

In today's first reading we hear from the book of Malachi. Malachi was written about 500 years before the birth of Christ. The people of Judah had returned from the exile in Babylon and rebuilt the Temple that had been destroyed. We would think that after being exiled to a foreign country because of false worship and injustice, they would say, "Alright, we're going to do things right this time. We don't want that to happen again."

Unfortunately, it does not seem that they did. The prophet Malachi has what is a fictional dialogue with the Lord to present the current situation.

We learn that the people were offering defective animals at the temple, whereas they were supposed to be offering perfect, unblemished sacrifices. Additionally, there were societal injustices in that some were taking economic advantage of foreigners, widows, and orphans – basically the weak members of society.

Malachi complains to the Lord about these injustices. Why, he asks, do you allow this to happen? God responds that He will take action. Those who fear the Lord and trust in His name (i.e., the righteous) will have their names recorded in the Book of Life. On the Day of Judgment, like the sun they will arise and shine forth for all to see.

The wicked, on the other hand, will be consumed on the Day of Judgment. They will be punished by fire root down to the root. In other words, Malachi foretells that on day the current injustices will be remedied.

The evangelists, for their part, see one of the prophecies in light of John the Baptist. In the third chapter, Malachi says, "*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*" (Mal. 3:1). He is the figure like Elijah who was expected to return before the Messiah and who will begin restoring the tribes of Israel.

Like Malachi, we also see many injustices today that frustrate us just as they did with the prophet. However, by remaining true to God, His Word, and the Church, we can trust that God will bring about justice. As Christians, of course, we believe that it is not God in the abstract who will do this, but Christ, the just judge. He sees and knows all, and therefore He alone is capable of judging with true justice.