

Sermon Outline

“Those Who Fear the Lord,” Part 2 – Malachi 3:12-4:6 – Robin Boisvert – April 1, 2012

Introduction

1. What is the History of Redemption (or redemptive history)? Redemptive history is God working out his plan to save us and redeem us from this fallen world. Redemptive history has the Acts.
 - a. Act I: Creation. Out of nothing God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. In His image and for His glory, God created male and female to multiply and to steward the creation on His behalf.
 - b. Act II: Fall. God gave one command – do not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When Adam and Eve disobeyed, sin entered into the world and death came as the result of sin.
 - c. Act III: Redemption. From God telling the serpent that the seed of woman (Jesus) would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3) to the covenants with Abraham to the giving of Law through Moses to the Davidic covenants to the exile of the Jews and their return, the rest of Scripture is a long, slowly developing plan of redemption.
2. Malachi prophesied after the Jews returned from exile in Babylon and after the temple and walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. They were back in the land. But they were a shadow of their former selves. They were discouraged, disagreeable and disobedient. But there was anticipation for the coming Day of the LORD that would vanquish the wicked and reestablish the former glory of Israel.
3. The main idea of the passage is: Those who fear the LORD can face the future with joy and confident hope.

There is a distinction between those who fear God and those who do not fear Him. (Malachi 3:14-18)

1. One group complained. The people complained because they thought serving the Lord was a waste of time. They were discouraged. The arrogant and evildoers prospered but life was difficult for them.
2. Another group feared the Lord. They esteemed and honored the LORD's name. The LORD saw their hearts, promised to spare that on that final Day and said, "Then once more you will see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked. Between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him" (verse 18).

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3. What does the phrase, “the fear of the LORD” mean? It means to respect, obey, and worship the LORD and to live under His authority. Those who fear God are those who esteem his name, are righteous, and who serve him.

The Day of the LORD will reveal the distinction between those who fear God and those who do not. (Malachi 4:1-3)

1. The “Day of the LORD” is a prominent theme in this passage. “For behold, *the day* is coming ...*the day* that is coming” (Malachi 4:1); “... on *the day* when I act ...” (Malachi 4:3); “... before the great and awesome *day of the LORD* comes.” (Malachi 4:5).
2. What is the “Day of the LORD”?
 - a. First, it is the day of God’s judgment against sin. On that day, He will vindicate the righteous and vanquish the wicked. “For behold the day is coming, burning like an oven when the arrogant and the all evildoers will be stubble. The day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1). That is a picture of utter destruction.
 - b. Second, it is also the day that will usher in the final salvation of God’s people. “But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. 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” (Malachi 4:2). In contrast to verse 1, this verse offers hope and joy for those who fear His name.
3. In speaking of the day of the Lord, Malachi is looking to a time far ahead of his own. He is inspired by the Holy Spirit to prophesy of a time in the future when a Savior will come to his people to deliver and redeem them.
 - a. In Jesus’ first coming, He came as a suffering servant; He came in humiliation; He came as the lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.
 - b. But He will come again, this time not as the Lamb of God, but as the Lion of Judah. He will come not in humiliation, but in exaltation; He will come in power and glory and with the clouds of heaven; He will come not to redeem but to judge. And it will be a universally known and acknowledged coming, “and every eye shall see him even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of him” (Revelation 1:7)
 - c. On this Day, the LORD will make clear the distinction between those who fear God and those who do not, those who esteem His name and those who despise his name,

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those who are righteous and those who are wicked, those who serve God and those who do not serve Him.

To be ready for that day, Remember and Repent (Malachi 4:5-6)

1. Here in these final verses of the Old Testament, two of the greatest figures in the Bible are mentioned – Moses and Elijah. Why?
 - a. Moses gave Israel the Law. Obedience to the Law was still required. However, the people had not been keeping even the most obvious laws: their worship was hollow and half-hearted; the leaders were corrupt and having a corrupting effect on others; they were robbing God by their failure to tithe and bring offerings to him; they were unfaithful to their marriage vows and they were complaining and ungrateful. The Lord saw this and it displeased him. He tells them to remember the Law of Moses.
 - b. Then He says He will do something. He will send Elijah before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. But Elijah had walked the earth long before Malachi's time. What could this mean? To understand this, we must turn to the New Testament, written 400 years later. In Luke 1:12-17 and Matthew 17:9-13, the gospel writers quote this final verse in Malachi and say that the predicted "Elijah" was John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for the Messiah, Jesus.

Conclusion

1. Like Israel in Malachi's day, we must remember the Law of Moses in the sense of obedience to Christ and his commands. Keeping the law does not save us. However, having been saved by Christ through believing in Him, it is our joy to obey Him. We live in the good of God's grace as we obey Him.
2. One way we obey Christ's command is by loving one another. This is what Malachi means when he speaks of the hearts of fathers being turned toward their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. It is a beautiful picture of relational harmony that comes through the gospel.
3. God had a word for ancient Israel. And He has a word for us. A day is coming when God will set everything right. That will be a day of joy and confident hope for those who fear and serve Him. On that day, for you those who trust in Jesus the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings and we shall go out leaping from the stall like a young calf.

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Fellowship Starters

1. Take time as a Care Group to read Malachi 3:13-4:6
2. What does it mean to “fear the Lord”? How does this practically work out in your day-to-day life?
3. What is “the Day of the LORD”? Is this Day something you dread or look forward to? Please explain?
4. Robin said, “We live in the good of God’s grace as we obey Him.” How have you experienced this truth?
5. How does anticipating the “Day of the LORD” encourage obedience, faith and the fear of the Lord in your life?