

Malachi 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

Analysis

This verse contains one of the Old Testament's most beautiful Messianic prophecies, depicting Christ as the "Sun of righteousness" who brings healing and liberation. The phrase "But unto you that fear my name" (velakhem yire'ei shemi) specifies the recipients of this blessing—not the wicked mentioned in verse 1 who face judgment, but those who reverently honor God's name. The contrast is stark: for the proud and wicked, the day of the LORD brings consuming fire (v. 1); for the righteous, it brings healing dawn.

"Shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (vezarchah shemesh tzedaqah umarpe biknafeyha) uses stunning imagery. The "Sun of righteousness" (shemesh tzedaqah) portrays the Messiah as the source of light, warmth, life, and justice—just as the sun governs day and dispels darkness. "Righteousness" (tzedaqah) emphasizes His moral perfection and His role in establishing justice. "With healing in his wings" (umarpe biknafeyha) uses the imagery of the sun's rays as wings—a common ancient Near Eastern motif. The Hebrew marpe means healing, cure, or remedy. Christ's coming brings spiritual, moral, and ultimately physical healing to those who trust Him.

"And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (vitzatem upishtem ke'eglei marbeq) depicts the joy and vitality of the redeemed. Calves confined in stalls, when released, leap and frolic with exuberant energy. Similarly, those bound by sin and living under oppression will experience liberation, growth, and

abundant life when the Sun of righteousness appears. This imagery anticipates Jesus's declaration: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

The New Testament confirms this Messianic interpretation. Zacharias prophesied at John the Baptist's birth that God would "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79). Jesus declared "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Revelation 22:16 calls Christ "the bright and morning star." The healing anticipated in Malachi finds fulfillment in Christ's earthly healing ministry, His spiritual healing of sin-sick souls through the cross, and the ultimate healing of all creation at His return (Revelation 21:4).

Historical Context

Malachi prophesied during the post-exilic period (approximately 450-400 BC), the last prophetic voice before 400 years of silence until John the Baptist. The returned exiles had rebuilt the temple (completed 516 BC) but spiritual enthusiasm had waned into apathy, compromise, and cynicism. The people questioned God's love (1:2), offered defiled sacrifices (1:7-8), robbed God through withheld tithes (3:8-9), and complained that serving God was unprofitable (3:14-15).

Into this context, Malachi announces both judgment and hope. Chapter 4 describes the coming "day of the LORD"—a day of burning judgment for the wicked (v.

1. but healing and liberation for the righteous (v.
2. .

The chapter also prophesies Elijah's coming before this day (v. 5), fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14, 17:11-13). These prophecies looked beyond the immediate historical context to Christ's first and second comings.

The 400 years between Malachi and Christ's birth are often called the "silent years" because no prophetic voice spoke. Yet God was preparing the world for the Messiah's arrival: Greek became the common language (enabling gospel spread),

Rome built roads and established peace (facilitating travel), and the Jewish diaspora spread God's law throughout the known world. When the fullness of time came (Galatians 4:4), the Sun of righteousness arose just as Malachi prophesied, bringing healing to all who believe.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the image of Christ as the "Sun of righteousness" shape your understanding of His character and ministry?
2. In what specific ways do you need Christ's healing—spiritually, emotionally, relationally, or physically?
3. What does it mean to "fear [God's] name" in a way that positions you to receive the blessings promised in this verse?
4. How should the certainty of Christ's return as the Sun of righteousness affect your daily life and priorities?
5. In what ways have you experienced the liberation and joy described as "calves of the stall" being released?

Interlinear Text

לְקַם	וְיִרְאֶה	שְׁמִי	שֶׁחָשָׁן	צַדְקָה
arise	But unto you that fear	my name	shall the Sun	of righteousness
H2224	H3373	H8034	H8121	H6666

וְמִרְכָּבָה	כְּעָנָלִים	וּפְשָׁתָם	מִרְבְּקָה
with healing	in his wings	and ye shall go forth	and grow up as calves of the stall
H4832	H3671	H3318	H6335
			H5695
			H4770

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 33:6 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

Psalms 84:11 (Parallel theme): For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Isaiah 30:26 (Parallel theme): Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

John 8:12 (Parallel theme): Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Luke 1:78 (Parallel theme): Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

Isaiah 53:5 (Parallel theme): But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Malachi 3:16 (Parallel theme): Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

Revelation 22:16 (Parallel theme): I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

John 1:4 (Parallel theme): In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

2 Samuel 23:4 (Resurrection): And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

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