

Malachi

Chapter 4

The Day of the Lord

“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.”

4:1 *the day*. The day of the Lord (see v. 5; 3:2 and note). (CSB)

The day of the Lord (3:17; 4:3, 5), when He will come to judge the living and the dead. (TLSB)

The entire New Testament period being considered a day of sifting and of judgment, because it culminates in the Day of Judgment.

burn like a furnace. See 3:2–3; Isa 1:31; 66:15–16 and notes. (CSB)

The Lord uses images of heat, fire, and burning to portray the Day of Judgment (cf Mt 25:41; 2 Pt 3:10). (TLSB)

arrogant. See 3:15 and note – (Evildoers – those who challenge God.) (CSB)

stubble ... fire. See Isa 47:14 and John the Baptist’s prophecy about the work of Christ in Mt 3:12. (CSB)

Evildoers who seem to prosper in this life will end up like a plant’s stalk after harvest. The note from Ps 1:4 says, “Winnowing farmers harvested the grain and, on a breezy evening, would throw it into the air. Since chaff was lighter than the grain, the breeze would blow the chaff away. Accumulated chaff was burned – vivid picture of the end of a life divorced from God. (TLSB)

Not a root or a branch. Nothing of them will be left (see Eze 17:8–9). (CSB)

The fire will be so intense that nothing of the plant will remain. (TLSB)

The final, eternal destruction of the wicked being coincidental with the last Judgment. Such is the terrible fate of those who do not avail themselves of the Lord's mercy (Kretzmann)

4:2 REVERE MY NAME – Those who believe in Jehovah, the God of the covenant, and His redemption. (Kretzmann)

The Lord addresses believers directly (3:16). (TLSB)

sun of righteousness. God and his glory are compared with the sun in Isa 60:1, 19 (see notes there). Christ is the “rising sun” from heaven (see Lk 1:78–79; see also Isa 9:2 and note). (CSB)

In contrast to the burning fire of judgment, the heat of the sun warms believers with the healing message of God's righteousness in Christ (cf Is 58:8). St Bernard of Clairvaux: “Those whom He called, them also He justified. Over them a Sun arises, though not that sun which may daily be seen arising over good and bad alike, but He of whom the Prophet speaks when addressing himself to those alone who have been called to the counsel” (*SLSB*, p 151). (TLSB)

righteousness ... healing. Salvation and renewal are intended (see Isa 45:8; 46:13; 53:5; Jer 30:17 and notes). (CSB)

its wings. The sun's rays (cf. Ps 139:9). (CSB)

Wings were often a symbol of security and shelter (Ps 63:7; 91:4; Lk 13:34). The handles of royal Judean storage jars were impressed with a winged sun disk. Some archaeologists believe this represented Yahweh, the Lord, or His chariot-throne (see Ezk 10:1). The sun disk has its origin in Egypt; Israelite artists commonly borrowed Egyptian and Phoenician designs. (TLSB)

like calves released from the stall. Frisky young calves often frolic about when released from confinement. (CSB)

Those who experience salvation will be full of joy and excitement, with the same kind of energy as calves at play. (TLSB)

Our spirits feel good! They want to kick and frolic in God's sunshine forever...and they shall! Nothing can hold them back. Imagine racing up the slopes of light! The saints stream into their final pasture. The Good Shepherd has kept His word. All is well and good. (PBC)

4:3 trample ... the wicked. As one treads the winepress (see Isa 63:2–3 and notes). (CSB)

Only the ashes of the wicked remain. (TLSB)

THE LORD ALMIGHTY – All believers are happy in their faith, in the enjoyment of Jehovah’s mercy; they enjoy true liberty and will finally celebrate an eternal victory over all their enemies. The prophet therefore, in concluding his message. (Kretzmann)

4:4 *Remember the law.* A final exhortation to those who impatiently wait for the Lord’s coming. (CSB)

This is the word “Torah.” It comes from the verb meaning to teach or to instruct. Here it does not mean just the laws with do’s and don’t but also and especially the words of promise and instruction, the complete revelation of God to His people. We are saved through this revelation of God’s will. (PBC)

my servant. See Ex 14:31; Dt 34:5; Jdg 2:8; Ps 18 title; Isa 20:3; 41:8–9; 42:1 and notes. (CSB)

The priests were not faithful servants because they did not teach the Law as Moses had (2:8). (TLSB)

statutes and rules that I commanded. God commanded Moses to teach all Israel His statutes and rules (Dt 6:1). These remained valid in Malachi’s day. (TLSB)

Horeb. Mount Sinai (cf. Ex 3:1). (CSB)

4:5 See 3:1 and note. (CSB)

Elijah. As Elijah came before Elisha (whose ministry was one of judgment and redemption), so “Elijah” will be sent to prepare God’s people for the Lord’s coming. John the Baptist ministered “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Lk 1:17; see Mt 11:13–14; 17:12–13; Mk 9:11–13). And some feel that Elijah may also be one of the two witnesses in Rev 11:3. (CSB)

“My messenger” (1:1) is identified here as someone like the great prophet Elijah, who had called Israel to repentance and was taken alive to heaven (2Ki 2:1–12). John the Baptist came in the power and spirit of Elijah. Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus at His transfiguration (Mt 17:3). (TLSB)

great and dreadful day. See v. 1; 3:2 and note; Joel 2:11, 31. (CSB)

Joel 2, 31, namely, before the Lord Himself would begin His ministry, which ushered in the period of the New Testament, culminating in the Last Judgment. (Kretzmann)

4:6 *turn the hearts.* Cf. Ge 18:19; Dt 7:9–11. According to Lk 1:17 John the Baptist sought to accomplish this. (CSB)

The angel Gabriel used these words to describe John’s mission. When fathers and children have a good relationship, the way is prepared for the coming of Christ into their hearts. (TLSB)

Having them both realize the love of Jehovah in sending the Messiah and in the subsequent salvation wrought for all men, Luke 1,17. (Kretzmann)

curse. Total destruction. If Israel does not repent, she will be dealt with as God had dealt with Edom (see Isa 34:5; cf. Mal 1:3–4). (CSB)

Though God threatened utter destruction, His ultimate hope is that people will respond in repentance and faith to the message of prophets such as Malachi and John (Lk 3:3–14). (TLSB)

Namely, in the event that men will not heed the preaching of repentance unto the forgiveness of sins. The Jews as a nation rejected the Messiah and have come under the curse. But this did not result in the overthrow of the kingdom of God and Christ. The spiritual Israel, rather, has heeded, and is heeding, the Word of Grace and is enjoying the fullness of the blessings promised throughout the Old Testament and so gloriously fulfilled in the New Dispensation. (Kretzmann)

4:1–6 The last OT Book concludes with the Lord's announcement that Judgment Day is coming. For those who refuse to repent and believe the Gospel, it means utter destruction. But for those who fear His name, this will be a day of rejoicing. John the Baptist called the people of his day to repentance and faith in the coming Savior. How great a message for us to hear! • Dear Lord Jesus, Son of Righteousness, let the light of Your healing grace shine on me, that I may fear, love, and trust in You always. Amen. (TLSB)