

**Malachi 3:4-4:6**

(The Jewish scriptures combine chapter 4 with chapter 3, so they list the haftarah reading as **Malachi 3:4-24**)

The connection to **Exodus 28** and the description of the High Priest's garments is the reference to the Levites in verses 3-4: "and he shall purify the sons of Levi... Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD..."

The messenger is Elijah (**Malachi 4:5-6**), preparing the way of the Messiah, who is the Lord, the "Messenger of the Covenant" spoken of in the latter part of the text. Rabbinical commentary interprets this coming to be in the world to come or the Days of Messiah. (Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 219. 4.)

Jesus identified the spirit of Elijah with John the Baptist:

- **Matthew 11:10** - "This is the one about whom it is written: 'Behold, I will send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You'" (see **Malachi 3:1**).

The Lord will "purify" the sons of Levi - i.e. He will cleanse their ministry of every error or self-serving thought, and perfect the offerings and worship of Israel "as in the former years" meaning as it was seen in heaven by Moses. Christ accomplished this by being the perfect sacrifice, as well as the ultimate High Priest. But "who can abide" this? No one can or could - all died on the cross, and those who believe have become new creations in Christ.

**Malachi 3:5** - The Judgment of the Wicked. But this list concentrates on things we would not. Where are the prostitutes and the gays, the petty criminals and the thieves? The focus is mostly on evil committed by the wealthy and the powerful.

**Malachi 3:6** - "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed."

The "gifts and calling are without repentance" (**Romans 11:29**), therefore the Israelites are indeed chastised and corrected, but not wholly consumed, as they rightfully should have been.

God is the same yesterday, today and forever (**Hebrews 13:8**).

- **James 1:17** - "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no variation nor shadow of turning."

- **Psalm 102:27** - "As a vesture, Thou shalt change them and they shall be changed, but Thou art the Same, and Thy years shall not fail."

**Malachi 3:7-12 - Tithes**

The main thing that Israel needs to repent of, and which needs "purifying" is Israel's attitude toward tithes and offerings.

### **It is vain to serve God!**

**Malachi 3:14-15** - "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered."

The classic argument - why are the wicked successful, while the righteous seem to fail?

We've been walking "mournfully" - walking through life with what we suppose to be religious and self-righteous condemnation of "fun" after our own understanding - so when do we get the payoff, the booty, the plunder? If the first shall be last and the last shall be first, when do we get to come out on top?

Not in this life - it's "in that day."

**Malachi 3:16-17** - "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

"make up" = *asah* - do, make, create, build, fashion

"jewels" = *cĕgullah* - peculiar treasure, special possession

- **Deuteronomy 14:2** - "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar (*cĕgullah*) people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."

- **Psalms 135:4** - "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure (*cĕgullah*)."

- **1 Peter 2:9** - "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

### **More on "That Day"**

**Malachi 4:1** - "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

The wicked will be destroyed, burned up like chaff and stubble after the threshing of

harvest.

**Malachi 4:2** - "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."

i.e. NET - "you will skip about like calves released from the stall."

**Malachi 4:3** - "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts."

- **Luke 10:19** - "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

**Malachi 4:4** - "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments."

"Remember" = *zakar* - remember, be mindful of, mention, think on

### **The Law was speaking of Christ.**

- **John 5:39** - "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

### **The Promise of Elijah**

**Malachi 4:5-6** - "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

The last word in the Old Testament is "curse."

In the synagogue readings, Jews traditionally don't end with this last verse but one over again after the last verse, to avoid concluding with words of ill omen. Thus they repeat: "Behold I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

### **Additional Haftarah:**

Hosea 14:7 – Joel 1:5 + 2:14

Jeremiah 11:16-20 + 12:1-3 + 15:15-16