

Malachi 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

Analysis

And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Following the promise that the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing for the righteous (v. 2), God describes their vindication over the wicked. **Ye shall tread down** (עֲשָׂרֶת, ve'assote) means to trample or tread underfoot—a victor's posture over defeated enemies. **The wicked** (רָשָׁעִים, resha'im) who once oppressed and mocked the righteous will be utterly vanquished.

They shall be ashes (פִּיְהָיו אָפָר, ki-yihyu efer)—reduced to ash, the final residue after fire consumes (v. 1). What once appeared powerful and threatening is now worthless dust. **Under the soles of your feet** (פֶּתַח פְּפֹת כָּלִכָּם, taħat kappot ragleikhem) depicts total victory. In ancient warfare, conquerors placed feet on defeated enemies' necks (Joshua 10:24). Here the imagery is even more complete—the wicked are mere ash underfoot.

The phrase **in the day that I shall do this** (בַּיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָנִי עֲשָׂה, ba-yom asher ani oseh) emphasizes divine action. The righteous don't achieve this victory through their own strength but through God's judgment. This anticipates Christ's victory over Satan, sin, and death—believers share in His triumph (Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 15:25-27, Revelation 20:10). The meek will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5), and those persecuted for righteousness will be vindicated when Christ returns.

Historical Context

Malachi's original audience, struggling under foreign domination and mocked by prospering wicked neighbors, needed assurance that God would vindicate His people. The promise that they would tread on the wicked reversed their present experience of oppression. This prophecy found partial fulfillment when Judah gained independence under the Maccabees (2nd century BC), but ultimate fulfillment awaits Christ's return. The New Testament extends this promise to all believers: we share in Christ's victory over evil. Though we presently suffer, we will reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 2:26-27, 20:4-6). The language of treading enemies recalls God's promise in Genesis 3:15 that the woman's seed would crush the serpent's head—ultimately fulfilled in Christ's victory at the cross and consummated at His return. Believers participate in this victory through union with Christ.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the promise of ultimate victory over wickedness sustain faith during present trials and persecution?
2. What does it mean that the righteous will 'tread down' the wicked, and how is this fulfilled through Christ?
3. How should confidence in final vindication shape our response to injustice and opposition now?

Interlinear Text

וְעָשָׂתָּה מִ	רֹשֵׁעַ יִם	כִּי	וְיָמִינִי	אֵפֶר	תְּחִתְמָת
And ye shall tread down	the wicked	H3588	H1961	for they shall be ashes	H8478
H6072	H7563			H665	
under the soles	of your feet	H3709	H7272	בַּיּוֹם	וְתַּעֲשֶׂה רַבְגָּלִיכָּם
				H834	אֵת יְמִינִי אֲשֶׁר
				H589	תֹּאמֶר כִּי אֵם רַבְגָּלִיכָּם
				H6213	הַזֹּאת שֶׁתְּבִיא כִּי
					H559
the LORD	of hosts	H3068	H6635	אֲבָאוֹתָה יְהִי הַ	

Additional Cross-References

Job 40:12 (Evil): Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Romans 16:20 (References Lord): And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Isaiah 26:6 (Parallel theme): The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

Zechariah 10:5 (References Lord): And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.

Malachi 3:17 (References Lord): And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Micah 7:10 (References Lord): Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

Micah 5:8 (Parallel theme): And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young

lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

Revelation 11:15 (References Lord): And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 14:20 (Parallel theme): And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Isaiah 25:10 (References Lord): For in this mountain shall the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org