

THE COMING OF MESSIAH

Anticipations of Advent

Discussion Guide
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Sermon Title **Found Faithful When He Comes** by Paul R. Martin

Malachi 3:13-4:6

Introduction: Malachi prophesied in Jerusalem after the period of the Babylonian exile. He is the last voice from God, and his prophecy is the last book in the Old Testament, before angels appear to Mary and Joseph to announce the birth of the promised Messiah. The words of this passage are the last official words from God until the time of Christ, a period of about 400 years. They could have been written to the church in the United States today, so descriptive are they of our times!

Sermon Outline

I. God States His Case (3:13-15)

- A. The people are arrogantly complaining about God to one another. (v.13a)
- B. They deny any wrong doing when they hear the prophet's words (v.13b)
- C. They have three main complaints, which betrays their heart attitude (vv.14-15)
 1. What do we get out of serving God and keeping His rules? What good has it done us?
 2. What good is being religious and doing religious duty? How has it profited us?
 3. Ungodly people are blessed, they get "set up" for success, they even openly test God and get away with it! They really have the good life!!

II. The True Followers of God Listen (3:16-18)

- A. They discuss God's indictment with true humility and fear of the Lord (v.16)
- B. God writes their names in His book of remembrance (v.16b-17)
 1. because they fear the Lord (genuinely respect and reverence Him)
 2. because they esteem His name (count Him worthy of praise and honor)
- C. They have the long view—the day will come when God will clearly distinguish between the wicked and the righteous (v.18)
 1. God has along view of time...we need His perspective
 2. His motive is to give people time to repent, that none should perish

III. God Will Come Himself And Bring Judgment & Blessing (4:1-6)

- A. A day is coming, says the Lord—the sun will rise on that day:
 1. it will set the wicked and arrogant on fire with judgment
 2. it will bring healing and great joy to those who fear the Lord
- B. Elijah will herald the coming of the Lord and the day of blessing
- C. In that day God will restore relationships and heal His land

Conclusion: There is a dual fulfillment in the prophecy if Malachi. These final words were spoken before the first advent of Jesus Christ, Who did indeed rise with healing in His wings. And John the Baptist, as the forerunner, was believed to be Elijah to come before the great deliverance. But all is not done, another day is coming. Jesus Christ will come back on that Great and Terrible Day of the Lord and all will know His coming. He will clearly distinguish between the righteous and the wicked and bring blessing to His people for evermore!

Malachi 3:13 - 4:6 ¹³ "Your words have been arrogant against Me," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?' ¹⁴ "You have said, 'It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked in mourning before the LORD of hosts?' ¹⁵ 'So now we call the arrogant blessed; not only are the doers of wickedness built up but they also test God and escape.'" ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. ¹⁷ "They will be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." ¹⁸ So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

^{NAU} Malachi 4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." ² "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. ³ "You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts. ⁴ "Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶ "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

Discussion Questions

1.) In what ways are the people of Malachi's day like the people of our day?

2.) Do you think it is valid to apply the prophecies of the Old Testament people to the church today? How do they relate?

3.) In what ways do you agree or disagree that many people in church today are in it because of what they expect to get out of it in material and emotional terms?

4.) Do you think serving God in order to get rewards is a valid motive? Explain your answer.

5.) Why do the righteous often suffer when it seems as though the wicked are prospering? How can we explain to people today that the “good life” and “living high” is not the best life?

6.) In what ways did Jesus bring healing to His day and how will it differ from the healing He will bring at His second coming?

7.) How important is the anticipation of the second coming of Christ in the hearts and minds of believers today? How does looking for His coming draw us closer to God?

MEMORY VERSE

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The Alliance Bible Church is a multi-cultural church celebrating the life of Christ in us by:

- Proclaiming the full message of God’s Good News to the diverse cultures of McHenry and surrounding communities,
- Discipling believers in living the deeper Christian life,
- Equipping His people for the work of ministry, and
- Demonstrating the unconditional love of Jesus to our community through meaningful acts of service.

