

Where is the God of Judgment? – Malachi 2:17

I. Introduction: “Where is the God of Judgment?”

- A. There are two ways to understand this question; each depends on the context.
1. It can be a somewhat positive question, uttered by people suffering or being mistreated.
 - a. *“Oh, God of judgment, where are you, and when will you step in to avenge the wrongs against us?”*
 - b. David and other Godly men asked this question in that kind of way.
 2. But then there are wicked people who used the same words, but with an evil intention.
 - a. *“I will continue in my sin, because the professed God of judgment has vacated the judge’s bench.*
 - b. *Where is the God of judgment? I don’t see Him.”*
- B. But which is it in this verse? To what does Malachi refer?
1. To my way of thinking, the question is asked in a **negative** sort of way.
 2. Yes, those returnees from Babylon were not prospering as they wished, & they yearned for God’s blessing.
 3. And yes, the wicked were laying heaving burdens on those Jews without any punishment as yet.
 4. But those Jews were wicked themselves.
 5. They were living in rebellion, thinking that God no longer cared about sin, righteousness and judgment.
 6. They were going through the religious motions, but their hearts were far from the Lord.
 7. We have seen evidence of this in the first two chapters of this book, and that theme will continue.
- C. This evening, let’s expand our consideration of the question from **Malachi** to the **entire Bible**.
1. Turn to **Psalm 10**. In this scripture David wonders where the God of Judgment was keeping Himself.
 - a. *“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?”*
 - b. *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*
 - c. *For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.*
 - d. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.*
 - e. *His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.*
 - f. *His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.*
 - g. *He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.*
 - h. *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*
 - i. *He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*
 - j. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.*
 - k. *Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.*
 - l. *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.*
 - m. *Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.*
 - n. *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.*
 - o. *The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.*
 - p. *LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.”*
 2. **“Where is the God of Judgment?”**
- D. On the opposite side of the same question is **II Peter 3:1-10**, and to that question Peter gives an answer.
1. *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:*
 - a. *That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:*
 - b. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

- c. *And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*
 - d. *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:*
 - e. *Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*
 - f. *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*
 - g. *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.*
 - h. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*
 - i. *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.”*
- E. Has this question ever arisen in your heart? Do you ever wonder why God doesn't take action?
1. Maybe you are suffering through a long period of illness or financial difficulty which is not your fault.
 2. Maybe you are suffering under some kind of physical or emotional persecution.
 3. Where is the God of judgment to correct these things?
- F. Keep two things in mind. Even if the rest of the message seems meaningless, keep these two things in mind.
1. First, it is **not your job to question or complain** how the sovereign God handles His creation and the creatures in it.
 2. **Hannah**, the mother of Samuel, knew what it was to be belittled and persecuted.
 - a. Her husband was a polygamist, and Hannah had a prolific rival in the next bedroom.
 - b. *“Peninnah had children, but Hannah had **NO** children.”*
 - c. *“And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb.”*
 3. I hope I'm not falsely accusing Hannah, but I have to imagine her asking with tears, *“Where is the God of judgment?”*
 4. But after God gave her a son, her attitude and her theology were perfectly straight, and in **I Samuel 2**:
 - a. *“Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.*
 - b. *There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*
 - c. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.”*
 5. Sometimes we may think like a Deist that God has vacated His throne, but it will never happen.
 6. *“The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him (all) actions are weighed,” **AND** they will all be judged.*
 7. Let God be God, doing things in His own time.
- G. The second point to remember is found in **Deuteronomy 32:4**.
1. *“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.*
 - a. *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:*
 - b. *Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.*
 - c. *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”*
 2. **Jehovah** is the **God of truth** without any kind of iniquity; **just and right is he**.
 3. His work is always perfect, *“for **ALL** his ways are judgment.”*
 4. The God we serve never ceases to be a God of judgment, and justice is guaranteed in Him.
 5. So a second duty given to us is to be **PATIENT**, allowing the Lord to work as He sees fit.

- H. I'd like to use the word "*patience*" as the key to the rest of our study this evening.
1. That God doesn't speedily execute judgment pushes people in any of several directions: good and bad.
 2. God's patience **revives the question**: "*Where is the God of judgment?*"
 3. God's patience **exacerbates the question**; it **accelerates iniquity**; and it **emboldens back talk**.
 4. But eventually God's patience comes to an end, and justice will be served.

II. In *Isaiah 30* we see God's patience **REVIVING** the question: "*Where is the God of judgment.*"

- A. And even though the wicked may take advantage of God's delay in judgment, it is for good.
1. "*Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:*
 2. *Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:*
 3. *Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.*"
- B. In essence these people didn't want a God of judgment; they didn't believe in a God of judgment.
1. "*Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.*
 2. *And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.*
 3. *For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.*
 4. *One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.*
 5. *And therefore will **THE LORD WAIT**, that he **MAY BE GRACIOUS UNTO YOU**, and therefore will he be exalted, **THAT HE MAY HAVE MERCY UPON YOU**: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.*"
- C. Even though some of these people were asking our question out of evil intent, they were told of God's grace.
1. "**THEREFORE will THE LORD WAIT**, that he **MAY BE GRACIOUS UNTO YOU**, and ... **THAT HE MAY HAVE MERCY UPON YOU**: for the LORD IS (indeed) a God of judgment.
 2. God's apparent unconcern in correcting an injustice in your life, may be an eternal blessing toward the person who is making your life miserable.
 3. The Christian should be willing to endure whatever the tools – and fools – Satan throws at him, if it means that in time those people might be saved.
 4. "*Blessed are all they that wait for (God to move).*"

III. Sadly, often times God's patience **EXACERBATES** the question.

- A. By that I mean the question is **intensified** with an evil intent.
1. **Ecclesiastes 8:11** says, "*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*"
 2. Maybe the foolish unbeliever defies God to strike him with lightning as he blasphemes the divine name.
 3. And because the Lord doesn't immediately cut him down, he is even more bold in his wickedness.
- B. But Solomon goes on in **verse 12**:
1. "*Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:*
 2. *But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.*"

IV. God's patience sometimes **EMPOWERS** evil **IMAGINATIONS**.

- A. In **Ezekiel 8:7** God's prophet is taken on a special journey by one of the Lord's spiritual servants:
1. *"And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.*
 2. *Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.*
 3. *And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.*
 4. *So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.*
 5. *And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.*
 6. *Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth."*
- B. Just because no other person on earth knows about someone's wicked imagination...
1. And just because the omniscient God doesn't immediately judge that person for his wicked imagination...
 2. He may go on in his corrupted thinking, until he is consumed by his pornography, or bigotry, or hatred.
 3. The Lord is just giving him more rope with which to hang himself.
- C. In **Ezekiel's** next chapter we see that God's patience is often used as an excuse to **ACCELERATE** man's iniquity.
1. **Ezekiel 9:9:** *"Then said (God's messenger) unto me, the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness; for they say, the LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not."*
 2. As our united States grow more evil and more evil, and does nothing to God's stop it, no one should think that the Lord doesn't care or that He has withdrawn Himself.
 3. What He is doing or what He has done is draw His sword. His judgment is coming. It is sure.
- D. Here in **Malachi 2:17**, I believe we see that God's patience **EMBOLDENS** wicked back talk.
1. *"Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the lord, and he delighteth in them; or, where is God of judgment."*
 2. As I have said before, It is a dangerous thing to give the Lord any of our lip.

V. One more thought, and one more scripture.

- A. The patience of the God of judgment will eventually come to an end.
1. Please turn to **Zephaniah** – five books ahead of Malachi – **Zephaniah 1**.
 2. *"The word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.*
 - a. *I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD.*
 - b. *I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.*
 - c. *I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests;*
 - d. *And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham;*
 - e. *And them that are turned back from the LORD; and those that have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.*

3. *Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.*
 - a. *And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.*
 - b. *In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.*
 - c. *And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills.*
 - d. *Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.*
 - e. *And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.*
 - f. *Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.*
4. *The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.*
 - a. *That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,*
 - b. *A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.*
 - c. *And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.*
 - d. *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land."*

B. Never think to yourself that God delayeth His judgment.

1. It is coming just as the divine schedule has stipulated.
 - a. It may come at first in tiny waves or big rollers and breakers.
 - b. But the ultimate storm is just over the horizon: judgment is coming.
2. And therefore be careful when you ask, *"Where is the God of judgment."*
3. Be thankful for God's patience and His day of grace, because you are a recipient of that grace as much as the man you think is terribly evil.

C. Oh, and by the way, the next verse says, *"Here He comes."*