

Malachi 4

The Day is Coming

Image Church // Exposing the Heart: wk. 4

Introduction

If you have your bibles, grab them and turn to the book of Malachi... We're going to be in **chapter 4**...

We're in our last week walking through the book of **Malachi**, which is the last book of the **OT**... God's last recorded words to the people of Israel... Then there would be about **400** years and then Jesus would come...

And what we've watched God do, is **expose the hearts of Israel**...

Summary:

- God says: I've loved you...I chose you when I didn't have to...
- Leftovers... In your participation in worship
- Drifted... Not where you started: intermarried/divorcing
- Giving... Money reflects where your heart is...
- Serving God... you think it's pointless, that God doesn't care...

Then for the first time in Malachi, we saw a **remnant of Israel** that sees God for who He is, and who has surrendered to Him and committed to serving Him...

- For them it wasn't about what they could get from God, it was about who God was...
- They saw the love of God... They saw God's mercy in the midst of the rebellion...

And God takes notice of this and He listens to them, and He responds to them declaring **that they will be His**, and **He will have compassion on them**...

- **BTW:** This culminates in Christ, but continues through Christ in the end...

And what we see in God's response is an affirmation of what He's been after from the jump with Israel, and that is: **He's been after their hearts**...

- For them to see God for who He is, and to live in light of that, surrendering their lives to Him...

And here's the thing God's desire for Israel is God's desire for us... He wants our hearts...

See, through Israel, **our hearts are exposed**, and yet what we also see in the midst of this is **God's faithful love toward wicked and rebellious people**...

Now, here's how **Malachi's** going to finish, He's going to point to the coming of a final day where God's going to bring an end to all that's wicked...

- There's a huge warning tied to this... And we'll see that...
- But really his day is a day that *can and should* bring us great hope...
 - That's what **Malachi** is going to leave us with, and what I want to leave you with today...

So we want today to be about **preparation**...

- You have a big game: you prepare...
- You have a big pitch at work: you prepare...
- You have a big test: you prepare...
- You got kids in school, every night before you prepare...
- Someone even mentions the word snow: and we prepare- can't find milk or eggs anywhere... *Can't figure out why those 2 things?!?*

We have a big day coming: Jesus is going to return: **The day of the Lord calls us to repentance and anticipation in hope.**

I want to pick up in **verse 18**, where God draws a *distinction* between those whose **hearts** are set on Him and those whose *aren't*

18 So you will again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who **serves** God and one who does not **serve** him.

Now, keep in mind, all of this is in the vein of what Isreal said earlier in 3:14-15... That **servicing** God had no effect, and **sinning against God** has no effect, God doesn't care, He's absent and unresponsive...

- We've all been there...

What God's showing them is **that's not true**, and He addresses their concern directly here... Saying that **He will act**, and when He does it will be abundantly clear...

Jesus drives home this same reality... In **Matthew 24**... Jesus' disciples asked what will the end be like...

Jesus answers their question very directly as He walks through a bunch of things that are going to happen... But then He tells them **no one will know the day or hour of His return**...

- *Joke: so for those that think you know- you're wrong*...

And then at the end of Chapter 24, Jesus *pulls a Jesus* and turns the conversation from what will happen in the future, **to how they're living now**... Which leads us into **Chapter 25** where He tells 3 parables right in a row...

The first one is about 10 Virgins- *it's not what you think*

- The point of it is this, don't miss the party... Right now, because of the blood of Jesus, there is an open invitation to the Party— which happens at His return—but after Jesus returns the invitation to the party is no longer an open invitation it is closed...

The second parable is the parable of the Talents- it's about the stewardship of your life... And how you live is a reflection of where your heart is...

The third one is about the Sheep and the Goats:

- This parable is a "*word picture*" of the final Judgement where Jesus will separate those who **have** truly trusted in Him and those who **haven't**.
- And that those who **have** trusted in Jesus, respond by loving "*the least of these*", It's evidence of heart position because what breaks Jesus' heart also should break the heart of those that follow Him...
- There's a separation of those who truly believed, and those who haven't...

All 3 of these parables are essentially pointing to **one question**: Are you ready for the return of Jesus when there will be a sifting and separation of those who truly believe and those who don't?...

Both Malachi and Jesus are pointing toward the same thing...

That there is coming a day when God will decisively act... And though it may seem like God doesn't care what happens now, it will one day become abundantly clear that he does very much care...

The question is will you be ready when He does??

Here's the irony- the majority of Isreal isn't ready for this day... God's made it clear in **Malachi** that He doesn't have their hearts...

We would see this pattern continue in the **NT**, Jesus would confront them over and over again, and then in **Matthew 23** He would come *no-hold-bars* as He pointed to the gap in their heart...

- The problem was still the same, it was about their gain and not God's glory!

So my question for you is where is your heart? Has it been refined by Jesus or is it hardened by sin?

And the thing I don't want you to miss is that what seems to be implied here is that when your heart is refined by Jesus when you see God for who He is and what He's done, **then it compels you to service...**

- To live a life in service to the God who's extended you grace that you didn't deserve...

IOW: **There's a difference in "believing that" and "believing in."**

- One is I believe that there's a God...
- The other is I believe in God...
- And a distinguishing mark is your response in the way that you live...

Example: Bungee jumping...

- Believe **that** it can hold you... Believe **in** it to hold you and strap it on...

When you believe in God for who He is and what He's done for you in Christ, you step into the life he's called you to live...

The difference in which side you will be on is based on the reality of whether or not you believe **that** or believe **in**... And that belief in Jesus changes everything...

Family listen, there's going to come a day when God will decisively act, and when He does it will be abundantly clear those that are His and those that are not based off who truly believes...

Look at **Chapter 4** verse 1... God gets even more specific on how evident His actions will be... Here's what it will look like...

Malachi 4

1 "For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble.

The coming day will consume them," says the Lord of Armies, "not leaving them root or branches.

God says when I act it will be like a burning furnace burning away the wicked... **This is the ultimate and final refining that will take place, this is the final purification, the ultimate separation, and the final judgment that Jesus will bring when He returns...**

I know that it's unpopular to talk about God's coming judgment and it's even got a bad wrap...

- Pit preachers at UNC...
- Heaven's gates hell's flames...

All of those are fear-based tactics...

- Where your belief is anchored in **fear** and not **love**...

Romans 2:4 The Kindness of God leads us to repentance...

I want you to see the Kindness through God's judgment...

Because God is perfect and holy, He has to execute perfect justice, meaning, that there must be punishment for transgressions... He cannot leave sin unpunished...

- The beauty is that God takes it on Himself... **Jesus would be judged in your place so that justice could be served...**
- That's kindness...

This is where **Malachi** is going to lead us... He's going to do something unique for an **OT** Propet... He Brings to light a positive reality...

- **Why?!?** Because this is an escapable judgment that has an incredible reality...

Malachi is going to point to a new era, one that Jesus brings where there is healing and renewal, where all that is broken is made new!

Look at verse 2: **But for you who fear my name,** the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out

and playfully jump like calves from the stall. **3** You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing," says the Lord of Armies.

The application here, be a cow... And all my CFA people said Amen!

We get a beautiful **metaphor here...** Of what the return of **Jesus the divine messenger of the covenant** (Malachi 3:1) will be like for those who fear the name of the Lord...

- **IOW:** For those who see God for who He is and trusts Him and His promises that have been revealed in Jesus...

That when Jesus comes, it will be like a sun rising...

- **BTW:** for the wicked, those who don't fear His name (Malachi 3:5), it will burn like a furnace, eliminating all of the impurities, all of the wickedness...

But for those who fear the Lord- who trust in Him, it will be an incredible thing, it will be like a sunrise coming over the horizon, beautiful and magnificent, warm, comforting and peaceful...

Radiating light like **wings that bring healing...**

- And that healing is restoration, peace, comfort, and rescue from misery...

What an amazing picture...

- I don't know about you but I long for that... I'm desperate for that...
- In a world that's so broken, with so much brokenness, with so much evil, hurt, and pain... I long to see this...

Malachi is saying that when Jesus returns, He will **grant** righteousness to His faithful people who've trusted and believed in God's promise that's been revealed in Jesus...

Righteousness is not something that you earn but something that's been granted to you...

The imputed righteousness of Christ... *Flesh out...*

And when Christ's righteousness is imputed in you it changes everything...

*And ultimately brings you to a place where you long for this day... Where you're waiting for this day, **the culmination of His righteousness that's been given to you!**

- **You can endure His righteousness because you have been given His righteousness!**

And when it happens, I love this the text says that you will **playfully jump like a calf from the stall!**

- **Literally bull calves of fattening, well-fed fattened calves...**
 - *Intentionally cultivated by the farmer, the most pristine, perfectly refined...*

That's what you will be like as you leap playfully with joy on the day that Jesus returns! What an incredible day it will be for those that are in Christ!

***Do you want to experience this?!?** Do want to experience the beauty of Christ's righteousness, do you want healing?!?!

- Surrender! Appeal to non-christian...

No, here's the final words in **Malachi** as this prophetic book comes to a close, that would be the last chapter of the **OT... Pay attention, verse 4:**

4 "Remember the instruction of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. **5** Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. **6** And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse."

BTW: Moses and Elijah are both at transfiguration with Jesus in **Matthew 17**...

God says: Remember the instructions of Moses at Horeb... **Horeb** means wilderness or wasteland, it's an alternate name for **Mount Sinai**... This was where Moses gave the 10 commandments...

He's saying remember back to that day- *I had just brought you out of Egypt- I walked you through the Red sea, I destroyed Pharaoh's army...*

- *I came down on **Mt. Sinai** and showed my holiness and my love... I taught you how to live for your good and my glory... I made a covenant with you there, and you made a covenant with me...*

What God's doing here is **calling them back**... This is a call for a renewal of obedience to the covenant... A renewal of trust and surrender...

All of Israel had committed themselves to God at Mount Horeb... God's calling for them to once again commit to Him...

Deu: 6:4-5 **4** Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Then God says: Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah...

Who is this?!?

Luke 1:17 *And he [John the Baptist] will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children...*

- Jesus affirms this in **Matthew 11:13**

John the Baptist is the first fulfillment of this... I don't have time to get into this but in the same way that Jesus coming is fulfilled in two

parts, when He came and died and when He comes to restore all things, the explanation of Elijah will be fulfilled in two parts...

- Through **John the Baptist**
 - And then in Revelation you will see Elijah come up again...
- But what God says here is that He's going to send a messenger, **John the baptist** **before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes**...

Here's the point that I want you to see...

*God precedes the wrath of judgment with the call of mercy...*¹

The coming of God's judgment is always preceded by a call of God's mercy in the midst of a coming judgment...

John was a messenger that prepared the way of Jesus by calling people to repentance, giving them a chance to hear and see what was about to happen next...

He would be the one who declared Jesus to be the Messiah, **the promised deliverer who has come**...

John the Baptist pointed to Jesus... **who is the manifestation of God's mercy before God's coming judgment**....

- Jesus would perform the greatest act of mercy, **mercy is not getting what you deserve**... Jesus would take on what you deserved...

And in **verse 6** God finishes by... Promising restoration prior to His curse and judgment...

- This promised restoration is ultimately fulfilled through the coming of Christ... So...
- If you are here, and you believe in Christ, you will not be cursed because God is faithful to his covenant to bring restoration to his people

¹ John Piper, *He will turn the hearts of fathers to the children. Other thoughts surrounding John the Baptist gathered from Him as well.*

Summary:

- Day of the Lord is coming...
 - It will either be like **refining fire or consuming fire...**
- For those that are in Christ, God will restore all things!

The final call is to remember the instruction of Moses...

- Our call in light of the coming of Christ is to look at Christ...
- And in the same way, they were called to renew their covenant... **We want to renew ours...**
 - We want to examine our hearts...

Conclusion [vamp]

3:10 Offering: **Here's the question: What are you committing to the Lord?**

- Salvation: Your life...
- Worship
- Commitment
- Money
- Time
- Talent
- Treasure
- Devotion
- Trust

Space to fill out card...

When I say Amen, you step out and come...

Stand...

PRAY

You come... As we sing!

Research:

Commentary overview of this section:

the Old Testament prophets were inspired to include under the notion of the Day of Yahweh a number of expectations that were fulfilled at various times, such as the fall of the north and the south in 722 and 586 respectively, the restoration that began with the decree of Cyrus in 539, the first coming of Christ, his second coming, and eternal life thereafter.

What makes this passage different? What justifies the more positive imagery in verses 20 and 21? The answer is that Malachi's focus is salvifically eschatological, referring to an entirely new and grand era, not merely a time a few years, or generations, ahead of his own. Christ confirms this by his identification of the new Elijah predicted in 3:23 [4:5] as John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14), not some prophet of Malachi's day or shortly thereafter. In other words, Malachi was here inspired to emphasize the christological, "gospel" side of the doctrine of the Day of the Lord, with its aspect of the Savior's coming to his people, as opposed to the judgment side of the doctrine, with its aspect of the elimination of evildoers, a theme he has already dealt with in 3:2–5.

Commentary on v. 2-3:

The expression "the sun of righteousness with healing in its wings" (šemeš šedāqâ ûmarpe' biknāpêha) is also metaphorical. It refers to the picture of the sun rising, that is, the Day of Yahweh beginning, in a manner that brings righteousness (the result of the purification process described in v. 19) and also producing healing/well-being. The "wings" of the sun are its rays. The Egyptians depicted the sun as a disk with wings representing its rays (see ANEP, figs. 351, 531, 532,

536). The language here is consistent with Old Testament usage of "wing" to connote "edge" or "fringe" (see 2 Sam. 21:11=Ps. 18:10; Ps. 104:3; Hos. 4:19; Hag. 2:12; Zech. 8:23 et al.).²

The actual emphasis of the verse is not on the sun, which functions only as a metaphor, but on God's granting righteousness (šedāqâ) to his faithful people. The imagery is not unlike that of Psalm 37:6 ("he will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun") or Isaiah 58:8 ("then your light will break forth like the dawn and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard"). Both examples also involve direct address to people who are being promised the reception of divinely granted righteousness, just as in Malachi 3:20.

The two points are: (1) *the faithful will prevail and the wicked will be eliminated;* (2) *this will happen when the Day of Yahweh comes ("on the day when I act"). The promise to the faithful is not that they will be the agents of annihilation of the wicked. That is, "you will trample on the wicked" is not a call for the righteous to exterminate the ungodly. Rather, God will already have accomplished this by his Day, which will have burned (in the dominant metaphor of this part of the passage) the wicked to ashes, again following the logic of curse type 10, destruction by fire (Deut. 28:24; 32:22). What the righteous will tread on is the ashes of the already dead wicked, not live persons who are to be killed by trampling. The restoration blessing type alluded to here is type 9, power over enemies/aliens. The verse employs the language of eschatological divine judgment, in which the wicked are exterminated with nothing left of them (the second death of Rev. 20–21) and the righteous are rewarded forever with the joy of the Lord.*

² Douglas Stuart, "[Malachi](#)," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey, 1387-1389.

Commentary on 4:4-6

Summary of congruency with whole book and dispute 6: *In fact, the themes of these verses are entirely consistent with those of the book as a whole, as well as with the sixth disputation. For example, with regard to the description of Moses as “my servant” in verse 22, compare “servant” (‘ebed) in 1:6 and “serves” (‘ōbēd) in 3:18. And, of course, the need to keep the “law” (tôrâ) in verse 22 is already the subject of 2:6–9. The prediction “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet” (hinnēh ‘ānōkî šōlēaḥ lākem ‘ēt ‘ēlīyâ hannābi’) in verse 23 is remarkably similar to the promise of 3:1, “Behold I am going to send my messenger” (hinnî šōlēaḥ mal’āki). The concept of the Day of Yahweh in verse 23 is well reflected in the book already in 3:2 and 19–21 [4:1–3]. The emphasis on its “coming” (bō’) here and in verse 24 [4:6] is already known from verse 19 (see also 3:1–2). The theme of parents and children in verse 24 is parallel to that in 1:6, and the theme of honoring the ways of parents to the language of 2:10. The risk of a curse (verse 24) echoes 1:5, 14; 2:2; and 3:8–12. Linguistically and theologically, 3:22–24 [4:4–6] is part and parcel of Malachi’s prophecies.*

Verse: 4

Everything that the people and priests had been doing that displeased God and that was the subject of Malachi’s excoriations earlier in the book could be summed up as refusal to honor the Mosaic covenant

The call of verse 22 [4:4] is for renewal of obedience to the covenant of God. Three synonyms are used to refer to the covenant. The first is “law” (tôrâ). It is to be “remembered” (i.e., obeyed—the problem was not that it had been lost to memory, but ignored) and thus the verb “remember” (zkr) is employed here in one of its usual meanings, “to heed, pay attention to, be mindful of.”

The second and third are “statutes” (ḥuqqîm) and “commandments” (mišpāṭîm). The repetition of these terms is a

means of underscoring the task at hand; there is no particular distinction among them in the context.

All Israel had agreed to obey the law at Mount Horeb. All Israel—not just some of Malachi’s audience—needed to agree to obey it once again. That is the message Malachi has been preaching all along, and it is what he now once again reiterates as the sum of his message and the conclusion of his sixth disputation.

Matthew 11:13-15 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. **14** And if you’re willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come. **15** Let anyone who has ears listen.

- Metaphorical... Pointing to John the Baptist... He is the new Elijah...

Matthew 17:3-5 Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. **4** Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it’s good for us to be here. If you want, I will set up three shelters here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him!”

As for salvation, this is what the closing clause (“lest when I come I strike the earth with destruction”) addresses. The clause provides a clear warning of destruction (a combination of curse type 24, death/destruction, with curse type 9c, desolation of the land; see Lev. 26:32, “I will lay waste the land” and Lev. 26:33, “Your land will be laid waste”; see also Lev. 26:34–35, 43; Deut. 28:51; 29:22 [23]) But because this warning is about a covenant punishment that is escapable (“lest when I come I strike”) it also represents an invitation to salvation. The coming of God to his people is what produces the events associated with the Day of Yahweh, a day that brings salvation to his allies and defeat to his foes.

The central question before Malachi's audience, and still before the modern reader of these last words of the book, is posed by Christ in Luke 18:8: "However, when the son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" If he finds faith (the hearts of old and young alike converted to God), there will be no need for destruction. If he does not, destruction will be the inevitable consequence. But which coming of Christ was Malachi's prediction of the new Elijah intended to presage—the first or the second? The answer is both. The New Testament clearly views both comings as the Day of Yahweh, since they both bring about the combination of salvation and judgment that the concept of the Day entails (on the Day as the first coming, see Luke 1:78; 4:21; John 8:56; Acts 2:20; on the Day as the second coming, 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10).

Thus John the Baptist's work as the predicted Elijah heralded both comings of the Lord, and his message (repent for the kingdom of God is near) is just as applicable today, prior to the second coming of the Lord, as it was in the first century, prior to the first coming of the Lord. Malachi 3:24 [4:6] speaks of a basic reality that still should arouse and inspire the hearts of believers everywhere.³

³ Douglas Stuart, "[Malachi](#)," in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 1391-1396.