

Malachi 2.17-3.5

“A Foolish Request”

LIVING GOD ANSWERS Prayer > Invited to Ask > ANYTHING in His Name
MANY GOOD THINGS TO ASK FOR > One Thing would be VERY FOOLISH

Focus PASSAGE > Justice of God > basis of the JUDGMENT OF GOD

Introduced by SARCASTIC COMPLAINTS of People > SIMILAR PATTERN

1.2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, *How* have you loved us?"

1.6 "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name.

"But you ask, *How* have we shown contempt for your name?"

1.7 "You place defiled food on my altar. "But you ask, *How* have we defiled you?"

2.17 You have wearied the LORD with your words. *How* have we wearied him?"
SPECIFIC > v. 17 "Where is the God of justice?" i.e. GOD YOU ARE UNJUST!

1. God is Wearied 2. Man is Worried 3. Man is Made Worthy

1. God is Wearied

a. By Sinful Actions v. 5 "I will come near to you for judgment" > REASONS:

sorcerers > MAGICIANS > TRY Influencing People & Events for Personal Gain
Sitting in the Bazaars in Almaty?

adulterers and perjurers > UNFAITHFUL to Spouse, to God, to Truth

2.14 you have broken faith with...the wife of your marriage covenant

ADULTERERS IN many SUNDAY SERMONS > HOW MANY Greedy Bosses?

“who defraud laborers of their wages” > Unpaid, Underpaid, Must Wait for Wages

“oppress widows & fatherless, & deprive aliens of justice” > God their Protector

MOSES: “the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and

clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.”
Deuteronomy 10.17-19

PROPHETS have God’s VIEW OF SIN > HE HATES ALL OF IT!
Sins in the Bedroom and Sins in the Boardroom
Moral Evil and Social Injustice

STUFF WE SEE IN DAILY NEWSPAPERS > Normal, Everyday, Behavior

BUT THESE ARE UNIQUE PEOPLE > Covenant People

1.2 "I have loved you," says the LORD... Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob”

2.5 “My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace...
and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.”

2.12 THESE PEOPLE “brings offerings to the LORD Almighty”

2.13 THEY “flood the LORD's altar with tears... THEY weep and wail”

GOD spoke to THEM though PROPHET AMOS - "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins." 3.2

THEY WANTED IT BOTH WAYS > Live like HELL as prepare for HEAVEN

UGANDAN Preacher Open Air in NAIROBI, KENYA

“Who wants to go to hell?” RAISE YOUR HANDS > None Raised! Duh!

“Who wants to live life dedicated to Jesus Christ?” NO HANDS RAISED!

b. By Scornful Arrogance 2.17 "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

NOT WRONG to WONDER > or EVEN to ASK God WHY? > Great Injustices

HAITI > Decades of Poverty and Corruption > More VIOLENCE and CHAOS

SUDAN > 30 years of Civil War > Millions of Civilians Killed > Many Xtians

ISRAEL & PALESTINE > Endless cycle of Bloodshed and Revenge

CHILDREN BLOWN UP on BUSES on their WAY TO SCHOOL

ABRAHAM WONDERED > regarding City of Sodom

“What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”
Genesis 18.24,25

JEREMIAH WONDERED > “You are always righteous, O LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?” 12.1

HABAKKUK WONDERED “How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong?... justice never prevails... justice is perverted”
1.2-4

JESUS WONDERED > in Garden of Gethsemane > Anticipating the Cross
"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."
Matthew 26.39

THERE’S the DIFFERENCE > ASKING not ACCUSING, or even ATTACKING
JESUS: Everything in His being RECOILED agnst Cross >“Your Will BE DONE”

HUMBLE ABRAHAM > “Far be it from you to do such a thing” Gen 18.25

CAREFUL JEREMIAH > “You are always righteous, O LORD,
when I bring a case before you.” 12.1

TRAGIC INDIFFERENCE of Malachi’s Listeners

3.5 THEY “do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty”

SHOCKINGLY DISPLAYED 1.14 “bring injured, crippled or diseased animals
and offer them as sacrifices”

JAMES BOICE “Accusing God of injustice is horribly arrogant. It demands that the only wise, holy, omniscient, sovereign God of the universe come down to our level and defend Himself before our petty human standards of justice. God was managing the universe quite well long before we were even born...God does all this perfectly well without our help. Yet when something does not go the way we like, we immediately accuse God of injustice and call Him to an accounting.”

NOTHING NEW > OLD as the GARDEN OF EDEN

DEVIL > God does not want you to eat fruit from tree of knowledge of good and evil because > AFRAID you will become just like Him > He'll be REDUNDANT
God wants to keep you from BEING FREE, HAVING FUN!

WHEN THEY EAT > God asks Man why? "the woman that YOU GAVE ME!"
God asks Woman why? "the Serpent that YOU PLACED HERE!"

MARTIN LUTHER's Paraphrase > "You, Lord, have Sinned!"

NOT SURPRISING TO READ > THEY WEARIED THE LORD

2. Man is Worried

a. Desire Fulfilled v. 1 "Lord *you are seeking*... messenger of covenant...*you desire*"

GOD GIVES THEM A DOSE OF THEIR SARCASM

v. 1 GOD SAYS: YOUR WISH WILL BE GRANTED > You will get Justice

DOUBLE DOSE > "My Messenger" coming > Name "Malachi" means Messenger
BUT NOT A REFERENCE TO MALACHI

AND "the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come"

YOU WANT JUSTICE?! > GOD OF JUSTICE HIMSELF IS COMING!!

b. Dross Fired v. 2 "But who can endure the day of his coming?"

TWO IMAGES of CLEANSING, PURIFYING -

"launderer's soap" > NOT "Tide" or "Barf" > ALKALI used to Whiten Cloth

"For he will be like a refiner's fire...He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver"

STILL TODAY > Bazaars of Ancient World > Workers with Silver same Process
Melt the Ore in small Portable Furnaces > Ore Melts > Dross Rises > Removed
Continues > Until Workmen sees Face reflected in Molten Metal like Mirror

SOVEREIGN JUDGE > applies HEAT of AFFLICTION and DISCIPLINE
v. 2 “he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.”

JAMES: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.” James 1.22-25

MALACHI > BRACE YOURSELVES > “Who can stand when he appears?”
“who can endure the day of his coming?”

LIKE SOLDIERS IN BATTLE > Who Can Stand their Ground?

WHEN YOU SEE GOD IN ALL HIS GLORY > FULNESS OF HIS HOLINESS
The LAST thing you WANT from HIM is JUSTICE

APOSTLE JOHN: “watched as (THE LAMB) opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black ... Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"
Revelation 6.12-17

3. Man Made Worthy

Word of HOPE > 3.5 “TESTIFY Against’ > NOT “Smote them” or “Send to Hell”
SURELY GOD COULD > and JUSTLY HE SHOULD

GOD HAS PENALIZING Judgment AND a PURIFYING Judgment

Jeremiah wrote in Book of Lamentations: (3.32)
“Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love.”

JOYCE BALDWIN “In the end no man will avoid confrontation with God, and it is of His goodness that warning of that event is given.”

a. Messenger v. 1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way"

MESSENGER > PROMISED BY ISAIAH

Faithful in Israel > EAGER ANTICIPATION of Messiah > "prepare the way"

"A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 40.3-5

PROPHECY quoted by ALL FOUR Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
ALL APPLY to John the Baptizer > Prepared way for Jesus the Messiah

MATTHEW links Isaiah and Malachi 3.1: "'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' 11.10

BEFORE KING COMES > Heralds SENT OUT to Prepare Way before Him

SIMILAR PROPHECY > 4.5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes."

IF the MESSENGER was not enough to get their KNEE'S KNOCKING in Fear...

b. Master v. 1 Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

TEMPLE? This PUNY SHADOW of Solomon's Great Temple?
Place where we dispose of our "blind, crippled, and sick" animals?

WILL GOD HIMSELF REALLY COME TO THIS TEMPLE?

Most Scoffed at Prophecy of Ezekiel: "The glory of the LORD entered the temple"
43.4

When PREPARATIONS are COMPLETE > Messenger has Prepared the Way
"when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman" Galatians 4.4

NOTHING LESS THAN A PROPHECY OF COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

HUNDREDS More in the Old Testament

The One COMING IS NOTHING LESS THAN GOD IN HUMAN FLESH

Isaiah: “make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God...
the glory of the LORD will be revealed” 40.3-5

JOHN BAPTIZER: “I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”

John 1.34

Stood together in Jordan River for Baptism

Matt 3.17

Voice from Heaven: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

TIMETABLE? Coming of the Lord? Coming again of the Lord?

Some clear days in Almaty > Magnificent vista of Tien Shan Mtns > So Close!

So Clear, So Close > WALK Right to THE TOP of Highest Peak

Begin > Further than it Looks > Steep Climb > Reach top > ONLY First Foothill!

Another Deep Valley Ahead > Small Mtn > Valley > Bigger Mtn > LONG WAY!

PROPHETS of OT // Standing in Almaty > ALL LOOKS SO CLOSE, SO NEAR!

OT > One Great Event > DAY OF THE LORD > ONE Great and Terrible DAY

John Baptizer > Old Testament Prophet > written about in the New Testament

In PRISON > DOUBTED > Is Jesus really the Messiah?

Expected Him to be Killing Romans – Not Curing and Converting Them!

JESUS gives answer in first sermon in hometown > Synagogue in Nazareth

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners & recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor

FINISHED READING AND SAT DOWN > “Today this scripture is fulfilled
in your hearing.” Luke 4.18-21

Here’s MESSIAH > Lord’s Anointed has Come > Kingdom Reign of God Begun

“the Lord has come to His Temple”

INTERESTING what He quoted from Isaiah’s prophecy of Messiah

AND what He DID NOT QUOTE > Next phrase in Isaiah:

“to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor *and the day of vengeance of our God*”

GOD'S UNFOLDING of His PROMISES > ONE DAY is TWO ERAS, EPOCHS
Each Marked by Coming (Advent) of Jesus Christ

First Coming > Characterized by MERCY > Sermon in Nazareth >
DID NOT READ the day of vengeance of our God" > NOT YET COME

DEFINED HIS FIRST COMING: "For God did not send his Son into the world to
condemn the world, but to save the world through him." John 3.17

Second Coming > DIFFERENT STORY > Characterized by JUDGMENT
COMING "on a white horse...With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are
like blazing fire...He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the
Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him...Out of his mouth comes
a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an
iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty."

BIG VALLEYS between the PEAKS of the Tien Shan Mountains
So far, valley is 2000 years long, how much longer? ONLY GOD KNOWS!

COMING SOON!?! i.e ALL IS READY, Work of Salvation is Accomplished

Robert Anderson, "The Silence of God" > "It is asked why in our time, if God is as
omnipresent, omniscient, and caring for us as we imagine Him to be, He does not
speak... Why is God silent? God has already spoken everything that can be spoken
graciously. Jesus is the ultimate, final word of God's grace. Not a syllable can be
added. The only words that remain to be spoken are the final words of judgment.
God is silent now because, when He speaks audibly again, His judgment will
come."

c. Men Made Righteous > Opportunity for Grace > Purifying Redemption

MALACHI spoke against 1) Corrupt Priests and 2) Careless Worshipers

PURIFYING JUDGMENT > RESTORE WORSHIP which PLEASES HIM

v. 4 "Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and
the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days
gone by, as in former years."

LOOKS BACK > Glory of the Old Covenant > King Solomon dedicates Temple

King Solomon summoned... the entire assembly...before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted...The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in...the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim... the cloud filled the temple of the LORD...Then Solomon said..."Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David...Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below--you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place...Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive." 1 Kings 8

LOOKS FORWARD > New Covenant Priesthood

"you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2.9

HOW IS MAN MADE WORTHY?

God NEVER Wearies FORGIVING REPENTANT SINNERS > Daily, Hourly

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him" Psalm 103.8-13

WHY JESUS CAME

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19.10

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" 1 Timothy 1.15

PLAY "The Long Silence" – At the end of time, billions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Most shrank back from the brilliant light

before them. But some groups near the front talked heatedly – not with cringing shame, but with belligerence. ‘Can God judge us? How can he know about suffering?’ snapped a pert young brunette. She ripped open a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. ‘We endured terror...beatings...torture...death!’ In another group a Negro man lowered his collar. ‘What about this?’ he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. ‘Lynched...for no crime but being black!’ In another crowd, a pregnant schoolgirl with sullen eyes. ‘Why should I suffer’ she murmured, ‘It wasn’t my fault.’ Far out across the plain there were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil suffering he permitted in his world. How lucky God was to live in heaven where all was sweetness and light, where there was no weeping or fear, or hunger or hatred. What did God know of all that man had been forced to endure in this world? For God leads a pretty sheltered life, they said. So each of these groups sent forth their leader, chosen because he had suffered the most. A Jew, a Negro, a person from Hiroshima, a horribly deformed arthritic, a child born with deformity. In the center of the plain they consulted each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was rather clever. Before God could be qualified to judge, he must endure what they had endured. Their decision was that God should be sentenced to live on earth – as a man! ‘Let him be born a Jew. Let the legitimacy of his birth be doubted. Give him work so difficult that even his family will think him out of his mind when he tries to do it. Let him be betrayed by his closest friends. Let him face false charges, be tried by a prejudiced jury and convicted by a cowardly judge. Let him be tortured. ‘At the last, let him see what it means to be terribly alone. Then let him die. Let him die to that there can be no doubt that he died. Let there be a great host of witnesses to verify it.’ As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the throng of people assembled. And when the last had finished pronouncing the sentence, there was a long silence. No one uttered another word. No one moved. For suddenly all knew that God had already served his sentence.”

FOOL Haughtily Demands JUSTICE from God

FAITHFUL Humbly Praise Him for His MERCY