

**Scripture Text:** Malachi 4:1–6

1 “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. 2But 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. 3And 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.

4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 6And 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.”

Key Themes:

- God’s final judgment
- Hope in the Messiah
- Living in light of eternity

Introduction:

The final chapter of Malachi brings a powerful conclusion to the Old Testament. It focuses on "the day of the Lord," a time when God will bring judgment on the wicked and reward the faithful. Malachi 4:1–6 calls us to examine our lives in light of eternity, offering both a solemn warning and a radiant hope rooted in the Messiah. This study will help us understand the implications of God's final judgment and encourage us to live faithfully in anticipation of Christ's return.

Study Notes:

1. *The Day of Judgment (Malachi 4:1)*

- The imagery of fire symbolizes God's righteous judgment, consuming all arrogance and evil.
- "Stubble" highlights the fleeting and fragile nature of the wicked's works.
- God's judgment is thorough and final, leaving neither root nor branch. This underscores the futility of rebellion against God.

2. *The Promise of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2)*

- "The sun of righteousness" represents the Messiah, who brings healing and restoration.
- For those who fear the Lord, the day of the Lord is not one of dread but of rejoicing.
- The image of leaping calves conveys joy, freedom, and renewal.

3. *Triumph Over Evil (Malachi 4:3)*

- The righteous will "tread down the wicked," symbolizing ultimate victory over evil.
- This triumph is not by human power but by God's sovereign hand.

4. *Remembering the Law (Malachi 4:4)*

- The command to remember the law of Moses connects God's covenantal faithfulness in the past with His future promises.
- This call to obedience is a reminder that God's Word is the foundation for faithful living.

5. *Elijah's Role (Malachi 4:5-6)*

- Elijah's coming is a prophetic announcement of God's redemptive work.
- This prophecy was partially fulfilled in John the Baptist (Luke 1:17) and will ultimately culminate in the Messiah's return.
- Turning hearts reflects restoration, reconciliation, and readiness for the Lord.
- The warning of a "curse" highlights the urgency of repentance.

Study Questions & Discussion Questions:

1. What does the imagery of fire and stubble in verse 1 teach us about God's judgment?

2. How does the promise of the "sun of righteousness" give hope to those who fear the Lord?

3. In what ways does the joy described in verse 2 encourage believers?

4. What does verse 3 reveal about the ultimate fate of evil?

5. Why is it significant that Malachi calls the people to remember the law of Moses?

6. How does the role of Elijah in verses 5-6 point to both John the Baptist and Jesus?

7. What does it mean to have "hearts turned" in preparation for the day of the Lord?

8. How can the warnings and promises in this passage shape the way we live today?

9. What practical steps can we take to ensure we are living in the fear of the Lord?

10. How does this passage inspire you to share the hope of the Messiah with others?

Practical Application:

1. **Reflect on Eternity:** Spend time meditating on the reality of God's final judgment and the hope we have in Christ. How does this perspective affect your daily decisions?
2. **Recommit to God's Word:** Just as Malachi calls the people to remember the law, commit to studying and obeying Scripture with renewed dedication.
3. **Be a Messenger of Hope:** Share the message of the gospel with someone in your life who needs to hear about the coming of the Lord and the hope available in Christ.

Take Home Challenge:

This week, identify one area of your life where you need to live more fully in light of eternity. Write down one specific action you will take to align your life with God's will. At the end of the week, reflect on how this step has drawn you closer to Christ and prepared you for His return.

Reflection:

Spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal areas where your heart needs to be turned back to Him. Thank Him for the hope of the Messiah and the promise of eternal life. Reflect on how you can live each day with a sense of urgency and anticipation for the day of the Lord.