

Malachi 2:17-3:6

We are crossing over the half way point in our study of Malachi this morning. God refers to himself some 24 times in these 4 short chapters as the The Lord of Hosts. We are learning about the character of The Lord of Hosts as we make our way through this short prophecy.

We have learned

1. In chapter 1:1-5 we learned that
  - a. The Lord of Hosts has the freedom, right, and power to bestow His love, mercy, and grace on whomever He chooses.
  - b. Likewise, The Lord of Hosts has the freedom, right, and power to bestow His anger, wrath, and judgement on whomever He chooses.
2. In verses 6-14 we saw that The Lord of Hosts is so gloriously holy that His mighty Name will be magnified, great, and reverently feared from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
3. In Chapter 2:1-9, we saw that The Lord of Hosts, by His very nature, demands honor from His people, disciplines His people, and keeps covenant with His people in spite of His people.
4. Last week in verses 10-16 we saw that the Lord of Hosts takes careful note of the treacherous acts of His people, mercifully calls them to repentance, and graciously warns them to be watchful of falling back into such sin again.

We will see today that **The Lord of Hosts is the perfectly just, purposefully refining, immutable, supreme judge, and that is our glorious hope!**

READ/Incorporate a time of praying for those around you.

The Lord of Hosts is the perfectly just, purposefully refining, immutable, supreme judge, and that is our glorious hope! Let's see this unfold in this passage together. God is...

### **I. The Perfectly Just God v17**

*You have wearied the LORD with your words.*

1. That term wearied is interesting because it generally describes exhaustion from physical labor.
2. How is this even possible?
3. That they would wear the one true God out?
  - a. Think about it. He created the heavens and the earth in 6 days
  - b. He didn't rest until the 7th and it wasn't because He needed rest. It was because we needed rest
  - c. And now he has been exhausted by them.

*Yet you say, "How have we wearied Him?"*

1. They ask the obvious question. How have we worn you, the Lord of Hosts, out?
2. He answers them clearly.

*In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them," or; "Where is the God of justice?"*

1. In essence, they have exhausted God by accusing Him of injustice
  - a. Those who do evil are good in God's eyes
  - b. God delights in those who do evil
  - c. Where is the God of justice?
2. To misrepresent God is more wearisome to Him than creating the heavens and the earth.
3. He is a jealous God
  - a. For His name
  - b. For his character
  - c. For his attributes
  - d. For his glory
  - e. Let us not take His Name in vain by misrepresenting him!
4. Isaiah 5:20 *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*

## **II. The Purposefully Refining God v1-4**

*Behold, I am going to send My messenger;*

I am going to send my messenger

1. My messenger in Hebrew is "Malachi"
2. Malachi 4:5

*and he will clear the way before Me.*

1. That phrase, clear the way, is used elsewhere in Scripture
2. Isaiah 40:3-5 *A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. 4 "Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*
3. Obviously this is prophesying the coming of John the Baptist
4. Mark 1:1-11
5. So, as we put the puzzle pieces together, we learn if "my messenger" is John the Baptist, then the "me" is Jesus.

*And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.*

1. John cleared the way before the coming of the Lord who would appear suddenly!
2. When He cleansed it.
3. When He died and the veil was torn in two it was sudden.
4. In A.D. 70 when the temple was destroyed, He showed up

2 “But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap.

1. This is not the blonde haired, blue eyed, she-Jesus that we see in all of the Roman Catholic paintings.
2. This is the Jesus that drives us to our knees!
3. Revelation 1:13-17a *and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. 14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. 15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man.*
4. **He came first to redeem with blood. He will come again to refine with fire!**

Now notice that he describes the Lord and the messenger of the covenant as the one in whom you “delight” in verse 1.

1. Remember that they had just accused God of delighting in the one who did evil in v17.
2. So it is as if God is saying, You think I delight in evil and you think You delight in the Lord.
3. But You don’t have a clue what you are talking about.
4. You will not be able to endure the day of his coming! You won’t be able to stand.
5. He will be like a refiner’s fire.

3 *He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness. 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.*

### III. The Supreme Judge God v5

1. He will be judge and star witness
2. Revelation 20:11-15

### IV. The Immutable God v6

Notice that what Malachi goes back to that keeps the sons of Jacob from being consumed here is not God’s mercy, grace, forgiveness or patience, but His immutability.

1. God’s immutability is simply the truth that God does not change.
2. Wayne Grudem calls it God’s unchangeableness and defines it as follows: *God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.*<sup>1</sup>
3. James 1:17 *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*
4. “He can not be changed for the better because He is the best, nor for the worse because He would cease to be the most perfect.” Frances Turretin

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<sup>1</sup>Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology. 163.

Their comfort was found in the fact that God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

1. How does God's immutability save them from complete and final judgement?
2. It has to do with God's pre-determined counsel and covenant with Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.
3. *If he had a beginning he may have an end; and if he had a change in his nature, he might have in his counsels; but since all the resolves of God are as himself is, eternal, and all the promises of God are the fruits of his counsel, therefore they cannot be changed; if he should change them for the better, he would not have been eternally wise, to know what was best; if for the worse, he had not been eternally good or just. Men may break their promises, because they are made without foresight, but God, that inhabits eternity, foreknows all things that shall be done under the sun, as if they had been then acting before him; and nothing can intervene or work a change in his resolves; because the least circumstances were eternally foreseen by Him.*<sup>2</sup> Stephen Charnock

Do you see what good news the immutability of God was for them?

1. You deserve destruction. You have broken my covenant.
2. You have gone the way of Edom.
3. But I, in eternally good foreknowledge, have chosen you!
4. And since I am a God who does not change, I will not consume you.

### **Conclusion:**

The Lord of Hosts is the perfectly just, purposefully refining, immutable, supreme judge, and that is our glorious hope!

1. We have a perfectly just God who will finally deal with sin, sinners, and enemies of the cross.
2. We have a purposefully refining God who, like a refiners fire, melts away the dross, the masks, the hypocrisy, and exposes us for who we are and how we are.
3. We have a God who will judge without partiality, finally, and supremely.
4. And He will not change. He is immutable.

So how can that be hopeful?

1. How can we stand before this God.
2. The way we can stand before this God is Jesus Christ...and God will never change His mind about Jesus.
3. He will always be faithful to Jesus...and if we are in Jesus, He will be faithful to us!
4. THE GOSPEL. In the courtroom of heaven, Jesus' blood will be our plea!
5. And we can rest in His immutable faithfulness to us in Jesus Christ. That is our glorious hope!

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changes not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be!

Great is Thy faithfulness. Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

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<sup>2</sup> Charnock, Stephen. The Existence and Attributes of God. 301

### **Questions for Reflection:**

1. Have you ever had the opinion that the wicked were prospering and the righteous were being mistreated? How did you respond in your heart? How should you have responded?
2. Answer the question in Malachi 3:2, “Who can endure the day of His coming?” In other words, how can a person prepare for the coming of Christ?
3. What does the imagery of Malachi 3:2-3 reveal about God’s work in our lives? How have you seen this process play out in your life?
4. Look again at Revelation 20:11-15. Walk through the text looking at the details of who is judged and what they are judged for.
5. If Christians are in Christ, and are fully accepted by God through Him, why are they still judged on their works?
6. What are some practical applications of God’s immutability?
7. What was the most impactful thing from this sermon? How will you seek to apply this message in your daily life?