

The Day of the Lord, Part Two – Malachi 4:1-3

I. Introduction:

- A. I don't remember which year it was, but I do remember the season: it was early Autumn.
1. Our brethren in Colorado were organizing as a church, and I was invited to participate. Steve and Kathy Kjeldgaard accompanied Judy and me.
 2. Sunday evening, after the organizational meeting, we jumped into the car and drove north up highway 287.
 3. Soon it was dark, but that was okay because there isn't much to see along I-80 in southern Wyoming.
 4. Then just before the border with Utah, in the black of night, we turned and headed north up U.S. 191.
 5. We arrived in Jackson Hole sometime in the middle of the night and started looking for a café for some coffee, but Jackson is a small town and the summer season was over, so we had to wait a couple hours.
 6. We spent some of that time at the city park in the middle of town, where the local sheriff came by to see what destruction four middle-aged delinquents were causing.
 7. After some breakfast, as the eastern sky began to lighten we again drove north toward Yellowstone National Park.
 8. Then a few minutes after leaving Jackson Hole, when we were east of some of the most spectacular mountains in America – the Tetons – the sun made it's appearance to our left.
 9. It was awe inspiring and absolutely unforgettable to watch those majestic peaks turn from dark grey to pink and then to rose red, as the sun flowed down their eastern face.
- B. I wish that I had the tongue of a ready writer so that I could describe that sunrise.
1. I **also** wish that I could embellish the image which **Malachi** gives to us here in **verse 2**.
 2. In some ways, I think those two sunrises are, or will be, similar.
 3. *"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."*
- C. In order to study this scripture, we'll proceed in the much the same way we did this morning.
1. Let's simply break the verse apart and expose all the colors which it contains.

II. **"But unto you THAT FEAR MY NAME shall the Sun of Righteousness arise."**

- A. This is a scripture which has been often preached, although never by me until today.
1. I have seen that some of those other messages have tried to use these words to preach the gospel.
 2. I don't condemn those preachers for doing so, but I hope they pointed out that this is not about the incarnation of Christ or His sacrifice on the cross.
 3. If the true background is explained, then I don't mind how this verse is used evangelically.
 4. But it needs to be understood: this is talking about the far end of the Day of the Lord, not near end.
 5. And it goes without saying that *"to fear the name of the Lord"* doesn't produce salvation.
- B. Look at the conjunction with which it begins.
1. *"BUT unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise."*
 2. This **verse** is the **reverse** side of **verse 1**.
 3. This verse stands opposite to the judgment which will fall on the proud and the wicked during the tribulation and at the Great White Throne of the Lord.
 4. You might say, this is speaking about that which will follow after the Bema judgment of the saved.
- C. I believe that the Bible teaches and all of those whom the Lord has saved shall stand before Him to be judged.
1. *"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to all that he that done, whether it be good or bad."*
 2. This will not be a judgment in regard to salvation, but about rewards for service.
 3. We notice that this is an Old Testament verse, and so we aren't surprised to find it expressed in Old Testament verbiage.
 4. The recipients of these blessings aren't described as *"saved"* people, or *"Christians"* or *"disciples."*
 5. These are people who *"fear the Lord;"* they *"fear the one who bears the name of the Lord."*

- D. I hope we have gone over this often enough that you know what that phrase means?
1. Those who fear the Lord do so as loving children, anxious to please and to serve their heavenly Father.
 2. They aren't in terror of the terrible God.
 3. **Psalm 33:8** defines the phrase for us, *"Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."*
 4. But obviously, not all the world is willing to *"stand in awe"* or to worship and serve and love God as they should. And that is the crux of **Malachi's** prophecy.
 5. God's people express this sacred fear, because they have been redeemed; they have new hearts.
- E. Moses once said, *"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes..."* God's saints really do these things.
1. David said in **Psalm 22**: *"Ye that fear the LORD praise him,"* and that is what they do.
 2. Those who fear the Lord, love to praise and worship Him.
 3. And His promises and prophesies of the Son's sunrise, just intensify that worship.
- F. This is an extremely important subject; one which we all need to understand and embrace.
1. Because to properly fear the Lord means *"unto you shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."*
 2. Without that kind of fear, you shall face the oven of God's judgment where you as stubble will be burned up
 3. Do **YOU** fear the Lord thy God?
 4. Like faith and repentance, this kind of fear is a gift from God, and it comes with regeneration.
 5. It is not natural to our depraved flesh.

III. **"Unto you that fear my name shall THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARISE."**

- A. I've been asking myself, **Why** did Malachi describe the Son of God as the *"Sun of righteousness?"*
1. Of course, I know it was the will of the Holy Spirit.
 2. *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God (like Malachi) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*
 3. But still, the Lord used the hearts and minds of His servants, making the language of **Malachi** different from the style of **Isaiah** and **Jeremiah**.
- B. So again, Why this image of the sun?
1. Could it to create a softer reflection of the image of **verse one**?
 2. The Being sitting on the Great White Throne, judging the wicked, *"from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away,"* is our Saviour, the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. And the Bema, where and when the saints will be judged, will be occupied by this same Jesus.
 4. The King, which will say to his angels, *"cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth..."*
 5. *"Shall (also) say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*
 6. The King of kings who will blaze down on the wicked, consuming them with fire, will also gently shine down upon those who fear His name with wonderful and glorious blessings.

IV. **"The Sun of righteousness shall arise WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS."**

- A. Isn't this the sort of language we might expect to find in the **Psalms**; in Israel's poetry?
1. This is prose and prophesy on a high and different level. We aren't used to this.
- B. To what does this reference to the Lord's wings mean? My first thought was to speed.
1. In Malachi's day, I'm not sure that he could visualize anything quicker than a bird on the wing, except maybe an arrow.

2. Certainly, no cheetah or charging lion can move more quickly than a falcon or even a dove.
3. But that doesn't explain the *"healing IN his wings."*
4. As I spent time thinking about it, I began to see that this isn't speaking of the wings of a snow white dove, an eagle, or even a mother hen.
5. This is the wings of the sun.

C. In that October morning in Wyoming, the sun came up over the relatively flat Wyoming country-side to our east, shining on all of the highest peaks at once, because there was nothing to break apart the sun's rising.

1. But most of us, at other times, have seen the sun come up from behind a ridge of mountains.
2. Sometimes it comes up in a way that its light is cut into several beams.
3. I think that is the image Malachi was trying to share.
4. When one, then two of the beams the Sun of righteousness, begin to shine on us, we'll feel the warming effect of the Lord's healing blessings.
5. For one person it may be different, or even earlier than another person, but that is only temporary.

D. Remember the background of this entire passage.

1. While the wicked were uttering their blasphemies about God, *"they that feared the Lord"* spake one to another, hopefully with words of encouragement.
2. As we see with *David* and *Job*, even God's people can wonder why the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer.
3. But when the Lord eventually *"makes up His jewels, sparing them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,"* at that point those justified jewels will be able to truly discern the difference between the righteous and the wicked and between God's treatment of each of them.
4. They will experience the warmth of the rays from the Sun of righteousness, and they shall be healed of all their doubts and disappointments.
5. *Psalm 103:1: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*
 - a. *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*
 - b. *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; WHO HEALETH ALL THY DISEASES."*

V. *"And ye shall go forth, and grow up AS CALVES OF THE STALL."*

A. Again, this is talking about the aftereffects of God's righteous judgments.

1. Whereas some have been depressed by the growth of wickedness in this world, following God's judgments God's people will be overjoyed.
2. Whereas some of God's people have been trapped in curse-riddled and age-corrupted bodies, they will be set free, leaping and prospering like a growing and pampered calf of the stall.
3. Whereas some saints have been oppressed and even persecuted, all of that will be put so far behind them they may never think of them again.
4. *II Corinthians 4:17: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*

B. And those calves of the stall will then, poetically-speaking, trample under foot the ashes of the wicked.

1. No, I don't believe we should interpret this literally; there isn't a reason to do so.
2. It just means that in that day God's people will rejoice in the just judgment of the Lord.
3. They will unhesitatingly praise the Lord.

VI. *Then God says, "I SHALL DO THIS, saith the LORD of hosts."*

A. This statement tells us two things: First, this is guaranteed.

1. The Lord will do as He has promised, and He *has* promised justice.
2. *And* He is the Lord of hosts: an army of angels, who are willing & able to carry out all the Lord's bidding.
 - a. *"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.";*

- b. And *“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*
 3. This statement reminds us that both these events are sure: the judgment of the wicked and the healing of those who *“fear the name of the Lord.”*
 4. **Isaiah 66:5:** *“Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word: your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.”*
 5. *“I **SHALL** do this, saith the LORD of hosts.”*
- B. The second thing this last statement tells us is that **HE** will do it; **WE** will not.
1. We have enough to worry about in ourselves that we shouldn’t have time to worry about the prosperity of the proud and the wicked.
 2. So what if they have more than we do? There is nothing we can do about it.
 3. And, besides, they won’t have it very long.
 4. **Isaiah 50:10:** *“Who is among that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord stand upon his God.”*
- C. We need to focus on our responsibilities under our fear of the Lord.
1. We have commands to pray without ceasing, and to rejoice ever more; things at which we aren’t very good.
 2. Rather than being envious of the wicked, we need to *“give thanks unto God in everything, for this is the will of the Lord in Christ Jesus.”*
 3. How many of the things currently in our lives quench the Holy Spirit and His blessings and ministry?
 4. There is much in us and surrounding us which at this moment are keeping us from fully enjoying our Saviour.
 5. **These** are the things we need to work on, leaving to the Lord the greater matters.
 6. Rather than worrying whether or not we are in Christ’s Bride, we need to love and serve the Bridegroom to the best of our ability, leaving the choice of that bride to the Lord.
- D. Thankfully there **IS** a day of reckoning, and we rejoice in God’s promises.
1. Everything will be corrected, rectified, made right in God’s good time.
 2. Yes, we can encourage ourselves in promises like that of **Malachi 4:2**.
 3. But even more than that, our responsibility should be to be the best saint of God, we can possibly be.