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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## **Malachi 4.**

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

*Teach it, don't demand it.*

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## Malachi 4.

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### Topics.

- A day of darkness and a day of rejoicing is coming.
- Those who fear the LORD'S name.
- The fear of God and Christians and love.
- I will send Elijah before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.
- The LORD will turn the hearts of fathers to their children.
- Lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.

**INTRODUCTION:** Malachi means, messenger of Jehovah or my messenger. It is clearly after the Babylon exile. The Temple had been completed and sacrifices were being offered (Mal. 1:7-10) (Mal. 3:8). A Persian governor (the word for governor in (Malachi 1:8) is a borrowed word, used for the Persian governors in Palestine during the time after the Babylonian exile) was ruling in Jerusalem. This indicates a date later than that of Haggai and Zechariah. Although the urging of Haggai and Zechariah had brought the completion of the Temple (515 B.C.), this had not produced the Messianic age many expected. Zechariah's call to repentance had gone unheeded, and God apparently had not restored the covenant Blessings. Malachi, writing a short time later, called the people to repentance because: -

- The priesthood had become corrupt.
- Worship, had become routine and social justice was being ignored.
- Tithing was neglected (the Tax System for the nation Israel).

Malachi predicted the coming of both John the Baptist and Jesus, referring to each as a "messenger" of God (Malachi 3:1).

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### A Day of Darkness and a Day of Rejoicing is Coming.

Malachi 4:1-3 ----- <sup>1</sup>"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming shall set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup>But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. <sup>3</sup>And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the LORD of hosts.

These verses can be applied to the following two events: -

1. To the death and resurrection of Christ (howbeit this application has limitations) Christ death on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and his resurrection totally destroyed the power and control the religious leaders, (chief priests, Pharisees, and scribes) had over the lost sheep of the house of Israel and all others who were seeking God. The entire Jewish Levitical system with all its feast days, religious ceremonies, offerings and sacrifices became obsolete after the resurrection of Christ because they no longer served the purpose that they did under the old covenant.

The prideful, hypocritical and arrogant leaders of the LORD were left without root or branch, everything they had built their kingdom of power and control on for the last four-thousand years was abolished, the religious law, the ceremonial rites and the need for a human high priest and the priesthood were all done away with. This is because there is no need for them today, since Christ's resurrection no one today needs men to intercede before God for them, nor do they need a temple or to practise any form of religious ceremony or even keep holy days because all things needed to be saved to eternal life and know God are found in Christ, he is the only High Priest and Saviour any man or woman needs to intercede for them before God.

2. The words, "When I act, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings and the wicked will be ashes under the soles of your feet (v2-3) has clearly not come to pass. Malachi's prophetic words do not stop at the first appearing of Christ, they cannot be contained to that period of history, they are far too powerful to stop, until they arrive at their final destination, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

## Those who Fear the LORD'S Name.

Verse two says, "For you who fear my name," to have a fear of God is to have a spirit that is afraid to harm others physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally, or spiritually, because causing others hurt is totally against God's will and violates Jesus command to love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:28-31) which means do good to others and not harm.

It is, knowing that there will be a day when we will stand before God and will give an account of our actions and behaviour and be judged accordingly either to eternal life or eternal death and allowing this truth to motivate us to seek God and his forgiveness. The Bible states that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10) and the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7) this is because it should not only motivate a person to seek after God and eternal life, but also motivate them to do the right thing.

**The Fear of God and Christians and Love:** Jesus said: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Those in Christ understand this great love of God and no longer act from fear, but from love in the same way that a man in love with a woman does not do things to please her from fear, but from the love dwelling in his heart. Likewise it is with those who belong to the Lords global family.

Once a person is saved in Christ and experiences God's forgiveness and His love and grace their heart is transformed and the mind and passions are changed in such a way that they now desire from the heart to live in a manner that brings honour God and a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their motivation to follow God is not from fear anymore, but from love because they now know, understand and experience the love God's has for them. For further information on the Fear of God see the title: "Fear of God," in Articles (ON WEBSITE MENU).

## I will send Elijah before the Great and Awesome Day of the LORD Comes.

Malachi 4:4-6 ----- <sup>4</sup>"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup>"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup>And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

Israel is told to remember the covenant they made with God on Mount Sinai (Horeb). Then Malachi says that God will send Elijah to Israel before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes, and he (Elijah) will prepare the hearts of the people. The great and awesome day of the LORD in this context is referring to the arrival of: -

- The seed of the women spoken of in (Genesis 3:15).
- Israel's Messiah that all the Scriptures speak of.
- The prophet Moses said was to come like him. (Deut. 18:15, 18).
- The Lord who Israel seeks that Malachi speaks of in chapter three verse one.

The great and awesome day of the LORD is referring to the birth, and the beginning of Christ's ministry to the lost sheep of Israel. The words, "I will send you Elijah the prophet," does not mean that Elijah will literally return in person himself, but that the driving passion and zeal Elijah had for the LORD will come to prepare the way for the coming of Christ.

**The passion and zeal of Elijah:** the people of Israel at the time of Elijah lacked faith they were undecided, between the God of Israel and the pagan gods in their land. Elijah living amongst them could not hold back his passion and zeal for God, so at the risk of his own life he gathered all Israel together and challenged eight-hundred and fifty false prophets on Mount Carmel. (1 Kings 18:18-38). Elijah cried to the LORD saying: -

- LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. <sup>37</sup>Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back. (1 Kings 18:36-37).

It was this spirit of zeal and passion to turn the hearts of God's people back to the LORD, regardless of the risk to Elijah's own life that was to come, and which did come in John the Baptist.

Luke when referring to John the Baptist picks up on Malachi's theme in the following verses: -

- He (*John the Baptist*) will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup>and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." (Luke 1:16-17).

Jesus in the following verses tells us John the Baptist is Elijah who was to come.

- Jesus said: <sup>11</sup>Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than *John the Baptist*. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup>From the days of *John the Baptist* until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. <sup>13</sup>For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, <sup>14</sup>and if you are willing to accept it, *he is Elijah who is to come*. <sup>15</sup>He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (Matt. 11:11-14).
- The disciples asked him (Jesus), "Then why do the scribes say that *first Elijah must come*?" <sup>11</sup>He answered, "*Elijah does come*, and he will restore all things. <sup>12</sup>But I tell you that *Elijah has already come*, and they did not recognize him, but did to him (John) whatever they pleased (beheaded him) so also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands." (Matt. 17:10-12).
- King Herod, some disciples and the crowds thought Jesus was Elijah risen from the dead, but in the following verses when Jesus asked his disciples, "who do you say I am?", Peter had the right answer "the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus immediately accepted the title, showing that when Malachi spoke of Elijah coming he did not have Christ in mind, but John the Baptist.
- Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. (Parallel passage is Luke 9:20-21) (Matt. 16:1-28).

The following verses show that: -

- The Levites and priests thought John the Baptist was Elijah (John 1:21).
- Herod, some disciples, believers and crowds mistakenly thought Jesus was Elijah. (Matt 16:14) (Mark 6:14-15) (Mark 8:28) (Luke 9:7-8) (Luke 9:18-19).

**He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers:** (v6) this is partially true of Christ first appearing since many Jews did receive the Lord Jesus Christ, but the prophet Zechariah clearly shows in the following verses that it will be completely fulfilled when Christ returns in glory.

- The LORD will give salvation to the tents of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>On that day the LORD will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, going before them. <sup>9</sup>And on that day I will seek to destroy

all the nations that come against Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

<sup>11</sup>On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great and the priests and every family of Israel will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:7-10)

**Lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction:** (v6) the words of Zechariah show that when Christ returns in glory to protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the surrounding nations and they look upon the King and Saviour who they crucified the hearts of fathers and their children will turn to their Messiah with great weeping and mourning and instead of the LORD destroying them they will be saved and united with all who belong to Christ's Kingdom and become part of His treasured possession.

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**Notes on Malachi:** at this time the entire nation of Israel had fallen away from the LORD. In the first two chapters Malachi rebukes the priests, then Malachi focuses on the entire nation, he calls Israel to repentance and tells them to return to the LORD, but to a remnant that fears the LORD and esteems God's name God gives some beautiful promises telling them they will make up His treasured possession.

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