

# Surely the Day is Coming (Malachi 4:1-6, Matt 17:1-13 & Matt 5:17-20)<sup>1</sup>

25-Nov-18

G'day Church Family

This is our final look at the OT book of Malachi and the last words of the OT

It would be great to have your Bibles turned to Malachi chapter 4

You have a sermon outline, in your bulletin, if you'd like to jot down some notes.

Let me pray for God's help and understanding. Let's pray...

## Intro

[Illustration for Family Service]

Have you ever received a bank statement or credit card statement and as you look through it?

You say – what was that payment?

I don't remember that

Oh yes – that's right – that's when I had a coffee and donut at Donut King or a that's when I bought that perfume at David Jones!

[Illustration of a bill at a restaurant for Café Church]

We forget that at some point we have to settle our account/bill

And that's how some people live their lives today

Enjoying life, living day to day - with hardly a thought about the coming day of reckoning with the Lord

Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that two certain things will happen to all of us - death and judgment

Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

And yet it is so easy to get so busy thinking and worrying and working on so many things - that we don't think about God's day of reckoning that comes closer with every day we live.

The people of Malachi's day were in danger of forgetting God's judgment. Remember back in Mal 2:17 they asked "Where is the God of justice?" and in Mal 3:14:15 they said, "It is futile to serve God".

The people in Malachi's day thought God wasn't just - and that obeying His Word was a waste of time. They were a lot like many people today who have forgotten the reality of God's judgment.

That's why verse 1 of Malachi 4 begins:

Surely the day is coming....

## Context

Before we look at this coming day

Let's put Malachi's prophecy in context

### [PowerPoint 1-Timeline]

- About 420BC - Malachi prophesies to Israel who have gone back to their old ways of - not worshipping God properly, worshipping other gods and disobeying God's law
- Then after Malachi there is a period of silence - no more revelation or prophecy from God - 400 years or so of silence
- Chapter 4 in Malachi is the last words and prophecy until Matthew's Gospel - 400 years later

- Here in Malachi 4 - there is a coming day of judgment
- But before this coming day - the judge has to be born - that's Jesus
- Jesus is born 400 years after Malachi
- And Jesus Himself also mentions a day is coming in Matthew 24:36  
 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father"
- BEFORE - this coming day
- Jesus talks about another day of judgment on Israel - with the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple - which happened shortly after Jesus' time in 70 AD - when the Romans completely destroyed Jerusalem
- This destruction of the temple is significant - in that a) it scattered the Jewish people b) it left the Jews without a temple to worship in and c) no means of making sacrifices for sin
- How will the Jews be forgiven without sacrifices?
- Surely this cries out for someone to fix sin and bring forgiveness?  
 (pause)  
 Of course - that someone - is Jesus  
 Jesus came, He died, He rose, He ascended to Heaven and He's coming back for this Day of Judgment
- Surely the day is coming...

Malachi - in chapter 4 - ends his prophecy with a reminder, both for the people of his day and for us today—specifically 3 things to remember about God's Judgment Day

## God destroys the wicked and preserves the righteous (Malachi 4:1-3)

The first thing to remember is:

**God will destroy the wicked and preserve the righteous**

[PowerPoint 2-heading]

That's in Malachi 4:1-3

Sometimes we doubt that the wicked will be punished. We see people in politics, in business, at work, or on the news who seem to do quite well even though they do wicked, evil things. We might even say I can't believe they got away with that. But do they? Malachi tells us in no uncertain terms ultimately, nobody gets away with anything.

[PowerPoint 2a-wicked]

He begins in verse 1 with the fate of the wicked. For there is a day coming... A specific day, a day as real and certain as today, when God will punish the wicked ...burning like a furnace...Malachi uses fire to describe the judgment of the wicked. He pictures the wicked as stubble= bits of grass or straw sticking up out of the ground after harvesting. But even the stubble will be burned up which is picture of what will happen to the wicked - burned up by the fiery furnace of God's wrath and judgment ...leaving neither root nor branch...= no life left in them. The image here is of total destruction, with no hope of survival or restoration. God's judgment will deal finally and decisively with all of His enemies. No more chances!

[PowerPoint 2b-righteousness]

Then, verses 2-3 give us a snapshot of the fortune of those who ...revere (explain) God's name = the righteous. Their destiny is not to have the heat

turned up, but for the beautiful - Dawn of a New Day...the Sun of Righteousness that rises with healing in its wings.

It's not hard to see this S-U-N as the S-O-N - Jesus - the light of the world (John 8:12) who calls people out of darkness into His light, and into the beautiful place described as heaven. But the point Malachi is making is not necessarily about what heaven will be like, but that those right with God - will find peace and joy given by God. He describes them as frolicking like newborn calves, running and leaping for joy - healed of their sin by the healing rays of this Sun of Righteousness - and the picture is of them trampling the ashes of the wicked whom God has judged. God will shine the Light of His goodness and blessing on those who revere Him. They will experience His perfect peace, His fullness of joy, because they belong to Him.

[PowerPoint 3-heading]

**Applications:**

[PowerPoint 3a]

- Does it pay to serve God? Does God really destroy the wicked and preserve the righteous? Malachi says He does. Do we believe that? If we do, it will affect how we see the world, and how we live our life.

[PowerPoint 3b]

- If we believe the wicked will eventually be punished, we won't envy them, anymore will we? We won't want to change places with people who get ahead by doing wrong. We may even come to pity them and in fact we should even witness to them - not wanting them to perish

[PowerPoint 3c]

- If we believe the righteous will be preserved, then we will be more patient when we don't receive our reward in this life. We will be willing to keep obeying God, even when we suffer, because we know that one day, serving and loving God will pay off.

God is telling us through Malachi how the story ends: the good guys win; the bad guys get burned. But how do we know who the good guys are? Malachi explains this in the next thing we should always remember about God's judgment...

**God's Law is the standard for His judgment (Malachi 4:4)**

***God's Law is the standard for His judgment.***

[PowerPoint 4-heading]

See verse 4

[PowerPoint 4a-law]

God's Law given to Moses [the commandments given to Moses on mount Horeb - aka Sinai] had a very simple way to distinguish between the wicked and the righteous: you obey God's law, you were righteous - disobey, and you were wicked. But this obedience was more than just keeping a set of rules—it involved a heart of love for the Lord that motivated people to obey Him. That is the standard of God's judgment—obedience to His Law from a heart of love - so God calls them to remember the law He gave them

Now you might be thinking - "*it's all well and good for God to tell us to remember His law*"

[PowerPoint 4b-all sin]

But the Bible also says - [we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God \(Rom 3:23\)](#) - so we can't stop sinning - so how can we be one of the good guys?

[PowerPoint 4c-justified]

But the Bible also says - [For the wages of sin is death, \*\*but\*\* the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord \(Rom 6:23\)](#)

So, it is in Jesus - we become the good guys

As the Apostle Paul puts it in Gal 2:16

<sup>16</sup> [a person is not justified \[found not guilty\] by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.](#)

So, to be one of the good guys we need to have faith in Jesus - the Sun of Righteousness - then we will be justified - just as if we never sinned

So, if nobody is saved by keeping God's Law, why not forget about God's Law altogether?

Well - Because Jesus didn't forget about it!

[PowerPoint 4d-Law]

In our 3<sup>rd</sup> reading today, Jesus said in Matt 5:17:

[Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.](#)

Jesus didn't abolish God's Law - He fulfilled God's Law - by obeying it perfectly and dying on a cross for the sin of the world. But He also used the Law of God for what it was intended for: to be a standard by which to measure our guilt before God and to measure our love for God.

The Law is meant to teach us how sinful we really are—how far short we come of God's glory - and to show us why we need Jesus!

The Law is also meant to show those who love God how to live to please Him.

When a person believes in Jesus, they should want to know how to live to please God.

[PowerPoint 5-heading]

**Applications:**

[PowerPoint 5a-why]

- I hope we can see then - why we should remember the Law of God? It is God's standard of judgment for the unbeliever - meant to show their guilt. And - It is God's standard of life for the believer - meant to be the expression of their faith by obeying the law and an expression of their love for Jesus - our Saviour.

[PowerPoint 5b-Jesus]

- Remember God will punish the wicked and preserve the righteous; God's Law is the standard for His judgment and without Jesus - we can't meet that standard.

Malachi offers us one more very important thing to remember about God's judgment:

**God's Judgment calls for our repentance (Malachi 4:5-6)**

*God's judgment calls for our repentance*

[PowerPoint 6-heading]

So, Malachi turns to Elijah - in verse 5

Elijah was a fiery, camel-clothed prophet of the desert, whose story is found in 1 Kings 16 to 2 Kings 2. Elijah lived during the reigns of the evil Israelite kings of Ahab and A-haz-iah. Elijah's mission was to call Israel to turn from idol worship - back to God—in other words he called them to **repentance**.

### [PowerPoint 6a-promise of Elijah]

Through Malachi, in verses 5 & 6, God promised before the coming day of His judgment He will again send Elijah to the people on a mission---the same mission---to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.

What Malachi means here is that the hearts of the fathers (parents) will be like the faithful forefathers of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - and they will pass that faithfulness on to their children - and their children will start to obey God and obey their parents - like in the old days.

In other words, God will send Elijah to call them to repentance. What is the alternative? Otherwise God will strike the land with a curse.

This promised "Elijah's" ultimatum about God's judgment is simple: repent or perish!

### [PowerPoint 6b-Who?]

But who is this "Elijah"? Elijah lived about 400 years before Malachi and he is one of those characters in the Bible - whose death is not recorded - so people thought when Malachi said God will send Elijah - naturally they thought Elijah was coming back

### [PowerPoint 6c-Promised Elijah]

But our 2<sup>nd</sup> Bible reading from Matt 17 - clears up this confusion

There's a mountain top experience where Moses (rep for the Law) and Elijah (rep for the prophets) - they appear with Jesus

Why? To show that Jesus fulfils the Law and the Prophets - and to show that the Bible, the Law and the Prophets - are all about Jesus!

The disciples with Jesus on the mountain are confused - as they ask "why do the teachers of the Law say Elijah must come first?" (v10)

Jesus explains (v11-13) that Elijah has already come - in the form of John the Baptist - and John was a prophet just like Elijah - and he had the same message as Elijah - Repentance!

[PowerPoint 6d-why?]

But let me pose a bigger question. Why does God send Elijah (John) at all?

These people know the score. They have God's Word. He's made it clear how to live right, how to love God and love their neighbour? They've had a preview of how God punishes the wicked when the Babylonians invaded Judah and wiped them out because they rebelled against God. Then He brought them back home, helped them rebuild Jerusalem and their Temple, and yet they went back to their idol worship again! God doesn't owe them a second chance, and yet here, He promises them that before He sends judgment, out of sheer mercy and grace, He will send Elijah to call them one more time to repent and avoid destruction. That's why He sends Elijah—because He loves these people.

The apostle Paul puts it this way - in Romans 2:4

Don't you realize that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

God also offers us time to repent before He sends His judgment. Even when we know better, even when we are stubborn and defiant, God's deepest desire is

not for our destruction, but for our repentance. Turn your heart to Me He calls and I will forgive you.

Remember - God is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

If that sounds soft on sin, let's remember that nobody has forever to turn to the Lord. God gives us time, but He doesn't give us forever. He is merciful, but He will not be mocked. If we refuse - there comes a day when it's too late, and we must face the music.

[PowerPoint 7-App]

**Application:** Is God calling you to repent? Prophet Elijah and John the Baptist - didn't come to church today, but the Spirit of God that empowered Elijah and John is here. Maybe He is calling you, gently reminding you of the divine ultimatum: repent, or perish. God's call to repentance is the call of a Father who loves us to come home. Why not heed His call and avoid His punishment?

(pause)

### Conclusion/Challenges

Malachi has challenged us today to remember 3 things about God's judgment:

[PowerPoint 8-conclusion]

1. GOD WILL DESTROY THE WICKED AND PRESERVE THE RIGHTEOUS.
2. GOD'S LAW IS THE STANDARD FOR HIS JUDGMENT.
3. GOD'S JUDGMENT CALLS FOR OUR REPENTANCE.

Just a few final thoughts...

What if Jesus returns later today or tomorrow?

Are we ready? Have we repented and put our faith in Jesus - the Sun of Righteousness?

(pause)

What if God is delaying Jesus' return because - He wants us to go and teach a whole bunch of children Scripture in our schools? Or He wants us to get involved in a ministry here at St. David's and we keep putting it off?

(pause)

What if God is delaying Jesus' return because He wants us to tell someone about Jesus?

What if we don't tell that someone and Jesus returns? They will miss out on Heaven - and end up in Hell? Is that what we want? Is that what God wants?

(pause)

Christmas is approaching and it's a great time to share our faith - and the reason for Christmas.

(pause)

[PowerPoint 8a-Day]

Remember, Malachi warns us - [Surely the day is coming...](#)

Let's pray...