

Oracle 4: God's Justice Delivered (Part 1)

Malachi 2:17-3:5

January 17th, 2021

1. Claim: You have wearied the Lord with your words (2:17a)

a. If God cannot grow tired, how should we understand a claim like this?

- i. **Isa. 40:28** ²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.
- ii. **Isa. 1:14** ¹⁴ "I hate your new moon *festivals* and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing *them*."
- iii. **Isa. 43:24** "You have bought Me not sweet cane with money, Nor have you filled Me with the fat of your sacrifices; Rather you have burdened Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities."
- iv. His "weariness" is not a statement about energy or exhaustion but about his emotions.

b. A core attribute of God is His immutability.

i. What does God's immutability mean?

1. God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and He acts and feels differently in response to different situations.
2. **Psalm 102:25-27** ²⁵ "Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. ²⁶ "Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. ²⁷ "But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end."
3. Malachi 3:6
4. **God does act and feel differently in different situations.**

- a. Walt Kaiser, "God is not a frozen automaton who cannot respond to persons, he is a living person who can and does react to others as much, and more genuinely, than we do to each other."
- b. *Bible Doctrine*, MacArthur and Mayhue – "Immutability does not mean that God is static or inert, nor does it mean that he does not act distinctly in time or possess true affections. God is impassible – not in the sense that he is devoid of true feeling or has no affections but in the sense that his emotions are active and deliberate expressions of his holy dispositions, not (as is often the case with human emotions) involuntary passions by which he is driven."
- c. i.e. "grieve the Holy Spirit" Eph. 4:30
- d. God becomes grieved and "sorry" about the sinful course of people, but it does not mean He made the wrong decision or wants a "do over."
 - i. Like a father who decides to let the rebellious actions of an 18 year old run its course, knowing it will hurt the child and the parent in the short run, because it will be for the long term good.

5. Why should it matter to me that God is unchanging but not emotionless?

- a. We can trust God.

- i. He will do what He has said He will do.
- ii. We can depend on God.
- iii. We can know where we stand with Him.
- b. We can have a relationship with God.
 - i. He isn't stale, static, distant, and made of stone.
 - ii. He cares, loves, listens, responds

2. Question: How have we **wearied** Him? (2:17b)

3. Explanation: Distorting evil, good, and **justice** (2:17-3:5)

a. "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord"

i. Could be a distortion of good and evil or another way of wording "where is the God of justice?"

ii. Why do we have tend to invert good and evil? How do we see that today?

1. Isa. 5:20²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

b. What is behind an accusatory question like "where is the God of justice?" What assumptions are being made?

c. Many Biblical authors struggled with the apparent prosperity of the wicked

i. **Job 21:7**⁷ "Why do the wicked *still* live, Continue on, also become very powerful?"

ii. **Ecc. 8:14**¹⁴ There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

iii. **Jer. 12:1** Righteous are You, O LORD, that I would plead *my* case with You; Indeed I would discuss matters of justice with You: Why has the way of the wicked prospered? *Why* are all those who deal in treachery at ease?

d. How can we avoid making the same assumptions when we see justice delayed?

i. Psalm 73

ii. 2 Pet. 3:8-9⁸ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

iii.