

Wearying the Lord, or fearing the Lord?

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[0 : 00] Drink from it, all of you. This is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Or as Paul would later phrase it, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Jesus, the messenger of the covenant, came to inaugurate the new covenant prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.

Malachi 3.1 Jesus did make his appearance at the temple as a baby.

It was a small event noticed by a few people. Simeon, who was waiting for the Messiah to be revealed, saw Jesus presented at the temple. And moved by the Spirit of God, he proclaimed, Thank you, God, my eyes have seen your salvation, alike to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

And the prophet Anna, who was also there, confirmed that this child will be the redemption of Jerusalem. But it would be John the Baptist who will truly prepare the way for Jesus to public ministry.

[1 : 42] And how did he do it? He warned the people to flee from the coming judgment. He called them to repent because the kingdom of heaven is near.

He testified that Jesus was the Son of God. And he said Jesus would baptize with the Spirit. He identified Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And he told people that judgment had already started. That Jesus was already holding his winnowing fork to separate the wheat from the chaff, the righteous from the wicked.

Jesus is the God of justice. Like most Old Testament prophets, Malachi in his prophecy about the coming Christ would mingle the two advance, the two coming of Jesus.

While Malachi 3.1 refers to his first coming 2,000 years ago, Malachi 2 will describe things that happened both at his first coming and at his second coming in the future.

[2 : 45] When Jesus started his public ministry, he started purifying and refining the priesthood. You see his confrontations with the priests, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

See how he cleansed the temple of the money changers who did their business in the outer courts. This is the only area in the temple where Gentiles were allowed.

So this business prevented Gentiles from worshipping Yahweh. And he declared as he drove them out of his father's house, he declared as he drove them out that his father's house is a house of prayer for all nations, not just for the Jewish people.

Jesus' numerous appearance at the temple fulfilled this prophecy of Malachi. And in fact, Jesus will show that he is the new temple and he came to replace the temple and the sacrificial system.

At his finished work on the cross, dying as an atoning sacrifice on our behalf, Jesus is able to justify sinners.

[3 : 52] Anyone who trusts in his redemptive work and repent will be declared righteous in the sight of God. Through his saving work, he transforms people into a royal priesthood, a new royal priesthood, a holy nation of people seeking to please him.

Purified not by soap or fire, but by his own cleansing blood. He continues to refine us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

And on the day of the Lord, when he comes again, he will accomplish his final work of purifying and refining of his people. We will be made perfect.

All traces of the sinful nature will be removed at his coming. We will then be able to serve and worship him in perfect righteousness. That day will bring vindication and purification for the righteous.

It will be the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy of a purified priesthood. But that day will also bring condemnation and punishment for those who do not fear him, what the Bible calls the wicked.

[5 : 05] He will come and put them on trial at his judgment seat. And this is when they will realize that it was so foolish to think that God did not care about their sins or that he delights in those who do evil.

But today is not that day. Today is not that day. In our readings from 2 Peter 3, Peter reminds you that the day of the Lord, that the day Jesus returns, will certainly come.

But it is still not here yet because Jesus is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But mark this, the day of the Lord will come like a thief at a moment you do not expect, suddenly. Today is the day of salvation.

If you are not a follower of Jesus, today is your chance to believe in what he has done for you. He took your sins on the cross and gave you his forgiveness and righteousness.

[6 : 14] And he calls you to follow him. If you are a Christian today, the question is not, why has the Lord not come yet? But rather, am I ready for his coming?

The people during Malachi's time were not ready. We are to take an inventory of our lives. Peter says, make every effort to confirm our calling and election.

What kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speeding his coming. Since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation. You know what makes God weary besides having his name and character solid?

Look at Isaiah 43, 24. I'll read it to you. In Isaiah 43, 24, God says, As God's chosen people, his royal priesthood and holy nation, let us be careful how we live.

[7 : 41] The Holy Spirit gives us the power through the gospel to live lives pleasing to the Lord. His grace teaches us to say no to sin. Look at verse 3, 5.

Look again at the evidence that showed that the people of Malachi's time did not fear God. How do we measure up to the same set of evidence?

How do you measure up to the same set of evidence? How do I measure up to the same set of evidence? You say, Surely we are not involved with sorcery.

Would you in desperation run to the Manangs or the Bomo's? Would you use protective charms and amulets? Do you consult the Feng Shui masters when you set up your house?

Does astrology or horoscope rule your life? You say you do not commit adultery. But Jesus says, even looking at someone else with lust is adultery.

[8 : 46] Sexual purity is not just about not committing adultery. What about your standing on sex outside of marriage, cohabitation, homosexuality, and transgender issues, pornography?

Are you striving to be honest in all your dealings? Is your yes, yes, and your no, no? Are you taking care of and paying your employees fairly?

How are we treating and supporting the socially disadvantaged, the widows, the orphans, the single parents, the lonely elderly, the homeless?

How are we treating our pendatang, the refugees, our migrant workers, and maids? Yes, let us take stock of our lives.

But I want to remind you today that the good news of this morning's message is that the messenger of the covenant would come.

[9 : 47] The good news of today's passage is that the messenger of the covenant would come. And every time we take the Lord's Supper like we did today, we proclaim that the messenger of the covenant has come and that he will come again.

He sealed the new covenant with his blood on the cross. We are thankful for his faithfulness and rest in his grace. When the day of the Lord comes, Jesus' blood will be our plea.

Today, by his power, with full convictions that he will return, we are to live with reverential fear, doing good works that will be tested and approved, fully pleasing to him.

Amen.