

Malachi 4:1–6 – The Final Word Before the Silence

Malachi ends the Old Testament with a sober warning and a bright hope. God speaks of a coming day of judgment, but also of healing, restoration, and hearts being turned back to Him and to one another.

*“For behold, the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”
Says the Lord of hosts,
“That will leave them neither root nor branch.”* Malachi 4:1

1. The Coming Day That Burns Like an Oven (Malachi 4:1)

God says plainly: “The day is coming.” This is not just a bad season of history; it is His day—a time when He will bring final, righteous judgment.

- The proud and all who do wickedly are compared to stubble—dry, brittle, and easily burned.
- The fire “shall burn them up” so completely that it leaves “neither root nor branch.” There is no future, no recovery, for those who stubbornly resist God to the end.

This is not cruelty; it is holiness. God has been patient for generations. He has sent prophets. He has offered mercy. But there comes a point where He will bring history to account.

Without God’s mercy, this would be the future of every one of us. By nature, we are not “neutral.” We are proud, self-centered, and often indifferent to God. Left to ourselves, we belong on the wrong side of this verse.

But Malachi does not end there.

2. The Sun of Righteousness and Healing (Malachi 4:2–3)

*“But to you who fear My name
The Sun of righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do this,”
Says the Lord of hosts.* Malachi 4:2–3

Notice the contrast:

- “All who do wickedly” in verse 1 face the burning judgment of God.
- “To you who fear My name” in verse 2, something very different happens.

For those who fear His name—who revere God, trust Him, and take Him seriously—“the Sun of righteousness” will rise “with healing in His wings.”

Christians have recognized for centuries that this is a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ:

- Like the sun rising after a long night, He brings light after darkness.
- He brings righteousness, not just as a standard but as a gift to all who trust Him.
- He brings healing—healing from sin’s guilt, from inner brokenness, and one day even from all sickness and sorrow.

Those who love and trust the Lord will “go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves.” The picture is of animals that have been kept inside, suddenly released into open pasture, full of energy and joy. It points to the freedom and joy of God’s people when His kingdom is fully revealed.

“You shall trample the wicked” is not a call to personal revenge. It is a promise that evil will not have the last word. Those who belong to God will share in His victory, not because they are better, but because they have taken refuge in Him.

3. Remember the Law, Watch for the Messenger (Malachi 4:4–6)

*“Remember the law of Moses My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With the statutes and judgments.
Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.
And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”* Malachi 4:4–6

Before the long silence between the Old and New Testaments, God gives two final instructions and one great promise.

1. “Remember the law of Moses...”

God calls His people back to what He has already said. They are to take His Word seriously, not just as information, but as the foundation for faithful living.

For us today, the call is similar:

- Take all of God’s Word seriously—His commands, His promises, and His warnings.
- Do not treat Scripture as optional advice, but as God’s truth for your life.

2. “I will send you Elijah the prophet...”

God promises that before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, He will send “Elijah the prophet.”

The New Testament gives us important insight:

- John the Baptist came “in the spirit and power of Elijah” to prepare the way for Jesus and to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children” (Luke 1:17).
- Jesus said that, in that sense, John was the promised Elijah for His first coming, if people were willing to receive it (Matthew 11:14).

At the same time, many see in Malachi’s words a further fulfillment still to come—a final Elijah-type ministry that will call people to repentance before the ultimate day of the Lord. However the details work out, the main point is clear:

God will not send judgment without also sending warning, mercy, and a call to return.

3. “He will turn the hearts...”

The closing note of the Old Testament is deeply relational:

- God wants to turn “the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.”
- True repentance is not just vertical (toward God); it is also horizontal (toward people), especially within the family.

Before judgment falls, God’s desire is to restore hearts—to Himself and to one another.

Practical Application for Believers

1. Live in the light of the coming day.
 - Judgment is not a myth. A real day is coming when God will deal with sin once and for all.
 - Let that reality shape your choices now: your integrity, your relationships, and your priorities.
2. Cultivate a healthy fear of the Lord.
 - To “fear His name” is not to live in panic, but to live with reverent awe.
 - It means you care more about what God thinks than about what people think.
3. Come to Jesus as the Sun of righteousness.
 - Maybe you are wounded, discouraged, or spiritually dry. He offers healing in His wings.
 - Bring Him your hidden sins, your bitterness, and your disappointment. Let Him cleanse and restore you.
4. Let God’s grace reach your family relationships.
 - Are there broken relationships between you and your children, or your parents?

- Ask God to “turn hearts” in your home. Humble yourself, ask forgiveness where needed, and pursue reconciliation.

5. Take God’s Word seriously.

- “Remember the law of Moses” echoes to us as, “Remember what God has said.”
- Build your life around Scripture, not around trends, opinions, or emotions.

A Challenge for Believers

Malachi confronts complacent religion. It is not enough to be outwardly religious while inwardly drifting.

- Are you living as if you really believe there is a day coming that “burns like an oven”?
- Are you among those who fear His name, or have you become casual and careless toward God?
- Is there a part of your life you keep off-limits from Jesus’ refining fire?

God is not calling you to despair. He is calling you to return. If you belong to Christ, the coming day will not destroy you; it will reveal the reality of what He has done in you. Let Him refine you now so you can meet Him with confidence then.

An Invitation to Those Who Have Not Yet Given Their Life to Jesus

Malachi ends with a sober alternative:

- A coming day that burns like an oven for the proud and wicked.
- A rising Sun of righteousness with healing for those who fear God’s name.

On our own, we are not in the “safe” group. We have all sinned. We have all ignored God, broken His commands, and hurt others. If the final day came and all we had was our own record, we would stand among those who face judgment.

But before that final day, God has already acted.

He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, not just as a teacher or example, but as the One who would bear our judgment for us. On the cross, Jesus shed His blood for our sins. He took upon Himself the punishment we deserved, so that we could be forgiven.

On the third day, He rose from the dead. His resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord. The One who died is alive forever, and He has the authority to forgive sins and give eternal life.

Because of the cross and the empty tomb:

- You do not have to face the coming day of judgment in fear.
- You can be counted among those whom God calls “Mine”—His own treasured people.
- You can begin to experience His healing, forgiveness, and new life now.

God is not forcing you. But He is inviting you.

If you sense Him drawing you, you can respond to Him in simple, honest faith—something like this:

“God, I know that I have sinned against You. I deserve Your judgment, but I believe that Jesus shed His blood on the cross for my sins and that He rose again. I confess that Jesus is Lord. I ask You to forgive me, to change me, and to make me Yours. I give my life to You.”

The prayer itself does not save you like a formula. Jesus saves you. But if you truly turn from your sin and trust Him, He will receive you.

“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The day is coming. You can meet it as stubble in the fire—or as a child of God, standing in the light of the Sun of righteousness, healed and secure in the One who loved you and gave Himself for you.