

WHO MAY ABIDE THE DAY OF HIS COMING?

BIBLE TEXT : Malachi 3:1-18.

LESSON 458 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "But who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand when he appeareth" (Malachi 3:2).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Malachi 3:1-18

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.

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?

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

The Messenger and the Message

Almost 2000 years ago, God the Father sent Jesus Christ His Son to the earth. We know the Christmas story of the Baby who was born in Bethlehem. Six months before Jesus was born, John the Baptist was born. He was later known as the "forerunner" of Jesus because he announced the coming of Jesus. John preached to the people in the wilderness, saying: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Matthew 3:2, 3).

The Prophet Malachi had foretold all this more than 400 years before it happened. He was the last messenger of the Old Testament times to announce the coming of Jesus. He said by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me" (Malachi 3:1).

Second Coming of Jesus

After Jesus fulfilled His mission on earth He went back to Heaven; but He is returning very soon to take His people unto Himself. The question is asked, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" One meaning of "to abide" means to face or to submit without shrinking. It does not mean that no one is going to stand, for the Christians are preparing themselves, and we can all be ready.

David once asked a similar question and gave the answer, too. "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, . . ." (Psalm 15:1-3).

The Refining Process

The Lord is described as being like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. In olden days the refiner of gold would sit before the melting pot and fix his eyes on the metal, taking care that the fire was not too hot but hot enough. There he would watch until all the dross, or impurities, was taken out and only the pure gold was left. When he could see his own image in the glowing gold, then he knew it was pure. So the Lord patiently watches as our hearts are made perfect through tests and trials. Are we able to say as Job said when he was severely tried, "When he bath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10) ?

We know that in washing clothes, the harder the washing and the stronger the soap, the whiter the clothes. In our lives today, the harder the trial, the greater should be the victory. We sometimes sing, "Harder the cross, brighter the crown." There is a process going on in our heart if we will but yield unto God, whereby the dross is removed through trials and testings. If we endure, and pray for grace to stand, our life will show forth the love and grace of God. Are you shining for Jesus? It will take that purity of heart to be able to abide the day of His coming and stand when He appeareth.

Tithes and Offerings

The question is asked, "Will a man rob God?" Malachi said the Israelites had robbed God in tithes and offerings, therefore they

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 delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.

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.

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

were cursed with a curse. Today if we withhold the things from God, which are rightfully His, we cannot expect His blessing upon our life. "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."

Jacob made a vow to God, "in which he said: "And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28:22). Twenty years later he returned to his house with many servants and cattle -- a rich man as a result of paying his vow unto the Lord.

In 1902 a man decided to put God's Word to the test, and promised God that he would set aside a certain percentage of his income for the work of the Lord. His home was mortgaged at that time and he was deeply in debt, but he set out to prove God, as Jacob had done.

Within three months the Lord began to bless him. Then he went into business, manufacturing glass jars. His factory was in San Francisco at the time of the earthquake and fire in 1906. Then his friends told him he was a ruined man, but he replied, "I don't believe it; or if I am, then the Bible is not true; I know God will not go back on His promises." He wired to inquire, and received a reply saying that the factory was in the heart of the fire, and no doubt destroyed, but that the heat was so intense that they would be unable to learn anything for some days. His faith was tested, but he trusted in God. Then he received another telegram saying: "Everything for a mile and a half on all sides of the factory burned; but your factory miraculously saved."

He went at once to San Francisco and found that the fire had burned on all sides of the glass factory. But even the wooden fence surrounding the buildings was only scorched. The factory was a wooden building and huge oil tanks were used to store fuel to melt the glass. The tanks were kept at 2500 degrees. The flames had leaped around and beyond the building and not a single glass jar was cracked by earthquake or fire. Certainly this man found, as many others have found, that obedience to God's Word brings great blessing.

Jesus said: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). People who give freely of their time, talent and means unto God, are happier and even richer than those who seem to think they cannot afford to give. One tenth of our increase belongs to God; if we give Him only that, we are actually not giving Him anything. A great blessing comes in giving above and beyond what belongs to Him.

When we pray, the More we praise Him, the more He draws near and blesses us. If we expect God to open His treasury, we must open ours. Of course, our real motive for serving God is love; we do not give unto Him in order to be repaid by Him. He owes us nothing; we owe it all to Him. He came to earth, suffered, bled and died for our redemption; the least we can do is love and serve Him.

Prosperity -- True and False

The Prophet Malachi also reminds the people that they said it was "vain," or useless, to serve God. "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance. . . ?" They looked around at the proud, wicked people who looked as if they were happy and prosperous. But the Lord said that He would show the true picture, and in the end it could be seen who was the righteous, happy person and who was the wicked one.

A sinner at one time boastfully said that he planted on

discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the message John the Baptist preached?
2. What is meant by "abide the day of his coming"?
3. How is the Lord compared with a refiner's fire and fullers' soap?
4. In what way do some people rob God?
5. What promise is given to those who bring all the tithes into the storehouse?
6. Whose names are recorded in the book of remembrance?
7. Who shall be known as the Lord's "jewels"?
8. Why should we pay tithes?

Sundays, he cultivated on Sundays and he harvested his crops on Sundays, and he reaped great crops. A Christian man answered him and said, "Yes, but God does not always settle his accounts in October." Things are not always as they appear on the surface; there is a final day of reckoning coming.

Honouring God

We are told: "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Proverbs 3:9). The prophet wrote: "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" (Malachi 1:6). Let us ask ourselves, "Am I giving honour unto God as I should? Am I respecting His Word, His ministers and His church as I should? Am I giving Him my tithes and offerings, my time, talent and all?"

Young people often say, "I don't have to do that; it is not necessary." They look about them at worldly young people who do not go to church and seem to have no restraint placed upon them, who attend worldly pleasures and appear to be happy. But let us remember, the Lord said that a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and think upon Him. **Those** are the ones whom God shall choose when He makes up His jewels; those are the ones whom the Lord will spare and protect and they shall be hid in the **day** of the Lord's anger, as we learned in the previous lesson (Zephaniah 2:3).

A Lesson David Learned

David was tempted and complained that the wicked spread himself, or prospered, as a green bay tree. A bay tree has huge branches and they grow along the ground; then out of those branches, other huge limbs or trees will grow, until one tree looks as if it were many trees, and it covers a large area. David said: "As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . They are not in trouble as other men; . . . they have more than heart could wish. . . . And they say, How doth God know? . . . they increase in riches" (Psalm 73:2-12). Yes, David could not understand why the wicked people could be so happy, and seemingly have everything coming their way.

Then he said he went into the church and then he understood their end. He saw how "foolish" and "ignorant" he had been when he realised that the wicked were upon "slippery places," and would be cast "down into destruction." Eternal hell awaits those who live only for this world, and who do not repent of their sins.

Let us search our heart and see if there is any complaining or murmuring there. God sees and hears. On the other hand, if there is a praise to God upon our lips and a constant thanksgiving unto the Lord, we will be recorded in that "book of remembrance." Let us purpose in our heart that whatever comes or goes, we will put forth every effort to be among those who shall "abide the day of his coming" and "stand when he appeareth."