

# WHO MAY ABIDE THE DAY OF HIS COMING?

**BIBLE TEXT** : Malachi 3:1-18.

LESSON 458 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "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" (Malachi 3:17).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Malachi 3:1-18**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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:

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

<sup>7</sup> 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:**

### **I The Messiah's Coming**

1. The promised messenger prepares the way for the coming of the Lord, Malachi 3: 1;

#### **Malachi 4:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

<sup>6</sup> And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

#### **Luke 1:17**

<sup>17</sup> And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

#### **Luke 1:76**

<sup>76</sup> And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

2. The Lord comes suddenly to His Temple, Malachi 3:1;

#### **Matthew 24:27**

<sup>27</sup> For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be..

### **II The Judge of All the Earth**

1. "Who shall stand when he appeareth?" Malachi 3:2;

#### **Psalms 130:3**

<sup>3</sup> If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

#### **Isaiah 33:14-17**

<sup>14</sup> The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

<sup>15</sup> He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

<sup>16</sup> He shall dwell on high: his place of defence *shall be* the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters *shall be* sure.

<sup>17</sup> Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.

#### **Matthew 24:40-42**

<sup>40</sup> Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

<sup>41</sup> Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

<sup>42</sup> Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

2. He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap, Malachi 3:3, 4;

#### **Jeremiah 30:7**

<sup>7</sup> Alas! for that day *is* great, so that none *is* like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

#### **Zechariah 13:9**

<sup>9</sup> And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

3. The wicked have swift witness against their sins, Malachi 3:5;

<sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

<sup>9</sup> Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

<sup>10</sup> 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.*

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.

<sup>13</sup> Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee?

<sup>14</sup> 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?

<sup>15</sup> And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Then shall ye return, and

Psalm 9:17; Jeremiah 17:10; Revelation 20:12.

### III A Blessing or a Curse?

1. The call to repentance is given, Malachi 3:6, 7; Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 3:1, 2; 4:17.
2. The sin of robbing God is charged, with a curse as the result, Malachi 3:8, 9, Isaiah 43:24, Acts 5:1-5.
3. A copious blessing is poured upon those who obey God, Malachi 3:10-12; Luke 6:38; II Corinthians 9:6-8.

### IV Difference in Talk

1. "It is vain to serve God," is the language of sinners, Malachi 3:13-15.
2. A book of remembrance is written by the Lord for those who speak of Him, Malachi 3:16; Psalm 112:6.
3. The righteous, as "jewels," are taken out of an evil world, Malachi 3:17, 18; I Corinthians 15:51-53; I Thessalonians 4:17.

### NOTES:

#### A Major Message

One need not read much of the third chapter of Malachi to see a message of major importance. This prophecy applies to the Jews, no doubt; but it is also applicable to all people, for it is the promise of the coming of Jesus Christ to this earth. He came the first time in mercy, but His second coming will be to visit a sinful world with judgment.

Just as Malachi had so clearly foretold, the ministry of Jesus Christ was preceded by the forerunner, the messenger: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matthew 3:3). The Jewish people were watching for and expecting this messenger, but they (the greater part, at least) failed to recognise John the Baptist as that Prophet. Jesus had to tell the people plainly, "If ye will receive it; this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matthew 11:14).

John the Baptist was a "burning and a shining light," coming in the spirit and power of Elijah, and was God's instrument to bring about a great revival. John predicted a Christ "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). Jesus' visible earthly ministry, being marked by His many acts of grace, mercy, love, and kindness, was in a measure different from John's expectations. It is part of Jesus' ministry to show the "day of vengeance of our God," but it is His part first to "proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD" (Isaiah 61:2). Those who receive and obey Christ and His teachings here and now, will be spared in the day of God's vengeance.

#### Literal King

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). At His first coming Jesus came in humility, not reigning as a king on a throne. Most of the Jews rejected Him as their Messiah. The Bible tells us that the day is coming when, after a time of terrible suffering and affliction, the Jewish people will accept Jesus as their Messiah and be saved when He appears the second time. "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." "They shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jeremiah 30:9).

Men have lived under the Dispensation of Grace, sometimes referred to as the Gentile Dispensation, since the time of Christ. The Gospel of the Kingdom has been preached in all nations, bringing light and individual responsibility to the hearts of men. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the

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

sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). If men reject Christ, not repenting of their sins, they will be eternally lost. Jesus is King to those who receive Him. He sets up His kingdom today in the hearts of men, and one day all the redeemed ones will crown Him literally: "KING OF Kings, AND LORD OF Lords."

### **Refiner and Purifier**

The Great Tribulation of the Jews and the world will come after the Bride of Christ is translated to Heaven, but the tribulations of the saints of God are taking place in their lives today. Jesus suffered before He was glorified, and His saints must take the way He trod. We will never have a glorified body with Him unless we suffer with Him.

The trial of our faith is "more precious than of gold that perisheth" (I Peter 1:7). Gold is put into the furnace and melted with intense heat and purified until the refiner can see his own image in it. Jesus Christ is putting the fire on His children until He can look down and see His own image. He is going to have a people who are purified, made white, and tried. Job said, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). It takes a true-hearted person to serve God faithfully here and now, but he can if he will.

### **The Day of His Coming**

These words of prophecy have a twofold meaning, for they point to the second coming of Jesus also. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple." Jesus said, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). Hundreds, thousands, millions of people have heard about Jesus' soon return to earth, but so few have prepared themselves for His coming! Nominal Christians even talk about Jesus' coming but they do not make themselves ready for this important event. "Who shall stand?" Anyone can stand, and everyone will stand who seeks for and obtains the graces and gifts that God has provided for His children. The knowledge of Jesus' coming should cause each one to search his heart and be sure there is nothing between his soul and the Saviour.

There is one safe way to "abide the day of his coming": to put on the whole armour of God and to walk in all the light of God's Holy Word. "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33).

### **Returning to God**

The Lord charged the people with three offences, or failures: they had gone away from Him and had not kept His ordinances, they had robbed Him, and they had spoken "stout" words against Him. The invitation was extended by the Lord in those days and is being extended still in our day for the people to return to the Lord. "Wherein shall we return?" The people did not realise that the failure to keep all of God's ordinances was sin. That the people kept many of God's ordinances is apparent, and they seemed to think this was sufficient, but God tells us that the whole Word must be kept in order to please Him. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

To show that the people had indeed gone away from Him, God asked, "Will a man rob God?" The Children of Israel seemed not to realize, and many people today seem to be unaware, that their failure to bring in their tithes and offerings is considered robbing God. Not just a few people were guilty, but at the time of Malachi's prophecy the whole nation of Israel suffered under a curse because they failed God in this matter.

The New Testament confirms tithing, and those who follow

this plan are richly rewarded with God's blessings. The promise is still true: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . 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 will not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). (Read Apostolic Faith tract No. 31, Tithing ---- God's Plan of Financing.)

The third offence that the Lord laid to the charge of Israel, and a charge that is applicable to men in our day, is the "stout" or strong words spoken against Him. There are other ways besides cursing, swearing, and blasphemy (which things God hates) to speak strong words against God. What had the people said? "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance . . .?" What is wrong with this sort of talk? It is completely wrong to measure or compare the worth of God's gifts with the paltry values of earthly things. These people were serving God half-heartedly, yet they were expecting the best of earthly blessings and blaming God when the blessings did not materialize. If we want God's best, we must give Him our best.

It is a high calling, a joy, and a privilege to serve God and be counted His child regardless of any earthly circumstance. The Prophet could say, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stabs: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17,18). Job, too, could say: "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

#### **God's Jewels**

In the midst of an unbelieving world, in the midst of all the vain-talking sinners, there is a "little flock," a group of people who fear, or respect, the Lord and love Him with all their heart, soul, and mind. These people are scattered throughout the earth, but they speak often one to another about the Lord and the Gospel. This does not mean that one Christian always talks to another Christian only, but often the Christian speaks to the sinner, hoping to win the sinner to God's way and to His love. The Lord hearkens and hears, and a book of remembrance is being written for them that fear the Lord, and that think upon His name.

These are God's "jewels," to be made up and spared when the Lord comes as a thief in the night. The Bridegroom shall come, the wise virgins shall go in with Him to the marriage, and the door shall be shut. The cry shall arise from the outside: "Lord, Lord, open to us"; but the answer shall be returned: "I know you not." "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:13).

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. Who fulfilled the place of messenger, spoken of in this lesson?
2. What was the messenger's duty?
3. How may one stand when the Lord appears?
4. Why are God's children tested and tried?
5. How does a man who has not kept God's ordinances return to God?
6. In what way does a man rob God? What is the result?
7. In what way may we prove God and receive His blessings?
8. What is meant by "stout" words?
9. How do we become one of God's "jewels"?

