

Title: **BECAUSE HE HATES**
 PUTTING AWAY

Text: Malachi 2:17-3:6

Subject: *Unconditional, Irresistible,*
 Indestructible Grace

Date: Sunday PM — October 25, 2009

Tape: Malachi #11

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Frank Hall*

Introduction:

The title of my message is **BECAUSE HE HATES PUTTING AWAY**. In Malachi 2:16 “*the LORD, the God of Israel,*” declares “*that he hateth putting away.*” Jehovah, the triune God of Israel thereby assures his fallen, erring, sinful people that his grace is absolutely free, unconditional, irresistible, indestructible grace. Bless the Lord, O my soul! — Because “*he hateth putting away*” nothing can separate me from him!

If the Lord God of Israel ever dealt with us, even once, as we have relentlessly and

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always dealt with him, we would long ago have been ruined forever. But “the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away!” That is the cause of his unfailing mercies upon us. It is the covenant faithfulness of God our Father, founded in his own everlasting love, engaged in his promise and his oath, to Christ our Surety, flowing to our souls from everlasting in his own precious blood and perfect righteousness!

Because “the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away” he rests in his love. Oh, for grace to see the cause and adore the mercy. Where the Lord God of Israel rests, there let my soul ever rest also, not in myself, not in my experience, not in my feelings, but in God my Savior, the Triune Jehovah, the God of Israel who here declares that “*he hateth putting away!*”

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No matter how things change with me, nothing changes with him! The everlasting worth, the everlasting efficacy, of my Savior's blood and righteousness changes not! His interest in me and my interest in him do not depend upon the varying circumstances of time and the varying vacillations of my poor, sinful heart!

The Lord not only hates putting away, but he *“saith that he hateth putting away!”* He says it that we may know it and rejoice in it. properly esteem his unchanging love. Oh, that we who are loved of God might live in the blessed, confident assurance of this fact! — *“He hateth putting away!”* — *“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing”* (Zephaniah 3:17).

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It is impossible to properly understand the message of Malachi 3, if we do not understand it in the context of this blessed fact, revealed in Malachi 2:16. — “*The LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away!*” The chapter division here is unfortunate. If I am not mistaken, it would be better to begin chapter 3 with the 17th verse of chapter 2. So let’s begin with Malachi 2:17. Our text will be Malachi 2:17-3:6.

Because he hates putting away, because God’s grace is absolutely free, unconditional, irresistible, indestructible grace, he here tells us what he has done and will do for his elect, for Israel, his chosen, the sons of Jacob that he loves with an everlasting love.

HORRID EVIL

In Malachi 2:17, the prophet of God continues to describe the horrid evil

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committed by God's covenant people. That is to say, he continues to describe the horrid evil you and I constantly commit against our God. — The faithful prophet never ceases to remind God's elect that God's mercies are completely undeserved! The faithful Gospel preacher constantly reminds his hearers that they are sinners, fully deserving God's unmitigated wrath. Here, again, we are given reason to rejoice in the fact that — "*He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*" (Psalm 103:10).

(Malachi 2:17) "Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him*? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?"

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Remember, the Lord God is still addressing Judah, Israel and Jerusalem, his covenant people. He is addressing those who have dealt treacherously with him and with one another, who have profaned his holiness, profaned his altar and robbed him of his glory, — a sinful people he refused to put away, because “*he hateth putting away!*”

How we have wearied him with our words of unbelief! — How we have wearied him with our words of broken promises and resolutions! — How we weary our God with our words, calling evil good and good evil! — How we have wearied God with our pretensions, our great swelling words, hypocritical words and acts of devotion by which we attempt to hide the evil of our hearts!

“**Where is the God of judgment?**” — That question may suggest the idea that, though

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few would speak such words openly, our behavior constantly cries, “*Where is the God of judgment?*” (Ezekiel 8:12; 9:9; Psalm 10:11; Isaiah 29:13-15).

(Ezekiel 8:12) “Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.”

(Ezekiel 9:9) “Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The LORD hath forsaken the earth, and the LORD seeth not.”

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(Psalms 10:11) “He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*.”

(Isaiah 29:13-15) “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: (14) Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid. (15) Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?”

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Perhaps this question is set before us here to expose that terrible tendency of our souls to distrust God's providence. **How often we are like David in Psalm 73**, murmuring against our God because in our dim eyes the wicked seem to prosper and the righteous are made to suffer. That seems to be the intent of Malachi in this passage (Malachi 3:13-14).

(Malachi 3:13-14) “Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee? (14) 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?”

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Yet, because “*he hateth putting away*,” because he is longsuffering to usward, not

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willing that any of his elect should perish, because “*he delighteth in mercy,*” the Lord God” stands fast by his purpose and says...

(Malachi 3:1) “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.”

With those words, our blessed Savior assured his ancient people that he would indeed come, the woman’s promised Seed, Abraham’s Seed, David’s Son, the Shepherd of Israel would come at the time appointed, to redeem and save his people in fulfillment of his blessed covenant agreements as our Surety.

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“Behold, I will send my messenger; and he shall prepare the way before me!” The Lord Jesus said by his servant Isaiah, *“Behold me! Behold me!”* (65:1). Here, as he concludes the writings of the prophets, he speaks as one who is at the very door; and promises to send one more prophet to prepare his way before him. Of course, these opening words of Malachi 3 refer to John the Baptist and the ministry to which he was appointed by the Lord (Mark 1:1-8). — **When the Lord God is about to come in grace**, he always sends his messenger (a gospel preacher) to prepare the way before him. — **Blessed are those people** to whom the God of Glory sends such a messenger!

(Mark 1:1-8) “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
(2) As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before

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thee. (3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (4) John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (5) And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. (6) And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; (7) And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. (8) I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”

THE LORD YOU SEEK

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Now, look at verse one again, and notice how the Lord Jesus is described. The question was raised in the previous verse, “*Where is the God of judgment?*” Here, the answer is given, — “**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.**” Six things are stated here about the One God promised to send, our blessed Savior.

1. He is “**the Lord.**”

The word Lord (Adonai) here speaks of the sovereignty of God our Savior. Christ did not come to be made Lord. He came as Lord! — This name of our God, “Adonai” means “the Cause” or “the Support.” What a suitable name for our blessed Savior! He is the original cause of all things (Romans 11:36). He supports and maintains all things (Hebrews 1:3); and he upholds his saints with

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the right hand of his righteousness (Isaiah 41:10).

2. Then, Malachi refers to the Lord Jesus as,
“The Lord, whom ye seek.”

Obviously, this is not a denial of man’s utter depravity, somehow suggesting that fallen man seeks the Lord. Here the prophet declares that at the time Christ came, at the time the Messiah appeared, his people were expecting him to appear. **Anyone could add up the weeks of years spoken of by Daniel the prophet** and, looking at the prophecies of the Old Testament, comparing Scripture with Scripture, understand that Messiah must appear when he did.

- Simeon was waiting for the Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:21-35).
- Anna came into the Temple by the Spirit of God, because she was expecting the Lord

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Jesus to appear there; and he did (Luke 2:36-38).

- Even the Pharisees were fully convinced that the time in which they lived was the time appointed for Messiah to come. — They thought John the Baptist was the Christ.

But it is a mistake to interpret the prophet's words only in a historical way. **Malachi's word is God's Word to you and me today,** God's Word to chosen sinners in every age and in every place. When the Lord Jesus comes to you in the mighty saving operations of his grace, he will appear suddenly as the very One you are seeking and must have (Isaiah 25:9).

(Isaiah 25:9) “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the

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LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

3. Third, Malachi declares, “*The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.*”
- What an assertion this is of his eternal Godhead. — God’s Temple is here called “*his Temple.*”
 - When the Lord Jesus appeared in the Temple, he demonstrated that it was his, by making a scourge of cords, and driving out the buyers and sellers from his house of prayer (John 2:14-17).
 - And when the Son of God comes into the hearts of his redeemed in saving mercy, he comes suddenly into his temple. — “*Ye are the temple of God!*”
4. Our blessed Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is both God of the Covenant and “**the Messenger of the Covenant.**”

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Christ is the Angel of the Covenant, the One who fulfilled the covenant, the One who reveals the covenant, and the One who pleads the covenant as our Advocate, Surety and Great High Priest (Jude 9; Zechariah 3; 1 John 2:1-2). — Christ is the Covenant (Isaiah 49:8).

5. Fifth, Malachi says, concerning this blessed Savior, he is the Lord, even the Messenger of the Covenant, “**whom ye delight in.**” — Blessed be his name, all to whom the Lord Jesus comes in saving mercy delight in him. — “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice!*”
6. Sixth, all of this was spoken of as a matter of absolute certainty, so much so that the Triune Jehovah penned his name to it all! — “**Behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts!**”

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NONE CAN STAND

Now, look at verses 2-5, remembering what we have already seen. These verses may, I am sure, have some reference to our Lord Jesus coming in the judgment at the last day; but here the Spirit of God is telling us about grace, God's free, unconditional, irresistible, indestructible saving grace. Because "*he hateth putting away,*" at the appointed time of love, the Lord Jesus will come to every chosen redeemed sinner; and (Blessed be his name forever!) before him none can stand! — "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power!*"

(Malachi 3:2-5) "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: (3) And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier

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of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. (4) Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. (5) And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.”

When Christ comes to you in the mighty, omnipotent, saving operations of his grace...

- He will cause you to fall before him (Psalm 51).

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- He will come near to judgment with you, chasten you sore, to refine his silver and his gold with fire, “*to purify the sons of Levi,*” that we “*may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness*” (Hebrews 12:5-11).
- Fuller’s soap was made from an herb. Using this very strong soap, the fuller would cleanse wool cloth, removing the spots from it, before the wool was used to make a garment. — That is the work of God our Savior in Redemption and Regeneration.
- Then, only then, can Judah and Jerusalem, the sons of Jacob, who profaned him so treacherously (Malachi 2:11), “*be (consciously) pleasant unto the Lord, as in days of old, and as in former years.*” — “*Accepted in the Beloved.*”
- In that blessed day, our God and Savior takes away the vile idolatry with which fallen man is plagued, and the corrupt ways

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of the idolater (Hosea 2:17; Zechariah 13:1-2).

(Hosea 2:17) “For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.”

(Zechariah 13:1-2) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. (2) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”

SALVATION SURE

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Now, hear the Word of our God in verse 6, and rejoice my brothers and sisters! Because our God changes not, “*he hateth putting away;*” and because “*he hateth putting away*” the everlasting salvation of his chosen is a matter of absolute certainty!

(Malachi 3:6) “For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Children of God, midst the perpetual fluctuating, dying, and perishing circumstances of our lives, and all things around us, what a grand foundation this is to our souls! For time and eternity, my soul, rest upon this Rock! God my God, our great Savior is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. He changes not!

- He is unchangeable in his nature.
- He is unchangeable in his purposes.
- He is unchangeable in all his covenant

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promises.

- He is unchangeable forever!

This and this alone is the cause and reason,
why the seed of Jacob are not consumed.

Amen!