

## Malachi 2:17-3:5 A Grim Warning

As we look at some Old Testament texts that look forward to God's future actions, it gives us a new perspective on how to look back at things like the advent of Christ. As we approach the season where we joyfully celebrate the Saviours coming we can get a real shock when we read how Malachi warned of the consequences of the Lords coming.

The background is one where the people have wearied God with their continual sin. Malachi has just illustrated this with a sermon on men who divorced their wives because they wanted a new younger wife. (Chapter 2:1-16). This is just one example. To such people God's coming is not something to look forward to at all.

### Evil affirmed ([Malachi 2:17-3:4](#))

Malachi's charge that Judah had "wearied the Lord with your words" is met with another sarcastic inquiry. "How have we wearied Him?" ([Malachi 2:17](#)) Malachi's answer went to the roots of another symptom of spiritual sickness. "By saying, 'All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord' " ([Malachi 2:17](#)).

How quickly humanistic values replace God's revelation of true goodness and purity. In modern doubletalk, pornographic movies are called "mature," and campaigns are launched to present homosexuality as an alternative and perfectly acceptable lifestyle. In Malachi's day too society slipped into the practice of calling evil good.

This last charge led Malachi to a promise and a warning. He spoke of the coming of God, but warned, "Who can endure the day of His coming? Who can stand when He appears?" ([Malachi 3:2](#)) Destiny, in the person of God's messenger, was approaching, and He would purify the land by judgment. *Then* the offerings of the remnant would be pleasing to God.

When we refuse to purify ourselves, God must act for us. It is not pleasant to be placed over what Malachi calls the "refiner's fire" ([Malachi 3:2](#)). The fire that removes impurities burns while it cleanses.

How were the people oblivious to their sin? ([2:17](#))

What warning did God give? ([3:1-5](#))

What was the basis for hope in God? ([3:6](#))

What is the extent of the price we pay, and possibly cause others to pay, when we knowingly disobey God?

In what ways do we try to rationalize our sins?

In Malachi 4:1 the warning is repeated. Yet a brighter alternative is given in a delightful metaphor in v2-3. How do we get this message across to a careless or nominal Christian?

What role should Christians have in standing up for God's ways to a non Christian majority?