, 7, 28; 37:7f, 20; 38:26; 40:5, 12; 41:14, 16; 42:10, 12; 43:5; 44:5, 14, 28; 46:16, 27; 48:47; 49:6, 39; 50:6, 9, 19; Lam 1:8, 11, 13, 16, 19; 2:3, 8, 14; 3:3, 21, 40, 64; 5:21; Ezek 1:14; 3:19f; 7:13; 8:6, 13, 15, 17; 9:11; 13:22; 14:6; 16:53, 55; 18:7f, 12, 17, 21, 23f, 26ff, 30, 32; 20:22; 21:5, 30; 27:15; 29:14; 33:9, 11f, 14f, 18f; 34:4, 16; 35:7; 38:4, 8, 12; 39:2, 25, 27; 44:1; 46:9, 17; 47:1, 6f; Dan 9:13, 16, 25; 10:20; 11:9f, 13, 18f, 28ff; Hos 2:7, 9; 3:5; 4:9; 5:4, 15; 6:1, 11; 7:10, 16; 8:13; 9:3; 11:5, 9; 12:2, 6, 14; 14:1f, 4, 7; Joel 2:12ff; 3:1, 4, 7; Amos 1:3, 6, 8f, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 4:6, 8ff; 9:14; Obad 1:15; Jonah 1:13; 3:8ff; Mic 1:7; 2:8; 5:3; 7:19; Nah 2:2; Hab 2:1; Zeph 2:7; 3:20; Zech 1:3f, 6, 16; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:14; 8:3, 15; 9:8, 12; 10:6, 9f; 13:7; Mal 1:4; 2:6; 3:7, 18; 4:6

## GRACE REBUFFED

**But you say, 'How shall we return?** (NAB = "Why should we return?", Young's Literal = "In what do we turn back?") - The conjunction "**but**" signals a contrast between what God desired of Israel and their rebellious response! **The Living Bible** paraphrase has...

"Come and I will forgive you."

But you say, 'We have never even gone away!'"

Clearly, Israel is not seeking clarification of what God meant by "**Return.**" Indeed, their response was not a **reception** but a **rebuff** of God's gracious call to **repent!** (cf Israel in Jesus' day - Mt 11:20-24 and earth dwellers in the last days outpouring of God's wrath - Rev 9:20-21-[note](#), Rev 16:9-11-[note](#))

In Malachi 3:8 the prophet does not hesitate to tell the rebels how to return to God - return by refraining from robbing God!

**Matthew Henry** has some excellent points for personal pondering -

Israel had run away from their Master, and quitted the work he gave them to do (Mal 3:7): You have **turned away from God's statutes** and have not kept them. The ordinances of God's worship were the business which as servants they must mind, the talents which they must trade with, and the trust which was committed to them to keep; but they went away from them, grew weary of them, and withdrew their neck from that yoke; they deviated from the rule that God had prescribed to them, and betrayed the trust lodged with them. They had revolted from God, not only in worship, but in conduct; they had not kept his ordinances. This disobedience they were chargeable with, and had been guilty of, **even from the days of their fathers**; either as in the days of their fathers of old, who were sent into captivity for their disobedience, or, "Now, for some generations past, you have fallen off from what you were, when first you came back out of captivity." Ezra owns it in one particular instance: "Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to plunder and to open shame, as it is this day." (Ezra 9:7)

Now observe, 1. **What a gracious invitation God gives them to return and repent:** "**Return unto me**, and to your duty, return to your service, return to your allegiance, return as a traveler that has missed his way, as a soldier that has run his colors, as a treacherous wife that has gone away from her husband; return, thou backsliding Israel, return to Me; and then I will return unto you and be reconciled, will remove the judgments you are under and prevent those you fear." This had been of old the burden of the song (Zech 1:3 "*Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Return to Me,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'that I may return to you,' says the LORD of hosts.*), and is still.

2. **What a peevish answer they return to this gracious invitation:** "But you said with disdain, said it to the prophets that called you, said it to one another, said it to your own hearts, to stifle the convictions you were under; you said, **Wherein shall we return?**" Note, God takes notice what returns our hearts make to the calls of His word, what we say and what we think when we have heard a sermon, what answer we give to the

message sent us. When God calls us to **return**, we should answer as those did Jer 3:22, "Behold, we come to Thee; For Thou art the LORD our God." But not as these here, **Wherein shall we return?**

(1.) They take it as an affront to be told of their faults, and called upon to amend them; they are ready to say, "What ado (time-wasting bother over trivial details) do these prophets make about returning and repenting; why are we disgraced and disturbed thus, our own consciences and our neighbours stirred up against us?" It is ill with those who thus count reproofs (expressions of disapproval) as reproaches (expressions of displeasure), and kick against the goads (cf Acts 26:14).

(2.) They are so ignorant of themselves (**Ed**: cf self-deception!), and of the strictness, extent, and spiritual nature, of the divine law, that they see nothing in themselves to be repented of, or reformed; they are pure in their own eyes, and think they need no repentance.

(3.) They are so firmly resolved to go on in sin that they will find a thousand foolish frivolous excuses to shift off their repentance, and turn away the calls that are given them to repent. They seem to speak only as those that wanted something to say; it is a mere evasion, a banter upon the prophet, and a challenge to him to descend to particulars. Note, Many ruin their own souls by baffling the calls that are given them to repent of their sins.

### Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings:

- **man**: Ps 29:2 Pr 3:9,10 Mt 22:21 Mk 12:17 Lk 20:25 Ro 13:7
- **In tithes**: Mal 1:8,13 Lev 5:15,16 27:2-34 Nu 18:21-32 Jos 7:11 Ne 13:4-14 Ro 2:22
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL'S NEED TO RETURN

**Related Resource:** [Malachi 3:8 Will a Man Rob God-Study of Tithing in Old and New Testaments](#)

**Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!** - God first asks a rhetorical question, one that should have served to get their attention and engage their minds! He follows with the accusation. And so in light of Israel's refusal to return to Him, He now points out a glaring example of their refusal. They were asking "How can we return, when we have never departed." God says "Look at your check books!"

**Rob** (06906)(**qaba**) means to rob, defraud, or to overreach (although in Talmudic literature it means "to take forcibly").

Other than Mal 3:8-9, the only use is...

Proverbs 22:23 For the LORD will plead their case And take the life of those who **rob** them.

**But you say 'How have we robbed You?'** - Some sins are obvious, but we must remember that sin by its very nature is deceitful, which means that there are times when we don't even realize we are committing sins. Such seems to have been the case with Malachi's readers. God is shining the light of His Word on Israel's self-deception. And yet they still fail to see God's point, questioning His accusation.

**In tithes and offerings** - God's answer is like a sharp arrow, piercing and to the point. God shines His light on their selfish hearts. Other than the Bible, no other **book** reveals the truth about our heart like our check **book**!

**Tithes** ([04643](#))(**maaser**) means a tenth part or tithe. Maaser is related to the numerical adjective **eser** ([04643](#)) used in 157 passages in the OT most often with the meaning of the number ten. A tithe is 10 percent of one's grain, fruit, animals, or money (Lev. 27:30-34; Neh. 13:5). The Lxx translates **maaser** with the adjective **epidekatos** meaning one in ten (the tenth). In Dt 14:28, 29 we see that every three years a feast was held at the time of offering the tithes, to which the needy were invited as well as the Levites.

**Wiersbe** - The annual tithe was given to the Levites (Nu 18:21-24), who in turn gave a tithe of that income to the priests (Nu 18:25-32). When a worshiper brought his tithe to the temple, he could use part of it to enjoy a special meal with his family and the Levites (Dt. 12:6-7, 17-19). Every third year a tithe was to be brought to the leaders locally to be used for the poor (Dt 14:28-29).

**Related Resources:**



- American Tract Society [Tithe](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Tithes](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Tithe, Tithing](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Tithe](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Tithes](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Tithe](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Tithes](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Tithe](#) [Tithes](#)
- King James Dictionary [Tithe](#) [Tithing](#)
- People's Dictionary of the Bible [Tithes](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Tithe](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Tithes](#) [Tithe](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Tithes](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Tithe](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Tithe](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Tithes](#) [Tithe](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Tithe](#)

**Maaser** - 27 verses - Ge 14:20; Lev 27:30, 31, 32; Num 18:21, 24, 26, 28; Dt 12:6, 11, 17; 14:23, 28; 26:12; 2Chr 31:5, 6, 12; Neh 10:37, 38; 12:44; 13:5, 12; Ezek 45:11, 14; Amos 4:4; Mal 3:8, 10. Here are some representative uses of maaser...

(Abraham declared) "And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a **tenth** of all." (Ge 14:20)

Thus all the **tithe** of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD. (Lev 27:30) -

**Comment:** The law decreed that a tenth of all produce (and flocks - see below) was 'holy to the Lord'

And for every **tenth** part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the **tenth** one shall be holy to the LORD." (Lev 27:32)

And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the **tithe** in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. (Nu 18:21)

**Comment:** The Levites received the tithe from the people who themselves gave a tenth to the priest (Nu 18:28).

For the **tithe** of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.' (Nu 18:24)

So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your **tithes**, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD'S offering to Aaron the priest. (Nu 18:28)

**Offerings** - Baldwin explains "**Offerings** were the portions of sacrifices set apart for the priests (Ex. 29:27, 28; Lev. 7:32; Nu 5:9) and the voluntary gifts for a special purpose (Ex. 25:2-7). One of Nehemiah's tasks was to ensure that the supplies intended for support of the temple ministry did not fail as they had done during his absence (Neh. 13:10-13). When no gifts were brought the Levites had no option but to give up their ministry and earn their own living by farming."

**Walter Kaiser** - Christians are not governed by any law that commands us to give **atenth** of our earnings to God; however, it must be noted that the practice of **tithing** antedates any provision of the Law of Moses (see Abram's response in Ge 14:20, cf Jacob's vow at Bethel Ge 28:22). Another argument often made in favor of Christians tithing is: "If it was appropriate under the law to give a **tenth**, Christians will want to give no less than a **tenth** insofar as we have received and known so much more!" How could it be put any more succinctly? No one robs God without robbing himself at the same time!

**Steven Cole** on the spiritual importance of giving -

Giving is one of the most fail-proof litmus tests of your relationship to God. On more than one occasion, Jesus linked a person's giving to eternal life. When Zaccheus, the wealthy tax collector, got right with God, his first recorded words were, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much" (Luke 19:8). His salvation immediately touched his pocketbook. Jesus confirmed this formerly greedy man's conversion by saying, "Today salvation has come to

this house" (Luke 19:9). Contrast that with the tragic account of the rich young ruler. He seemed like such an eager potential convert. He came running (not walking) to Jesus and asked, "Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?" What a witnessing opportunity! So Jesus said, "That's easy. Just invite Me into your heart by faith." No, that's not what Jesus said. He knew that the man had an idol. So He said, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But the man went away grieved, unwilling to obey Jesus' words. Jesus didn't run after him and say, "How about ten percent?" Rather, He said to the disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:17-23).

In Luke 16:10-11, Jesus states that our stewardship of money is a test of how we will do with more important responsibilities: "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?" In the context, the "very little thing" is the money that God has entrusted to us! The "much" or "true riches" are the souls of people. Our use of money is God's test of whether He can entrust souls to our care! You can impress other Christians by your extensive Bible knowledge, your fervent prayers, or your many years of service in the church. But God does not look at any of those things to test your faithfulness. Rather, He looks at how you manage the money that He has entrusted to you. Are you greedy or generous? ([Malachi 3:7-12 Robbing God](#))

**Cole** goes on to address the concept of **tithing** -

It may shock you to learn that ten percent is not the biblical standard for giving (for a longer treatment, see John MacArthur, *Whose Money Is It, Anyway?* [Word], pp. 97-113). Abraham once gave Melchizedek ten percent of his spoils from a single battle, but there is no indication that he regularly gave ten percent. Jacob promised to give God ten percent if God would do what Jacob wanted Him to do, but that is hardly a biblical model for giving! The Law of Moses actually prescribed several tithes that would have amounted to somewhere between 20-25 percent (Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:20-21; Deut. 12:17-18; 14:22, 28, 29). But in Israel, the tithe functioned more like an involuntary tax than as a freewill offering.

Many preachers (especially Baptists!) use Malachi 3:10 to teach "storehouse tithing." One Baptist commentator says, "So-called storehouse tithing does have a sound basis in this verse." The idea is that the church is the storehouse where you are supposed to give ten percent of your income. Anything that you give to other Christian organizations should be over and above that ten percent that goes to the local church.

I wish that I could promote that idea, because I'm sure that our church income would go up substantially if everyone did that! Frankly, we could use the money, both for ongoing budget expenses and to meet our need for more property and facilities. But that application stretches this text beyond credulity. The storehouse refers to the storage rooms at the temple, where the people brought the first fruits of their harvest. The priests who served at the temple used this produce for their needs. I'm sad to say that the storehouse was not the local church and the tithe is not the New Testament standard for giving!

It is significant that tithing is never mentioned in any instructions to the church, although much is said about giving. If the church is supposed to give ten percent, it seems strange that Paul did not mention this when he wrote to predominately Gentile churches, which would not be familiar with the Law of Moses.

People get nervous when you take away that ten percent figure. Somehow, it's comfortable and simple to give ten percent. But the problem with tithing is that people get the notion that once they've paid God ten percent, they're free to squander the rest on themselves. But I think that God would charge such people, however sincere they may be, with robbing Him.

You may wonder, "If I don't tithe, then how do I determine how much I'm supposed to give?" The New Testament principle is that God owns it all. We just manage it for Him. The New Testament standard is, give generously and cheerfully "as God has prospered you," out of gratitude for His indescribable gift of salvation (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8 & 9; Acts 11:29). For those who are very poor, ten percent may represent generous, sacrificial giving. For those who have ample salaries, ten percent may be robbing God.

I think that John Piper's teaching is sound, that Christians ought to live with a wartime mentality, gladly making personal sacrifices in order to advance Christ's cause. If we expect missionaries to live sacrificially for the sake of the gospel, shouldn't we hold ourselves to the same standard? If we live in relative luxury while people perish because there aren't enough funds to get the gospel to them, are we not guilty of robbing God? ([Ibid](#))

**Wiersbe** - While 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 suggests proportionate giving ("as God has prospered him"), there is no express command to

tithe given to the church in the New Testament. Paul teaches "grace giving" in 2 Corinthians 8–9, which is certainly beyond 10 percent. Many Christians feel that if believers under the Old Covenant brought their tithes, how could Christians under the New Covenant begin with anything less?

**T V Moore** - We may try to defraud God, but in the end will only defraud ourselves. The eagle who robbed the altar set fire to her nest from the burning coal that adhered to the stolen flesh. So men who retain God's money in their treasuries will find it a losing possession. No man ever yet lost anything by serving God with a whole heart, or gained anything by serving him with half a one. We may compromise with conscience for half the price, but God will not endorse the compromise, and like Ananias and Sapphira, we will lose not only what we thought we had purchased so cheaply, but also the price we paid for it.

### Malachi 3:9 "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!"

- Mal 2:2 Dt 28:15-19 Jos 7:12,13 22:20 Isa 43:28 Hag 1:6-11 2:14-17
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You are cursed with a curse** - Why? "**For**" introduces the explanation for the curse. Solomon wrote "There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, but it results only in want." (Pr 11:24) The last part of this verse would in effect be the "outworking" of this curse...

**Stingy givers  
are destined to be  
Scanty receivers!**

**For (term of explanation)** - Always pause to ponder this conjunction when it used as a term of explanation (which is often the case when **for** is found at the beginning of a verse). This simple discipline will force you to examine the context, to re-read the text and in essence to meditate on the passage. In this case God explains why Israel would be cursed. Answer - Not "highway robbery" but "holy robbery!" In other words, to withhold the tithe from God and in effect from His servants the Levites who were totally dependent on this gift, was tantamount to withholding from God Himself! And in Mal 3:11 we see they were reaping what they had sown, for insects had invaded the land and the crops were being destroyed!

**Wiersbe** - Whenever we rob God, we always rob ourselves. To begin with, we rob ourselves of the spiritual blessings that always accompany obedience and faithful giving (2 Cor. 9:6–15). But even more, the money that rightfully belongs to God that we keep for ourselves never stays with us. It ends up going to the doctor, the auto body shop, or the tax collector. "You have sown much, and bring in little ... and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes" (Hag. 1:6, nkjv). If we don't trust God to care for us, whatever we do trust will prove futile. People who lovingly give tithes and offerings to God find that whatever is left over goes much farther and brings much greater blessing.

Malachi 3:10 "**Bring** the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.:"

- **whole**: 2 Ch 31:4-10 Ne 10:33-39 Pr 3:9,10
- **storehouse**: 1Ch 26:20 2Ch 31:11-19 Ne 10:38 12:44,47 13:5,10-13
- **prove**: 1Ki 17:13-16 Ps 37:3 Hag 2:19 Mt 6:33 2Co 9:6-8
- **open**: Ge 7:11 Dt 28:12 2Ki 7:2,19
- **pour out**: Eccl 11:3
- **for you**: Lev 26:10 2Ch 31:10 Lk 5:6,7 12:16,17 Jn 21:6-11
- **Related Resource**: [Malachi 3:8 Will a Man Rob God-Study of Tithing in Old and New Testaments](#)
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**TEST JEHOVAH WITH  
YOUR OFFERINGS!**

**Bring** (command) **the whole tithe into the storehouse** - Walter Kaiser explains that "The emphasis on wholeness must have involved the firstfruits of the crop, the earliest interest off the shekel, and, since God always inspects the giver before He inspects the

gift, the entirety of the person (cf. Gen. 4:3–4)—his time, talents, and self."

**Storehouse** (0214)(**otsar**) can mean a treasure, store, a treasury (a place in which stores of wealth are kept). **Otsar** is a storage vault which holds valuables, a building or part of a larger building (Jos 6:19). **Otsar** is the place where treasure is kept or the treasure itself (as in (1Ki 14:26; Pr 10:2; 15:16; 21:6; Jer 48:7; 49:4). Job uses **otsar** twice in somewhat of a figurative sense to describe God's storehouse of His elements such as snow and hail (Job 38:22). **Otsar** is used figuratively in Dt 28:12 to describe blessing and prosperity the Lord will give Israel if they are obedient. "Various items were stored up, such as supplies (Neh. 12:44) or treasures of a palace or temple (1Ki. 7:51; Jer. 15:13). The Lord also has treasures in the heavens (Deut. 28:12) and in the winds (Jer. 10:13). The word refers to storehouses themselves (Neh. 13:12, 13)." In Isa 45:3 the phrase "treasures of darkness" is a figurative description of the wealth of Babylon.

Lxx translates **otsar** here with **thesauros** (cf English "treasure, treasury") which is a place for storing valuables (a treasury, treasure chest, Mt 2:11, a storehouse)

**Walter Kaiser** explains "The **"storehouse"** is either the "treasury of the temple of the LORD" (1Ki 7:51) or, in a more figurative sense, the place from which all of God's blessings proceed. The word "treasury" appears eighty times in the Old Testament, but only in a few does it clearly connote a divine storehouse (e.g., Ps 33:7; 135:7; Job 38:22). Dt 28:12 and, obliquely, Jer 50:25, do speak of God's treasury-house as in the heavens. Accordingly, we must be careful not to use this verse to insist on the practice known as *"storehouse tithing,"* by which all giving to God's work is channeled through the local church. We must "bring" the tithes to the storehouse, but, in fairness to the text, the "storehouse" does not have to be the local church—good as that practice is as a general principle."

**Wiersbe** - There were special storage rooms in the temple for keeping the grain, produce, and money that the people brought to the Lord in obedience to His Law. If people didn't want to carry heavy produce all the way to the temple, they could convert it into cash, but they had to add 20 percent to it just to make sure they weren't making a profit and robbing God (Lev. 27:31).

**Otsar** - 70 verses - **Usage:** armory(1), cellars(1), gains(1), storehouse(3), storehouses(13), storeroom(1), stores(3), treasure(3), treasures(26), treasuries(19), treasury(7), treasury\*(1).

Dt 28:12; 32:34; Josh 6:19, 24; 1Ki 7:51; 14:26; 15:18; 2Ki 12:18; 14:14; 16:8; 18:15; 20:13, 15; 24:13; 1Chr 9:26; 26:20, 22, 24, 26; 27:25, 27f; 28:12; 29:8; 2Chr 5:1; 8:15; 11:11; 12:9; 16:2; 25:24; 32:27; 36:18; Ezra 2:69; Neh 7:70f; 10:38; 12:44; 13:12f; Job 38:22; Ps 33:7; 135:7; Pr 8:21; 10:2; 15:16; 21:6, 20; Isa 2:7; 30:6; 33:6; 39:2, 4; 45:3; Jer 10:13; 15:13; 17:3; 20:5; 38:11; 48:7; 49:4; 50:25, 37; 51:13, 16; Ezek 28:4; Dan 1:2; Hos 13:15; Joel 1:17; Mic 6:10; Mal 3:10

**So that** - Expresses purpose. The purpose is that there might be food in God's house. The truth is that since God owns everything, He does not actually need anything we can give Him (Acts 17:25). However what does please Him is we first bring our hearts (in obedience), so to speak, doing so as an act of worship.

**Test** (0974)(**bachan/bahan**) means to examine, to try, to prove, to scrutinize. **Bachan** is a primary (or root) word which depicts examination to determine (and bring out) the essential qualities of something, and in the moral realm speaks particularly of a person's integrity (think of integer = indivisible - undivided ~ think undivided heart or single minded focus/purpose). In Scripture **bachan** is used almost exclusively in this moral/spiritual sense meaning to try, search out, examine or prove one's spiritual heart or character. **Bachan/bahan** is used almost exclusively in a spiritual sense (unlike the words above - smelt and refine).

To try gold, persons, the hearts (1Chr 29:17, Ps 7:9, 17:3), sons of men (both righteous and wicked = Ps 11:4-5) or man of God.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** often translates **bachan** with **dokimazo** which means to assay, to test, to prove, to put to the test, to make a trial of, to verify, to discern to approve. **Dokimazo** involves not only testing but determining the genuineness or value of an event or object. That which has been tested is demonstrated to be genuine and trustworthy.

**Bachan** - 27v - **NASB** Usage: assay(2), examine(2), proved(1), test(7), tested(3), tests(3), tried(5), tries(2), try(3). **KJV** translates **bachan** as try 19, prove 7, examine 1, tempt 1, trial 1

**Genesis 42:15** by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here! 16 "Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies."

**1 Chronicles 29:17** "Since I know, O my God, that You **try** the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things; so now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to You.

**Job 7:18** That You **examine** him every morning And try him every moment?

**Job 12:11** "Does not the ear **test** words, As the palate tastes its food?"

**Job 23:10-note** "But He knows the way I take; When He has **tried** me, I shall come forth as gold.

**Job 34:3** "For the ear tests words As the palate tastes food.

36 'Job ought to be **tried** to the limit, Because he answers like wicked men.

**Ps 7:9-note** O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God **tries** the hearts and minds.

**Ps 11:4-note** The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD'S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids **test** the sons of men. Ps 11:5-note; The LORD **tests** the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates.

**Ps 17:3-note** You have **tried** (Lxx = dokimazo) my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested (tsaraph) me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

**Ps 26:2-note Examine** (Lxx = dokimazo) me, O LORD, and **try** (nasah) me; **Test** (tsaraph) my mind and my heart. (Red = imperatives!)

**Ps 66:10-note** For You have **tried** (Lxx = dokimazo) us, O God; You have refined us as silver is refined.

**Ps 81:7-note** "You called in trouble and I rescued you; I answered you in the hiding place of thunder; **Improved** (Lxx = dokimazo) you at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

**Ps 95:9-note** "When your fathers tested (nasah) Me, They **tried** (Lxx = dokimazo) Me, though they had seen My work.

**Ps 139:23-note Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart; **Try** (bachan; Lxx = dokimazo) me and **know** my anxious thoughts; (Red = imperatives! Four bold requests of the all seeing God! Oh my!)

**Proverbs 17:3** The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD **tests** hearts.

**Jeremiah 6:27** "I have made you an assayer and a tester among My people, That you may know and **assay** (Lxx = dokimazo) their way."

**Jeremiah 9:7** Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, I will refine (tsaraph) them and **assay** (Lxx = dokimazo) them; For what else can I do, because of the daughter of My people?"

**Jeremiah 11:20** But, O LORD of hosts, who judges righteously, Who **tries** (Lxx = dokimazo) the feelings and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You have I committed my cause.

**Jeremiah 12:3** But You know me, O LORD; You see me; And You **examine** (Lxx = dokimazo) my heart's attitude toward You. Drag them off like sheep for the slaughter And set them apart for a day of carnage!

**Jeremiah 17:10** "I, the LORD, search the heart, I **test** (Lxx = dokimazo) the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

**Jeremiah 20:12** Yet, O LORD of hosts (this is Jesus), You who **test** (Lxx = dokimazo) the righteous, Who see the mind and the heart; Let me see Your vengeance on them; For to You I have set forth my cause.

**Zechariah 13:9-commentary** "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And **test** them as gold is **tested** (Lxx = dokimazo). They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

**Malachi 3:10-commentary** "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and **test** Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

**15** 'So now we call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also **test** God and escape.'"

**Will... open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows** - Obedience opens the windows of heaven to pour out God's blessings. "If men will take up the challenge, God will release "the windows " or "floodgates" of heaven and send an abundance of rains (cf. Dt. 28:12; 2Ki 7:2, 19)."

According to George Barna, "Fewer than one out of every ten church-going Christians donates at least 10 percent of their income to



churches and other nonprofit organizations. (More than one-third claim to do so.)"

**Wiersbe** - Yes, giving is an act of faith, but God rewards that faith in every way. That isn't the reason we give, because that kind of motivation would be selfish. "If you give because it pays, it won't pay!" said industrialist R. G. LeTourneau, and he was right. We give because we love God and want to obey Him, and because He's very generous to us. When we lay up treasures in heaven, they pay rich dividends for all eternity.

**Adrian Rogers** - Oh, I wish I could tell you this! I wish I could get this in your heart, dear friend: God wants to bless you. God wants to open the windows of Heaven upon you. Here it is—listen—recognize your failure; restore your fellowship; release your finances; receive your fruitfulness. God—God—will open the windows of Heaven and bless you.

**Stewardship** - Maybe there are more reasons than we know to bring rather than send our offering to church. In Lake Mary, Florida the bomb squad detonated a suspicious cardboard box found outside a church. They discovered it had \$2,500 cash, apparently a donation to the church. The Lord wants more than our money; he wants our lives along with it. When we bring it, we avoid it being blown to bits. The article says that the local authorities said they would replace the money. (The Week, May 21, 2010, p. 6. Illustration by Jim L. Wilson and Rodger Russell)

**Opened Windows** - One of the statements most commonly made is that tithing was intended for the Jew only and does not apply to the Christian living under grace. If this were true, then our Lord would not have said of tithing: "These ought ye to have done" (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42). Our heavenly Father does not promise wealth to every one who tithes, but He does promise to "**open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.**" Take Him at His word today. Dr. S. D. Gordon wrote he could never forget his mother's paraphrase of Malachi 3:10. The verse begins: "Bring ye the whole tithe in" and ends, "I will pour" the blessing out till you'll be embarrassed for space. Her paraphrase was this: "Give all He asks: take all He promises." Tithing pays rich dividends in the home, at school, in business, in the pulpit, on the mission field; in fact, in every walk of life.—Tither

## OPENING THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

**Malachi 3:10+** "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

While these words in Malachi were clearly addressed to Israel and thus apply directly to them, as with all Scripture, while there is one accurate interpretation, there can be many applications. Such is the case with this beautiful promise. Note that it is a conditional promise calling for one to bring the whole tithe to God, which in context refers to money and/or sacrificial animals. But the principle of offering up sacrifices to the Lord also applies to our prayers.

As someone wrote "Prayer is the **offering** of our sincere desires to God. It involves a sense of our unworthiness and necessities." And so are not our **prayers** an offering from our heart to God even as are our gifts of money, etc? Indeed, our prayers are a spiritual offering. If God calls us to honor Him by bringing the "tithe into the storehouse," it begs the question "What about the "tithe" so to speak of my prayers?" "Am I bringing my prayers into the storehouse (cf the "storehouse" in Rev 8:3-4+ = "the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.")? In Hebrews 13:15+ we see the exhortation "Through Him (Christ our Mediator) then, let us continually **offer** up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." And Peter writes "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to **offer up spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pe 2:5) **James Rosscup** elaborates on the **spiritual sacrifices** believers are now to offer up to God...

**To offer up** is in the aorist tense, describing the entire process of the ongoing worship as comprising one composite unit, even with its many parts. The sacrifices are **spiritual**, in contrast to OT **material** sacrifices of bulls, goats, lambs, birds, and meal (Lev. 1–5). Even in the OT times God discerned when worship was with sacrifices coming **spiritually from the heart** (Ps. 51:17). Of this nature, the present aspects of worship are the many spiritual ministrations believers present to God, **many in prayers**...When these take the form of **prayers**, they are committed to the God Who delights in these as in the sweet incense and the morning sacrifice when these were pure in OT days (Ps 141:2). A part of them are what the writer to the Hebrews describes as "the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb 13:15). (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible)

And so surely **our prayers are an offering of spiritual sacrifices** to the Almighty God. What would be the efficacy of prayers ("large petitions") like Colossians 1:9-14+ if we offered them up to God as our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving? Would not our Almighty God Whose ways are great and marvelous (Rev 15:3+) be pleased to open up "**the windows of heaven and pour out for**

**(us) a blessing until it overflows."**? And how can we be confident God will answer according to this promise in His Word? Because of His faithfulness to His own word which says "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will (which is seen in His Word, like Col 1:9-14), He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." (1 John 5:14-15+) Beloved, may God be pleased to open the windows of Heaven and pour out upon us the spiritual blessings including the blessing of personal, corporate and national revival in Jesus' Name. Amen

Worship Him today by singing this hymn from John Newton

[Come My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare](#)

Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much;  
None can ever ask too much.

**Addendum** - Jesus said ""If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?" (Lk 16:11+) So clearly there are "riches" far more valuable than mammon. So bring your offering of prayer into the storehouse and God will open the windows of heaven and pour out blessing until it overflows!

**Here is an example of God opening the windows of heaven and pouring out blessing until it overflows** - The efficacy of prayer - "Then you have not been modified in any way as to the efficacy of prayer?" asked his visitor. Mr. Spurgeon laughed. "Only in my faith growing far stronger and firmer than ever. It is not a matter of faith with me, but of knowledge, and everyday experience. I am constantly witnessing the most unmistakable instances of answers to prayer. My whole life is made up of them. To me they are so familiar as to cease to excite my surprise; but to many they would seem marvellous, no doubt. Why, I could no more doubt the efficacy of prayer than I could disbelieve in the law of gravitation. The one is as much a fact as the other, constantly verified every day of my life. Elijah, by the brook Cherith, as he received his daily rations from the ravens, could hardly be a more likely subject for scepticism than look at my Orphanage. To keep it going entails an annual expenditure of about £10,000. Only £1400 is provided for by endowment. The remaining £8000 comes to me regularly in answer to prayer. I do not know where I shall get it from day to day. I ask God for it, and He sends it. Mr. Muller, of Bristol, does the same on a far larger scale, and his experience is the same as mine." Beloved, if God does this with money, would He not also do spiritual blessings? That is a rhetorical question!

**COMMENT** - The language of Malachi 3:10 is often used in prayer by those who are not aware that it is rather a challenge than a promise—"Prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts." We naturally ask whether God does "open the windows of heaven and pour down blessing" upon the faithful givers of tithes. Instances are not wanting among ourselves to supply the answer. No workers in our day have enjoyed larger blessing than George Müller and Charles Spurgeon, both of whom have, from the beginning of their work, put the sacred rule into practice with believing and humble hearts. Years ago Mr. Spurgeon said: "I knew a lad in Christ once who adopted the principle of giving a tenth to God. When he won a money prize for an essay on a religious subject, he felt that he could not give less than one-fifth of it. He has never since been able to deny himself the pleasure of having a fifth to give. God has wonderfully blessed that lad, and increased his means and his enjoyment of that luxury of luxuries—the luxury of doing good."

**I Must Give Before I Can Pray**" "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."—Mal. 3:10 The venerable Dr. Sewall, of Maine, once entered a meeting in behalf of foreign missions just as the collectors of the contributions were resuming their seats. The chairman of the meeting requested him to lead in prayer. The old gentleman stood hesitatingly, as if he had not heard the request It was repeated in a louder voice, but there was no response. It was observed, however, that Dr. Sewall was fumbling in his pockets, and presently he produced a piece of money, which he deposited in the contribution box. The chairman, thinking he had not been understood, said loudly, "I didn't ask you to give, Dr. Sewall, I asked you to pray." "Oh yes," he replied, "I heard you, but I can't pray till I have given something."

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### **Malachi 3:10 C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - Condition of Blessing**

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me nowhere with, 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."—Malachi 3:10

MANY read and plead this promise without noticing the condition upon which the blessing is promised. We cannot expect heaven to be opened or blessing poured out unless we pay our dues unto the Lord our God and to His cause. There would be no lack of funds for holy purposes if all professing Christians paid their fair share.

Many are poor because they rob God. Many churches also miss the visitations of the Spirit because they starve their ministers. If there is no temporal meat for God's servants, we need not wonder if their ministry has but little food in it for our souls. When missions pine for means, and the work of the Lord is hindered by an empty treasury, how can we look for a large amount of soul prosperity?

Come, come! What have I given of late? Have I been mean to my God? Have I stinted my Savior? This will never do. Let me give my Lord Jesus His tithe by helping the poor and aiding His work, and then I shall prove His power to bless me on a large scale.

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**Malachi 3:10 Robert Morgan** - Several years ago, a company asked me to prepare a series of studies on the major stewardship campaigns in the Bible, and I discovered something that I did not previously know. There are two ways of giving to the Lord in the Bible. The first is by our weekly tithes and offerings, and that is one of the most important disciplines in the Christian life. I had a young couple that go to another church in our area tell me something very interesting recently. They had not been tithing because their finances had been so tight. In fact, never in their marriage had they felt they could consistently tithe because of their distressed finances. Some weeks they weren't sure where the groceries were coming from. Other weeks, they couldn't put gasoline in the car. Their family members had told them, "Don't dare tithe. You can't afford to tithe. It takes every penny just to pay the bills." But things grew worse and worse, and this couple found themselves under incredible stress.

Then one Sunday, the pastor of their church was away, and the associate pastor spoke on the subject of tithing. He said something to this effect: "If you are having financial difficulties, you can not afford not to tithe. God cannot bless you if you aren't honoring Him by returning to Him a small portion, a tithe, a ten percent, of what He is giving to you. It is an act of faith on your part. It's an act of love. It's an act of obedience." The associate pastor quoted Malachi 3:

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it" (NKJV).

This couple came under great conviction about this matter. They decided that very week to begin tithing, but they said, "It was the hardest step of faith we've ever taken." As soon as they began tithing, they both told me, their financial situation began reversing itself. Work prospects improved dramatically. And two weeks later they wrote another tithing check, and their second tithing check was 243 percent more than their first check due to the increase in their income.

I've always believed this is the basic way in which the Lord sustains His work on this earth—through the regular week-in, week-out tithes and offerings of His people. That's the first way in which we're to give to the Lord. But there is a second way. And we have it here in this passage. Sometimes God puts an opportunity in our pathway. ([A Tent, a Tithe and a Jar Full of Pennies](#))

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**Malachi 3:10 Robert Morgan** - A \$100 bill, a \$20 bill, and a \$1 bill met up with each other at the shredder at the end of their natural lives. The \$100 said, "Well, I've had a good life. I've seen the whole world. I've been on cruises in Caribbean, safaris in Africa, and vacations in Europe."

The \$20 said, "Well, I've not done quite as well, but I have been to Atlantic City, Disneyland, and Starbucks."

They both turned to \$1 bill and asked, "How about you?" He said, "Oh, I've seen the whole nation from coast to coast. I've been from church to church to church..."

The \$100 bill asked, "What's a church?" (See [Full Sermon](#))

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**Alan Carr** in sermon on Joel 2 - **There Is the Promise of Revival** (Joel 2:23-25)

God promises to send both the "former" and "latter" rains. The "former" rains fell in October and November. They helped replenish the soil in preparation for the next planting season. The "latter" rains fell in March and April. They came just in time to ensure that the harvest would be bountiful. God also promised to replace everything that had been lost during the days of drought and devastation. He is promising a revival of His blessings on the land!

This is what we need in our day!

**We need the Lord to open the windows of Heaven  
and erase this spiritual drought we have been living under.**

We need Him to send the heavenly rains upon us one more time. We need Him to give us back everything the enemy has tried to

take away from us.

- **We need a revival of His manifest presence among His people**
- **We need a revival of His power in our services**
- **We need a revival of the conviction of God on the hearts of the lost.**
- **We need a revival of holiness in the church.**

We need a revival! Oh that God's people would seek His face and ask Him for the move of God we so desperately need in these days. Oh that we would see how far we have fallen and that we would desire to get back to where He would have us to be. We need a revival! It's our only hope! It's the only hope for our families, our communities, our churches and our nation. (Sermon - [It's Not Too Late - Joel 2:12-27](#))

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**Spurgeon's Prayer** - Oh that at this moment He would **open the windows of heaven**, and **send us a flood of grace, like the deluge of vengeance in Noah's day, until the tops of our loftiest expectations should be covered**. He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask, or even think. (Eph 3:20) He gives liberally, and upbraids not. Our abounding sin and death need abounding life and power. In such a city as this the largest blessing will be none too great. Let us open our mouths wide, that He may fill them. The Lord is illimitable in His wealth of grace, and boundless in His goodness and power. Let us take the promise as it stands and plead it at the throne, "Hast thou not said, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground'?" Lord, do it, to the praise of the glory of Your grace.

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**Chris Benfield sermon excerpt** - An Eventual Intervention (Lk 11:8)—Jesus said that he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. The persistence and commitment of the man eventually paid off. The friend rose and gave him all he needed. He didn't supply a portion of his need; he gave him all he needed to provide for the friend. Jam.5:16b—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. You may feel as if you have prayed and prayed and yet there has been no answer. Now is no time to abandon your prayers. God may be about ready to open the windows of heaven and pour a blessing that will more than meet your need! ([Prayer is Profitable](#))

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**What Is Tithing?** (Genesis 28:11) Mathematically it is a tenth. "... and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee" (Gen. 28:11). Scripturally it is a law. "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase" (Deut. 14:22). Morally it is a debt. "... Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Mal. 3:8). Economically it is an investment. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:20). "Give, and it shall be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). Spiritually it is a blessing. "I will open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

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**Octavius Winslow** - Take His promise, "Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out," and plead it in wrestlings at the mercy-seat, and see if He will not **open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.** Go to Him just as you are; if you cannot take to Him a pure heart, take an impure one; if you cannot take to Him a broken heart, take a whole one; if you cannot take to Him a soft heart, take a hard one—only go to Him. The very act of going will be blessed to you. And oh, such is the strength of His love, such His yearning compassion and melting tenderness of heart for poor sinners, such His ability and willingness to save, that He will no more cast you out than deny His own existence. Precious Jesus! Set us as a seal upon Your heart, and by Your Spirit seal Yourself upon our hearts; and give us, unworthy though we are, a place among "those who are sealed."

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**From Diary of Andrew Bonar** - Tuesday, Aug. 29th.—Have returned home. Glad to begin my own work here. Lord, **open the windows of heaven**. My soul has been going out to the Lord Himself of late more than before, and **I have been led to pray from time to time for the Holy Spirit in a way that I have not often done. Is He coming among us in power?**

**Malachi 3:11 "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts.:**

- **rebuke:** Joel 2:20 Am 4:9 7:1-3 Hag 2:17
- **nor will:** Dt 11:14 Jer 8:13 Joel 1:7,12 2:22 Hab 3:17 Zec 8:12
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then** - **Then** means soon after that or next in order of time. This **expression of time** is always a cause to pause and ponder "What

time is it?" Or stated another way "When is **"then"**?" Or what happened before **"then"**?" This promise to rebuke the devourer is connected with their bringing of the whole tithe into the storehouse and "testing" God's goodness and ability to provide bountifully. As an aside given the devastation of their crops, one could see how they might be tempted to withhold a portion of their tithes. **We would never become stingy in our giving if the "crops" failed would we?** Tithes and offers ultimately are a test of one's faith. Will God respond in times of crisis as His people continue to give God His share? Yes, God will open the storehouses but God's people must first open their storehouses in faith, trusting God for the provision.

**The devourer** - While the identity is not stated, the effect on the fruit and grapes supports that it was an insect plague (probably locusts), hail or drought, although Jim Wilson suggests other types of "devourers." (see illustration below).

**Devourer Illustration** - That's an interesting word. A word that makes me think immediately of the [Tasmanian devil](#). Not Bugs Bunny's nemesis, but the animal that haunts the dark nights of the island. The devil is about the size of a cocker spaniel, but don't let its size fool you, its bite packs the same power of an animal four times its size. It has a unusually large head and a mouth that when it is unhinged shows a set of teeth designed to mutilate its prey and frighten its predators. It is an eating machine. In 30 minutes, it can eat up to 40% of its body weight, and when it eats, it devours the entire carcass, bones and all. It is a devourer. When God promised to rebuke the devourer for tithers, I don't think He had the Tasmanian Devil in mind. He had things in mind like greed, selfishness, impulse consumerism and waste—things that can destroy people's resources and squander their opportunities. The very act of giving a tithe is an act of faith. It affirms the belief that living on 90% with God's blessing is better than living on 100% without it. But it also acknowledges our dependence on God and welcomes His protection. (Illustration by Jim L. Wilson)

**Walter Kaiser** makes an interesting observation - We see in this verse, as we saw in Amos 4:6–12 and Haggai 1:6, the impact human spiritual progress (or the lack of spiritual renewal) has on nature. As we have discussed, the impact was first seen after the fall, and will continue to be seen until the second coming of our Lord, when all of nature will be healed (Rom. 8:18–20).

**Nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes** - **Cast** is the Hebrew verb **shakal** ([07921](#)) which refers to bereavement of children (Ge 27:45; 43:14; Lev. 26:22; 1Sa 15:33) as well as miscarriage (Ex 23:26, Job 21:10), so that in reference to the grape vines it means they will not lose their fruit by dropping off their grapes before they ripen.

**Malachi 3:12 "All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.:**

- **all:** Dt 4:6,7 2Ch 32:23 Ps 72:17 Isa 61:9 Jer 33:9 Zep 3:19,20 Zec 8:23 Lk 1:48
- **delightful:** Dt 8:7-10 11:12 Da 8:9 11:41)

**All the nations will call you blessed** - If Israel will give, Israel will be blessed and the nations will recognize their blessing.

**Steven Cole** explains "When God's people obey Him with their giving, the nations will see how God blesses His people and they will be drawn to the delightful land. The world isn't drawn to disobedient Christians who are under God's discipline. They are drawn to obedient believers who know the joy of God's delightful blessings. Our generous giving to the cause of world missions directly blesses those who hear the gospel and come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot say whether or not you are robbing God. It is a matter for each of us, myself included, to examine individually, prayerfully and continually. I find that it's easy to slip into a worldly mindset with regard to giving."

**For** - Pause and ponder this **term of explanation**. Here **for** explains WHY all nations will call Israel blessed.

**You shall be a delightful land** - The land of Israel appearing lush, verdant, fertile would be like "postcard" to the world.

**Walter Kaiser** explains "The promise that God had originally given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 would be fulfilled. Nations all over the world would rise up and say, "Thank God for those people who have been faithful to Him so that He could be faithful to them and to all of us who have also been blessed as a result of their turning back to Him."

**Delightful** (desired, precious) ([02656](#)) (**hepes/chepes/chephets**) is a masculine noun which means to take pleasure or find enjoyment in something. To feel great favor towards something. To experience emotional delight (referring either to men as here in Ps 1:2 or to God - 1Sa 15:22, Ps 16:3, Isa 44:28, 46:10; 48:14; 53:10)

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **hepes/chepes/chephets** with **theletos** which means wished for, desired. Theletos is used only one other time in the Lxx in 1Sa 15:22 describing God's desire (obedience not sacrifice).

God says to Israel (speaking of her future restoration)

"It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will



be called, "**My delight** is in her," And your land, "Married" ("delight" and "married" reflect a full restored relationship with the Lord); For the LORD delights in you, And to Him your land will be married." (Isaiah 62:4)

'You will be called [Hephzibah](#)' that is, 'my delight is in her' (Isa. 62:4; see Jer. 3:19; Ezek. 20:6, 15; Dan. 8:9; 11:16, 41; Zech. 7:14).

**Malachi 3:13 "Your words have been arrogant against Me," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?':**

- **Your:** Mal 2:17 Ex 5:2 2Chr 32:14-19 Job 34:7,8 Ps 10:11 Isa 5:19 28:14,15 Isa 37:23 2Th 2:4
- **What:** Mal 3:8 1:6-8 2:14,17 Job 40:8 Jer 8:12 Ro 9:20
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **THEIR ARROGANCE LED TO SELF DECEPTION**

**Your words have been arrogant** (harsh, hard, severe) **against Me** - We have already encountered an example of their harsh, impudent, presumptuous approach to God in Malachi 2:17! This was the genre of behavior one expected from a pagan (see Pharaoh's response - Ex 5:2). In fact, the Hebrew word *chazaq* (see below) is used to describe Pharaoh's heart as "hardened" (*chazaq*; Lxx - *katischuo* = prevail, overpower, by extension to be stubborn).

**Your words have been arrogant** - More literally this reads "your words are hard [or "strong"] against me." NIV = "said harsh things against me"; TEV, NLT = "said terrible things about me." The Lxx translates *chazaq* (see below) in Mal 3:13 with the verb **baruno** meaning to make heavy, to weigh down, to burden, to grieve and by extension to prevail against. Brenton translates the Lxx of Mal 3:13 "Ye have spoken grievous words against Me." **O my, have we have done this? I fear so (at least I'll speak for myself!)** (cf Eph 4:29-note which describes "unwholesome" or "rotten" words and then Paul describes the rotten fruit of rotten words in Eph 4:30-note - grieving God, the Holy Spirit!) Forgive me (us) **O Lord, and keep back Thy servant(s) from presumptuous sins** (Ps 19:10-note , cf Nu 15:30, 31, read the two prayers in Ps 119:38, 133). Amen

**MacKay** - The people had adopted a more aggressive attitude against the LORD than at Mal 2:17. This expressed itself in strong criticism of him.

**Arrogant** ([02388](#)) (**chazaq**) is a common verb in the OT (267 verses) and generally means to be or grow firm or strong. Interestingly, **chazaq** is used frequently in a positive sense in the exhortation to "**Be strong**" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9, Josh 10:25, Dt 31:6, 7, Dt 31:23) **Chazaq** is used in the context of conflict, as with David and Goliath, where "David **prevailed** over the Philistine." (1Sa 17:50). And so in Malachi, *chazaq* seems to picture a conflict between Israel's words and God's will. In a sense their words are pictured as strong against or prevailing over God (which of course is impossible).

The Septuagint translates **chazaq** in this passage with the verb **baruno** which means to burden, to weigh down, to grieve, to oppress, to weary. The picture is of their "arrogant words" as words which were grievous to God!

**Yet you say 'What have we spoken against You?'** - Once again the people take issue with God's assertion (accusation). When a sinner is sinning it is very difficult for them to truly see their sin for what it really is. Sin is deceptive. So once again, perhaps now with less a sense of surprise than some of the preceding divine accusations, they in effect deny God's charge.

**MacKay** - Again the people were reacting to unfavorable circumstances, not by questioning what was wrong with themselves, but by complaining against God. They should rather 'heed the rod and the One who appointed it' (Mic. 6:9).

**Malachi 3:14 "You have said, 'It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning before the LORD of hosts?':**

- **It is:** Job 21:14,15 22:17 34:9 35:3 Ps 73:8-13 Isa 58:3 Zep 1:12
- **that:** Isa 58:3 Joel 2:12 Zec 7:3-6 Jas 4:9
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NET** = you have said, 'It is useless to serve God. How have we been helped by keeping his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD who rules over all?'

**NLT** = "You have said, 'What's the use of serving God? What have we gained by obeying his commands or by trying to show the LORD of Heaven's Armies that we are sorry for our sins?'"

**It is vain to serve God** - These "**arrogant words against**" God (Mal 3:13) are a lie. They have believed a lie! And so they contended that it did not pay to serve the Lord. (This reminds me of **Robert G Lee's** famous sermon - [Pay Day - Some Day](#)) It is never vain to serve God!

**Mackay** notes that **serve** "goes beyond worship (Ex. 4:23; 7:16) to entail a life of total obedience (Deut. 10:12; Josh. 24:14). It was intended to be a matter of a total commitment to God, done gladly and willingly (1Chr 28:9; Ps. 100:2). This was what the LORD would bless. In contrast, what was 'futile' lacked substance and was worthless (compare the 'dreams that are false', Zec 10:2). Contrary to what they had been taught, they had concluded that serving God was the road to ruin and disaster because it was all a sham and brought them no benefit."

**Woodrow Kroll** paraphrases their arrogant words - What good does it do to serve Jehovah? We're better off to keep the 10 percent for ourselves. They looked at the service of God from the standpoint of profit.

**BKC** - Ironically the people, in a sense, were indicting themselves, saying their own worship and service of the Lord was empty, useless, and without result. Hence they felt they gained no benefits from serving Him.

**Vain** ([07723](#))(**shav**) means futility, worthlessness, fruitlessness (this is the same word used in the commandment in Ex 20:7). **Shav** is that which has no real value or is marked by futility. The Lxx translates **shav** in this verse with the word **mataios** which describes that which is empty, devoid of force, lacking in content, nonproductive, useless, fruitless, powerless, lacking truth, of no real or lasting value.

**Walter Kaiser** - God had offered to be put to the test and they had responded, in effect, "The wicked have already put you to the test and have concluded that you are a paper tiger. You threaten, but you never follow up on your threats... It was useless, unsubstantial, unreal, valueless and materially and spiritually worthless to the servant."

**What profit is it that we have kept His charge** ('observing what is to be observed') - More arrogant nonsense! They had not kept ([shamar](#) = observed) His charge. They did not obey out of love, but with an eye on what they could get out of God. Their "offspring" are alive and well in the twenty-first century! Turn on many so-called "Christian" programs and notice the prevalence of Rolex watches (tongue in cheek)!

**Mackay** explains that their question "presents a revealing insight into their mentality. The dominant motive in their lives was personal, material advantage... In rejecting (His charge), they were defying God and saying that they were no longer prepared to live as the covenant people.."

Paul says keeping God's **charge** is of great profit, not only in this present life but that to come! Service from a submissive servant heart is the "gift" that keeps on giving. Paul exhorted Timothy (lest he forget)...

But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of **little profit**, but godliness is **profitable** for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (1Ti 4:7-8-note)

**Jesus** spoke about the "**profit**" of not keeping God's "**charge**"

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35 "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it (**This is REAL PROFIT!**). 36 "For **what does it profit a man** to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 "For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." (Mk 8:34-38)

**Profit** ([01215](#)) (**betsa**) is used largely in a negative sense and means dishonest, illegal or unjust gain, ill gotten gain, gain made by violence (Jdg 5:19, Mic 4:13), a sin to be avoided (Ge 37:26; Ex 18:21; 1Sa 8:3; Ps. 119:36; Pr. 28:16). **Betsa** describes personal advantage derived from some activity. **Betsa** described plunder gained by robbery after a military victory (Jdg 5:19) Here in Malachi 3:14 **betsa** conveys primarily the sense of advantage or benefit.

**Kaiser** comments that **profit** was "a technical term for the weaver's act of cutting a piece of cloth free from the loom. Thus in Malachi it has the negative connotation of men expecting their "cut" or percentage, as a racketeer or gangster would demand his "cut" for his evil work (cf. Ge. 37:26)." Oswalt writes "However, the more common connotation of the root is based on a slightly

different aspect of "cut off." That is to cut off what is not one's own, or in the slang of our day, to take a "rip-off," thus to be greedy, covetous."

**Betsa** - 23 verses - Ge 37:26; Ex 18:21; Jdg 5:19; 1Sa 8:3; Job 22:3; Ps 30:9; 119:36; Pr 1:19; 15:27; 28:16; Isa 33:15; 56:11; 57:17; Jer 6:13; 8:10; 22:17; 51:13; Ezek 22:13, 27; 33:31; Mic 4:13; Hab 2:9 (Lxx = [pleonexia](#)); Mal 3:14 **Usage in NASB:** dishonest gain(4), end(1), gain(7), illicitly(1), plunder(1), profit(4), unjust gain(4), unjust\*(1).

**Oswalt** notes that "lust for personal gain is in direct opposition to unselfish devotion to God (Ps 10:3; 119:36; Isa 33:15) and must inevitably destroy the person who succumbs to it (Prov 1:19; 15:27; Hab 2:9). Perhaps its most disastrous result is its tendency to dull the hearing of God's word (Ezek 33:31)."

**Judah** was guilty of the sin of illicit profit...

Jer 6:13 "For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is greedy for **gain**, And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely.

Jer 8:10 "Therefore I will give their wives to others, Their fields to new owners; Because from the least even to the greatest Everyone is greedy for **gain**; From the prophet even to the priest Everyone practices deceit.

Jer 22:17 "But your eyes and your heart Are intent only upon your own **dishonest gain**, And on shedding innocent blood And on practicing oppression and extortion."

**We have walked in mourning before the LORD of hosts** - **NIV** has "What did we gain by... going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?" The Hebrew word for mourning is used only here in the OT and is translated by the Lxx with the word **hiketes** which describes one who comes to seek protection, a suppliant or fugitive. They are saying our mourning has been to no avail.

**Walter Kaiser** - The skeptics' last impudent charge was that "mourning" had yielded no profit either. The men had clothed themselves with dark clothing (the word for "mourning" comes from the verb "to be dark"), or perhaps had darkened their faces to convey grief and sorrow for the sin and plight of the nation, but concluded that their acts were useless. It is little wonder that they were useless, for once again the skeptics attributed worth to the acts themselves, though they were devoid of genuine piety (cf. Is. 58:2-12).

**Malachi 3:15 'So now we call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also test God and escape.'":**

- **we call:** Mal 4:1 Es 5:10 Ps 10:3, 49:18, 73:12 Da 4:30,37 5:20-28 Ac 12:21 1Pe 5:5
- Mal 2:17 Job 12:6 21:7-15,30 Pr 12:12 Ec 9:1,2 Jer 12:1,2 Hab 1:13-17
- Job 22:23
- **they also test:** Nu 14:22,23 Da 6:16 Ps 78:18,41,56 95:9 106:14 Mt 4:6,7 Ac 5:9 1Co 10:9 Heb 3:9
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PIOUS PRESUMPTION PERSISTS!**

**NLT** - From now on we will say "Blessed are the arrogant." For those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them go free of harm." (Malachi 3:14-15)

**So now we call the arrogant blessed** - This is the fourth and final mention of blessing in Malachi. In Mal 2:2 God said "I will curse your blessings." In Mal 3:10 God encouraged them to test Him and He would bless them "until it overflows." Mal 3:12 describes a future eschatological blessing promised to Israel.

**Arrogant** ([02986](#))(**zed**) conveys the basic idea of pride, presumptuous (Ps 19:13<sup>note</sup>), a sense of self-importance, and often is exaggerated to defiance and rebelliousness (Pr 11:2, Jer 49:16; 50:31-32; Ezek 7:10). This is the same word used again in Malachi 4:1-note.

**The doers of wickedness** (are) **built up** - "This atrocious insinuation, that God favored evil-doers, was the highest insult they could have uttered, and was that which, as it were, drove God to inflict his judgments upon them." (T V Moore) Doers of wickedness indeed often do appear to be doing good, but God gets the last word. Even godly Asaph lost sight of Who God really is and as a result he fell into the same deception voiced here in Mal 3:15...

Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. Surely in vain (Lxx =

**mataios**) I have kept my heart pure, and washed my hands in innocence. (Ps 73:12-13)

**They also test God and escape** - Kaiser "The wicked, they had blasphemously implied, can tempt God and go free; nothing bad ever happens to them. How frequently have we heard that claim in our day!"

Clearly Israel had either not read or had forgotten what they had read in the Pentateuch where God declared...

Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, **yet** (note the striking contrast!) have put Me to the **test** (Hebrew = nacah; Lxx = peirazo) these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. (Nu 14:22-23, cf Ps 78:18-19, 41-42, 56-58)

The **psalmist** also testifies that those who tested God did not escape but were justly punished...

"When your fathers **tested** Me, They **tried** Me, though they had seen My work. "For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest." (Ps 95:9-11)

<b>TWO WAYS TO TEST GOD</b>	
<b>Malachi 3:10</b>	<b>Malachi 3:15</b>
Testing God to see how far He would go in blessing	Testing God to see how far they could go in evil

#### **James Smith - FULLNESS OF BLESSING. Malachi 3:7-17.**

Malachi was the last of the prophets. The times in which he lived, about 400 years before Christ, were typical of any modern community (see vv. 13, 14).

##### I. The Condition of Blessing. There was—

1. THE DIVINE CHALLENGE. "Prove Me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (v. 10). What a promise this is, and what a challenge to our faith. "Prove me." "Put Me to the test, and see if I will not do this for you." Don't let the greatness of the blessing make your faith to stagger. Remember that He who hath promised is the Almighty and Unchangeable Lord (v. 6). What He hath promised He is well able to perform.

2. THE CONDITIONS SPECIFIED. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (v. 10). The tithe was the tenth of the increase, given for the priests who served in the house of the Lord. It was reckoned as belonging to God. They were to "render to God the things that are God's." But we as Christians are not promised fullness of blessing if we give Him a tenth of our increase, although even this will bring blessing into the soul. We are called upon to give to God that which belongs to Him. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20). God is not satisfied when we give Him only part of what is His own (Acts 5:2). If we are to have the "open windows of Heaven" and the "poured out blessing," we must present ourselves unto God. This is our reasonable service (Rom. 12:1). "Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments unto God" (Rom. 6:13). We can only prove Him when we have fulfilled His conditions.

##### II. The Evidences of Being Blessed.

1. "THEY FEARED THE LORD AND THOUGHT UPON HIS NAME" (V. 16). Reverential fear is a blessed state of mind, for it leads to a deeper thinking into the preciousness of His Holy Name, that Name which is above every name. O fear the Lord, ye saints of His.

2. "THEY SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO ANOTHER." We are not told what they said, but if they were thinking of the wondrous Name of the Lord, they were surely speaking of Him. Herein lies the secret and joy of Christian fellowship. They had a common cause.

3. THEY HAD THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD. "The Lord hearkened and heard" (v. 16). His promise was fulfilled: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). To the mere onlooker nothing happened. But the Lord was "listening in." We have open ears when we hear others speaking of us, and mentioning our name. So the Lord hearkens when we talk of Him. But the Lord is

no idle listener. A "book of remembrance" was written, a memorandum was kept. For this thing so precious to Him shall never be forgotten. This thing may be written in that other book mentioned in Revelation 20:12. All spiritual values are associated with His Name.

4. THEY HAD THE LORD'S COMFORTING ASSURANCE. "They shall be Mine when I make up My special treasure" (v. 17). "They thought of Me when in the midst of a perverse people, who said, It is vain to serve the Lord" (v. 14). "I will think of them in that day when I gather out all that is worth saving from a wrecked and sinking world." What an encouragement we have here for the prayer and fellowship meeting, for quiet seasons of meditation. The Lord knoweth the thoughts and intents of the heart. His special treasure is the Church, redeemed by His own Blood. "They shall be Mine." (Handfuls of Purpose)

**Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.:**

- **feared:** Mal 3:5 4:2 Ge 22:12 1Ki 18:3,12 Job 28:28 Ps 33:18 111:10 112:1 Ps 147:11 Isa 50:10 Ac 9:31 10:2 Rev 15:4
- **spoke:** Dt 6:6-8 1Sa 23:16-18 Es 4:5-17 Ps 16:3 66:16 73:15-17 119:63 Pr 13:20 Eze 9:4 Da 2:17,18 Lk 2:38 24:14-31 Jn 1:40-47 Jn 12:20-22 Ac 1:13 2:1 4:23-30 Eph 5:19 1Th 5:11,14 Heb 3:13 Heb 10:24 12:15
- **and the:** 2Sa 7:1 2Ch 6:7 Ps 139:4 Mt 18:19,20 Ac 4:31-33
- **book:** Es 2:23 6:1 Job 19:23-25 Ps 56:8 Isa 65:6 Da 7:10 Mt 12:35-37 Rev 20:12
- **esteem:** Ps 10:4, 20:7, 94:19, 104:33 Isa 26:3,8 Heb 4:12,13
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE RIGHTEOUS REMNANT

**Then** - After the nay sayers had had their say, then the godly spoke up.

**Those who feared the LORD** (cp Mal 4:2) - In context fear of Jehovah describes the **remnant** of Jews who trusted not in works of righteousness but trusted in the righteousness of the Messiah for their salvation (cp Ge 15:6). Notice that fear of the LORD is a key phrase (mentioned twice). "They **feared the Lord**, which means they held Him in awe (**Ed**: honored, revered) and worshiped Him as the Lord Almighty. They met together (**spoke to one another**), not to complain but to encourage and edify each other." (Wiersbe)

**THOUGHT** - Do you truly possess a healthy, holy **fear of the LORD**? If you do not, then you need to soberly ponder Paul's admonition in the form of a command in 2Cor 13:5+ "**Test** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** ([present imperative](#)) yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?"

**Solomon** writes...

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: **fear God** and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. **For** (**term of explanation** - what is Solomon explaining?) God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. (Eccl 12:13-14)

**John Piper** - To **fear the Lord** is to tremble at the thought of offending him by unbelief and disobedience. It is the feeling that God is not to be trifled with. It is the very opposite of the attitude of the people in Mal 3:13–15 who speak with an incredible swagger: "It doesn't pay to serve God." Those who fear God shudder at the thought of speaking that way about their Majestic Father. Anything that dishonors God is anathema to those who fear God.

**Woodrow Kroll** - In the midst of the spiritual declension that surrounded them they were drawn together by their mutual concern of manifesting obedience to the Lord. (**Ed**: A good pattern in our day of moral declension in America!)

**Walter Kaiser** - The "fear of the Lord" is a virtual synonym for the righteous living and holy lifestyle that grow out of this fear (Lev 19:14+; Dt. 17:19+; 2Ki 17:34). Fear (reverential fear) is one motivation for holy living and maintaining an attitude of complete trust and obedience to the Lord as one's Master and Savior.

## RIGHTEOUS REMEMBERED



**A book of remembrance** (book of memorial) ("memory book") - The NET Bible says "A scroll was prepared before him in which were recorded the names of those who respected the LORD and honored his name." Why did the godly need this book? Or why would Malachi describe this book at this juncture? **John MacArthur** has an interesting thought...

In the hearts of the true and righteous worshipers who loved and served God in Israel, all the talk of judgment produced fear that they, too, might be swept away when God's wrath came. To encourage the godly remnant, Malachi noted how the Lord had not forgotten those "who fear the Lord and who esteem His name. The book may be a reference to the "**Book of Life (click for Tony Garland's discussion)**" in which the names of God's children are recorded (e.g., Ex 32:32-34; Ne 13:14; Ps 69:28; Da 12:1). The Persians had a custom of recording in a book all acts of a person that should be rewarded in the future (e.g., Est 6:1, 2). The psalmist knew of such a book as well (Ps 56:8). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Henry Morris** - In heaven, God keeps records of not just the actions of His people but even of their thoughts. This verse indicates His particular pleasure when His people truly fear the Lord, and He occupies both their conversations and their inward thoughts, even (perhaps especially) when most of their contemporaries ignore or reject Him. ([book of remembrance](#))

**Before Him** - Not merely in His presence but it is **before Him** constantly as a reminder. The **Septuagint** uses [enopion](#) which means literally in sight and thus means before or in front of God. As **Kroll** says "The point of the figure is that God ever keeps before Himself the names of those who are His and are in proper relationship to Him."

**Who esteem His Name** - KJV has "**thought upon** His Name." The NKJV translates it as "**meditate** on His name" Those who fear His Name will esteem His Name! Every time we pray "Hallowed be Thy Name" (Mt 6:9-note) we esteem His Name!

Recall how Malachi's message began...

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise (same word used in Nathan's reproof of King David - 2Sa 12:9!) My **Name**. But you say, 'How have we despised Thy **Name**?' (Mal 1:6+)

**Kaiser** - God's "name" comprises His person, His qualities, His doctrine, and His ethical and moral standards—these were the things the believers judged to be their highest and most prized possessions! If you asked any of these God-fearers what they judged to be their wealth, property, or greatest asset, they would have pointed to the name of God and all that it stands for. This is exactly as our Lord counseled, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21-note). Solomon said as well, "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Pr. 23:7). The believers thought on the name of the Lord, and as a consequence it was reflected in their character.

#### **Related Resource:**

- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Summary

**G Campbell Morgan** comments that in this passage "are revealed the secrets of strength in an age of failure; they **thought upon His name.**" The Hebrew word translated **thought** is elsewhere translated **regard**... they "**thought upon His name,**" that is, they took an inventory of the wealth they had in His name, **Jehovah Jireh. Jehovah Nissi. Jehovah Shalom. Jehovah Tsidkenu. Jehovah Shammah.** These people had nothing left to think of, other than the Name. The grandeur of their nation was perished. The prophetic voices were silent. The priests had corrupted the covenant. The kings had passed away. All about them was formality devoid of power. But there was left them the real value of life. It was the name. They thought upon His name. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is set on high." (Pr 18:10) When the king has failed, the priest is corrupted, and the prophet is silent; when the national power has declined and we are bewailing the failure of our age, then let us think on the Name, take an inventory in the Name, count it as our wealth, take time to go over our wealth in order to discover how rich we are.

**The LORD gave attention** (KJV = "hearkened") **and heard** - **Gave attention** is the Hebrew verb **qashab** meaning "to incline (ears)" giving us a beautiful anthropomorphic picture of God giving heed and listening carefully to His people. This believing remnant in Israel realized the promise God had given in Mal 3:7 (**Return to Me, and I will return to you**). As the psalmist says "The righteous cry and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles." (Ps 34:17).

We see God's ready response to the righteous, Isaiah recording...

It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. (Isa 65:24)

**G Campbell Morgan** comments on "**hearkened and heard**" (KJV) noting that "Both these words are pictorial. "**Hearkened**" is a

word suggesting the action of a horse at the sound of its master's voice, the pricking of the ears. It is only a figure of speech. The horse is arrested by the voice it knows... **Heard** means bending over patiently listening that no syllable may be missed. When His people spoke with one another—not when they spoke to Him—Jehovah **hearkened, and heard**. They thought on His name and talked to each other of it, and He **hearkened and heard**. God always attends to the conversation of those who are bound together by their loyalty to His name, and their consciousness of the wealth of their possessions in Him. Two or three of His people never meet together to speak of the deep things of His Name and all the Name means to them, but that He hearkens and hears."

## THE VALUE OF HIGH REGARD FOR THE NAME OF GOD

**Those... who esteem His Name** ("honored His Name" = **NET**, "had high regard for His Name" = **HCSB**; "Reverenced His Name" = **Septuagint**). These people did not make a "*decision*" for Yeshua! Modern evangelicalism has so watered down the glorious Gospel that all one has to do is say "I believe in Yeshua" and they are considered as being truly saved! There are even some in evangelicalism who say one can make such a "decision" and live the rest of one's life in sin and still be confident they will die and go to heaven! That is a deceptive, deluded, devilish theology and these deceived souls will be among the "*Many*" referred to by Jesus in the pithy passage Mt 7:21-23+! If you say you believe in Yeshua and do not have a love for Him, a love that is not just vocalized but is truly lived out (cf Jn 14:15 - love equates with obedience!), then you are not born again. Do not be deceived! In contrast these Jews believed and were circumcised by the Spirit giving them a new heart (see circumcision of the heart), one that esteemed **His Name**.

### Related Resource:

- [What is decisional regeneration / decision theology? | GotQuestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org/What-is-decisional-regeneration-or-decision-theology/)

**Esteem** (02803) (**chasab/hasab**) means to consider, to think, to calculate, to reckon oneself, to impute. Chasab conveys several meanings - devise, plan (Divine = Zech 7:10, Human = Ge 50:20); making a judgment (Divine = Isa 53:4, human = Job 33:10); "meditating" or running thoughts through one's mind (Mal 3:16); impute (2Sa 19:20, Ge 15:6 quoted in Ro 4:3-note, Ps 32:2-note quoted in Ro 4:8-note) (See [Imputation](#)).

**Leon Wood** - The basic idea of the word is the employment of the mind in thinking activity. Reference is not so much to "understanding" (cf. bin), but to the creating of new ideas.

**Chasab/hasab** is used in Genesis 15:6 where Abram's faith was "reckoned (**chasab/hasab**)... to him as righteousness." In that crucial OT passage, the **Lxx** translates the Hebrew **chasab/hasab** with the Greek verb **logizomai** which means to take an accounting of something. While this is not the Greek verb used in Malachi 3:16, it does suggest a picture of what it means to **esteem** His Name (see Morgan's comment in the next paragraph). The **Lxx** actually translates **chasab/hasab** with the verb **eulabeomai** which means to show a reverent regard and respect for God's Name.

**Swanson** summarizes the meanings of **chasab** as **(1)** credit, account reckon, imputer (Ge 15:6); determine value (Lev 25:27); (nif) accounted (2Ki 22:7); **(2)**. (qal) consider, i.e., pertaining to thought and thinking in a detailed, logical manner, considering various factors, which has some focus on the formulation of an opinion (Ge 38:15); (piel) consider (Ps 73:16; 77:6, 119:59); (nif) considered, accounted, reckoned (Dt 2:11); (hitp) consider oneself (Nu 23:9+); **(3)**. (qal) plan, plot, purpose, devise, i.e., think about a course of action in some detail (1Sa 18:25); (piel) plan, plot (Pr 16:9; 24:8); **(4)** (piel) be on the verge, begin, i.e., be on the beginning of a course of action, as a figurative extension of reckoning in a logical way (Jonah 1:4) ([A Dictionary of Biblical Languages w- Semantic Domains- Hebrew](#))

**Chasab** - 122 verses - **Usage in NAS:** accounting(1), **calculate**(5), composed(1), consider(3), **considered**(13), counted(1), counts(1), designer(1), determined(1), **devise**(13), **devised**(8), devises(1), devising(1), esteem(2), esteemed(2), execute(1), have(1), impute(1), intend(2), make(2), makers(1), meant(2), mindful(1), plan(2), planned(3), **planning**(5), plans(4), plotted(1), pondered(1), purposed(3), **reckoned**(10), regard(1), **regarded**(8), regards(1), require an accounting(1), scheme(1), schemed(1), seem(1), skillful(1), skillful workman(9), think(3), thought(2), value(1).

Ge 15:6; 31:15; 38:15; 50:20; Ex 26:1, 31; 28:6, 15; 31:4; 35:32, 35; 36:8, 35; 38:23; 39:3, 8; Lev 7:18; 17:4; 25:27, 31, 50, 52; 27:18, 23; Num 18:27, 30; 23:9; Deut 2:11, 20; Josh 13:3; 1 Sam 1:13; 18:25; 2Sam 4:2; 14:13f; 19:19; 1Kgs 10:21; 2Kgs 12:15; 22:7; 2Chr 2:14; 9:20; 26:15; Neh 6:2, 6; 13:13; Esther 8:3; 9:24f; Job 6:26; 13:24; 18:3; 19:11, 15; 33:10; 35:2; 41:27, 29, 32; Ps 10:2; 21:11; 32:2; 35:4, 20; 36:4; 40:17; 41:7; 44:22; 52:2; 73:16; 77:5; 88:4; 106:31; 119:59; 140:2, 4; 144:3; Pr 16:9, 30; 17:28; 24:8; 27:14; Eccl 9:10; Isa 2:22; 5:28; 10:7; 13:17; 29:16f; 32:15; 33:8; 40:15, 17; 53:3f; Jer 11:19; 18:8, 11, 18; 23:27; 26:3; 29:11; 36:3; 48:2; 49:20, 30; 50:45; Lam 2:8; 4:2; Ezek 11:2; 38:10; Dan 11:24f; Hos

**G Campbell Morgan** emphasizes that in Malachi 3:16 we discover one of the "*secrets of (spiritual) strength in an age of failure* (descriptive of the apathy and indifference in most of Israel in Malachi's day)". **Morgan** observes that the source of spiritual strength in the believing Jewish **remnant** is that...

they **thought upon His name**. The Hebrew word translated **thought** is elsewhere translated **regard**... they took an inventory of the wealth they had in His name, **Jehovah Jireh. Jehovah Nissi. Jehovah Shalom. Jehovah Tsidkenu. Jehovah Shammah.**

These people had nothing left to think of, other than the Name. The grandeur of their nation was perished. The prophetic voices were silent. The priests had corrupted the covenant. The kings had passed away. All about them was formality devoid of power. But there was left them the real value of life. It was the name. They thought upon His name. "**The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is set on high.**" (Pr 18:10)

When the king has failed, the priest is corrupted, and the prophet is silent; when the national power has declined and we are bewailing the failure of our age, then **let us think on the Name, take an inventory in the Name, count it as our wealth, take time to go over our wealth in order to discover how rich we are.**

They "**spake one with another**"... described constant, continuous, unbroken fellowship with each other, based on thought centered upon the Name of Jehovah.

**T V Moore** - When the wicked are talking against God, the righteous should talk for him. Religious conversation is necessary, all the more, for the very reasons that often chill and repress it. When a fire burns low, the coals that are alive should be brought near together, that they may be blown into a flame. So when all is cold and dead, living Christians should draw near and seek the breathings of the Spirit, and kindle each other by mutual utterance.

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**Days of Proscription and Persecution** "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another; and the LORD hearkened, and heard it."—Mal. 3:16

In the memoirs of Hannah More, there is mention made of her grandfather, who married into a family zealous for Nonconformity. They boarded a minister in their house, and at midnight pious worshippers went with stealthy steps to hear the words of inspiration from the minister's lips, while Mr. More, with a drawn sword, guarded the entrance from violent or profane intrusion. Mrs. More was also a pious woman, and used to tell her younger relatives, when they complained of the long distance to church, that they would have known how to value Gospel privileges had they lived, like her, in the days of proscription and persecution.

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### **Malachi 3:16-18 Returning God's Love**

The book of Malachi begins with this wholehearted word from the Lord to His halfhearted worshipers: "I have loved you" (Mal 1:2). Though Israel had long been the object of God's love, they no longer returned His love.

God listed the ways His people had offended His love through their disobedience. Israel's response was to question God. When He implored them, "Return to Me, and I will return to you," they questioned Him in their blindness, "In what way shall we return?" (Mal 3:7). With divine "tough love," the Lord exposed their many blind spots. He did this so that they might repent and accept His love, and return it with wholehearted obedience.

We too are often halfhearted in our faith, appearing to love and serve God but really loving and serving ourselves. Today, as in Malachi's time, God looks for people who reverence Him by maintaining two spiritual practices: speaking to each other about Him, and meditating on His wonderful attributes (v.16). The first is fellowship with God's people; the second is fellowship with God Himself. Not only are we to receive and share God's love, we are also to return it through glad obedience.

Such worshipers are God's "jewels" (v.17). Are you one of them? — by Joanie Yoder [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

"We love You, Lord Jesus," we often will say,  
But are we as ready His will to obey?  
Let's heed what God's Spirit would have us to do—  
That's how we show Him a love that is true. —D. De Haan

To love God is to obey God.

**Malachi 3:17 "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."":**

- **they will:** Jer 31:31-34 Eze 16:8, Ezek 36:27,28 Zec 13:9 Jn 10:27-30 17:9,10,24 1Co 3:22,23 6:20 15:23 Ga 5:24 2Th 1:7-10 Rev 20:12-15
- **My own possession: or, special treasure,** Ex 19:5 Dt 7:6 14:2 26:17,18 Ps 135:4 Isa 62:3,4 Tit 2:14 1Pe 2:9
- **and I:** Ne 13:22 Ps 103:8-13 Isa 26:20,21 Jer 31:20 Zep 2:2 Mt 25:34 Ro 8:32 2Co 6:18 1Jn 3:1-3
- **son:** Mal 1:6 1Pe 1:13-16
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ISRAEL'S REMNANT IS GOD'S TREASURED POSSESSION**

**They will be Mine** - This is the language of covenant, specifically the New Covenant promised to Israel and to Judah by Jehovah...

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "**when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,** 32 not like the (Mosaic) covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** 34 "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31:31-34+)

### **Related Resource:**

- Remnant of Israel

This covenant promise alluding to the righteous as God's possession is reiterated in Ezekiel...

And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so **you will be My people, and I will be your God.** (Ezek 36:27-28+)

**On the day** - Notice that this is an **expression of time**, which should always cause us to pause and ponder, asking "What time is it?" "When (what) will take place "on that day"?" This day is yet future to us. In Exodus 19:5+ Moses was to speak Jehovah's conditional promise to Israel camped at the foot of Mt Sinai - "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own **possession (segullah)** among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine." Did they obey? No. And for over 2000 years the Jews have been persecuted and killed. But there is a **day** coming which Malachi refers to as **on the day**. First the **day** will be preceded by the last 3.5 years of this present evil age, a horrible time referred to as the Time of Jacob's Trouble when 2/3's of Israel will be killed, a more horrible genocide than the Nazi Holocaust! But 1/3 of Israel will be brought through the fire (read Zechariah 13:8-9+) and will repent and put their faith in their Messiah. This **righteous remnant** will constitute what Jehovah had always desired way back at the foot of Mount Sinai, His **possession**, sons and daughters of Israel who would finally fulfill His condition in Exodus 19:5+ for they will "**indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant.**"; (for more on how this "second deliverance on eagles' wings" [first described in Ex 19:4+] will transpire read Zechariah 12:10-14+, Zechariah 13:1+, and Romans 11:25-29+, see also Zechariah 14:1-21+).

**Baldwin** - The high privilege God will bestow is to make these believers his own possession; **Mine** is emphatic in the Hebrew, and **My special possession** further endorses the point. These words, quoted from the covenant inauguration (Ex. 19:5) and later referred to in that connection (Dt. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4), draw attention to the original election of Israel. The purpose which God had in first choosing a people is shown in the last of the prophets to be about to be fulfilled.

**Possession** (05459)(**segullah**) is related to an Akkadian cognate, sikiltu, means "private possessions." **Segullah** refers to a treasured possession, that which is valued personal property, that which is owned by someone and in which the owner has special affection or holds special value (Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17). **Segullah** most frequently occurs in reference to something God chooses, here referring to Israel, who God choose from all the nations of the world (Ex 19:5, Dt 7:6, 14:2). Segullah speaks of personal wealth in 1Chr 29:3, Eccl 2:8.

**NET Note - Segullah** is a technical term referring to all the recipients of God's redemptive grace, especially Israel. The LORD says here that he will not forget even one individual in the day of judgment and reward.

**Segullah** - 8 verses translated possession(5), treasure(2), treasured possession(1).

Exodus 19:5+ 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own **possession** (Lxx = **periousios**) among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own **possession** (Lxx = **periousios**) out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own **possession** (Lxx = **periousios**) out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 26:18 "The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a **treasured possession** (Lxx = **periousios**), as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments;

1 Chronicles 29:3 "Moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, the **treasure** I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple,

Psalms 135:4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own **possession**. (**periousiasmos** = wealth, treasure)

Ecclesiastes 2:8 Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the **treasure** of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men-- many concubines.

Malachi 3:17 "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own **possession**, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

**My own possession** (see Exodus 19:5+) - Remember that in context God is speaking to Israel **not** the church, so it is Israel who will be His "**own possession**" or His own **jewels** (or "peculiar treasure" in the KJV), on that [day](#) when He spares them. Israel deserved annihilation, but because of His mercy (not giving them what they deserved) and grace (giving them what they did not observe), he will spare a **righteous remnant** of Israel (see note above [on the day](#))

Believers today are of course God's possession (valued property, peculiar treasure)

(Jesus) Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for **His own possession** (KJV = peculiar people = **periousios**), zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:14-note, cf Ro 14:7-9-note, 1Co 6:19,20-note, 2Co 5:15-note)

**I will spare them** - "I will have pity on them." "I will have compassion on them." From the Lxx (see below) we get the sense of God saying "I will choose them." His choosing has a purpose, and in Mal 3:18 this purpose is to serve Him.

**Spare** (HCSB = have compassion) ([02550](#))(**chamal**) means to spare (to forbear to destroy, punish, or harm, refrain from attacking with necessary severity) or to have compassion ("had pity" Ex 2:6). Nathan told David, how the rich man **spared** ("unwilling") his own lamb (2Sa 12:4). The Babylonians would not "spare" arrows in their attack on Jerusalem (Jer 50:14). In Ezek 36:21, God said He had "concern (chamal)" for His holy Name. When preceded by the Hebrew negative particle (lo') chamal means to do something ruthlessly (Isa 30:14; Lam 2:2) or without any restraint (Jer. 50:14) Chamal " can take on the nuance of holding on to something, desiring it, such as holding evil in one's mouth (Job 20:13) or being unwilling to do something right or that is costly to oneself (2Sa 12:4)." (Baker) In Ezekiel (Ezek 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:5, 10; 16:5; 36:21) we see the repeated phrase that God will "have no pity" (Hebrew = chus) nor will He "spare" (chamal) Judah. From this it seems that chamal while expressing the attitude of compassion or pity, also describes "compassion in action" so to speak (albeit in all the Ezekiel passages it is used in a negative sense - God would NOT spare them!).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses an interesting verb in Mal 3:17 to translate "spare" -- the verb **hairetizo** (29x - most in the Lxx = Ge 30:20; Nu 14:8; 1Sa 25:35; 1Chr 28:4, 6, 10; 29:1; 2Chr 29:11; Ps 25:12; 119:30, 173; 132:13f; Ezek 20:5; Hos 4:18; Hag 2:23; Zech 1:17; 2:12; Mal 3:17; Mt 12:18) which means to choose (from **haireo** = to take > English "heresy" - from hairesis = action of taking, choice). The idea of **hairetizo** involves choice or selection (sole use in NT = Mt 12:18 referring to Jesus, "chosen" to accomplish the purposes of God, even as the ones chosen here in Mal 3:17 are to serve God).

**Chamal** - 40 verses - Ex 2:6; Deut 13:8; 1Sa 15:3, 9, 15; 23:21; 2Sa 12:4, 6; 21:7; 2Chr 36:15, 17; Job 6:10; 16:13; 20:13; 27:22; Pr 6:34; Isa 9:19; 30:14; Jer 13:14; 15:5; 21:7; 50:14; 51:3; Lam 2:2, 17, 21; 3:43; Ezek 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:5, 10; 16:5; 36:21; Joel



2:18; Hab 1:17; Zech 11:5f; Mal 3:17 **Usage in NASB:** concern(1), desires(1), had compassion(2), had pity(1), had... compassion(2), have compassion(1), have pity(4), have... pity(1), mercy(1), ruthlessly\*(1), show pity(1), spare(11), spared(5), spares(2), sparing(5), unsparing\*(1), unwilling(1). The **KJV** translates as pity 18, spare 18, have compassion 5

Pr 6:34 **For** (This **term of explanation** forces us to observe the preceding **context** = Pr 6:32-33) jealousy enrages a man, and he will not **spare** (chamal) in the day of vengeance.

**As a man spares** (has pity) **his own son who serves him** - This comparison (see term of comparison// simile) helps us understand God's heart in sparing a remnant. The remnant were sinners also, but had made the choice to fear God, to esteem His Name, to serve Him (Mal 3:18).

**Who serves** (Lxx = douleuo) **Him** - Contrast those in Mal 3:14 who said "It is vain to serve God."

**John Piper** writes

Mal 3:14 says it is pointless to serve God. And Mal 3:17 says God will count them his possession and spare him **who serves Him**. What is the difference? It is the difference between the service of a son and the service of a slave. It's the difference between the younger brother and the elder brother in the parable of the the Prodigal Son. The younger brother, broken and humbled, wanted to serve because he knew that to be at home with the father was the greatest blessing in the world—all his needs would be met. The elder brother had the mindset of a slave—if anybody around here deserves a party, I do. Who has worked harder than anybody to earn such a blessing! There is a formal, slavish service of God that thinks in terms of what it is contributing to the plantation and what the slave owner owes me. That service is indeed in vain. But there is another kind of service that thinks like a son in the house of his father—here is total security, here is food on the table, here is rest and recreation and love and education and inheritance and the fame and glory of my Father! Why would I want to work anywhere else but here! That is the mindset of the true servant of God. • Fear God. • Hallow his name above all names. • And serve him like a son serves a Majestic Father. ([I Will Spare Them as a Man Spares His Son](#))

**Malachi 3:18 So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.:**

- **Will again:** Mal 3:14,15 Mal 1:4 Job 6:29, 17:10 Jer 12:15 Joel 2:14 Zec 1:6
- **distinguish:** Ge 18:25 Ps 58:10,11 Isa 3:10,11 Da 12:1-3 Mt 25:46 Ro 2:5,6 2Th 1:5-10
- **between:** Josh 24:15 Da 3:17-26 Jn 12:26 Ac 16:17 27:23 Ro 1:9, 6:16-22 1Th 1:9
- [Malachi 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

<b>A HEBREW PARALLELISM</b>	
<b>RIGHTEOUS</b>	<b>WICKED</b>
<b>SERVE GOD</b>	<b>DOES NOT SERVE GOD</b>

**So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked** - Will again is in a sense a time phrase and conveys a promise of future blessing to Israel. This would find fulfillment any time a Jewish man or woman choose to fear God (to believe in Him, to receive imputed righteousness by grace through faith), but will find its full and final fulfillment at the Return of Messiah, Who will return to those who have "returned" to Him (see Ro 11:25-29-note) John MacArthur ([MacArthur Study Bible](#)) agrees writing that "The distinction between the godly and ungodly will be evident for all when the righteous Lord is present, ruling from the throne of David in Jerusalem." As added support for this eschatological interpretation, Malachi continues the thought in Malachi 4:1-2, which speak of the first and second advent of Christ. In that **day** the LORD Himself with **distinguish between the righteous and the wicked**.

**You will again** - This is the Hebrew verb **shub**, which means **return** as in Mal 3:7 (also used in Mal 1:4, 2:6, 4:6). Young's Literal = "And ye have turned back." You have returned, obeying His call in Mal 3:7.

**Distinguish** - This is literally the verb "you will see." NIV = "And you will again see the distinction between."

**Woodrow Kroll** on the distinction **between the righteous and the wicked** writes that "the righteous remnant who have turned to

the Lord and serve Him. They will clearly be able to realize the falseness of the objection raised in verse 16. They will realize that God does not treat the wicked and the righteous in the same way, for He will sovereignly deliver the righteous and destroy the wicked. The wicked may appear to prosper, but judgment lies ahead for them. The righteous may suffer now, but a glorious deliverance for them lies ahead."

**Wiersbe** - One of the sins of the priests was that they failed to make the distinction between the way of holiness and the way of sin. To them, one sacrifice was just as good as another, yet they were supposed to teach the people "the difference between the holy and the common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean" (Ezek. 44:23).

**Between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him** - This theme of distinction between the godly and ungodly is presented at the very beginning of the psalms...

For the LORD knows the way of the **righteous**,  
But the way of the **wicked** will perish.  
Psalm 1:6-note

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### **Malachi 3:17 - C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - Exceedingly Precious**

"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Malachi 3:17

A Day is coming in which the crown jewels of our great King shall be counted, that it may be seen whether they answer to the inventory which His Father gave Him. My soul, wilt thou be among the precious things of Jesus? Thou art precious to Him if He is precious to thee, and thou shalt be His "in that day," if He is thine in this day.

In the days of Malachi, the chosen of the Lord were accustomed so to converse with each other that their God Himself listened to their talk. He liked it so well that He took notes of it; yes, and made a book of it, which he lodged in His record office. Pleased with their conversation, He was also pleased with them. Pause, my soul, and ask thyself: If Jesus were to listen to thy talk would He be pleased with it? Is it to His glory and to the edification of the brotherhood? Say, my soul, and be sure thou sayest the truth.

But what will the honor be for us poor creatures to be reckoned by the Lord to be His crown jewels! This honor have all the saints. Jesus not only says, "They are mine," but, "They shall be mine." He bought us, sought us, brought us in, and has so far wrought us to His image, that we shall be fought for by Him with all His might.

## **The Messenger of the Covenant** **By Henry Mahan**

Malachi 3:1-6

The preceding chapter (Malachi 2) is filled with rebuke and judgment against both the priests and the people for their sins.

The priests were apostates from the way of the Lord and caused the people to stumble (Mal. 2:8-9). The chapter closes with these words, 'You have wearied the Lord with your wicked words, it saying that the Lord takes delight in your evil ways and that there is no judgment and righteousness in God. You ask, 'Where is the God of judgment?' Chapter Three begins with the answer of our Lord to this question.

**Malachi 3:1.** 'Behold I will send my messenger.' This is John the Baptist, called the last of the Old Testament prophets, who was sent to 'prepare the way before him' (Isa. 40:3; John 1:6-9). The allusion is to kings and great men sending ambassadors before them to give notice of their coming. John said, 'I am not the Christ! I am not that prophet! I am not Elijah! I am the voice crying in the wilderness--behold the Lamb!' All of the prophets have written and preached of the Messiah's coming (Acts 10:43). Now the last of their number declares that the Messiah has been born of woman and is in the midst of them (John 1:29-34).

'And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.' The Lord Jehovah is speaking of himself, the Son of God, the promised Messiah and Christ, the Lord and head of the church, the Redeemer of true Israel (John 4:25; Matt. 2:2-6).

Some were seeking him as a temporal deliverer, to free them from national bondage and to restore the earthly glory to Israel; but some, like Simeon, believed the word and waited for 'thy salvation' (Luke 2:25-32). When the Lord speaks of coming to his temple, he is actually talking about coming to the material temple in Jerusalem (the second temple--Haggai 2:1-9). The temple was built to be HIS, devoted to his worship, to reveal his glory and his mercy to sinners through the sacrifices and the mercy-seat. He came to

that temple on several occasions (Luke 2:22-27; Mark 11:15-17). 'He was in the world and the world knew him not,' and 'He came unto his own (temple, priesthood, nation) and his own received him not' (John 1:10-11).

'Even the messenger of the covenant.' This is the covenant of grace, the everlasting covenant of which our Lord Jesus is not only the surety and mediator, but called here the messenger. He is called the messenger of that everlasting covenant of grace (Heb. 13:20-21; 7:22; 8:6) because it is revealed, made known, and manifested in and through him (John 1:14; 1 John 5:20; Eph. 1:8-10). As our king he reigns, as our priest he perfects us, and as our prophet he reveals the mysteries of God's covenant.

'In whom ye delight; behold he shall come.' All believers delight in him. 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Pet. 1:8); and all believers delight in his covenant. David's last words on earth were words of joy and confidence in the Lord's covenant of grace (2 Sam. 23:1-5). We rejoice in the messenger of the covenant and in the covenant--its antiquity (2 Thess. 2:13), its sureness (Rom. 4:16), its immutability (Rom. 11:29), its fullness (Col. 2:19-10), its beloved messenger, surety, and advocate (1 John 2:1; 1 Tim. 2:5).

**Malachi 3:2.** 'Who shall abide the day of his coming?' Who shall stand when he appears? Who shall listen when he speaks? 'Who hath believed our report?' Is this not only Isaiah's question but the question of every prophet?

When he says, 'I and my Father are one,' who shall abide?

When he declares, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' my kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, who shall abide?

When he says, 'All that my Father giveth to me shall come to me,' and 'No man can come to me except my Father draw him,' who shall abide?

When he preaches the gospel of the cross, the tomb, and the glorious resurrection as our substitute and saviour, who shall hear?

When he talks of the new birth, eating his flesh and drinking his blood, of persecution and division caused by him, who shall abide?

'He is like a refiner's fire and like a fuller's soap.' His word is called a fire (Jer. 23:29). When it comes in power, it separates the gold from the dross, truth from error, genuine faith from false faith, and will try the works and preaching of men (1 Cor. 3:13-15). These women would boil the garments in hot water. Then they were rubbed with fuller's soap, which whitened them and took out the spots. We are sanctified by his word of truth.

**Malachi 3:3.** 'And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.' One can see the old refiner of precious metal. He made the fire; he knows how hot it should be; he knows when to put the metal into the fire, how long to leave it, and when to take it out. All the time he sits (unalarmed and untroubled) and waits for the purifying process to do its work. Our Lord Jesus Christ has come to this earth and finished the work given to him. He is exalted at God's right hand, seated until his church is called out and his enemies are made his footstool. This verse denotes his constant care over his church from the cradle to the grave. His eye is upon them in all their ways. He will purify these 'sons of Levi,' for they are all priests; and he will purge them that they may believe him, worship him, and offer sacrifices of faith, love, praise, and thanksgiving in righteousness; that is, in the righteousness of Christ (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:16). He began the work of purifying and purging, and he shall finish it (Phil. 1:6).

**Malachi 3:4.** All spiritual worship, faith, praise, and offerings are acceptable to God through the Lord Jesus Christ if such are offered in the faith of his righteousness imputed and his atoning sacrifice. Without Christ, nothing we do or say is acceptable to God (Rom. 8:8; Heb. 11:6).

**Malachi 3:5-6.** The Lord declares that he will be a swift witness against all ungodly men and women and 'their foot shall slide in due time' (Deut. 32:35). But as he is unchangeable in his judgments against sin, he is unchangeable in his love and mercy to his people! Our confidence and assurance is based not upon our faithfulness but upon his! We are often called 'the sons of Jacob' because, as Jacob was loved, chosen, called, and blessed by the sovereign grace of God, so are we!

'All that I am, even here on earth,  
All that I hope to be,  
When Jesus comes and glory dawns,  
I owe it, Lord, to thee.' (H. Bonar)