

Malachi 3:1-18

As we have been studying through the prophecy of Malachi we have encountered a nation that has been wholly taken up with itself. The Name of God and the ways of God have been disregarded and placed on to the sidelines of this people, ... *God's own special people, Israel.*

Jesus said, on one occasion, “unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required”. God had given much to the people of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and He expected much from them. Consider the blessings that God has favoured you with day after day. Indeed, “unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required”.

We have noticed too the faithfulness of this man Malachi. He was a man who stood out from the crowd. He was disgusted with the people's activities and lack of gratitude for the blessings that God had granted them. It's hard standing apart, but stand apart from those who contradict the ways of God, but it's even harder rejecting God and the ways of God.

Malachi is approaching the conclusion of his prophecy. He hasn't minced his words. I hope that I have caused you to see how relevant his message is for the people of God today. It's imperative that we listen to God's Word and learn from past generations.

- * We too are a people privileged by God.
- * We too have been blessed with a heritage that includes the faithful witness of men and women of God.
- * We too have been brought up in freedom to practise our faith.

HERE IS A QUESTION FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT: Do you as a member of Christ's visible Church today emulate the Church of Malachi's day? Would you have been content to follow the Israelites up the path towards the Temple in Jerusalem and, at the same time, 'be party' to many of the abominations against which Malachi was preaching?

Let's look again into our text, ... for although he is approaching the conclusion of his prophesy, he hasn't quite finished yet!

- * Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth he reminded the children of Israel that God had especially chosen them on to Himself.
- * The coming of the Messiah is foretold in these first few verses and Malachi, under the leading of Almighty God, tells the Israelites about this event.
- * Now immediately you can imagine some of Malachi's listeners concocting what kind of a person this Messiah would be,
 - * His roots, - an influential family,
 - * His goal, - to rid Israel of the foreign invaders,
 - * His characteristics and nature, - a fine warrior of noble stature.
- * Indeed, Malachi's first verse would have been most welcome.

REFINEMENT

- * However, vv.2,3 may not have caused too much joviality.
- * "You Israelites and people of Jerusalem, are you looking forward to the coming of the Messiah? ... Now, hold on a minute!"
- * Malachi asks,
 - * But who may abide the day of His coming?
 - * who shall stand when He appeareth?
- * They did not realise that the day of the Messiah's coming is fraught with judgement!
- * Why so? ... because when the Messiah there will be a period of God's **refinement**.
- * When the Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth John described the welcome He was given:
 - * He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
 - * He became the Stone that the builders rejected.
- * 400 years after, Malachi when the Lord Jesus walked in Galilee and Jerusalem, He was rejected and despised by His own people.
- * Look at how God in His Word described this process of refinement,
 - * 3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and 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.
- * God demands righteousness and perfection from His children!
 - * "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

- * The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary ushered in a new era, - His precious blood washed away all the sin of all the people who would believe in Him.
- * We are a new creation: we are taking on new priorities and new characteristics, - the blood has washed us white as snow.
- * Today we are being prepared for Glory,
 - * Our preparation involves refinement and purification, in order to strip ourselves of all that is repugnant to God.
- * After such a period, - and only after such a period, ...
 - * 4 ... shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.
- * Yes, there will be a **REFINEMENT** of the people of God.

- * Sadly, there will be many people who will not be effected by the refinement process of God (v.5), ...
- * They will not know cleansing/refinement for they are not interested.
- * They are a people who honour God with their lips and not with their hearts.
- * God says, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.” (Rev. 22:11)
- * If you have never asked the Lord Jesus Christ to come in and take hold of your life you’ll spend eternity in hell with all the murderers and perverts and filth-merchants that ever walked this earth.

- * Look at v. 6, it tells us of our God that never changes,
 - * His mind never changes,
 - * His judgements never change,
 - * His ways never change.
- * Are you living according to the way that Almighty God lays down in Scripture?
- * Are you an obedient child? Are you a grateful child?
- * Does the Lord Jesus take up more than just a couple of hours on as Sunday?
- * Is He the Lord and Master of your life?
- * Is He pleased with you and the way you serve Him?
- * Your sins have been nailed to the Tree, and your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. “You’re special because God has loved you”.

Yes, Malachi addressed the people regarding the necessity for refinement.

RESPONSIBILITY

(v.8ff.)

- * “Will a man rob God?” What a question! Of course, he wouldn’t.
- * What is God speaking about then?
- ◆ *One of the responsibilities of God’s children is the subject of tithing:*
Lev.27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S: it is holy unto the LORD. 32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, ... the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.
- * It means a tenth of our income,
 - * If our income is £50 a week, £5 is God’s *automatically!*
 - * If our income is £500 a week, £50 is God’s *automatically!*
- * Whatever we give after our £5/£50 is a freewill offering but God expects His tenth, - and remember, He blesses obedience.
- * God’s work at home and abroad depends on the obedience of God’s people, ... to be generous with *God’s* generosity..
- ◆ *Do you ever feel it is hard to get time to pray and read God’s Word?*
 - * There are 24 in the day, but aren’t we always so busy; ... do we tithe our time?
- * Do you set aside at least 1/10 of your own income and 1/10 of your time for God?
- * ... - it’s Biblical teaching; God blesses obedience to His Word.
- * If God’s people would tithe their income and their time how rich a Church *spiritually* we would be.
- * No-one likes to be a pauper, *especially when his Father is the King.*
- * The witness for God is always stunted because of disobedience to the teaching of the Word of God concerning the subject of tithing.

REMEMBRANCE

- * We find the dismal scenario that the confessing people of God were casting His word to the one side.
 - * they weren’t interested in what He had to say through His servant
 - * they weren’t concerned about the spiritual state of their country,
 - * tithing wasn’t an issue, - they weren’t interested.
- * God gets fed-up! He does. And He got fed-up with these people.
- * Nevertheless, we come across a remnant “that feared the Lord” (v.16)
 - * their names and deeds are written in His ‘book of remembrance’

- * What was the calibre of these people? (v.16b)
 - * “they feared the Lord” * they “thought upon His Name”.
- * ... and the Lord *of Hosts* bellows from His throne,
 - * “they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels” (v.17)
 - ... jewels, precious jewels,
 - His loved and His own.
 - Like the stars of the morning,*
 - His bright crown adorning,*
 - They shall shine in His beauty,*
 - Bright gems for His crown.*

CONCLUSION

- * There’s a great day coming for the people of God.
- * All the treasures of Heaven Christ gave up for His people and He won the greatest victory to make them His own.
- * In the fulness of time Jesus returned to His Father in heaven and He, - the Master-builder, - has been preparing a home for His children.
- * In God’s process of **REFINEMENT**, in our depth of **RESPONSIBILITY** to Him (whether with our time or our money), does His book of **REMEMBRANCE** record your faithfulness in His service?
- * How are you in your walk with God? Are you enjoying Him?
 - * “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever”
- * What are you doing for God in these days?
 - * Are you active? Do you witness to His power in your life?
- * Do you enjoy being a Christian?
 - * “Only what’s done for Christ will last!”
- * Does He enjoy having you as His child?
- * Have you the full assurance that your name is written in the ‘book of remembrance’ and that today you are enjoying the favour of God?

May the Lord bless His Word to our hearts this morning.