

MALACHI 4: 1 "For, behold, the day comes, it burns as a furnace; and all the proud, and all who work wickedness, will be stubble; and the day that comes will burn them up," says the LORD of Armies, "that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

God's awful judgments on the wicked, Mal 4:1. Great blessedness of the righteous, Mal 4:2, Mal 4:3. The prophet then, with a solemnity becoming the last of the prophets, closes the Sacred Canon with enjoining the strict observance of the law till the forerunner already promised should appear, in the spirit of Elijah, to introduce the Messiah, and begin a new and everlasting dispensation, Mal 4:4-6.

Verse 1

Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven - The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

And all the proud - This is in reference to Mal 3:15 of the preceding chapter.

The day that cometh shall burn them up - Either by famine, by sword, or by captivity. All those rebels shall be destroyed.

It shall leave them neither root nor branch - A proverbial expression for total destruction. Neither man nor child shall escape.

MALACHI 4: 2 But to you who fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings. You will go out, and leap like calves of the stall.

Verse 2

You that fear my name - The persons mentioned in the sixteenth verse of the preceding chapter, ye that look for redemption through the Messiah.

The Sun of righteousness - The Lord Jesus, the promised Messiah; the Hope of Israel.

With healing in his wings - As the sun, by the rays of light and heat, revives, cheers, and fructifies the whole creation, giving, through God, light and life everywhere; so Jesus Christ, by the influences of his grace and Spirit, shall quicken, awaken, enlighten, warm, invigorate, heal, purify, and refine every soul that believes in him, and, by his wings or rays, diffuse these blessings from one end of heaven to another; everywhere invigorating the seeds of righteousness, and withering and drying up the seeds of sin. The rays of this Sun are the truths of his Gospel, and the influences of his Spirit. And at present these are universally diffused.

And ye shall go forth - Ye who believe on his name shall go forth out of Jerusalem when the Romans shall come up against it. After Cestius Gallus had blockaded the city for some days, he suddenly raised the siege. The Christians who were then in it, knowing, by seeing Jerusalem encompassed with armies, that the day of its destruction was come, when their Lord commanded them to flee into the mountains, took this opportunity to escape from Jerusalem, and go to Pella, in Coelesyria; so that no Christian life fell in the siege and destruction of this city.

But these words are of more general application and meaning; "ye shall go forth" in all the occupations of life, but particularly in the means of grace; and: -

Grow up as calves of the stall - Full of health, of life, and spirits; satisfied and happy.

MALACHI 4: 3 You shall tread down the wicked; for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I make," says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 3

Ye shall tread down - This may be the commission given to the Romans: Tread down the wicked people, tread down the wicked place; set it on fire, and let the ashes be trodden down under your feet.

MALACHI 4: 4 "Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded to him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances.

Verse 4

Remember ye the law of Moses - Where all these things are predicted. The Septuagint, Arabic, and Coptic, place this verse the last.

MALACHI 4: 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes.

Verse 5

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet - This is meant alone of John the Baptist, as we learn from Luk 1:17 (note), in whose spirit and power he came.

MALACHI 4: 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Verse 6

And he shall turn (convert) the heart of the fathers (על al, with) the children - Or, together with the children; both old and young. Lest I come, and, finding them unconverted, smote the land with a curse, חרם cherem, utter extinction. So we find that, had the Jews turned to God, and received the Messiah at the preaching of John the Baptist and that of Christ and his apostles, the awful חרם cherem of final excision and execration would not have been executed upon them. However, they

filled up the cup of their iniquity, and were reprobated, and the Gentiles elected in their stead. Thus, the last was first, and the first was last. Glory to God for his unspeakable gift!

There are three remarkable predictions in this chapter: -

1. The advent of John Baptist, in the spirit and authority of Elijah.
2. The manifestation of Christ in the flesh, under the emblem of the Sun of righteousness.
3. The final destruction of Jerusalem, represented under the emblem of a burning oven, consuming every thing cast into it.

These three prophecies, relating to the most important facts that have ever taken place in the history of the world, announced here nearly four hundred years before their occurrence, have been most circumstantially fulfilled.

In most of the Masoretic Bibles the fifth verse is repeated after the sixth - "Behold, I send unto you Elijah the prophet, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come;" for the Jews do not like to let their sacred book end with a curse; and hence, in reading, they immediately subjoin the above verse, or else the fourth - "Remembering ye the law of Moses my servant."

In one of my oldest MSS. the fifth verse is repeated, and written at full length: "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." In another, only these words are added: "Behold, I will send you Elijah." It is on this ground that the Jews expect the reappearance of Elijah the prophet, and at their marriage-feast always set a chair and knife and fork for this prophet, whom they suppose to be invisibly present. But we have already seen that John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, was the person designed; for he came in the spirit and power of Elijah, (see on Mal 3:1 (note)), and has fulfilled this prophetic promise. John is come, and the Lord Jesus has come also; he has shed his blood for the salvation of a lost world; he has ascended on high; he has sent forth his Holy Spirit; he has commissioned his ministers to proclaim to all mankind redemption in his blood; and he is ever present with them, and is filling the earth with righteousness and true holiness. Hallelujah! The kingdoms of this world are about to become the kingdoms of God and our Lord Jesus! And now, having just arrived at the end of my race in this work, and seeing the wonderful extension of the work of God in the earth, my heart prays: - O Jesus, ride on, till all are subdued, Thy mercy make known, and sprinkle thy blood; Display thy salvation, and teach the new song, To every nation, and people, and tongue!

In most MSS. and printed Masoretic Bibles there are only three chapters in this prophet, the fourth being joined to the third, making it twenty-four verses.

In the Jewish reckonings the Twelve Minor Prophets make but one book; hence there is no Masoretic note found at the end of any of the preceding prophets, with accounts of its verses, sections etc.; but, at the end of Malachi we find the following table, which, though it gives the number of verses in each prophet, yet gives the total sum, middle verse, and sections, at the end of Malachi, thereby showing that they consider the whole twelve as constituting but one book.

