

The Manner of the Day of the Lord (Part 1)

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[0:00] Good evening once again. It's time once again for our Wednesday evening Bible study.

! But before we get into that, let me just make mention of the fact that there have been some changes since last week. He had mentioned that we would probably either finish chapter 4 today or perhaps next week, but the elders have decided that, I believe it is on May 20th, we will begin once again meeting together here at the church for the Wednesday night session.

That will be held in the auditorium, and Pastor Mike will be teaching that lesson up until the time that the other activities for Wednesday night kick off again.

Don't know what that date will be, but it will be sometime in the future. So, in the meantime, then, Wednesday nights beginning May 20th will be in the auditorium, and that will be great to be able to be back together for that.

Then after things settle down and other things kick in, then Lee Roberts will begin his study in the book of Habakkuk. So, just wanted to bring you up to date with that.

[1:30] And I believe even on, is it May 17th, that Sunday, May 17th, that we will be having church services here once again, live and in person and in technicolor, if you will.

And that will be broken up by alphabetical listing. I think it's A through G will begin at 9 o'clock, and then those whose last names start from H through the end of the alphabet will come at 11 o'clock in the morning on Sundays.

And so, be looking forward to that time. It'll be a divided situation, but better than what we've got right now. So, we welcome that. Let me just take this time to just give a shout-out and appreciation to Mike and all of those that have made the videos possible.

Dan has done a tremendous job in taping all these things and getting them on the Internet for us.

And so, we appreciate so much the talent God has given them to do that, the skill as well.

And so, thank you guys for your great help in doing that, making this possible. So, let's begin tonight with chapter 4. And as we concluded Malachi chapter 3 last week, God had been speaking about the apparent difference between the ungodly and the righteous and the idea that that will become quite evident in particular to the unrighteous.

[3:06] And that through the way that God deals with each of those people. He spoke of the fact that the righteous in the midst of living in the midst of the ungodly in the covenant nation that they, the righteous, had been speaking one to another about their faith in God and the fact that they're still following Him, trusting in Him.

And that's been not only an encouragement to them, but it is to serve as a model to the unrighteous as to how their lives should have been conducted in the midst of waiting for the things that God had promised to come to pass.

So, he picks up then, or continues, I should say, in chapter 4 with that idea. And this, in particular, he begins with showing the ungodly a picture of the separation between them and the righteous.

And he does that by giving them a look at the character of the day of the coming judgment that he has been speaking to them about. So, we begin in verse number 1.

And he says, For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble.

[4:32] And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Now, we're going to see how complete a desolation that is as we look at the character of that particular verse.

The fierceness of God's judgment here is characterized by the burning of an oven, or literally of a furnace. You know quite well, as do I, that when we have a fire, if we want to get that fire good and hot, we can find the flames of that fire, more so than burning it outwardly.

A campfire can create heat, but you can find those flames to an oven, and the heat of those flames becomes more and more intense.

And so, that's the idea he gives us here, that that is going to be a day that shall burn as an oven. Tremendous, tremendous heat that brings tremendous annihilation and destruction, if you will, please.

Daniel had described the fire of that day in his prophecy, in chapter number 7, and verses 9 through 14. And this is what we read there.

[5 : 54] I beheld till thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool.

His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake, I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away. Yet, their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all the people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.

[7 : 18] So again, the throne of the Ancient of Days was pictured here as a fiery flame. His wheels a burning fire, and a fiery stream issued, and came forth from him.

The judgment was set, and the books were opened. That, of course, in Daniel's prophecy, was a picture of the four world powers through the generations, and the succession of each one of them that culminates then in the reign of the Ancient of Days, of course, that will conquer all of them whose kingdom will be then an everlasting kingdom.

And that, of course, is the kingdom of God. The psalmist declares in Psalm 50, verse 3, Our God shall come and shall not keep silence. A fire, excuse me, shall devour before him, and that shall be a very tempestuous round about him.

Isaiah says in chapter 66, verses 15 through 16, For behold, the Lord will come with fire and with his chariots like a whirlwind to render his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire.

For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. So, the ungodly then will resemble the stubble that the fire consumes.

[8 : 51] In Isaiah chapter 5, verse 24, the scripture says, Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust, because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

So, you begin to see here, more and more, not just the devastation, but the completeness of it as he begins talking about the roots and the stubble being pulled up.

Zephaniah chapter 1, verse 18, Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver him 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. The proud, that's the arrogant, the insolent, presumptuous, they do wickedly.

They act wickedly, unjust, or guilty is the idea here. Now, those who are called blessed by the murmuring nation will then be consumed by fire.

[10 : 07] Remember, they said that those that were ungodly were being prosperous, and so they must have the favor of God upon them. They murmured against God in that.

And so he said, those that are called blessed, those prosperous, ungodly people, will be then consumed by fire, and that as stubble, as stubble is burned up.

And so, indeed, all that do wickedness will as well. And so, therefore, included in that picture are the murmurers themselves. These 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.

Of course, that is, again, a picture of total destruction. Nothing's going to be left. They'll not have any hope of shooting up to life again.

No life with God that is expressed by His love, and no sharing in the glory of God as well. Realize with me, when the shoot, or the root, rather, has been wholly, totally cut away, nor the shoot, and the shoot torn up from the ground, when that happens, there is no hope that remains of anything sprouting up again.

[11:29] We've all had gardens, and we've had flower beds that shoot up sprigs of things that we don't like, and we try to pull the root out from the ground, because we realize then that if the root doesn't come up, it's going to spring up once again, and that's the picture here.

Without any root remaining in the ground, there's no hope of anything springing back up in its place. Isaiah gives us a great picture of that in Isaiah chapter 11.

Remember that in chapter 10 now of Isaiah's prophecy. Isaiah sees the gathering of the remaining world powers come together to do battle against the covenant nation of God and God himself in that battle that will take place that we know of as the battle of Armageddon.

The whole world power assembles together, and Isaiah pictures them as resembling the cedar forests of Lebanon, and that in contrast to the entire household of David, the people of Israel, that because of the apostasy now is like that stump that has been cut away, that tree that has been cut down that leaves only that stump, and it's like a root without a stem, without branches, and without a crown for fruit to grow upon.

That's the picture of the contrast that he gives here. Now, in chapter 11 though, in verse 1, things begin to change.

[13:14] God says, there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of its roots.

out of the stump of Jesse, out of the remnant of that chosen royal family of God that has sunk so low to insignificance, something is going to come forth.

It's a twig that's going to spring up that promises to replace, if you will, that tree in that trunk that has been cut down.

ground. So, down below, below the surface of that hard, dusty ground, there's a root, and that root then begins to spring up to life.

How many times during the spring do we always go out when we're anticipating something we've planted to grow? We go out there quite often and look and see, and all of a sudden, something very small, but something springs up out of the ground and we know, ah, it's going to give forth life or it has given forth life and it's going to sprout up and hopefully give out that fruit, that fruit.

[14:34] And so now, the same thing happens here with Israel. Down deep below the ground, those roots are covered with the earth, but now a small twig raises up and that gives us the idea that life is going to spring up and then eventually is going to blossom.

In fact, the word that's used there of that little root is the netzer, the nietzer rather, and that comes from a word that means to shine or to blossom.

What a picture of the promise that God gives there to the covenant nation who he has had to judge or is going to judge because of their rebellion against him.

Now, the expression that says it shall grow shows at once that it will not stop at that lowliness that it has reached, but it will rise up, shooting up from the ground, and will eventually become a tree that's laden with fruit in abundance.

Now, that comes, of course, in the person of Messiah Jesus, and he will then be exalted by the Father.

[15:53] In verses 2 through 5 of Isaiah chapter 11, the scripture says, the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth, and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked, and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

What a hope that is pictured there for the covenant nation of Israel through the Messiah that's been promised that will come as it's seen in the day of Isaiah.

Job even speaks of that idea of the tree of having root and hope in Job 14 verses 7-9 he says, For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stalk thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant.

Oh, what tremendous. I love that phrase when he says, When it catches the scent of water, it begins to bud and it begins to grow.

[17 : 45] But, if it be completely torn from the ground, from its roots, and its shoots are cut away, all hope that can again shoot up to life will perish also.

And so, likewise, as Malachi sees it, the hope of all the lovers of sin then perish as well. Isaiah 66, 24 says, And they shall go forth and look upon the carcass of the men that have transgressed against me.

For their worms shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. In verse 2, now, of Malachi 4, the reward for the ungodly or the righteous has seen. He says, But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness rise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.

Tremendous contrast here between the burning of the chaff, the unrighteous pulled up by the roots to be able to spring up no more, and then the picture of the righteous and what God provides for them.

[19 : 05] That nourishing idea of sunlight, of sunrise, and sunshine. But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness, S-U-N, will rise with healing in its wings, its wings, the New American Standard says.

So the day of the Lord, that will be like a fire for the wicked, in contrast, will be like the sunshine to God's people. In the kingdom, righteousness will prevail and pervade like the sun.

It arises, he says, with healing, that is, health or restoration in its wings. So there's the power of restoration in righteousness.

righteousness. It's just like the rays of the sunshine, and that's the picture he has here. The sun is bright, but it has the rays that extend from that, that provide that nourishment, that warmth, everything that creation needs is able to grow and grow correctly.

And so that's the picture that God gives of what the righteous are going to experience in that day. So, God's people will be spiritually restored, and renewed.

[20 : 24] You think about the people of Israel, the covenant nation that has gone through such turmoil because of the ungodly of the people, that have suffered in the midst of that as well.

And we see this also in the tribulation period. The righteous of Israel will go through that as well. And God though has some tremendous promise for them, that refreshing, that restoration that will come, that he pictures as the sun of righteousness will come and refresh them and restore and renew them spiritually.

It reminds me of the psalmist David, as it probably does you as well, when he pictures the fact of that restoration in Psalm 23, when he says, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. I've got some fescue in my front yard.

I told Calvita this morning, that fescue just continues to grow. I've already cut it two or three times, and it needs it again. The rest of the yard doesn't need it, but that fescue does.

[21 : 41] But it is such a plush, rich, green color, that if I were an animal, I'd love to just go down and sit in it, lay in it, wallow in it, because it looks like such a refreshing thing.

That's the picture David has here of what God is going to do. He said, I don't need of anything else but that of the Lord, because he's my shepherd. He's the one that guides me, directs me, protects me, and so he makes me to lie down in those green pastures, beside those still, unruffled waters, and in that then, by that, he restoreth my soul.

He brings it back to life again. It's as if the soul has flown away, but here God is pictured as bringing it back so that it then again comes back to itself, just like the prodigal son did, you recall, when he was wallowing in the pigpen, all of a sudden, the Bible says he came to himself.

He realized where he was and what had happened and wanted to change that. So, likewise, God restores the soul of the righteous, brings us back to a recognition of our relationship to him, of how joyous and how wonderful that relationship is when we're walking together with God in that

relationship.

so it's the idea of him imparting new life to the soul. So he does that to the soul by causing it in the midst of the dryness and the heat of temptation and trouble to taste the very essence of life, the green pastures, the still waters, if you will, that refresh and strengthens our soul.

[23 : 37] So he goes on to be able to say, yea, then, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'll fear no evil, for thou, God, art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Now preparest the table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Tremendous picture of what God does in the life of the righteous. Isaiah speaks of the same type thing.

In Isaiah 45, verse 8, drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour down righteousness and let the earth open and let them bring forth salvation and let righteousness spring up together.

[24 : 41] I, the Lord, have created it. That's what Isaiah says. Instead of salvation in the word righteousness, it's the allusion to the fact that the ungodly complained of the absence and judgment of righteousness from God.

So the righteousness will not only punish the ungodly, but also rewards the good with happiness and joy. So you see the dual picture there.

When righteousness comes, God will judge the ungodly through that righteousness, but also reward the righteous. So in verse 3 of Malachi 4, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.

So just like an animal that's been cooped up in that stall, confined, if you will, when he's turned loose, he exults in that freedom that he has.

Can't wait to get out, and when that gate is open and he's free from the confinement, then he is rejoicing and happy and glad and full of exuberance, if you will.

[25 : 50] That's the idea of the picture here. The righteous will go forth and grow as calves of the stall. So not only will those who fear God be liberated from all the oppression that they are under, but they'll also acquire power over the ungodly.

They will tread down the wicked, who will then have become ashes, and lie like ash upon the ground, having been so completely destroyed by the fire of judgment.

Isaiah 26 verses 5 and 6 say, For he bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty city he layeth it low, he layeth it low even to the ground, he bringeth it even to the dust, the foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy.

So here, the wicked have no preeminence at all, as they did before. This was their complaint of the murmurs, remember. They complained that the ungodly were prosperous, no doubt they had much control, so God must be pleased with them instead of bringing judgment against them.

But on that day, God says the righteous will have dominion over them. Psalm 49 verse 14 said, Like sheep they are laid in the grave, death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

[27 : 33] Beautiful picture of the contrast that God gives. So I think we'll close there because Malachi then begins in closing his prophecy by showing what the duty of the righteous people are on that day of judgment.

If they're going to escape the curse with which the transgressors are threatened in the law that he's given them, and if they are to take part then in the salvation promise to those who fear God, God begins to show them in verse 4 of what their responsibility in that is.

And we'll pick up there and look at that a little more closely next week. So we're going to pray here in just a minute, but let me say to you that in that change now, we're going to try to go ahead and we'll probably finish up verse chapter 4 next week, but then also the following week will be the last video session on Wednesday night.

We'll kind of bring that all together for where we are here in the day of grace. What are we to do in light of what God shows us here?

So we'll attempt to do that in the two weeks ahead following today. So let's pray together. Father, we do thank you again for your love, for your grace, for your goodness.

[28:57] And Lord, your word shows us a number of things about you, of course. It shows how terrible you are as far as judgment and wrath, but also how loving and kind and gentle you are to those that know you, to those that love you, to those that follow you.

So Lord, in spite of the difficulties that we face daily in the lives that we live here, we have that assurance that you know us, you know our situation, our circumstances, and we can trust you in that loving kindness that you bestow upon us.

So Father, thank you for that. So I just, I ask that you encourage your people in the fact of who you are and what you are to them and enable them to see that daily as we go through the difficulties of the days ahead.

And we're going to thank you and praise you for that. Now we look forward to the time together again next week that we are able to see the things that you've promised there. And so we'll thank you for it.

Look forward to it now in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.