

The Refiner's Fire

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MALACHI 2.17-3.6 (ESV)

¹⁷You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?" ¹⁸Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

MALACHI 2.17-3.6 (ESV)

²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

MALACHI 2.17-3.6 (ESV)

⁵Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me," says the LORD of hosts. ⁶For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

INTRODUCTION

Hardship and suffering make some people better and others worse. The word 'fire' in Malachi 3 represents the hardship and suffering we all, both individually and collectively, have to pass through from time to time. How we relate to God and how we respond to this 'fire' will determine whether it makes us better or worse.

OUTLINE

- 1.The Process of Refining
- 2.The Purpose of Refining
- 3.The Promise of Refining

1. The Process of Refining

- Story of the silversmith...
- Melt with heat: "Has God forsaken me?"
- Expose impurities: "Where did that come from?"
- Purge impurities: "Losing a piece of me..."
- Pollution: silver alloys...

2. The Purpose of Refining

- 'He will sit as a refiner...'
- The process is complete when...
- To restore pure sacrifices...
 - Like Cain and Able

3. The Promise of Refining

But not everyone who experiences the fire is refined by it!

- Consumed vs. Refined
- The Rebellious, Religious, & Righteous
- The problem of pride/self-centeredness
- The covenant messenger, His temple, and righteous offering (singular)
- Reformation 500: "Are you accepted because you obey or do you obey because you're accepted?"

CONCLUSION

- Malachi means 'messenger': God still wants messengers to prepare the way.
- Only the Righteous are refined; the Rebellious and Religious are consumed!
- How we respond to the Process of refining will determine how well the Purpose of refining is fulfilled.
