

Understanding the Message of Malachi
Malachi 3:1-4 (p. 1021)

Intro

I. The _____ was coming...

The Lord has a special _____ for His people, but we have not always given Him the _____ that He deserves.

The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. "I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert." If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the Lord of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down.... "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'.... When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. 1:1-4,6-8

We must put the Lord _____ in our lives and in our worship; He is determined to _____ His name.

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.... But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts....Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations. 1:10-14

There are always _____ for half-hearted worship and sinful disobedience.

"And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings...Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts! And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.... You have wearied the Lord with your words.... 2:1,2,11-17

Sometimes we want _____ to change, but _____ are the ones who need to change; _____ is the doorway to greater blessing, but who can repent _____?

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. 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. v.1,2

A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Is. 40:1)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” (Mt.3:1-3)

Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John [the Baptist].... What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” (Mt. 10:7-10)

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance... (Mark 1:4)

he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Luke 3:3)

II. To _____ His people.

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. v.2,3

The Lord was coming to purify His _____ so that we could _____ Him in righteousness and be pleasing to Him.

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 Lord came first to purify us with His _____, but He will come again—this time, for _____.

...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22)

...because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free... (Zech. 9:11)

the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

we have redemption through his blood (Eph. 1:7)

you were ransomed...with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19)

you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Eph. 2:13)

...the blood of the eternal covenant... (Heb. 13:20)

“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts. v.5

_____ to the Lord by putting Him first in your life and worship; the Lord will
_____ those who honor Him.

“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. 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?’ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me...In your tithes and contributions.... Bring the full tithe into the storehouse... And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. v.6-10

Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. (Zech. 1:3)

When you _____ and put the Lord first, you will experience the special
_____ He has for His people.

...those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them.... “They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession... Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked... for you who fear my name.... You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3:16-18; 4:2

The Old Testament is not _____ about what we need to believe or _____; it is primarily about Who God is and what _____ would do.

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers....” v.4-6

“Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” (Jn. 1:21)

...among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist... and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. (Mt. 11:11,14)

Understanding the Message of Malachi Malachi 3:1-4 (p. 1021)

Intro

I. The Lord was coming...

The Lord has a special love for His people, but we have not always given Him the honor that He deserves.

The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. "I have loved you," says the Lord. But you say, "How have you loved us?" "Is not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the Lord. "Yet I have loved Jacob but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert." If Edom says, "We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins," the Lord of hosts says, "They may build, but I will tear down.... "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'.... When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. 1:1-4,6-8

We must put the Lord first in our lives and in our worship; He is determined to glorify His name.

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.... But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts....Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations. 1:10-14

There are always consequences for half-hearted worship and sinful disobedience.

"And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings...Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. May the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the Lord of hosts! And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.... You have wearied the Lord with your words.... 2:1,2,11-17

Sometimes we want God to change, but we are the ones who need to change; repentance is the doorway to greater blessing, but who can repent enough?

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. 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. v.1,2

A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Is. 40:1)

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” (Mt.3:1-3)

Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John [the Baptist].... What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ (Mt. 10:7-10)

John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance... (Mark 1:4)

he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Luke 3:3)

II. To purify His people.

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. v.2,3

The Lord was coming to purify His people so that we could worship Him in righteousness and be pleasing to Him.

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 Lord came first to purify us with His blood, but He will come again—this time, for judgment.

...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22)

...because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free... (Zech. 9:11)

the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

we have redemption through his blood (Eph. 1:7)

you were ransomed...with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19)

you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Eph. 2:13)

...the blood of the eternal covenant... (Heb. 13:20)

“Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts. v.5

Return to the Lord by putting Him first in your life and worship; the Lord will honor those who honor Him.

“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. 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?’ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me...In your tithes and contributions.... Bring the full tithe into the storehouse... And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. v.6-10

Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. (Zech. 1:3)

When you repent and put the Lord first, you will experience the special love He has for His people.

...those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them.... “They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession... Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked... for you who fear my name.... You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 3:16-18; 4:2

The Old Testament is not primarily about what we need to believe or do; it is primarily about Who God is and what He would do.

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers....” v.4-6

“Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” (Jn. 1:21)

...among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist... and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. (Mt. 11:11,14)