

Message #9

Malachi 4:1-6

We want to begin this final study on Malachi by refreshing our memories concerning what God's people were doing. These were people going to worship at the Temple. These were very religious people but they were not right with God. Malachi specifically points that out:

- 1) They questioned God's love. 1:2
- 2) They did not honor God as God. 1:6
- 3) They did not respect God. 1:6
- 4) They despised the name of God. 1:6
- 5) They gave God defiled offerings. 1:7-8
- 6) They could not recognize their worship meant nothing and should be shut down. 1:10
- 7) They were weary and tired of giving God worship and offerings. 1:13
- 8) They gave God blemished offerings they didn't want. 1:14
- 9) They did not reverence God. 2:5
- 10) They did not stand in awe of God. 2:5
- 11) They did not want true Biblical instruction. 2:6-7
- 12) They would not listen to or respond to true Biblical instruction. 2:8
- 13) They turned away from God's word. 2:8
- 14) They caused other people to stumble by their false instruction. 2:8
- 15) They totally corrupted the Levitical covenant. 2:8
- 16) They dealt treacherously with their Jewish brothers. 2:10-11a
- 17) They profaned God's sanctuary. 2:11
- 18) They married women who worshipped foreign deities and false gods. 2:11c-12
- 19) They emotionally went to worship and offered unacceptable offerings to God. 2:13
- 20) They divorced their Jewish wives of many years and married idolatrous women. 2:14-16
- 21) They did what was evil and said it was good. 2:17
- 22) They got involved in demonic sorcery. 3:5
- 23) They were immoral adulterers. 3:5
- 24) They were false witnesses and liars. 3:5
- 25) They oppressed employees and defrauded them of wages. 3:5
- 26) They oppressed widows. 3:5
- 27) They oppressed orphans. 3:5
- 28) They would not assist or help an alien. 3:5
- 29) They did not fear God. 3:5
- 30) They robbed God of the offerings they owed God. 3:8-10
- 31) They spoke arrogant words against God. 3:14-15
 - A. They said it was vain to serve God. 3:14a
 - B. They said there was no profit to obeying the word of God. 3:14b
 - C. They said a relationship with God was depressing and not happy. 3:14c
 - D. They said godless arrogant people are blessed by God. 3:15a
 - E. They said God builds up and supports wicked people. 3:15b
 - F. They said wicked people test God and they escape and get away with it. 3:15c

There is the list of what God's own people were like. They were going to worship services at the Temple and playing their religious game.

This religious game was being played when Jesus Christ showed up some 450 years later and the religious players leading this game were the Scribes and Pharisees and priests.

So before God and Malachi bring the O.T. to a conclusion, there is one final message and the message is **FUTURE FINAL JUDGMENT**.

Malachi ends the book and ends the O.T. by communicating this point:

A JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING IN THE FUTURE IN WHICH GOD WILL FULLY JUDGE AND FULLY DISPLAY THOSE RIGHT WITH HIM AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT, SO NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE CHANGES.

God's people, who have spiritual wits about them, better develop a fear and reverence for God and they better get serious about obeying God's word and analyzing their own hearts because future judgment is coming.

You will notice that **verse 1** says, "the day is coming." **It will be a literal day.**

It is called by **Isaiah** "the Day of the LORD" (Is. 2:12). **Joel** describes this day as the "day of the LORD" and says there has never been anything like it (Joel 2:1-2). **Amos** describes the day of the LORD as a ferocious day of darkness and gloom (Amos 5:18-24) that will specifically bring righteous judgment against the phony religious world. **Malachi** calls it here "the great and terrible day of the LORD" (Mal. 4:5).

People who think the Day of the LORD is such a wonderful party day had better take an honest look at themselves and a serious look at this day. Religious game players will pay a high price. They will pay an eternal price on that day that is coming.

Now you will notice that verse 1 begins with a conjunction "for" which connects us to Malachi 3:18. So what this means is when this Day of the LORD hits, God will make distinguishing judgments.

What we learn here about the day of the LORD is that when it occurs, God will make a judgment distinction between those who were righteous and those who were not.

There are seven final observations we want to make about this day that Malachi makes as he brings his prophecy to a conclusion:

Observation #1 - A day is coming that will burn like a furnace. **4:1a**

This is speaking of a fiery judgment. That is clearly the point. God is going to burn up sinful things and sinful people in judgment. Fire is His language, not our language.

What this fiery judgment will immediately show is who was righteous and who was not.

Observation #2 - A day is coming that will burn all arrogant and evil people. **4:1b**

God is going to burn up every arrogant and evil person. Not only will they be burned, but their roots will be burned so that there is nothing left of them on this earth anymore.

This has reference to two applications:

(Application #1) - God will literally burn them up and physically destroy them with fire.

(Application #2) - God will spiritually burn them up and eternally let them burn in fire.

We believe both applications are true to this passage. God will literally burn people up with fire like Sodom and Gomorrah and God will cast people into the eternal fires of hell.

So the first thing that Malachi presents about this day is it is a day of furnace judgment.
As S. Lewis Johnson said, God will set them ablaze and they will be burned up like chaff.

There will be no root of their arrogance or evil left in existence nor will there be any branch of arrogance or evil left. It will all be burned up.

Observation #3 - A day is coming that will be wonderful for those who fear God. **4:2-3**

There are four realities brought out about this:

(Reality #1) - The sun of righteousness will heal. **4:2a**

Now the “sun” of righteousness will actually turn out to be the “Son” of righteousness. Just as the sun can burn, so the sun can refresh and revive. The rays of light and healing will bring healing to all righteous people. God’s people will shine like the sun. They will be blessed by the “Son” (Is. 49:6-7).

(Reality #2) - The people will skip in freedom. **4:2b**

If you have ever been around a calf that gets let out of its stall or the colt of a horse, you realize what is being said here. As soon as that little animal is out of the stall, it hops and skips around and jumps in joy and freedom.

That is what the Day of the Lord will do for the faithful people of God. It will set them free and finally they will be able to be happy and joyful all over the world.

(Reality #3) - The people will trample down the wicked. **4:3a**

This, I think, literally has to do with walking over their dead bodies. In Ezekiel 39:12 we read “For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land.” The wicked people will be lying dead in the land of Israel and it will take all the people in the land seven months to bury them. They literally will be walking over and digging holes and trampling the wicked while they are burying them.

(Reality #4) - The people will trample on their ashes. **4:3b**

We take this as literal. God will literally have burned up these people, which is why we believe this has literal and eternal ramifications. Righteous people will literally be walking over the ashes of those God destroyed.

Observation #4 - A day is coming when God’s people will remember Moses’ law. **4:4**

Now God challenges His people to “remember the Law of Moses.” He identifies Moses as His servant and He specifies that they are to remember the “statutes” and “commandments” that God gave him at Horeb. He gave those things for “all Israel.”

God’s word needs to be taken very seriously, regardless of the dispensation. It was their violations of the word of God that brought them to judgment.

Observation #5 - A day is coming when God will send Elijah as a prelude to the great and terrible day of the LORD. **4:5**

Now He already did this once. In fact, in Matthew 17:2-13, both Moses and Elijah did appear at the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ. So one could legitimately say Elijah has already showed up before the great and terrible Day of the LORD.

In fact, when Peter, James, and John were coming down the mountain after seeing that, Jesus said to them, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead” (Matt. 17:9).

After Christ had risen from the dead and they did tell people about Moses and Elijah, they should have immediately realized Jesus is “the Son of Man” and He is the One who will inaugurate the Day of the LORD.

Observation #6 - A day is coming when God will restore the family. **4:6a**

When the Day of the LORD comes, there will be restoration among family members. All there will be in harmony and in fellowship with God. Parents, children, grandchildren will all be restored to a wonderful relationship with God.

Observation #7 - A day is coming when the curse will be gone. **4:6b**

When Judgments have been completed and the Day of the LORD is over, the curse will be gone and the people of Israel and the land of Israel will blossom as a rose.

This book of Malachi shows us that just because we are faithful to go to church and just because we serve and just because we give and just because we sing and just because we listen, does not mean our hearts are right with God.

God's people in Malachi did every bit of that, but look at the list of things that showed their hearts were not right.

If this book should do anything, it should cause us to ask God to keep us from ever becoming cold-hearted, hard-hearted and indifferent to His precious word.