

The Day of the Lord, Part One – Malachi 4:1-3

I. Introduction:

- A. On Israel's greatest Pentecost, Peter and the others stood before a large crowd in the court yard of the temple.
1. When some smart alecks accused the brethren of being full of new wine, Peter replied, *"These are not drunken as ye suppose.... But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.*
 2. *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: & your sons & your daughters shall prophesy, & your young men shall see visions, & your old men shall dream dreams.*
 3. *And on my servants & on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; & they shall prophesy:*
 4. *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, & signs in the earth beneath; blood, & fire, & vapour of smoke:*
 5. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*
- B. **Peter** and **Joel** referred to *"that great and notable day of the Lord."*
1. It was a subject which was **as common** to the minds of Israelites as **COVID** is to the minds of Americans.
 2. **Isaiah** talked about the *"day of the Lord"* nearly 800 years earlier, **Jeremiah** brought it up 200 years after Isaiah, and **Ezekiel** picked up that theme a century after that.
 3. **Joel** wasn't the only minor apostle to talk about it, so did **Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah** and **Zechariah**.
 4. And most of the time, those were true descriptive prophecies, not just a casual mention in passing.
 5. And it is clear to me that **Malachi** is referring to that same day here in **chapter 4**.
 6. The people to whom he was speaking knew exactly what he was saying.
- C. To facilitate our study of **verse one**, I'd like to simply break the verse apart before bringing it back together.
1. The day of the Lord is coming; it will burn as an oven; and the wicked and proud will be totally consumed, leaving nothing, neither root nor branch.
 2. The subject is not a pleasant one, but it has a brighter aspect which we will consider later this evening.
 3. *"But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings."*

II. The Day of the Lord COMETH.

- A. One of the rules of Bible study is to look at what it says in a literal fashion unless the context demands otherwise.
1. For example: the word *"day,"* as in **Genesis 1**, speaks of a day as any child can understand it.
 2. It is a twenty-four hour span of time which includes a period of daylight and darkness.
 3. **Genesis 1** speaks of *"the first day,"* and then six other successive days.
 4. Only someone with an evolutionary agenda would think anything else.
- B. When we come to the word *"day"* here in **Malachi**, we should automatically think of a twenty-four hour day.
1. And certainly the *"Day of the Lord"* will begin at a specific point on the calendar.
 2. But comparing scripture with scripture, we quickly see that all of the prophesied events in regard to that day will require more than twenty-four hours.
 3. For example, the Day of the Lord includes the seven-year tribulation.
 4. And Peter suggests that one of the positive aspects of that day has already begun; shortly after the Lord Jesus' ascension into Heaven.
- C. But **Malachi** is replying to the blasphemous suggestions of a pack of unbelieving wolves.
1. They were saying, *"It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?"*
 - a. *"It appears to us that the wicked and proud are better off in this world than the righteous."*
 - b. *"They that tempt God are even delivered"* – they escape.
 2. *"No,"* Malachi says, *"They may appear to be enjoying life today, but the Day of God's judgment is coming."*

- D. The word **“behold”** is used more than 1,200 times in the Bible.
1. It is meant to attract people’s attentions; to catch their ears.
 2. **“BEHOLD, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble.”**
 3. **Isaiah** said in **chapter 13**: **“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. BEHOLD, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.”**
- E. The scripture tells us all – through Israel – to be prepared: **“the Day of the Lord is coming.”**
1. God said to **Ezekiel**, **“Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is NEAR, even the day of the LORD is NEAR, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.”**
 2. **Joel** prophesied, **“Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is AT HAND, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.”**
 - a. **“Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand.”**
 - b. **“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is NEAR in the valley of decision.”**
 3. **Zephaniah** exhorts us **“Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is AT HAND.”**
 4. The **Apostle Paul** wrote to the **Thessalonian** Christians, among whom he had a relatively short ministry, saying, **“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”**
 5. In other words, it will come as a surprise.
 6. Then **Peter** said in one of his general epistles: **“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**
- F. The message wasn’t just to Old Testament Israel, but to New Testament Christians as well.
1. This world is commanded to live in the light of the imminent Day of the Lord.
 2. And I believe that immediately prior to that day, the Lord will make up His jewels, sparing them from what is to come.
 3. In other words, Christians should be prepared for an imminent translation into the presence of the Saviour

III. Malachi reminded his hearers that day shall **BURN** as an **OVEN**.

- A. Forgive me if I am accidentally extending these words beyond their original intent, but isn’t there a difference between the fire in a forest or prairie and what goes on in an oven?
1. I can show you pictures of a Baptist church in Nespelem where a fire consumed all the grass on the hill at the back door, & then the houses across the street, & a big tree in the front yard, but not the church building
 2. Grass fires can be unpredictable.
 3. But unless the fuel unexpectedly runs out, what goes into an oven comes out cooked to the extent that the chef expected. It is a controlled burn.
- B. **“That day shall burn, (not as a grass fire, but) as an oven.”**
1. One of the primary purposes of the Day of the Lord is judgment.
 2. Israel will be judged during that day, and so will countless heathen countries.
 3. **Jeremiah** put **Egypt** into the Lord’s gun sights for that day.
 - a. **Jeremiah 46**: **“The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; against Egypt...”**
 - b. **“For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.”**

- C. Turn to **Isaiah 13:6**: *“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man’s heart shall melt:*
1. *And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.*
 - a. *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.*
 - b. *For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*
 - c. *And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*
 - d. *I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.”*
 2. Later **Isaiah** adds: *“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.”*
 - a. *“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.”*
 - b. *“For it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.”*
 - c. *“For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.”*
- D. Someone might say that these are depressing images, and perhaps we shouldn’t consider them.
1. But we **must** consider them. I don’t think I can paint the picture with the darkest colors this deserves.
 2. We **must** consider them, because the United States is going to suffer under this judgment in that day.
 3. The loved ones we leave behind after our translation are going into this inescapable oven.
 4. **Lamentations 2:22**: *“Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of the LORD’S anger non escaped nor remained.”*
- E. **Obadiah** prophesied of the Gentile nations, *“Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity;*
- a. *Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.*
 - b. *For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.”*
2. **Zephaniah** in **chapter 1**, prophesies against Israel, but the application could be made to us.
- a. **Verse 7**: *“Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.*
 - b. *And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD’S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.*
 - c. *In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters’ houses with violence and deceit....*
 - d. *The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.*
 - e. *That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,*
 - f. *A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.*
 - g. *And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.*
 - h. *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.”*

IV. Generally speaking, **UPON WHOM** will the judgment of the Day of the Lord **DESCEND**?

- A. *“Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”*
1. Upon whom is this aspect of the Day of Lord directed? It will fall upon the **proud** and **wicked**.
 2. Those terms go together, both in the Bible and in day-to-day life: *“the proud and wicked.”*
 3. I suppose that some people at times can sin without incorporating their own personal pride.
 4. But those who are full of themselves in pride and arrogance are already standing knee deep in a cesspool and **everything** they do stinks before the Lord.
 5. Pride exacerbates even the slightest sin.
- B. And Jehovah has proclaimed His **abhorrence of pride**.
1. By nature, in every aspect of human nature, there is **no** room for pride.
 2. Wise **Solomon** declared: *“A high look, and a proud heart... is sin.”*
 3. **The Apostle John** said, *“The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of God, but is of the world”* – the world of sin and Satan.
 4. The **first** of the **seven things** which are an abomination to the Lord is *“a proud look.”*
- C. The crux of the matter is revealed in **Psalm 10:4**: *“the wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all (or any) his thoughts.”*
1. Often, when a man knows the command of God; when he knows what is right and what is wrong; but he pushes ahead in his transgression, there is a degree of pride in what he is doing.
 2. He thinks of himself as beyond the Lord’s hand, or he pictures the hand of the Lord as too short.
 3. The proud man is the first to tempt the Lord, challenging God to judge him.
- D. But as **Isaiah** says in **2:10**: *“Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.*
1. *The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.*
 2. *For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:*
 3. *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”*
- E. **Peter** wrote in **chapter 3**: *“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:*
1. *That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:*
 - a. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers (proud boasters), walking after their own lusts...*
 - b. They will be walking in the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.
 2. *“And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*
 3. *For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:*
 4. *Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:*
 5. *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*
 - a. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

- b. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*
6. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*
 7. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*
 8. *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"*
- F. **Malachi** adds a final thought to the multitude of Old Testament prophecies which preceded his.
1. The Day of the Lord will leave the proud and wicked with absolutely nothing – *"neither root nor branch."*
 2. In many plants, even if a prairie fire sweeps over a field, if there is still some root remaining, there will be life once again as soon as the first rain falls.
 3. But God says these wicked and judged people will have no root left; there will be nothing left to sprout.
 4. And there will be no branch with which to produce fruit unto the glory of the Lord or for any other purpose.
- G. In the day of the Lord, **the proud** and the **wicked** will be **silenced**.
1. There will be nothing left in which to boast or to hope.
 2. Their promises will prove to be baseless. Their righteousness will prove to be unrighteous.
 3. They will have to confess: *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."*
- H. Notice that **Malachi** doesn't say *"they shall be LIKE stubble."*
1. What he says is *"they shall **BE** stubble;"* they shall be the dried leaves which are tossed into the burn barrel, or oven, to be consumed by the fire.
 2. I remind you of the Lord Jesus' words in **Matthew 13**: *"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*
 3. But then He goes on much like **Malachi** does: *"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."*
- I. Do you have ears to hear all of this?
1. There is a day of judgment coming to those proud souls who live in wickedness & independence from God
 2. They will essentially have nothing left from day one, but especially after a million years into their judgment.
 3. But there is also a day of salvation for those who fear the name of the Lord.
 4. For them, the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.
- J. Of which group of people do you belong?
1. You can demonstrate that you are one of the blessed, by your humble repentance before the Lord.
 2. You can demonstrate that you are a child of God by putting your faith, love and allegiance in Christ Jesus, the Saviour; the Judge.
 3. You can prove that you are one of Christ's own by obediently following him; by serving Him.
 4. Will you do that this morning?