

Faith Lost in the Promises of God (Part 2)

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[0:00] Welcome back to our study in Malachi. I was thinking all the way up here today. We're one day closer to the time when we can get back together.

! Whenever that's going to be. So looking forward to that time. But also grateful for this opportunity through the video to continue the teaching and sessions in the book of Malachi.

Last week we opened up chapter 3 as Malachi began to reveal to us the spirit of discontent and murmuring among the people of God because they expected the manifestation of the glory of God and the coming judgment of the Lord upon the unrighteous. But those did not take place immediately as they anticipated it would.

So they became careless in their walk and lost faith in really the promises of God and called the holiness and justice of God into question.

Because they then thought because the unrighteous were being prosperous that God was in favor with them instead of bringing judgment upon them.

[1:31] So they asked the question where then is the judgment of God? And they began to deny the coming of the Lord in that time. Last verse of chapter 2 brought that to us when Malachi says, You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, Wherein have we wearied him?

And that is when you say, Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them. Therefore, where is the judgment of God? And so God then replies to that and saying, I'm going to deal with that.

And he does that in the first verse of chapter 3, you recall. He said, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.

And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in. Behold, he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts.

So we saw that he is coming. God will be coming in judgment, and just as they desired him to do. But it's going to be a little different than they think it's going to be, and he addresses that in verse number 2, where we'll pick up today.

[2:52] That coming of God, after his messenger appears, will be the fact that he will come in judgment. Now, we saw last week that that one that will come is, of course, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We saw the twofold manifestation of his coming last time, the secondary fulfillment, which was in his earthly ministry. And then the primary coming will be that of his time that we see in the revelation.

So his coming then is going to be a time of judgment, if you will. And so we want to begin looking at some things. Recall with me in 2 Peter chapter 3.

2 Peter chapter 3, the apostle Peter writes to us about something here that I think we need to remember. As we look at this, keep in mind the twofold aspect of the coming of Jesus.

We know he'll come in the rapture for the church, and that could be at any moment, at any time. What a tremendous way to climax the coronavirus outbreak, wouldn't it be, for the Lord Jesus to come at the end of this.

[4:08] Whether he will or not, don't know, but he could. So his coming for the church could come at any moment. And then ushers in the tribulation period. And at the end of the tribulation period, he will come in the revelation.

And that's the point of time we see and recognize Malachi speaking of here, when he will suddenly come to his temple and bring judgment to the covenant nation of Israel.

Now, 2 Peter chapter 3, verses 3 through 10, the writer says to us, Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise

of his coming?

Sounds quite similar to what Malachi is saying the people of his day were saying. For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water perished.

[5:19] But the heavens and the earth, which are now by the same word, are kept in store, and reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but as longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Take note again, he says in verse number 10, The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

That's the phrase that gives us the reality that this coming he's talking about will be the coming in the revelation. Then Zechariah chapter 14, verses 1 through 4, the prophet says, Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

[6:37] For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west. And there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall be removed toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

So again, the day of the Lord that will come, and that at the end of the tribulation period that we see in the Revelation. Now, the judgment that he's going to bring is not just judgment upon the heathen, as we see, for which the ungodly nation, of course, Israel was longing for and wanting to see.

But it's going to be a judgment upon the godless members of the nation of Israel. One thing we must keep in mind is this. When God comes in that judgment, it's going to be a twofold judgment.

[8:02] He is going to judge the heathen nations, and particularly by the way that they've treated the nation, the covenant nation of God, the nation of Israel. But the Revelation, as we see, more so deals with the nation of Israel.

The church will be raptured out, but God will deal in judgment upon his covenant people, Israel. Take note with me that it says in verses 2 and 3 that God is like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap. Twofold picture here of judgment. The refiner's fire we've spoken of before. It's a hot fire that is used to melt down the ore and to remove the impurities thereof.

We'll see more of that here in a minute. But the fuller's soap is more picturing a lighter type of judgment upon the people. Even though that fuller's soap will be a severe judgment of its own, it won't be quite as severe as the refiner's fire.

You realize the clothes that were washed with the fuller's soap, kind of an alkaline type soap, was always washed by trampling it under feet.

[9:25] And so we see the severity of even that type of judgment that is to come. So that's the type of judgment that God said he'll bring to the nation of Israel, and particularly the godless members of the nation of Israel.

1 Peter chapter 4 verses 17 and 18 give us a kind of a scary picture for us in this day of grace in the midst of the church.

He says, There, for the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? We realize that when Jesus died on the cross, he died for our sins, our judicial punishment for our sins.

But there's a judgment, I believe, to come for the church to make it ready for the coming of the Lord. Don't think we're ready for that yet.

[10 : 38] I think the world, the church is too comfortable still in the world today. And God will bring some difficult times that will cause us then, I believe, to long for the Lord to come.

That's why the coronavirus today is so interesting, to see what it has done worldwide to the unsaved, but also to the saved, those people of God that comprise the church, to see how we've adjusted to that, what we're doing in the midst of that.

Now, he says, Who may abide then that day of his coming? Who endures that day? That question has a negative connotation to it.

No one endures it, is the idea here. And that fact is set in Joel chapter 2, verse 11. Scripture says, Who shall stand?

Who shall remain standing, is the idea. And that's in contrast to falling or sinking under the burden of judgment. Now, the reason for that inability to stand in that day is the fact that the Lord will come as a smelter's fire.

[12 : 10] That smelter's fire will burn out all the corrupt ingredients that are mixed in with the gold and the silver in that refining process. Zechariah chapter 13, verses 8 through 9 say to us, It shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein.

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. He comes as that smelter's fire. And just as the smelter's fire purifies the gold and silver from anything that's impure, from adhering to it, so the Lord then will refine what he says is the sons of Levi, the priests.

He will purge or strain or filter anything that is adhering to their lives, that is causing them, if you will, to be impure in the idea of offering sacrifices on behalf of the people.

[13 : 33] Now, since the priests direct the spiritual life of the nation, and the fact that they were very corrupt, as we've seen earlier in God's dealing with them, the cleansing of the nation then must begin with the purification of the priests.

Again, he says, 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 will go through that purging fire, that difficult time of judgment upon their lives. Now, it consists of two things. First of all, the fact that the individuals that are displeasing to God will be cut off from among them.

And then secondly, in the fact that they're being cleansed from the sins and crimes adhering to them will be done by the Lord. So those who are capable of being set right are cleansed, but those who cannot be set right, those that will not repent of their sin are then cut off by the Lord.

That's the work of purification. And that comes, of course, as we see, through the result of God's refining work among them. And he says he does that, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

[15 : 01] So the priests are to become to the Lord offerers of sacrifices in righteousness. Now, he's not talking here about the idea of the righteous sacrifices.

We have seen just earlier in chapter 2 that they were bringing, if you will, polluted sacrifices, impure sacrifices to the Lord to offer.

But that's not the matter that he's talking about here. The idea here is that the priests themselves will be righteous. Their lives will be clean.

Their moral character will be put right in order for them to offer an offering to the Lord with a proper state of heart so God can and will them accept their sacrifices.

Verse 4. Those days of the olden times are, of course, the years past.

[16 : 10] Those times of Moses, the first years of the sojourn in the desert, as well as the times of David and the first years of the reign of Solomon that he speaks of.

So those things, as far as the heart of the people and the heart of the priests in particular, will be those like those former days. In verse 5 then of Malachi 3, then God says, I will come near to you to judgment and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against false swearers, 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.

So the refining fire that God brings when he comes will not just be limited then to the priest, but it will be a judgment upon all sinners in the covenant nation.

Now, this judgment then is threatened against all those that wanted the judgment to come back in verse 17 of chapter 2.

Remember, they were calling for the judgment. Where is the judgment of God? So that judgment will come, but it's threatened here upon those that call for that judgment. So to those the Lord will draw near to judgment and rise up as a swift witness against everyone that does wicked, does not fear, does wickedly, and does not fear the Lord.

[17:49] You know, it's a good thing. When the people of Israel were looking and calling for the judgment of God, wondering where it is, when he promises that judgment, it comes then upon all of the nation, in particular those that were calling for that judgment.

So that gets me to think, isn't it good for us? First of all, before we make any judgments about anybody else, to take a good look at ourselves, where are we in our relationship to God?

Where are we in our walk with God? Where are we just in our lives daily as far as the matter of this thing called sin and righteousness? So it does good for us to take a look at ourselves first and then before we ever look at anyone else in that judging manner.

Now, the drawing near to judgment takes place in that day of his coming that will be preceded, of course, by the sending of the messenger to prepare the way.

So it tells us nothing about that particular time when that will happen, but simply says it will come rapidly and unexpectedly to the people of the covenant nation.

[19:01] And so God comes as a practical witness against the wicked, convicting them of their guilt, and he does that by punishment. The particular sins mentioned here were such as grievous sins in the eyes of the Lord.

To some extent, then, some of them were punishable by death according to the law. Verse 6 says, For I am the Lord. Here's the pivotal, I think, pivotal verse for us we saw at the very outset of our study in the introduction.

For I am the Lord, or I am Jehovah. I change not. Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. Remember the connotation of the word Jehovah here, the self-existent God that reveals himself to man.

He's going to reveal himself to the people of Israel, and in this case, he's going to do that in the form of judgment. But he says, I'm the Lord. I'm Jehovah. I change not.

Therefore, your sons of Jacob are not consumed. Now, because Jehovah is unchangeable, he's unchangeable in his purposes, he's unchangeable in who he is.

[20:14] So, as a result of that, Israel, as the people of God, are not going to perish when it comes to this judgment. Some will, yes, but the nation entirely will not be annihilated, if you will.

God will exterminate the wicked out of the nation of Israel by the means of his judgment. But he does that in order to refine the nation, to shape it according to its true calling.

The sons of Jacob, or the people of Israel, will not perish, because their existence rests upon the promises of the unchangeable God.

Romans chapter 11, verses 25 through 33, tell us, For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

[21:26] For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the Father's sake.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in time past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

For God hath concluded them in all, all, in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Oh, I like the way he closes that. Oh, the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. Aren't you glad God thinks differently than we do? Now, the reason why God has to this point withheld his blessing and his salvation is shown to us in verses 7 through 9 in chapter 3.

And he also gives us a picture of an invitation here to repent. He says, Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them.

[22:49] Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, wherein shall we return? Now, the reason why Israel waits in vain for the judgment and for the salvation to come with it is not to be found in God.

It's not his fault, if you will, that he's not come yet. But it's found, that fault is found in the people of God. From their earliest days they've transgressed the commandments of God, the commandments that they were given by him.

Ezekiel says to us in chapter 2 and verse 3 of his prophecy, And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me.

They and their fathers have transgressed me even unto this day. And yet they regard themselves as righteous in spite of what Ezekiel says.

They reply to the call of repentance by simply saying, Wherein shall we return? In what particular way shall we return? What have we done, in other words?

[24:04] So Malachi reveals to them what that particular sin is. Two specific things God states here in tithes and offerings. Verse 8, Will a man rob God?

Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. They're doing what nomads should presume to attempt to do.

trying to defraud God in their tithes and the heave offerings, namely by either not paying them at all or not paying them as they should in the house of God.

They've robbed him. Robbing signifies to defraud, to overreach. So the offerings included here have several clashes that were due God from the people of Israel.

Let me just list a few of them. First of all, in Numbers chapter 15 verses 19 through 20, we see the idea of the first fruit offerings. Then in Exodus chapter 30 verses 13 through 15, the annual gift or tithe of the half shekel.

[25:17] Then the offering made for the tabernacle found in the book of Exodus chapter 25 verses 2 through 3. And then the offering to the second temple after it was constructed constructed in the day of Ezra.

Find that in Ezra 8.25. And then there were the tithes of their own tithes, which the Levites paid to the priests. Then those of the portions of the sacrifices which went to the priests, as we see in Leviticus 7.14.

They robbed God in spite of the fact that He has already visited them with severe punishment, with the curse of barrenness.

Verse 9, He said, You are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed or defrauded me, even this whole nation. So it was God that they defrauded, not merely certain individuals in this, but the entire nation defrauded Him.

So, we see then the command of God to obedience in verse 10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts.

[26:35] 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. So, He said, not only, not merely a portion of the tithes, but all of it, He said, bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.

Now, the tithe was paid to Jehovah and that for His servants, the Levites. In Numbers chapter 18, verses 23 through 24, 29, the scripture tells us, but the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity.

It shall be a statute forever throughout your generation that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit.

Therefore, I have said unto them, among the children of Israel, they shall have no inheritance. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites and say unto them, When you take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.

And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, and though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress, thus ye shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel.

[28:13] And ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offerings to Aaron the priests. And of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering to the Lord, and of the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof, out of it.

So, again, the tithe paid to Jehovah for his servants the Levites. The tithe then was delivered at the sanctuary where the store chambers were built for that particular purpose.

Now, we see the first usage of that word tenth or tithe in Genesis chapter 28 in verses 20 through 22. You realize the story there of Jacob running, he confronts God, or rather God confronts him, and makes some promises to him.

And at the close of that, Jacob then makes some promises to the Lord. Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house. And of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

[29:37] So, the first idea there of the tithe actually being shown to us in the scriptures. So, at their beginning, the tithe appears to have been set kind of like a thanksgiving offering made unto God as a tribute to the Lord for his blessings and goodness in what he has done on their behalf.

That is the picture of Cain and Abel's offering in Genesis chapter 3, excuse me, chapter 4 and verses 3 and 4. So, we see almost from the foundation of the world the idea here of the heart of man being driven to give back a portion of that unto the Lord that God had blessed them with.

So, when God established regular worship, proper provision was made for those that served continuously in the tabernacle or the temple, whichever the case may be.

They had no other inheritance among the people of Israel except what was brought to them out of those offerings. So, the land was then later divided and when that land was divided you recall all the tribes of Israel possessed part of that land but the Levites had nothing, no inheritance among their brethren.

So, they were to be provided for by the people and that through the tithes that they brought. So, thusly, God gives to them the law of tithes and offerings.

[31:16] In Leviticus chapter 27 and verse 30, and all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's.

It is holy unto the Lord. So, notice the giving of tithes prior to the law was given in Genesis chapter 14 verses 17 through 24.

And this, of course, was that moment of time when Abraham has come back from defeating the kings and rescuing Lot and Melchizedek meets him.

And we see in verse number 18, Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.

And he gave him tithes of all. That is, Abram gave tithes to Melchizedek. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me thy persons and take the goods to thyself.

[32:28] And Abraham said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should say, I have made Abram rich.

And so Abraham recognizes Melchizedek as a priest of the Most High God and thus gives him tithes, as if giving tithes unto the Lord.

Now, that was a laborious task among the people of Israel, no matter how they did that. Bringing to God the tenth of all goods produced, if they were farmers, was a laborious task.

And even if you just brought animals, you had to bring those animals on your journey to the temple to offer it to the Lord. So, it was a laborious task to bring those things before the Lord.

But they were to do that faithfully and with a heart of thanksgiving. So, it was to be a labor of love, not through necessity, except for the fact they saw the necessity of that in bringing that for the priests.

[33:48] So, we realize that that is Old Testament scripture. And God gives the principles in the Old Testament of tithing and of giving. But there are admonitions in the New Testament as well.

And since we're about close to time to finish this up today, we'll need some time to look more carefully at that. And so, we'll do that next week. Looking at the New Testament principle of our

giving unto the Lord.

Well, it's been good to be here again today and trust God's blessings upon you that you remain well and safe and prosperous in your heart toward the Lord.

Let's pray together. Father, we are grateful again today for your love and grace and your provision and protection upon your people through this time of virus that we're in.

And so, Lord, thank you as well now for the time we've had together and ask that you bless the study that we've had. Enable us to process this in our heart and our mind, knowing that the God we serve is the same God that Israel served and that you have made tremendous provision for us in this day of grace through your spirit and through your son's blood in the forgiveness of sins.

[35:09] So, Father, enable us to grasp a hold of what you're saying to us to develop more and more of a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving towards you. And we'll thank you for what you do now. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.