

### Comments on Malachi 3

1 BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he [is] like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit [as] a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger [from his right], and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. 6 For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

v1-6 The second curse is leveled at the priests (v. 1-3) and the people (v. 4-6). The Lord will send a messenger to clear His way, and then He will personally come to His Temple (v. 1). When the Lord arrives at the Temple none will be able to stand in His presence because He will come to refine and purify the people, to purge wickedness from before Him (v. 2). He will act as a smelter of gold or silver purging off all dross from those who are to serve Him in the Temple, so they may serve in righteousness (v. 3). Then the offerings from Judah at Jerusalem will be acceptable to Him as they were historically (v. 4). But, first He will contend with all of the wicked among Israel who flagrantly violate the Law and do not revere Him (v. 5). However, a remnant will be preserved because the Lord will keep his covenant with Israel (v. 6).

v1 This verse is best known as the NT proof text of John Baptist as the forerunner of Messiah. D&C 84:26-28 also informs us John Baptist was called to overthrow the Levitical order of the Priesthood, in fulfilment of the predictions in ch. 1.

Aside from this, also note the Lord is saying He Himself will be coming to His Temple. This is a strong argument for the incarnation of the Lord.

v1 "suddenly", Henderson states, "When it is declared that he should come 'suddenly' to his temple, it is not implied that he was to come in or near the times of the prophet, but merely that his coming would be sudden and unexpected in the circumstances under which it took place."

v2-3 The harsh metallurgical tests are used to show that when the messenger and Lord appear they will test the people based upon pure doctrine and a godly walk, as opposed to the vain actions the priests were presently engaging in. This clearly sets the stage for an adversarial relationship between the religious leaders and the Lord's covenant messengers. When the messenger and the Lord appear, it will not be a friendly gathering.

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept [them]. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, wherein shall we return? 8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation. 10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

v7-12 Another allegations against Israel in general accusing them of failing to tithe and make offerings, and they again deny the charges (v. 7-8). The Lord curses them for violating the Law on this point (v. 9), and challenges them to put Him to the test regarding the covenant blessings associated with this law (v. 10-12).

From the historical context of Nehemiah, the Levites had to abandon Temple service and farm the land in order to survive. See the general comments on Malachi.

v11-12 The blessings listed here are paraphrased from the blessings detailed in Lev. 26.

v8 "rob", the JPS translation indicates the Hebrew here is *qaba*, intended as a wordplay on Jacob, *aqeb*, in v. 6.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, what have we spoken [so much] against thee? 14 Ye have said, It [is] vain to serve God: and what profit [is it] that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? 15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, [they that] tempt God are even delivered.

v13-15 These verses repeat Israel's statement from 2:17 and expound upon them as the Lord addresses Israel's accusation against Him.

They allege it is futile to worship the Lord because they aren't getting anything for it, and the wicked are prospering, so why not be wicked? This kind of statement reveals the very core of the problem. The reason they are not being blessed is not because the Lord is unjust, but because they are wicked. Rather than admit they are wicked, they accuse the Lord of being unjust and fault find with others around themselves. They claim they are more righteous by comparison, and therefore ought to be blessed. The Lord therefore correctly identifies them as prideful.

What Israel is saying here directly contradicts the substance of Ps. 37 (esp. See Ps. 37:7).

**16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard [it], and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. 17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. 18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.**

v16-18 After the accusations of 1:2-3:15 are delivered by Malachi, the people who are repentant among them gather together and their names are recorded in the Book of Life. Malachi's testimony separates the good from the bad. The Lord takes note of their reverence (v. 16). He states He will take them as His own, and spare them on the day of purging (v. 17). Thus, will the complainers from v. 13-14 and 2:17 be able to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. At the Last Day the Lord will accept these humble followers and reject the rebellious complainers.

v17 "my jewels", a better translation would be "treasured possession" as in Exod. 19:5, Deut. 7:6, also cp. D&C 101:3.

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