

Malachi 4:1-6

Summer Series Malachi; August 23 & 24, 2015

The Day is Coming!

^{4:1} "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. ² But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. ³ Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things," says the Lord Almighty. ⁴ "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

"The Day is Coming..." What day am I talking about? For some the day for starting school is 1 day away. There are 21 days till the first regular season game of the Green Bay Packers. There are 96 days until "Black Friday." 125 days until Christmas. Valentine's day is 175 days away. Some of the days that lie ahead are exciting to us; some are not. But there is one BIG day ahead for all of us. It is going to be the Day of the Lord. It is the Day of Christ's return to earth. It is the final day as we know it.

We know very little about Malachi, other than he was the last prophet that God spoke through to warn his people about their sins. As we have seen through all the prophets that we have looked at this summer, they had quite a history of wickedness. God led them out of Egypt, but they complained about being in the desert. God sent them food and water in miraculous ways, but they didn't like it. God warned them not to get mixed up with Canaanite practices when they entered the Promised Land. They worshiped the false gods anyway. They were immoral. They would lie and cheat. Their leaders and priests were corrupt. Finally, God punished them by allowing the Assyrians and the Babylonians to conquer them and carry them off into captivity. That brings us to the time of Malachi, about 400 years before the birth of Jesus. God lovingly allowed the Israelites to return to their promised land. But they continued in their sin.

Now God was addressing what was soon going to happen. There was a "day" coming, and coming soon, when everything would be destroyed and every sin would be punished. This was not going to be a good day for sinners. ^{4:1} "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire." That impending disaster and destruction was to be a call to repentance – a call to turn from their evil ways and to turn back to the Lord. From the rest of Scripture we know what "day" Malachi is speaking about. This is the same day that he spoke through the prophets Joel and Amos and Micah and Zephaniah and others. That *coming day* was Judgment Day.

It is that day that God judge all the **arrogant** and **evildoers** of the world. Arrogant is thinking our life and stuff is too important than spending time with our Lord. It is when we think more highly of ourselves than we should. It is placing our needs, our wants and our ways above our Lord. Evil is the opposite of good. Evil is what we know we shouldn't do, but we do it anyway. Evil is talking about someone or gossiping about someone to hurt them. If we think that we have never been **arrogant** or an **evildoer**, we are lying. We have been arrogant. We have been evil. As Malachi says: "**ALL the arrogant and EVERY evildoer.**" There are no exceptions!

As you look at these words of Malachi, there is one little word I want you to look at. It is a short word. It is a familiar word. It is an easy word to remember. Did you figure it out, yet? It is the first word in verse 2: "**But.**" "**All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,**" says the Lord Almighty. "**Not a root or a branch will be left to them. BUT for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.**" That one little word will be one of the most important words that we will ever hear from the mouth of God.

God sees evil. He sees OUR evil. He hates every evil thought, word or action that we have. Yet, he looks at His Son, Jesus, and says that we will have "**healing in its wings.**" That "**healing**" will cause us to "**go out and leap like calves released**

from the stall.” I love that picture. I don’t think I have ever seen calves or cows leaping. I’m sure they do. God’s people are like the calves. From their perspective, they are still trapped. To the people of Malachi’s day it looks like God isn’t coming to their rescue. They were under the control of someone else. Their society is overrun by outsiders. Their economy is in question. Besides all of that, the Messiah, the Promised One, the Savior hasn’t come and there has been no sign of Him coming. So, they stand in their stalls with no way out.

But then the gates go open. They are released. Can you imagine them round around in circles and jump for joy. That will be every believer on Judgment Day. Free from sins, free from death, free from our old age, walkers, canes, and every other ache and pain we might feel. That is going to be a wonderful day. On that day, we will receive more comfort than we can even imagine.

Later today, we will focus some time on Christian Education. As I thought about that this week, I couldn’t come up with a better picture that God lays before us in the words of our text. The purpose of Christian Education, whether that is in a formal setting in school or in our homes, is to make *LEAPING COWS*. Someday, all this stuff around us will disappear. Someday, we may all disappear. Someday, we will be *leaping cows* through our faith in Jesus.

The words of our text are the last words of the Old Testament. God’s prophets will now go quiet. They will not speak again until John the Baptist comes 400 years from then to point out the Lamb of God. God’s people will have to wait for that Savior to come. He will come to rescue his people from their sins. He will pay the price from sin. Heaven is ours through that Savior.

And so, may we all look forward to THAT Day when God will make us **“go out and leap like calves released from the stall.”** Amen.