

Sermon Text Discussion Notes – December 18th, 2022

Malachi 2:17-3:5 – “The God Who Brings True Justice” by Drew Hunter

Overview

Here’s one of the most important and common questions about God and life that we ask. And by we, I mean we as humans throughout history. It’s a question deep in our souls, especially in the face of suffering. The question is: Where is God? We look at suffering, or sin, or injustice. And we wonder where God is. What is he doing about this? Does he care? Where is God?

We’re looking at Malachi for Advent. And we’re seeing that through this prophet, God confronts apathy and cultivates hope for Advent. In this text, we come to Malachi 2:17-3:5. God is addressing one problem with his people after another in this book. And the problem in this text is that they are accusing God of not caring about injustice. They have grown so weary of waiting for God to act that they accuse him of not being just. And God responds to their complaint by promising that he will bring justice.

Israel has wearied God by saying he doesn’t care about justice. And God responds by promising that he will come to bring justice by purifying and judging. This text is here to lead us to embrace his purifying work and patiently waiting for his judgment.

- 1 – The Complaint (2:17)
- 2 – The Purification (3:1-4)
- 3 – The Judgement (3:5)

Discussion Questions

- 1) In v17, what complaint was Israel making about God? Is there a difference between longing for God to bring justice, and accusing him of being unjust? Compare and contrast the Psalmists when they ask “How long, O Lord?” to the complaint seen here in v17.
- 2) When you think about the word justice in our current societal context, what comes to mind? Whether it’s social justice, racial justice, or other justice language you hear or read about, how should God’s word impact our thought processes and our conversations about these matters? How would you speak to someone who doesn’t believe in the Bible’s authority when it comes to this topic?
- 3) Israel saw sin and evil around them. They complain, “Where is the God of justice?” And now God answers in Mal 3:1-4. What does God promise to do in these verses?
- 4) We’ve seen that Israel asks God to bring justice, but they don’t consider what trouble they might be in if God answers their plea. If Israel is not right with God when he brings justice, what would happen to them (see v2)? What remedy does God promise in response to the question of “But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears”?
- 5) How are John the Baptist and the coming of Jesus himself a fulfillment of the promises in this text? Why do we see and experience so much pain and suffering in the world if there has already been a fulfillment of these ancient prophecies?
- 6) In v5 we see that God will bring justice through judgement. How is this fulfilled, and when does it happen? This first happened with the coming of Jesus. Jesus took the wrath of God (judgement) on himself for all that would trust in him. How does this show that God is just even when he forgives us (cf Rom 3:21-26)? There is also a final judgement coming (cf 2 Cor 5:10). Is this final judgement good news for everyone? How should this impact our zeal for spreading the gospel to our friends and family that don’t know Jesus? How should this impact our heart for global missions?