

Post-Exile Prophets
SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
Friday, October 10
Reading: Malachi 3:16 – 4:6

Malachi 4:2 *But for you who revere My name, the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.*

The Day of the Lord is coming! It is the day of God's judgment. But God promises to make a distinction between those who serve Him and those who do not. The arrogant and evildoers will be burned up like stubble, while God's people will see "the Sun of righteousness rise with healing in its rays." What sets His people apart?

Malachi again mentions that they "revere" and honor His name (3:16; 4:2). This shows their awe and reverence for God's holiness and sovereignty. They "serve God" (3:17-18), showing their reverence and obedience to God's plan and mission for their lives. Lastly, they "remember the law," showing their dedication to study and obey God's Word. These are the marks of true followers of God, both then and now!

"The Sun of righteousness" is a unique name for the Messiah. Like the sun, His coming will bring the burning judgment of God on those who reject Him, but the healing rays of love and forgiveness to the faithful. How has Jesus shined the light of His righteousness into your life?

God's final promise of the Old Testament is to send "the prophet Elijah" to prepare the people for His coming (3:1) and turn their hearts back to God. The word translated "turn" is the same word God used when He pleaded with the people to "Return to Me" (3:7). The mission of the coming Elijah was to bring the families of Israel to repentance. These final words of God for His people are one of the main themes in Scripture: God will always receive those who turn to Him in repentance. And it is our job to be His Malachi's – His messengers – to a world that dishonors and rejects Him.

For the next 400+ years God is silent. The people had the written Word of God and He is obviously working behind the scenes, but there is no prophet or written message from God during this period. Then, one day, an old priest named Zechariah receives a message from the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:5-20). The angel tells him that he and his wife will have a child and they are to name him John.

"He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, **in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children** and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people **prepared for the Lord.**" (Luke 1:16-17)

Later, after the birth of John, his father will sing a song of praise in which he says:

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to **prepare the way** for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which **the Rising Sun will come** to us from heaven" (Luke 1:76-78).

The promise recorded by Malachi about the coming of "Elijah" and the "Sun of righteousness" was fulfilled! John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus the Messiah who came to bring us the light of salvation.