

## Mal'akhi ~ Part 3

This passage from the **Book of Mal'akhi** is a sharp dialogue between **God** and a weary, cynical community. It addresses the tension between human injustice and divine purification, shifting from a "**Where is God?**" complaint to a "**Who can endure His arrival?**" warning.

These verses form a parenthesis between two messages concerning **God's** justice and judgment. What the **Jews** have labeled as **God's** injustice is not **God's** being unrighteous or unfair, but **His** being mercifully patient. A genuine call of repentance is then issued (v. 3:7), and the fruit of it is described (v. 10).

### Lord of Justice Coming

*2<sup>17</sup> You have wearied ADONAI with your words. Yet you ask, "How have we wearied him?" By saying that, anyone who does wrong is good from ADONAI's perspective, and that He is delighted with them; or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"*

Disillusionment followed the rebuilding of the **Temple**. The presence of **God** had not come to the new **Temple**. They began to live in indifference to **God**. Calloused and lacking in spiritual discernment, the people persisted in cynical expressions of innocence. They had rejected all intentions of taking right and wrong seriously. So deeply gripped by complacent self-righteousness, they had the gall to question the **Lord** insolently, implying that **He** favored the wicked and was unconcerned about the righteous. The prophet faced them with imminent judgment, telling them **God** was coming, but to refine and purify.

*3<sup>1</sup> "Look! I am sending my messenger to clear the way before me, and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple. Yes, the messenger of the covenant, in whom you take such delight - look! Here he comes," says ADONAI-Tzva'ot. <sup>2</sup> But who can endure the day when he comes? Who can stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner's fire, like the soap maker's lye.*

Instead of bringing rewards, **His** coming is likened to two purifying agents - *fire to burn off dross* and *alkali to whiten* - an indication of the true condition of their hearts. The fire will burn off the dross of iniquity; the soap will wash out the stain of sin. His coming will be one in which He removes all impurities. No one will escape this cleansing. Importantly, He will come to purify and cleanse, but not necessarily to destroy.

*3 He will sit, testing and purifying the silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, refining them like gold and silver, so that they can bring offerings to ADONAI uprightly. <sup>4</sup> Then the offering of Y'hudah and Yerushalayim will be pleasing to ADONAI, as it was in the days of old, as in years gone by.*

The **Second Advent** will mark the **Lord's** judgment on sin, raising the question of who can endure it. **Yeshua's Temple** cleansing foreshadows this purifying ministry, to be fulfilled at **His** return.

### Wicked to Be Judged

*5 "Then I will approach you for judgment; and I will be quick to witness against sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers; against those who take advantage of wage-earners, widows, and orphans; against those who rob the foreigner of his rights and don't fear me," says Adonai-Tzva'ot.*

**God** issues a stern warning that He is coming not just as a creator, but as a **quick witness** and **judge**. The verse outlines a specific "litmus test" for morality, focusing on how the powerful treat the vulnerable.

## Robbing God

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*<sup>6</sup> "But because I, Adonai, do not change, you sons of Ya'akov will not be destroyed. <sup>7</sup> Since the days of your forefathers, you have turned from my laws and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. "But you ask, 'In respect to what are we supposed to return?'*

The fact that *the Lord* is the unchanging One accounts for the preservation of the *sons of Ya'akov* from destruction. *The Lord* invites the people to **return to Him**, but they deny having *gone away*, asking hypocritically, *'In respect to what are we supposed to return?'*

*<sup>8</sup> Can a person rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How have we robbed you?' In tenths and voluntary contributions. <sup>9</sup> A curse is on you, on your whole nation, because you rob me. <sup>10</sup> Bring the whole tenth into the storehouse, so that there will be food in my house, and put me to the test," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. "See if I won't open for you the floodgates of heaven and pour out for you a blessing far beyond your needs. <sup>11</sup> For your sakes I will forbid the devourer to destroy the yield from your soil; and your vine will not lose its fruit before harvest-time," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. <sup>12</sup> "All nations will call you happy, for you will be a land of delights," says Adonai-Tzva'ot.*  
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Under the **Mosaic Law**, the **Israelites** were required to give a tenth of all produce and livestock to the **Lord** (or they could redeem it with money and add a fifth part). The **tithes** were in addition to numerous offerings and were an acknowledgment that everything belonged to **God** and that **He** was the **Giver** of all possessions.

The **Brit Hadashah** teaches **Believers** to give systematically, liberally, cheerfully, and as the **Lord** has prospered them, that is, proportionately. But no mention is made of tithing. Rather, the suggestion is that if a **Jew** living under law gave a tenth, how much more should a **Messianic** living under grace give!

The reward for faithful tithing in the **Tanakh** was material wealth; the reward for faithful stewardship in the present age is spiritual riches.

So, **He** reminds them of their failure to bring their **tithes and offerings**, thereby robbing **God** and bringing a curse upon themselves. If they will be faithful with their **tithes**, **He** will bless them with incredible plenty, so much so **He** will *open for you the floodgates of heaven and pour out for you a blessing far beyond your needs*. He will deliver them from drought, plague, enemies, and locusts, and make them a blessing in the earth.

Expressing frustration at home is common, especially during conflicts about finances or responsibilities. **Mal'akhi 2:17-3:12** encourages prioritizing family unity and returning to **God**. Set aside an evening this week to discuss family goals and financial habits, show gratitude for each other's efforts, and agree on biblically aligned values for a more **Messiah-centered** home.

In our next post, we will continue to explore **Mal'akhi**.

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<sup>1</sup> Mal'akhi 2:17-3:12.