

Return to a Just God

Key Verse:
“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
—Matthew 7:12

Selected Scriptures:
Malachi 3:1-10;
Matthew 7:12

Jehovah’s mouthpiece, Malachi also foretold future aspects of God’s plan. “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. 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: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier 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.”—Mal. 3:1-3

The foregoing words had an early and partial fulfillment

MUCH OF WHAT THE Prophet Malachi records is a delineation of Israel’s continued wickedness following a return from Babylonian captivity. The priests in particular failed to reverence God by making blemished offerings and were warned to repent. Additionally, they neglected divine ordinances, divorcing their wives as they aged, and then marrying younger heathen women.—chaps. 1,2

In addition to reproving Israel for her waywardness as

in the ministry of John the Baptist, who exhorted the Jews to repent and prepare to receive Christ as their Messiah at his First Advent. The broader application of this prophecy pertains to the work of the Gospel Age footstep followers of Jesus. Their commission has been to preach among all nations the good tidings relative to the presence of Christ, who will reign over the entire human family in power and glory. This will result in a period of righteous judgment being executed.—Acts 17:31

The Scriptures have much to say regarding justice and judgment. As believers who are rightly exercised by the Holy Spirit and the principles of righteousness, we are not to be undiscerning Christians concerning the conduct of others. Consecrated believers have the responsibility for judging serious sins and taking appropriate action. (I Cor. 5:9-13) On the other hand, Jesus cautioned against the tendency to see a small fault in others, while hypocritically ignoring our own deficiencies which may be of much greater magnitude.—Matt. 7:1-6

Our Key Verse sets forth a minimal standard of justice by treating others in the same manner that we would desire for ourselves. How sad it is that in this present evil world, even this basic measure of respect for one's fellow man has been lost sight of to a considerable extent.

Those who are devoted to God and followers of Christ, however, will go beyond the "Golden Rule" and imitate our Lord's standard of discipleship as it pertains to love. This would mean that we should be in such harmony with the divine plan for man's salvation that we will desire to spend our time, talents, and energies in encouraging our brethren in their spiritual endeavors, while at the same time, as opportunity presents itself, proclaiming God's kingdom as the panacea for all evil and unrighteousness. May we all exhibit this spirit in sincerity and truth.—John 13:34,35; Gal.6:10 ■