

## XV. MALACHI 3:1-2

### A. Context and Structure of Malachi 3:1

1. Malachi 2:17 ends with the question, "Where is the God of judgment?" next verse begins to answer that question.
2. The parallel structure of the verse indicates that the "Lord" and the "messenger of the covenant" are the same individuals.

"Behold, I will send my messenger,  
and he shall prepare the way before me

and the Lord	even the messenger of the covenant
whom you seek	whom you delight in
shall suddenly come	behold, he shall come
to His temple	

saith the LORD of Hosts"

### B. Exegesis of Malachi 3:1

1. The speaker ("I") is Yahweh, or the LORD (v. 5-7).
2. "My messenger" - not an angel, but a human messenger. (cf. Is. 40:3)  
- identified in 4:5 as Elijah
3. The "Lord" (Adon) is a name of God (cf. Adonai) appearing hundreds of times, but only six times with the article (ha Adon) - all of them refer to God, not a human "master."  
(cf. Exodus 23:17; Isaiah 1:24; 3:1; 10:16; 10:33; 19:4; Malachi 3:1)
4. The "messenger of the covenant" is the same as "the Lord"
  - a. "The identity of the angel of the covenant with the Lord is placed beyond the reach of doubt by the parallelism of the clauses." (Keil)
  - b. Characteristics of the "angel of the Lord" or "messenger of the Lord" in the Old Testament
    - 1) Used interchangeably with the Divine name Yahweh (Genesis 16:11-13)
      - a) Yahweh's name is in Him (Exodus 23:20,21)
    - 3) Sacrifice is made to Him (Genesis 22:11-12; Judges 13:19-23)
    - 4) He has power to forgive sins (Exodus 23:20-21; Zechariah 3:1-6)
    - 5) He is identified with the "wonderful child" of Isaiah 9:6 (cf. Judges 13:18)
  - c. While the "angel of the Lord" possessed the same nature as Yahweh, in same way he is distinct from Him.

C. Rabbinic Views of Malachi 3:1

1. The "Lord" is interpreted as either the God of justice referred to in 2:17 (Rashi), or as an allusion to King Messiah (Kimchi).
2. The "messenger of the covenant" is the angel appointed to avenge the breaking of any covenant (Rashi) or is a designation of Elijah (Kimchi).
  - a. This is inconsistent with the context which identifies the "coming" as that of God Himself (3:2ff).
  - b. The first "messenger" in the verse cannot be the same as the second following messenger.

D. Fulfillment of Malachi 3:1

1. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:3; 11:10; Luke 1:76)
2. Jesus
  - a. "Suddenly" = "unexpectedly"
  - b. "to His Temple"
    - combines elements of first and second comings (see Simeon and Anna in Luke 2:25-38)
3. This is an example of a scripture that was "fulfilled" in the first coming, but will be "filled full" in the second coming.

E. Exegesis of Malachi 3:2

1. Here is the direct answer to "Where is the God of judgment?"

There is an aspect of judgment in the first coming – John 3:17-18; 12:31
2. Who can abide and stand in the day of His coming?
  - a. The implied answer is no one
  - b. Psalm 130:3; Joel 2:11
3. Judgment will be a time of separation – "refiner's fire" and "fuller's soap"
  - a. Zech. 13:9
  - b. Matthew 25:31-33, 46 (cf. vs.34, 40); (cf. vs. 41, 45)

## **JEWISH TRANSLATIONS OF MALACHI 3:1**

Leeser: "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall clear out the way before the LORD: and suddenly will come to his temple the Lord, whom ye seek; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he is coming, saith the Lord of hosts."

Harkavy: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

JPS: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he shall clear the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, Behold, he cometh, saith the LORD of hosts."

NJPS: "Behold, I am sending My messenger to clear the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek shall come to His Temple suddenly. As for the angel of the covenant that you desire, he is already coming."

A Jewish Bible according to the Masoretic Text: Hebrew & English, Sinai Publishing, Tel Aviv, Israel

"Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

## **CHRISTIAN TRANSLATIONS OF MALACHI 3:1**

KJV: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

NKJV: "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts."

ASV: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts."

RSV: "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts."

NIV "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.