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“I Will Send My Messenger” - Malachi Chapter 3 v 1-18

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. 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. 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. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord.^[a] 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.

⁵ “Then I will draw near to you for judgement. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts. ⁶ “For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷ From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ ⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer^[b] for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. ¹³ “Your words have been hard against me, says the Lord. But you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’ ¹⁴ You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the Lord of hosts? ¹⁵ And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.’” ¹⁶ Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed his name. ¹⁷ “They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. ¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

At the end of Chapter 2 we are shown how the Lord had grown tired of the people He had chosen to be His special people being so unreliable, fickle and double minded. To such an extent that at the beginning of Chapter 3 He gives them due notice of His intention to send someone to reveal His arrival.

The Messiah that the people of Israel had looked for over such a long period was about to arrive. Identified as John the Baptist in the New Testament, the forerunner of Jesus was predicted in Matthew Chapter 11 v 10-18 and John Chapter 1 v 6-9. To this very day those who are lost in sin need someone to announce that the Lord, the Saviour of the World, including them has arrived. And that He is prepared to love and save them.

God had planned and prepared His people to receive His most important revelation. Malachi announced the one who would prepare the way for God's coming to His people. God does not abandon His chosen ones to their own evil choices. He chooses to help people, in this case by sending His Messenger to prepare the way before the Lord. John the Baptist fulfilled this role, preparing the way for Jesus.

God is working to teach His people how to worship Him. He wants to refine and purify us so righteous living will accompany our offerings. Only then, as we present ourselves acceptable to God can our offerings be acceptable. God looks to the day priests would be morally pure and follow the directions He had given for worship. Impure motives and actions make our offerings unacceptable.

God's presence can be dangerous. People think they can hide their sins and never be convicted. God however comes to witness against sinners: those who practice magic or perform sexual sins, who are liars, oppressors of the poor, and perpetrators of injustice. We do not want to face God as a witness against us in His court.

God does not change; He is constant to fulfil His threats and promises. People cannot excuse themselves by blaming God for unfulfilled expectations or for bad times. Such times may reflect God's wrath on a sinful people. God will do what He says. We must ask if you have fulfilled our promises to Him faithfully.

God deplores the sin of turning away from His decrees. Levitical law required the people of Israel to give 10% of their agricultural products plus various sacrifices and services to God. Failure to give the tithe and required offerings was robbing God. This Old Testament heritage provides a background for the greater revelation of life and service that results from faith in Christ. Giving takes on greater meaning in the lives of those who follow Jesus Christ and heed His teachings. God's desire is to bless His people meeting all their needs. He expects his people to fulfil our obligations to Him.

Some of Judah argued that the wicked escaped punishment, and, therefore, it was of no advantage to serve God. God knows who is righteous and rewards them and of that you can be assured. Those who respect and follow God's way of life were recorded permanently, not only in God's understanding but also in the historical witness of Israel's books of faith. History bears witness to the dramatic difference between those who followed God's lifestyle and those who chose their own. Check this out by comparing Exodus Chapter 32 verses 32 & 33. Psalm 69 verse 28, Psalm 87 verse 6 and Daniel Chapter 12 verse 1.

Malachi believed he could explain why the people failed to revere God. Because their spiritual leaders - the priests - did not fear God or teach the people God's Word the people did not honour God. The priests should have corrected the people of God when they brought unworthy sacrifices. They should have encouraged a deep love for God, and given God's instructions on tithing; but they did not know God either.

Today, here in Broadstone, we are indeed blessed by Almighty God with those who week by week occupy our pulpit. Men who proclaim the unsearchable riches of God's Holy Word. Who continue to point everyone in the congregation to the saving work of Christ on the cross and His love for the whole of humanity regardless of the colour of their skin, after all that is only the outer wrapping of the person within.

The name Malachi means "my messenger" so in this chapter we see one of Gods messengers foretelling of the arrival of another, the arrival of John the Baptist. Malachi was the last of the writing prophets and John the Baptist was the last and greatest of the old covenant prophets. So John was given the unique privilege of ministering at the end of the old dispensation and at the beginning of the new, and it was John who presented Jesus to Israel as we read in John's gospel Chapter 1 versus 29-31.

What, you may ask can we who live in 2026 gain from something written so long ago. How about taking a fresh look at Malachi Chapter 3 verse six for a start. *"For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob are not consumed"* That and the following verses should fill us with absolutely massive encouragement, that despite all our failings, we have a God who still loves us with a love so deep and wide that it overcomes all our shortcomings. We will miss the mark of God's perfection BUT, he is faithful through everything. All we need is a penitent heart with which to seek our loving Saviour's forgiveness.

Transcript of the presentation given by Deacon Rodney Burge and discussed at the church-based, morning home group on Tuesday 10th February 2026. All scripture is from the ESV Translation.