

Getting Ready for His Return

God exhorted the people of Israel to repent and prepare for God's other Messenger, who would be the bearer of a new covenant.



GOD'S STORY
THE TRANSFORMATION FOR ADULT LIFEGROUPS

Malachi 3:1-15

October 4, 2020

(Malachi 3:1-5) ¹ "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. 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. ² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, ⁴ and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. ⁵ "So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty.

(Malachi 3:6-12) ⁶ "I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' ⁸ "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. ¹² "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty.

(Malachi 3:13-15) ¹³ "You have spoken arrogantly against me," says the Lord. "Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?' ¹⁴ "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty?' ¹⁵ But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it."

COMMUNITY – CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

- What are some things children do or say that leave their parents feeling weary?
- How does a wise parent respond to a child's wearisome behavior?
- If you are a parent, what motivates you to show patience to your child when you are weary?

CONTENT – EXPLORING GOD'S STORY

Have a volunteer read Malachi 3:1-5

- At the end of Malachi 2, the people questioned God's justice (2:17). What was God's reply to their charges of injustice? What situations today cause people to ask, "Where is the God of justice?"
- What did the Lord's people say His coming Messenger would do? How was this different from what the people were expecting?
- How can we be sure God is aware of every injustice? Why can we be confident He will address and bring about a resolution to every injustice?

Have a volunteer read Malachi 3:6-7

- According to verse 6, what did Israel deserve? Why did they receive mercy?
- God's love, mercy, and grace are astonishing. Can you recall a time when you deserved punishment but received grace instead? How did you feel?

- As recipients of God's grace, how should we allocate grace and mercy to others? What does God's unchanging love teach us about how we are to love other people?

Have a volunteer read Malachi 3:8-12

- How were the people of Judah robbing God?
- Is God dependent on our financial offerings? If not, then why are we commanded to give?
- What does it take in terms of faith, commitment, and planning in order for believers today to tithe?

Have a volunteer read Malachi 3:8-12

- What allegations did the people of Judah bring against God? Why did they think the wicked were getting away with their behavior?
- How do you feel when those who disobey God seem to come out ahead?

COMMISSION – ENGAGING IN GOD'S STORY

- Are there areas in your life you have strayed? Do you need to repent and return to God?
- In what ways can you increase your generosity in order to share the gospel with those who are lost?
- As we conclude our study of the Old Testament and move to the New Testament and the coming of Jesus, what themes have you seen? How have you seen Jesus foreshadowed in the characters, stories, and verses of the Old Testament?
- Israel was about to enter a time of 400 years of silence of hearing directly from God. God continued to move and guide His people during this time, but there were no more direct scriptures written to them until the coming of Jesus, the Living Word. How is this similar to us today? How is it different?

PRAYER: Thank God that He is a God of mercy and forgiveness. Ask Him to show group members areas in their lives where they need to repent and return to Him. Pray that group members will be faithful to obey God in their giving so God's work can be done in your church and throughout the world.

CONTINUE TO JOURNEY THROUGH GOD'S STORY

Bible Reading Plan:

DAY 1 – Luke 1
 DAY 2 – Luke 2
 DAY 3 – Matthew 1-2
 DAY 4 – Mark 1
 DAY 5 – John 1

KEY VERSE: John 1:14

H.E.A.R. Method:

Highlight a verse or two.
 Explain what the text means.
 Apply the verse to your life.
 Respond to God.

Our team has put together Bible study resources to encourage and inspire you as you engage in God's Story. Visit chetscreek.com/gods-story for videos, study guides, and more.