

“The Sun of Righteousness”

Malachi 4:1-3

The book of Malachi is one of the darkest books in all the Bible. The prophet catalogs the sins of Israel from the people to the priest. There are twenty-one indictments that God brings against them.

- They desecrated God’s table and despised God’s holy name.
- They departed from God and *“married the daughter of a strange god”* (2:11).
- They perverted judgment and robbed God of His tithes and offerings.
- They broke God’s covenant... broke God’s law... and broke God’s heart.

The days of Malachi were much like the days we are living in today. Totally corrupt... wickedness abounding... days of spiritual indifference. There is a curse at the beginning of the book (2:2)... in the middle (3:9)... and the book ends with the word *“curse”* (4:6). Darkness had settled in.

But just before the light goes out and the curtain comes down on the Old Testament, God raises up the prophet Malachi who gives this **great promise**—*“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness [Jesus] arise with healing in his wings...”* The book of Malachi is God’s message in times of darkness.

The Nelons sing a song—*“The Sun’s Comin’ Up In the Morning”* (#38). It may be dark where you are at in your life right now, but never fear, we have a promise that the sun’s coming up in the morning.

I. The *PICTURE* represented in this title. Sun is a picture of God.

“The Lord God is a sun and shield” (Ps. 84:11).

- A. The *COMPOSITION* of the sun. The sun is not solid—The sun is $\frac{3}{4}$ hydrogen; $\frac{1}{4}$ helium. Because it is made up entirely of gases, it is invisible, yet it is visible (Col. 1:15; cf. 1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18).
- B. The *COMPONENTS* of sun light—Three kinds of sun rays:
 1. Alpha/light—Can be seen, but not felt (Jesus Christ, John 14:8-11).
 2. Beta/heat—Can be felt, but not seen (Holy Spirit, John 14:16-20).
 3. Gamma/actinic—Can be neither seen nor felt (Father, John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16).

- C. The *CENTRALITY* of the sun. It is the center of our solar system.
1. Everything revolves around the sun—Christ is the pre-eminent One—Christ should be the center of our life and revolve around Him.
 2. The gravitational effects of the sun, dominates the entire planetary system that includes the earth.

II. The *PRINCIPLE* represented in this title. It magnifies the pure and righteous character of the Son of God. Using the sun as a picture of Christ's righteousness, we see...

- A. Jesus is *INDEPENDENTLY* righteous. The sun borrows no brilliance from any heavenly body. It has a glory all of it's own.

➔The sun never needs any help from any other planetary body in generating light. Neither has Jesus needed any help to shine.

1. There is but ONE sun, and there is one righteous God.
2. The sun **shines on the just and the unjust...** the dirty places and the clean places. The dirty places cannot diminish the sun's brilliance and the clean places do not make the sun shine brighter. Christ's purity is not affected by man's impurity.
3. The brightness of the sun swallows up all other lesser lights and in doing so, expels the darkness. The sun burns through the fog and haze.
4. The sun cannot help but give light and heat—so Jesus cannot help but be righteous. He does not merely reflect the righteousness of His Father, but is righteous in and of Himself (1 John 1:5).

- B. Jesus is *INFINITELY* righteous.

The diameter of the sun is 865,000 miles, about 109 times larger than the earth. The temperature surrounding the corona of the sun is 1,800,000° F. The energy produced every second from the sun is equivalent to the energy released from the explosion of 100 billion one-megaton hydrogen bombs.

The enormity of the sun reveals the insignificance of man compared to the majesty of God.

1. Just as no source of light can outshine the splendor of the sun, neither can any righteousness exceed the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is in a class by Himself.
2. The sun's light is so bright that man cannot look directly at it very long. Likewise, God's purity and holiness is so intense

that man cannot look upon Him in their natural state (Rev. 1:16-17).

- C. Jesus is *IMMUTABLY* righteous. As the sun shines with the same magnificence each day, so the Lord Jesus Christ is forever righteous. He can never be more righteous and He cannot be less righteous (Mal. 3:6—“*I am the LORD, I change not...*”).
1. When you’re already perfect, you don’t have to change.
 2. There is nothing for Him to change into, because He is already everything! You can’t go anywhere where God ain’t already been and you can’t go anywhere where God ain’t already there!
 3. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is healing for your past... He is health for your present... He is hope for your future.
 4. You may not always see the sun shining, nevertheless it is.

III. The *PROVISIONAL* aspect of this title. The sun furnishes directly or indirectly all the energy supporting life on earth. All foods and fuels are derived ultimately from plants using the energy of sunlight.

- A. The sun provides what we EAT. All living things—both plants and animals—are part of a process called “the food chain.”
1. Begins with green plants. Plants make their own food through the process of photosynthesis—Plants combine the energy from the sun, carbon dioxide from the air, and water from the soil to grow and produce food.
 2. In the process plants give off oxygen.
 3. Some plants are eaten by animals, which are eaten by larger animals. Man eats both animals and plants.
 4. Man and animals breath the oxygen released by the plants. They exhale the carbon dioxide that, in turn, is used by plants!
 5. This process disproves the idea that the six days of creation were geographic ages instead of literal 24 hour days.
- B. The sun provides our ENERGY.
1. Even artificial light comes from the sun, for it is manufactured by the power of plants stored in fossil fuels, coal, oil and natural gas. These fuels come from plants and animals that lived long ago.
 2. The effects of sunlight cause wind that powers windmills.

3. Sunlight also evaporates water which falls as rain and snow. The water forms rivers. Hydroelectric power plants on rivers use the power of moving water to generate electricity.
4. Solar power now even powers some cars and heats homes.

➡ **Everything we have, we have because of the sun.**

IV. The *PRACTICAL* aspect of this title. These truths need to be applied to our daily living.

➡ Like the sun, Jesus is sufficient for whatever need you have. Jesus more than enough than to just keep you from going to hell.

A man said to Tom Hayes, "Jesus saved me, but if it were not for AA, I could not stay sober." The same God that saves is the same God that sanctifies and is sufficient for every need you have. 2 Peter 1:3 says that when you have Jesus, you have everything that pertains to life and godliness.

➡ The essence of Christianity is not how people are treating me... nor how I am feeling. The essence of Christianity is how the Son is shining! Jesus is the essence of Christianity.

- A. The sun is the source of **sustained life on this planet**. Without the sun earth would be a cold, dead planet. Without Jesus, God's Son, I am dead in sin.
- B. The sun is the source of **beauty on this planet** (flowers). Anything beautiful in my life, is because of the Son.
- C. The sun is the source of **joy**. There is something about a sunny day versus a cloudy, gray day that affects your attitude. "*The joy of the Lord is our strength.*" With Jesus I can have joy even when it is stormy outside.

V. The *PROPHETICAL* aspect of this title. The promise is doctrinally aimed at Israel.

- A. Following the book of Malachi there are 400 years of spiritual silence and darkness. There is not another word from heaven until Gabriel announces the arrival of Israel's Messiah.

Sometimes God expresses His judgment by what He says and sometimes by what He does not say. The silence of God is just as fearful and the voice of God. The withdrawal of God's voice from a nation or an individual's life is the worst judgment of all.

- B. Jesus brought healing to all who wanted it.
- C. Israel rejected healing and crucified Jesus—Put out the sunlight.

- D. Jesus arose on the morning of the 3rd day—The sun came up in the morning.
- E. Jesus ascended back to heaven—Darkness again.
- F. Israel has been in spiritual darkness for over 2,000 years. But God is going to shine upon Israel again. One song says, “*The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise.*” That sunrise is coming of Jesus when He returns to gather up His jewels.

Christ is both “*the bright and morning star*” (Rev. 22:16) and “*the Sun of righteousness*” (Mal. 4:2). As the morning star reveals itself in the darkest part of the night, so Jesus will come for the tribulation saints in the darkest hour of the tribulation period. At last the dawning of the “new age” will come as Jesus returns to earth as “*the Sun of righteousness*” (cf. Ps. 19:4-6).

Several years ago Barb and I spent a few days on the big island of Hawaii at Hilo. Our hotel room faced the eastern sky. One morning I got up about a hour before daybreak to read my Bible. I opened the drapes to watch the sun come up.

At first there was a lightening of the mist and a brightening of the fog. As the sun shed its light and warmth, the mist began to rise. It resolved itself into clouds.

Then came a single ray of sunlight breaking through the clouds. Soon there was another ray of sunlight cutting through the cloud cover. The clouds began to part as more sunbeams pierced through.

Finally the sun burst through in all its glory. I had to wake up Barb to share the experience with her.

There was a time I was walking in a spiritual fog—I was lost, and confused. But “*the Sun of righteousness*” arose in my heart.

At first there was a glimmer of hope until finally the light of Jesus burst through all the darkness of my

sin and dispelled all my doubts and fears.

The sun came up in the morning!
Has He arisen in your life?
Without Him you are dead in the
darkness of sin.