

#1687  
Cf. #120 #856

Malachi 4:1-3<sup>1</sup>  
The Sun Of Righteousness  
Will Arise  
One Midweek Advent Service  
Free text:

Pastor A. J. Kunde  
Grace WELS Durand MI  
7:00 p.m., Wednesday  
December 7, 2011  
6:00 p.m., Meal.

Pastor Kirby A. Spevacek, Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Wisconsin  
Lutheran Quarterly*, Volume 82, (Milwaukee,  
WI: Northwestern Publishing House) 1998;  
adapted

<sup>4:1</sup> “Surely the Day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that Day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty [of Sabaoth, Hosts, Armies]. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. <sup>2</sup> But for you who revere [fear] my Name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. <sup>3</sup> Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the Day when I do these things,” says the LORD Almighty [of Sabaoth, Hosts, Armies].

THE DAY IS COMING  
I. A DAY OF HEALING  
II. A DAY OF BURNING PUNISHMENT  
III. A DAY OF FREEDOM

In the Name of Jesus, our Sun of Righteousness, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

The emphasis of the Advent Season usually focuses on the celebration of Christmas – the celebration of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. But there is another emphasis of which Christians need to be aware, and that emphasis is on Jesus’ Second Coming in Judgment. Our text from the Old Testament Prophet Malachi makes us aware of that Second Coming of Jesus, when the LORD proclaims through Malachi ... THE DAY IS COMING! THE DAY IS COMING ... I. A DAY OF HEALING; II. A DAY OF BURNING PUNISHMENT; and, III. A DAY OF FREEDOM.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

## THE DAY IS COMING I. A DAY OF HEALING

The LORD Almighty, the LORD of Sabaoth – of Hosts, of Armies – says that for those who revere, who fear, his Name, the Sun of Righteousness will arise “with healing” in his wings (cf. 4:2a). What is the Name that people are to revere and fear in order to receive this healing?

The LORD’s Name, the Name of God, is everything that God reveals about himself in his Word – in the Holy Inspired Inerrant Scriptures. Our text refers to God as “the LORD Almighty.” This is one of the texts in which the Name LORD is spelled in all capital letters: L O R D. This Name refers to the Jehovah God who is eternal; who is from everlasting to everlasting; who is the Alpha and the Omega – the Beginning and the End. The Name LORD in all capital letters also refers to the God of free and faithful grace – the God who is merciful and gracious, kind and forgiving – the God who does not punish people for their sins as they deserve but, rather, forgives them. Our text also refers to God as “Almighty.”

“Almighty” is a translation of the Hebrew word **ʾĕlōhîm** [Sabaoth]. It means armies or hosts. The true LORD God is the God of the armies and hosts of the heavens as well as of the armies and hosts of the earth. Nothing happens in the heavens or on the earth that is not under his control. The NIV translates the Word as “Almighty.” Then, our text refers to “the Sun of Righteousness.”

Jesus is “the Sun of Righteousness” for he himself is righteous, and he credits his righteousness to all people. St. Paul is stating this truth when he says, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19a). “Not counting ... sins,” is the same as forgiving sins, is the same as justification, is the same as declaring people righteous. This is what God does for Jesus’ sake, and this declaration of righteousness covers the entire human race, for “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ.” Other Names for Jesus, also inform us about what we are to revere and fear regarding God’s Name.

The Name Jesus is taken from the Old Testament Name Joshua, which means the LORD saves, or the LORD is salvation. Jesus’ Name means Savior. Jesus is called the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. The three offices to which Jesus was anointed are Prophet, Priest and King.

Jesus is the Prophet, for he proclaimed God’s Word in truth and purity and continues to do that today through his Church – the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints.

Jesus is the Priest, for he offered up himself to be the Atoning Sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus continues as the Great High Priest for believers as he intercedes at the right hand of God for believers.

Jesus the King, for he fought and won the battle against sin, death and the grave, against hell and against the devil and his power. Jesus continues as King today by ruling, governing, controlling, and directing all things in heaven and earth for the benefit of his Church – his people. And, as King, Jesus rules in the hearts, minds and lives of his people – those who believe in him – he rules in their hearts, minds and lives through his Holy Word. Jesus is also Lord spelled with only the first letter capitalized.

The word Lord with only the first letter capitalized refers to Jesus as master and owner. That is what Jesus is for his people, for he bought and paid for them with his holy precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. This is the “Name” of God that people are to fear and revere.

For those who fear and revere this Name of God, the Sun of Righteousness comes with healing in his wings (cf. 4:2a). Those who fear and revere this Name of God therefore regard his Word as holy and sacred, and they gladly hear and follow it. These believers receive healing.

When we think of healing, we usually think of the removal of some sickness or illness, the curing of some disease or disability. But the Sun of Righteousness gets to the root cause of such diseases and illnesses. That root cause is sin.

The Sun of Righteousness heals the root cause of all disease and illness, which is sin. He does this by taking away sin, by washing away sin. The Sun of Righteousness does this by his perfect life and by pouring out his precious blood to take away the sins of the world.

This removal of sin, this cleansing of sin, is for the entire world. However, only those who believe in the Sun of Righteousness, who believe in Jesus, benefit. Thus, it is believers and only believers in Jesus who fear and revere the Name of the LORD God Almighty.

#### APPROPRIATION

This healing from the Sun of Righteousness is also what you need. You need to be healed from sin and its effects, because you are a sinner. A sinner is someone who misses the mark or target. The target that God has set up for you and for everyone is perfection. God expects you to be perfect. You are not. Therefore, you are a sinner. You are a sinner, but you have healing through Jesus the Sun of Righteousness.

Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness has substituted his perfect and holy life for your imperfect, wicked, sinful and unholy life. Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, has substituted his pain and suffering and death on the cross for the pain, suffering and eternal death that you ought to suffer for your sins. The Good News or Gospel of Jesus brings to you this Message, and through this Message, you are brought to faith in Jesus so that you now have this healing of your sinfulness. In place of punishment, Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, has given you escape from punishment and eternal life in heaven. Yet, for some, there will be punishment in eternity.

## THE DAY IS COMING II. A DAY OF BURNING PUNISHMENT

The LORD says through Malachi, “Surely the Day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that Day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them” (4:1). Who are “the arrogant and ... evildoers” that are going to be punished in this burning?

Anyone who is a sinner can be labeled as “arrogant” and as an “evildoer.” The arrogant oppose and rebel against God. The evil and wicked refuse to conform to God’s will as revealed in his Holy Word. Any one who opposes God is fodder, stubble and straw for this burning fire.

The Book of Revelation describes this place as a “lake of burning sulfur” (Revelation 20:10). Isaiah describes this condition as being where “their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome” (Isaiah 66:24b). Jesus adds to this description that this place is outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12; 13:42&50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). This is the place known as hell, where all the wicked, arrogant, rebellious and evildoers will exist eternally.

### APPROPRIATION

Well, since you are by nature wicked, arrogant, rebellious and evil doing and evil thinking, this is the place where you belong. You were conceived and born in sin – sinful from the time your mother conceived you (cf. Psalm 51:5). Every thought of the imagination of your heart is evil all the time – evil from childhood (Genesis 6:5; 8:21b). You are forced to confess along with St. Paul, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature” (Romans 7:18a). You too have to lament with St. Paul, “What I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing” (Romans 7:19). You deserve this punishment of a fiery furnace about which our text speaks. But this punishment has been removed from you by Jesus, and by faith alone in Jesus, you have the benefit.

Jesus, by his cross and suffering, took away the punishment you deserve eternally. Yet there remains punishment for those who reject Jesus, for those who refuse to believe in Jesus.

Jesus said, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). True faith in Jesus will be marked by true contrition and repentance for sin. For those who do not repent and lament of their sins, punishment remains. This is a constant temptation for you and for all believers.

Believers are tempted to look upon their sins as minor. They are tempted to think themselves not to be as bad as others. But you, as believers, must always come back to what God expects of you. God expects perfection. You cannot provide that perfection. Therefore, you need a Savior; and, you have a Savior, Jesus, your Sun of Righteousness.

Jesus' righteousness, holiness and sinlessness, has been credited to you by faith. Now there remains for you the complete freedom that Jesus has waiting for you.

### THE DAY IS COMING III. A DAY OF FREEDOM

The LORD describes the freedom of believers in a picture taken from cattle raising. He says that believers "will go out and leap like calves released from the stall" (4:2b). Those who are releasing young calves from their stalls in early spring need to make sure they get out of the way, because the youngsters will make a break for that freedom with kicking and jumping and cavorting. That is the picture the LORD gives of those who have been given freedom from sin – released from sin. In addition, believers will also share victory with their Savior Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness.

Continuing with the picture of calves released from the stall, the LORD says, "Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the Day when I do these things," says the LORD Almighty [of Sabaoth, Hosts, Armies]" (4:3). Nothing will be left of the wicked – unbelievers who rejected Jesus and who also therefore refused to repent of their sins – nothing would be left of them. They would be trampled under like ashes left over from a fire. They would still exist, but they would be in the fires of hell forever. Believers, however, would experience freedom.

Believers would experience freedom. No more would sin and sorrow reign. Sin and its results would be gone. Believers would be free with Jesus in heaven forever.

### APPROPRIATION

As a believer in Jesus, truly repentant, you already have healing from your sin. Your sins have been taken away by Jesus' perfect life and by his suffering and death on the cross. But you will also be free from the effects and results of sin.

What are the effects and results of sin? The most obvious effect and result of sin is death. God proclaimed through his Prophet Ezekiel, "The soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezekiel 18:4b). St. Paul proclaimed, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). But Jesus promised, "He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25b,26a). In addition, believers will also be free from all of the other effects of sin.

Everything that causes pain, tears, suffering; every disease, illness, incapacity – all of these are effects of sin and from all of these, believers will be free. John sees this truth in one of his visions recorded in the Book of Revelation. John records,

***<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the Throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will***

***wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:3-5).***

Sin and all its effects will be gone. Tears will be wiped away. There will be no more pain. For Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness heals all and gives eternal freedom from sin and its effects. For unbelievers it will be different.

Unbelievers will burn like stubble. Unbelievers will be trampled underfoot. Unbelievers will have an eternal existence in the fires of hell. That is not the case for you, however.

As a believer in Jesus, you have freedom from sin now – your sins are forgiven in Jesus. As a believer in Jesus, you have waiting for you in heaven freedom from all of the effects of sin. Continue in faith, then, in Jesus as your Savior.

### CONCLUSION

An important reminder during this Season of Advent is that Jesus will come again in Judgment. In preparation for that Second Coming, God reminds you that Jesus has given you healing for your sin. Jesus gave his perfect life for your sinful life. Jesus suffered on the cross the punishment you deserve because of your sin. In eternity, Jesus will also give you freedom from the various effects of sin: Pain, suffering, disease, illness, incapacity .... There will be for you in heaven no more pain or sorrow, no more tears or crying. You have awaiting for you eternal bliss with Jesus, your Sun of Righteousness. Amen.