

Malachi 4:4-6
A Sharp Promise
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Introduction

This morning we will be looking at the final three verses not just of the book of Malachi but also of the Old Testament. These three verses are the curtain which closes God's Old Testament revelation. After speaking these last few sentences to the Israelites through Malachi, God did not speak for 450 years. Humorously, some have contorted that this is sufficient evidence that God must have been overtly angry. Without a doubt, the people of God had rejected His law, choosing their own life based upon their own interests and logic. But I do think that these verses are quite remarkable and worthy of our utmost attention.

Imagine if your wife (or for you ladies, imagine if your husband) was to be silent with you for five full years; imagine if she literally didn't say one syllable to you for an entire five year period. It would not take long at all before you would begin to ask yourself; "What on earth did I do; what on earth did I say for her to clam up to such an extreme degree?" Then you would probably try to remember her last words, searching for some sort of a clue as to the reason for her silence. You see, God had sent prophet after prophet after prophet to Israel for literally hundreds of years. In spite of Israel's stiff-necked rejection of God's words, and in spite of their continual persecution of His spokesman, He continued to send His prophets. He had been speaking to Israel for 1000 literal years (from the time of Moses in the 14th Century BC to Malachi in 430 BC). Hundreds of years of noise from God. God simply would not let Israel alone; He loved them too much to not exhaust every option of repentance. Hundreds upon hundreds of years of pleading and exhorting, promising and warning. And now in His redemptive plan, seemingly out of no where, He stops talking. Talk about a silence which speaks volumes! And this silence continues for 450 years.

So what were God's last words before His 450 years of silence? That is what we will be considering this morning. As can be seen by the title of this sermon, God's last words centered on what I have called, a 'Sharp Promise.' What I mean by this will become clearer as we go along. This passage can be easily broken up into two different sections: 1. An Urgent Exhortation (4:4) and 2. A Sharp Promise (4:5-6).

An Urgent Exhortation to an Active Memory (Malachi 4:4)

This verse begins the epilogue to the book of Malachi. Observe what God has to say through His prophet.

"Remember the instruction of Moses My servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel."

God calls His people to 'remember.' I have two questions about this command to remember: 1. What does God want them to remember, and 2. What does the command to 'Remember' mean? First, the context of the passage makes it quite clear what God wants His people to remember; "the instruction of Moses... the statutes and ordinances I

commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.” He wants them to ‘remember’ the things that He commanded them at Horeb. Horeb is just another name for Mount Sinai, where Moses received the law from God mediated through angels.¹ Now if you listen to John Piper on this passage, you will find that he takes the command to remember as a call to remember not the contents of the law given at Horeb, but rather the experiences and events surrounding the giving of the law. Observe what he says,

“When God says, ‘Remember the law!’ I think it ought to ring in our ears the same way ‘Remember the Alamo!’ rang in the ears of the Texas Revolutionaries. It means, ‘Don’t forget what happened at Horeb! How I brought you on eagle’s wings out of Egypt! How I came down with power and glory on Mt. Horeb, and revealed my love and holiness, and made a covenant with you of all the peoples on the earth, and taught you the way of life and everlasting joy with good commandments and wise statutes and ordinances only for your good!’”²

While this principle of remembering the redemptive and gracious supernatural events of God revolving around the giving of the law is certainly biblical and can be found in many different passages in the Old Testament (see Psalm 77 and Psalm 105), this is just not what Malachi is talking about here in 4:4. What is it that Malachi wants the people to remember? The content of the law. Surely, Malachi would urge them to remember the experience accompanying the giving of the law, but that is not what this passage points to. He wants them to remember the “the statutes and ordinances I commanded... at Horeb for all Israel.” Now why would they need to remember the law of God given at Horeb? Because they had, at this point in their history, by and large, forgotten it, and the evidence of their forgetfulness (of God’s law) is scattered throughout the book of Malachi.

Consider the (five) ways in which the book of Malachi reveals Israel’s forgetfulness of God’s law: (1) they had forgotten God’s commandments regarding not presenting defiled food upon the altar (read Malachi 1:6-8 in light of Leviticus 22:17-33); (2) they had completely neglected (forgotten) God’s commandment regarding marriage to foreign women (read Malachi 2:10-11 in light of Deuteronomy 7:1-6); (3) they had completely forgotten God’s commandments regarding faithfulness in the covenant of marriage (read Malachi 2:13-15 in light of Genesis 1:22-24 and Exodus 20:14); (4) they had disregarded (forgotten) the myriads of commands in the law regarding justice for the poor, downtrodden, and helpless (read Malachi 3:6 in light of Exodus 20-Deuteronomy 34); (5) they had forgotten God’s commands regarding tithes and offerings (read Malachi 3:8 in light of Leviticus 27:30-33 and Deuteronomy 12:5-19). The evidence of their

¹ John Walton, Victor Matthews and Mark Chavalas explain; “Horeb was another name for Mount Sinai, the place where God revealed himself to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments. Its precise location is uncertain, and there are at least four possible locations in the souther Sinai argued by scholars to be Mount Sinai: Jebel Musa, Ras es-safsafah, Jebel Serbal and a mountain near al-Hrob.” John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Biblical Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 811.

² John Piper in a sermon preached on December 27, 1987 on Malachi 4:4-6, “He Will Turn the Hearts of Fathers to their Children.” See http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/40/619_He_Will_Turn_the_Hearts_of_the_Fathers_to_the_Children/; 2009.

forgetfulness abounds on the pages of Malachi. In other words, Malachi is merely calling the Israelites, as a final plea, to remember the law of God—to remember the commandments of God as revealed in His word.

This leads me to my second question: What does God mean when He commands the Israelites to ‘Remember’? First, the Hebrew word rendered ‘remember’ in our English translations (*zakar*) can mean,

“**remember**, i.e., to recall information or events, with a focus on responding in an appropriate manner.”³

A lack of obedience can definitely be identified as forgetfulness or a lack of memory (see Deuteronomy 26:13; Psalm 44:17; Jeremiah 18:15). Thus, to ‘remember’ God’s law has less to do with rote memorization than it does with intentional living. Without a doubt, the duty of ‘remembering’ begins with memorization, but to fully obey the charge, ‘Remember!’ one must remember to such a degree that it begins to inform the choices one makes, the way one lives.

After all, many of the Pharisees had the entire Torah memorized to perfection and yet they were chastised by Christ for their lawlessness. The Israelites in Malachi’s day knew the law, and yet their memory of the law was insufficient. They had a shallow memory, a memory that did not lead to a changed life. Their memory did not ultimately lead to action. This is what Malachi is calling the Israelites to: a dynamic and active memory of God’s Word. In other words, God is calling His people to live, believe, and obey His word.

Is this not significant? This is God’s final exhortation in the Old Testament. This is God’s last exhortation to the Israelites before 450 years of silence. I find this to be significant. Now this is speculation, but I must entertain the question. Why did God’s final exhortation to the Israelites before 450 years of silence have to do with remembering the word of God? You would think that His final exhortation would have been, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.” But this is not His final exhortation. His final exhortation was a call to have an active memory of His word. Why? Because, all of God’s requirements are found in His word. Where do you find the commandment to Love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor as yourself? In the word of God. Thus, by calling the Israelites to an active memory of the word of God, He is calling them to actively love Him and to actively love their neighbor.

If the Lord were to call me from serving this congregation in Boscawen to another congregation in, let’s say... El Paso, Texas (and I do not foresee such a circumstance), my last sermon would be on the centrality of the Word of God. Why would my final sermon not be on the centrality of the Gospel, the glory of God, the centrality of Christ, the Spirit-filled life, or the like? Because if the church keeps the word at the center of all that she does, believes, and proclaims, Jesus, the Gospel, the glory of God, and the Spirit-filled life will remain central in the life of the church. Why? Because the Bible teaches us to keep those things central.

³ Swanson, James: *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. electronic ed. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, S. DBLH 2349, #2

This is God's final exhortation to His people for 450 years. What do you think this means about the importance of 'remembering' God's word?

A Sharp Promise (4:5-6)

Second, let us consider the second part of this morning's message. First, we saw that God lays forth an urgent exhortation for His people, a call for them to pursue an active memory of His word, a memory which leads to action. Now we will be considering 4:5-6. In these final two verses of the Old Testament God leaves Israel with a promise of future healing. But this is no mere promise; it is what I have termed, a 'sharp promise,' a 'pointed promise,' a 'promise with an edge,' or a 'promise with teeth.' It is sort of like a backhanded compliment. How many of you know what a backhanded compliment is? A backhanded compliment is a compliment that is loaded with implications—it is a loaded compliment. Wikipedia suggests that a backhanded compliment is a compliment which combines "an obvious compliment with an equally obvious insult"⁴

You could imagine me coming to church next week with a new hair cut, new shoes, and dressed in a brand new high-end suit and tie. I come decked out in a new \$3,000 suit from Men's Warehouse, sporting wing tipped shoes, a vest, and one of those big fatty ties tied in a double Windsor knot. I come strolling through the front doors of the church and Stan, a member of the congregation, immediately picks up on my new look, comes up to me and says, "Jimmy, I love the new outfit. Don't you look dapper this morning!" Well, I proudly stroll past Stan knowing myself that I look good, knowing that Stan knows that I look good... knowing that everyone knows that I look good. I make my way to the sanctuary. As soon as I step foot into the sanctuary Art, another man from the church, comes up to me and says, "Jimmy, don't you look nice. What an improvement! I mean after last week with your beaver of a beard, disheveled hair, and wrinkled clothes... You know... you are starting to look less and less like a bum every Sunday." That, my friends, is a backhanded compliment. It is a compliment which is loaded with implications. It is a compliment which has expectations built into it. What is the implication of the backhanded compliment? "Jimmy, you look good. What an improvement! Now keep it up before you start looking like a bum again. You were on the verge of losing credibility, don't let go of yourself again."

Now I am not suggesting that the promise given in Malachi 4:4-6 is a backhanded promise. The promise given in 4:4-6 is a real promise, but it is a promise that is loaded full of implications: expectations and commands. Let's take a look at this sharp promise.

⁵ Look, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to [their] children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse." (Malachi 4:5-6)

When you read this passage, it is difficult to know how to take it. Much like a backhanded compliment, this passage sort of leaves you sitting there awkwardly saying, "Umm... Thank you... ummm... I think." This promise leaves you saying, "Ohh... that's comforting... I think." This promise says something about the Israelites. What does it say?

⁴ I got this from wikipedia. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backhanded_compliment

It says that they are not ready for “the great and awesome Day of the Lord.” It is important that you know what the ‘great and awesome Day of the Lord’ is a reference to. If you do not understand the significance of this Day in Old Testament thought, you will completely miss the implications of what Malachi is saying. First of all, this ‘great and awesome Day of the Lord’ should not be taken as “the great and adventurous Day of the Lord” or “the superb and exciting Day of the Lord.” Rather, the sense of the words, “great and awesome,” is that it is day to be feared. The Day of the Lord is ‘great and awesome’ because it is the day when the Lord will come in all of His glory to establish righteousness and justice. What will happen on ‘the great and awesome day of the Lord’? Well, just look at Malachi 4:1-3. These are the events that will take place on that ‘great and awesome’ Day. Whenever the phrase “the Day of the Lord” is used (and especially in the Old Testament), it is almost always a reference to the coming judgment of God upon the wicked. It is a day to fear. Look at just some of the passages which speak of the Day of the Lord with me. As you read these passages, try to get a sense of the terror of this Day.

Isaiah 13:3-9: 3 I have commanded My chosen ones; I have also called My warriors, who exult in My triumph, to execute My wrath. 4 Listen, a tumult on the mountains, like that of a mighty people! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations being gathered together! The LORD of Hosts is mobilizing an army for war. 5 They are coming from a far land, from the distant horizon—the LORD and the weapons of His wrath—to destroy the whole country. 6 Wail! For the day of the LORD is near. It will come like destruction from the Almighty. 7 Therefore everyone's hands will become weak, and every man's heart will melt. 8 They will be horrified; pain and agony will seize [them]; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look at each other, their faces flushed with fear. 9 Look, the day of the LORD is coming—cruel, with rage and burning anger—to make the earth a desolation and to destroy the sinners on it.

Joel 2:1-3, 10-11: 1 Blow the horn in Zion; sound the alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the residents of the land tremble, for the Day of the LORD is coming; in fact, it is near—2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and dense overcast, like the dawn spreading over the mountains; a great and strong people [appears], such as never existed in ages past and never will again in all the generations to come. 3 A fire destroys in front of them, and behind them a flame devours. The land in front of them is like the Garden of Eden, but behind them, it is like a desert wasteland; there is no escape from them... 10 The earth quakes before them; the sky shakes. The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars cease their shining. 11 The LORD raises His voice in the presence of His army. His camp is very large; Those who carry out His command are powerful. Indeed, the Day of the LORD is terrible and dreadful—who can endure it?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-3: 1 About the times and the seasons: brothers, you do not need anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the Day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "Peace

and security," then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

This promise has teeth in it; it is a promise with an edge. The purpose of this promise for the original recipients of God's word through Malachi was to slap them awake to their need of repentance. This is a sharp promise because it points to their need for repentance—it is a word of warning that they are not ready for the 'great and awesome day of the Lord.'

In order to move forward with this passage, in order to understand the nature of this final promise given by God in the Old testament, it is imperative that we answer two questions regarding this passage: (1) Who does Elijah refer to and (2) What is the purpose of his ministry? First, there is no doubting the fact that the promise regarding Elijah was at least partially fulfilled in John the Baptist. This is one of the hairy things about biblical prophecy; you often find God bringing multiple layers of fulfillment to one single promise. For example, we know that Solomon was at least the partial, immediate fulfillment of the promise God made to David about one of his son's sitting on his throne (see 2 Samuel 7:11-16); however we also know from a whole slew of passages from both the Old and New Testaments that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the promise given to David regarding his (S)on who will rule from his throne forever (see Psalm 2; Acts 2:22-36; Hebrews 1). This promise had a two tier fulfillment; it was partially fulfilled in Solomon and fully fulfilled in Christ. Some suggest that this is the situation regarding the promised Elijah from Malachi 4:5-6. Without a doubt, John the Baptist is at least the partial fulfillment of this promise given in Malachi 4:5-6. We only need look at one text to settle this issue. Turn with me to Luke 1:17. These are the words of Gabriel to Zechariah, John's father, before the birth of John. Gabriel says the following about the ministry of John the Baptist;

He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go before Him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

Even in this passage you do not see Gabriel equating John with Elijah, but rather stating that he goes before Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elijah." But doesn't this passage sound familiar? Surely, the quote regarding hearts of fathers being turned to their sons is not an exact reduplication of Malachi 4:5-6, but there is no mistaking the fact that Gabriel was associating John's ministry with that of the promised Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6. This is why I cannot help but see John as the promised Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6. Jesus even says in Matthew 11:12-13 regarding the John the Baptist;

"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been suffering violence, and the violent have been seizing it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come. Anyone who has ears should listen!"

So, who is the promised Elijah? I think John the Baptist is *at least* a partial fulfillment of this passage. Some suggest that the Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6 is one of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. However, I don't see much in Revelation 11 about hearts of fathers being turned to their sons and sons to their fathers. Surely, Elijah may be one of the witnesses, but I do not see the witness of Revelation 11 performing the same work of reconciliation that we see the promised Elijah of Malachi 4:5-6 doing.

Second, what is the purpose of his ministry? We need to be careful here to not confuse means with purpose. The purpose of Elijah's ministry to bring restoration to Israel so that their land may no longer be under the curse of God. The means of removing the curse would be in the reconciliation between father and son, son and father. This is the means of accomplishing his goal. He is going to come and bring about covenantal faithfulness, which is here represented in a general way by pointing to restored relationships between fathers and sons.⁵ But the purpose of his ministry is to remove the curse of God, so that when He comes on the great and terrible Day of the Lord, they might be ready.

Notice what Eugene H. Merrill has to say about Elijah's ministry.

“Sin has so effectively disrupted the wholeness and happiness of societal life that no amount of good intentions or merely mechanical adherence to even the gracious provisions of Torah can patch things up again. What is needed is a redeeming word from YHWH mediated through a prophet like Elijah. That word, faithfully proclaimed, will accomplish a healing, reconciling result. When that occurs covenant is kept, at least on the horizontal axis, and if on that axis certainly on the vertical as well, because it is one integrated whole. Without that contravening message there would be no hope, for it would be impossible to keep the covenant without the divine energy that that word imparts. Instead Israel, and indeed the whole earth, would be consigned to the ban like a heathen nation.”⁶

Thus, the purpose of Elijah's ministry is to turn the hearts of Israel to covenant faithfulness lest they incur the judgment of God. So, how would you have taken this if you were a contemporary of Malachi, hearing this prophetic utterance in real space-time history? I think I would have had mixed emotions. On the one hand I would felt a sense of hope knowing that God had a plan on stepping in, intervening for the sake of His people; and yet I would have been overcome with an extreme urgency to get right with God. This is a sharp promise, because built into this promise is the knowledge that the Israelites are not yet ready for the 'great and awesome Day of the Lord,' and that is why

⁵ I think that Piper is incorrect in taking Malachi 4:6 as a specific word about father/son relationships. See http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/40/619_He_Will_Turn_the_Hearts_of_the_Fathers_to_the_Children/; 2009.) This misses the point of what God is saying. God points to reconciliation between fathers and sons as a way of speaking to reconciliation in horizontal covenantal relationships in general. The father/son relationship is the best way of doing that considering the level of loyalty bound up in the father/son relationships in antiquity. It may even be beneficial to read Malachi 4:5-6 in light of Malachi 3:17. A son is a father's honor. The father/son relationship was the archetype of horizontal relationships in the ancient world.

⁶ http://bible.org/seriespage/malachi#P3332_1083507

God **has** to send Elijah. If God were not to send Elijah the Israelites would still be under the curse.

In order to get a better understanding of how all of this fits together, it will be profitable to consider John's role in the removal of this curse. Before we do so it is imperative that we understand what this 'curse' is. Without a doubt, the word 'curse' is a reference to the covenantal curses promised by God on Israel if she were not to be faithful to the covenant that He had made with her on Mount Sinai (see Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 for the details). This is the curse that God is promising to remove, the adverse consequences of Israel breaking the covenant that God had made with them at Mount Sinai as laid forth in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. And the part John is going to play in this removal of the curse is a ministry of horizontal (earthly, one to another) reconciliation.

And although Malachi 4:5-6 speaks of the ministry of John the Baptist as being crucial to the removal of this curse, we must not think that he is the sole or even the main role in this redemptive work. After all, it is Christ and Christ alone who could remove the curse of sin (Galatians 3:10-14).⁷ And although I understand that Malachi suggests that it is the 'land' that is going to receive the curse, we should guard against being woodenly literal in our New Covenant (progressive revelation informed) interpretation of this promise. It is important to note that the English word translated 'land' can also be translated as 'earth' (KJV and NKJV) or it can even refer to the inhabitants of a land.

Bottom line: this promise in Malachi 4:5-6 is sharp; it is loaded with implications of impending judgment. Surely, God is going to intervene; but this promise is a clarion call for those who are not right with God to get right with Him before they have to given an account—before the 'great and awesome Day of the Lord' comes. This is a promise full of eschatological fulfillment, but built in this promise is a call to flee from the wrath to come.

Noting the Difference Between the Close of the Old Testament and the Closing of the New: Christ as The Centerpiece of God's Redemptive Work, The Hinge upon Which Scripture Swings

In closing I want to draw your attention to Revelation 22:12-17; 20. Do you see the difference between the ending of the Old Testament and the ending of the new? The promise given in Malachi 4:5-6 had built in it a tension. Compare and contrast the closing of Malachi 4:5-6 (the last two verses of the Old Testament) with Revelation 22:12-17, 20, a selection from the last chapter of the New Testament (the words of Christ will be in 'red').

“Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each person according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. I, Jesus, have sent My

⁷ And yes, I believe that the curse spoken of in Galatians 3 is at least a partial reference to the curse mentioned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

angel to attest to these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star'

Both the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' Anyone who hears should say, 'Come!' And the one who is thirsty should take the living water as a gift...

He who testifies about these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.'

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!'”

Notice the great difference between of closing of the curtain in the OT as opposed to the closing of the curtain in the NT. Notice that the saints at the end of the book of Revelation are crying out, “Come Lord Come!” They are eagerly anticipating the return of Christ. And yet, in Malachi the tone of God’s promise is that they are not yet ready for the coming of the Day of the Lord. Why such a difference? Well, Malachi came before the time of Christ, before the blood of Christ was shed. They could never have prayed for the day of the Lord to come because their redemption was not yet, at that time bought, their salvation was not yet purchased. Jesus had not yet defeated sin, Satan, and the grave. The decisive victory, the decisive payment, had not yet been made. But in the book of Revelation the saints cry out for the return of Christ because they are confident that the curse has been fully removed in Christ. What is the ground of their hope? The historical events surrounding the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

Surely, one need only read Hebrews 11 to see that the true saints of God in the Old Testament were confident of their eternal salvation, but the basis of their hope at the time was not quite as full as the basis for our hope. Let me explain: their hope was built solely on the infinitely faithful word of God. This is certainly enough for any of God’s kids. However, we have more than the infinitely faithful word of God; we have the actual fulfillment of that word. They had the promise, we have the fulfillment. They had the promise of the curse being removed; we live in a day when the curse has already been removed. You really get a sense of this reality when you read Romans 3:25-26;

*God presented Him [Jesus] as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, **because in His restraint God passed over the sins previously committed.** He presented Him to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus.*

God wiped our guilt away through Christ. Our sin, and the guilt of our sin, was not removed until Christ took it (our sin, that is) upon Himself and bore the penalty due it on our behalf. In the Old Testament God ‘passed over’ sins; in Christ, he put sin away forever. God prolonged judgment through the shedding of the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats on the altar in the temple in the Old Testament, in Christ God removes judgment forever (see Hebrews 10:1-18 to get a glimpse of this distinction). These Old Testament Israelites lived on the foreside of the historical life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The hope of the true saints in the Old Testament was the same as ours, but for us on the backside of the cross, the basis of our hope has been fulfilled.

When you look at the end of the book of Malachi and read Revelation 22 in light of it, noting the great difference, you really begin to see that Jesus is the center of God’s plan of redemption. He is the center of all Scripture. He is the source of our hope. He is

God's "Yes" to all of the promises that have been made. Even the most righteous of God's saints in the Old Testament era were not ready for the day of the Lord because the curse had not been removed; but the curse was fully removed on Calvary, and thus we actually await with expectation this 'great and awesome Day of the Lord.' In fact, you find Jude, in Jude 23-24, suggesting that one of the key ingredients of 'keeping yourself in the love of God' is eagerly anticipating the return of Christ in all of His glory. The Day of the Lord is the object of our hope. Jesus is the hinge upon which biblical history swings.

Let me put it like this.

The End of Old Testament: You are not yet ready for the day of the lord, a lot needs to happen before you are ready for Me to come in all of My glory.

The End of New Testament: "Come, Lord! Come!" We are now ready for your return. Our garments have been washed in the blood of the lamb, our redemption has been accomplished, our salvation is sure. "Come, Lord! Come!"

Can you cry with the 'bride' (the church) in the book of Revelation, "Come, Lord! Come!" If not, you need to receive Jesus as your personal Lord (by repenting of your sins) and savior (by throwing yourself upon Him as your only hope of salvation from the 'curse' of God's judgment). Jesus is your only hope.