

Malachi 4:1-6

I trust as we have been studying this prophecy of Malachi that you have been able to recognise how relevant the Scriptures are to the modern times. We are coming to the last chapter and it is so important to take heed of this final message that Malachi brings.

I have often read this fourth chapter, and particularly concentrated upon the concept of the coming of God's judgement and also the entrance into the world of this person Malachi describes as 'Elijah'. Of course, Elijah within this context refers to John the Baptist; Jesus said of him,

Mt. 11:11,13,14 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

I want to remind you again that this prophecy was written for the ears of the children of Israel, - not for the outside nations such as Egypt, Syria and Babylon. This was God's people that God was addressing. ... and Malachi had to bring them a harsh, unappealing message:

- * He had to tell them about the lack of sincerity in their so-called 'worship' (1:7,8),
- * He had to tell them about how God can read the attitudes of their minds and hearts (1:13),
- * Their concepts of good and evil had become confused, - they didn't know the difference between them any more (2:17),
- * They had robbed God of the tithes they owed Him (3:8,9)

So let's understand this: that God has been speaking to the children of Israel, ... to His own special people, ... a people whom He had set aside out of all the surrounding nations, ... and the same message is becoming increasingly more relevant to the Church today. What does God have to say to us through the words of His servant Malachi?

IT IS A HARD MESSAGE

- * Malachi has already mentioned the coming of the day of the Lord.
- * He has told the children of Israel that it will be a time of judgement,
 - * It seems that most of them were neither interested nor worried about it, because they weren't ready to listen.
- * I want to show you what Malachi is speaking about:

The Lord Jesus Christ is seated upon His throne of Judgement,

- * Every person that ever was born has an appointment to appear before Him, - that's a frightening thought for those who are unprepared.
- * But among that great crowd is a group of people who have become increasingly more anxious.
- * They are making a lot of noise and there is concern in their voices as Jesus Christ *the Judge* looks at them,
 - * "Lord, we have prophesied using Your Name",
 - * "Lord, we have cast out devils using Your Name",
 - * "Lord, we haven't only done some wonderful works in Your Name, we have done many wonderful works in Your Name",
 - * "... and Lord, why are You looking at us like that, - it's as if You don't know us!"
- * Then Jesus Christ, the final Arbiter, will dismiss these people who thought they were in His service, and He eternally damns them into hell with the terrible words,
 - * "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

All the members of the Church have been told to be watchful for Christ is coming back again to receive His own unto Himself.

- * Some of the members are all excited about His return,
 - * they read the Scriptures and are always examining themselves in the light of God's Word,
 - * they never stop being amazed at why God chose to save them,
 - * they know they belong to Christ and He is so precious to them.
 - * They can't understand why everyone else in their church isn't sharing the same enthusiasm as they are.
- * Two groups of people to be found, - I would almost hazard to say, - in every church fellowship.
- * Yes, as in the days of Malachi there were those and for them, anything they had to do for God is tedious,
 - * Whatever they do for Him their hearts aren't really in it,
 - * if they could get someone else to do the job *they would!*
 - * Everything is done grudgingly, not of their best, half-heartedly.
 - * They are more concerned with 'taking' rather than 'giving'.
- * In fact, Jesus spoke about these type of people in His parable,
 - * **And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.**

- * There is the mention again (4:2) of the people that fear His Name, - that's the quality of a truly born again believer, - they are always watching to please Him.
- * And look, ... there is the S-U-N of righteousness; and there is no doubt that is speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ.
- * He is arising with healing in His wings, why is that?
 - * it is for the believer who has been travelling through stormy waters and they have often feared they were going to sink,
 - * it is for the believer whose shoulders have had so many terrible burdens to carry,
 - * This is the SON of God Who is changing their darkness into light, the long night into the perfect day.
 - * This is Who John referred to as "the bright and morning star".
- * Jesus is coming back for His own,
 - * He won't be drawing the sinner to Himself,
 - * He won't be drawing to Himself people who are depending on their own righteousness and their membership of a church, or whether or not they have been baptised.
- * He will be drawing unto Himself those whom He knows,
 - * those for whom He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane,
 - * those for whom He died on the cross of Calvary,
 - * those who knelt down in a church meeting, or in a little Gospel mission hall, or beside their bed, ... *somewhere* that they repented of their sin and they placed their child-like faith in the saving and redeeming grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion. Notice finally, Malachi's last words to these people; he told them to remember the Law of Moses, "Don't forget what God has said to you! What was good enough for Moses' day remains good for today also!"

How do you receive Malachi's final message?

- * Some of his listeners chose to reject all he had to say,
- * I'm very sure though they haven't forgotten what he said to them,
- * If I could take you on a tour of hell now you would see them weeping on their knees and beating on the door from which there is no exit.

