

**THE LORD WHOM YE SEEK
SHALL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS TEMPLE**

**July 31, 2016
Malachi 2:10-3:6**

“Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?
for he is like a refiner's fire.” Malachi 3:2

The people of Israel who returned from captivity, settling in their native land, had forgotten God. He created them, chose them for special treatment, gave them the land of their enemies and had now delivered them from captivity. But they were mindless of His love, by which He chose their forefather Jacob for unique favor.

They ignored His command to bring an unblemished sacrifice, bringing the sick, blind and lame from their flocks and herds. They overlooked His command not to intermarry with the heathen nations surrounding them. They violated the sanctity of holy wedlock, divorcing their wives in order to marry the heathen. They robbed God by refusing to tithe.

Yet they maintained their hollow exhibition of religion, offering polluted sacrifices, and weeping over the altar of sacrifice. They complained sanctimoniously against God, scorning that He blessed wicked men, thus deeming them to be good. They complained “Where is the God of judgment?” (2:17). Malachi denounced their complaint with this response (3:3-6).

1. The coming of the “Lord whom ye seek” (i.e., the coming of Christ) will be preceded by a forerunner who will prepare the way. This was a prophecy regarding John the Baptist, who was sent before Christ to prepare the way for His coming (Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:3, 11:10; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 1:76, 3:4, 7:26-27, John 1:23). Malachi repeats this prophecy in 4:5: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (see Luke 1:17; Matthew 17:10-13). Malachi wrote of one coming of Christ, but we know from the New Testament that there are two appearances of Christ. Malachi’s message encompasses both.

2. Christ will come “suddenly,” meaning, unexpectedly (3:1). This implies that He will be undetected, which was the case when Christ was born in Bethlehem, as He grew in Nazareth, and when He was crucified. His own people did not recognize Him (John 1:12). And, His second coming, foretold in the New Testament, will be unexpected. “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matthew 25:13).

3. His coming was not what was expected by those who were clamoring for it. Rather, He judged their works, and found them deficient. He came to purify the “sons of Levi,” (i.e., the priests), and the people whom they represented (3:3-4). He came to “his temple” (3:1), which they defiled by unholy offerings. He came to purify it and the priesthood (see John 2:13-17; Matthew 21:12-13).

4. He will come to judge (Malachi 3:5-6). That judgment will indict sinners and their sinful ways. His first coming resulted in strong denunciation of Israel’s ruling religious class, excoriating hypocrisy, pride, greed and self-righteousness. He warned the most religious regarding the danger of hell. So, His second coming will be unto judgment, and everyone who lives in sin is appropriately (and mercifully) warned to flee from the wrath to come.

