

The Last Judgment  
November 11, 2018

Malachi 4:1-3  
206-208-382-206, v. 3

**“Look! The Day Is Coming!”**

- I. Woe to the arrogant!
- II. Wow for the Christian!

Dear Christian friends,

If you're like me you **probably don't remember** very many sermons. That's just being HONEST. There are only two sermons that really STICK in my mind – and I didn't preach either one. **Both** sermons go back some 35-40 years. One was about Jesus' temptations and had the theme of “IF.” It was ABOUT HOW the devil constantly tries to get us to **doubt and question** God's Word and promises.

The other sermon was from a beautiful July morning. The sky was **so blue** – the sun was **shining bright**. It was warm but not humid – a PICTURE-PERFECT **July in Wisconsin** morning. The sermon began with the pastor asking, “**How many** of you got up this morning thinking today could be Judgment Day?” On that **beautiful morning** Judgment Day was probably the FARTHEST THINGS from our minds!

That's the way many people – even Christians! – live their lives. We know ANY DAY NOW **could be** the Last Day – or **could be our last day** on earth – but we just push that OFF to the side. Today COULD be Judgment Day but MORE THAN LIKELY it **won't** be so let's get busy with whatever.

God's talk of the **Last Judgment** is not an IDLE THREAT or an EMPTY PROMISE. “**Look! The day is coming,**” thunders the LORD Almighty here – and WHEN that **day comes** it will be 1)woe to the **arrogant** and 2)wow for the Christian.

**I. Woe to the arrogant!**

For “**the arrogant and every evildoer**” the Last Judgment means only one thing – WOE! “**Look! The day is coming, burning like a blast furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble. The day that is coming will set them on fire,**” says the LORD of Armies.”

“**Arrogant**” – that's another word for proud. The “**arrogant**” – **proud** - person has TOO HIGH an OPINION of himself. The “**arrogant**” person presumes to KNOW BETTER than God – **presumes** that God just doesn't know what He's talking about. In the eyes of the “**arrogant**” GOD'S WAYS are **dumb** – what GOD SAYS is **stupid**. In the eyes of the arrogant HIS WAYS are the ways that make sense – the way things should be. That arrogance – that **pride** – leads the arrogant to REBEL and DEFY the Lord God Almighty. Who is God to TELL HIM what to **do** – what to **believe**?! That arrogance leads the arrogant person to be an “**evildoer**” – to **do what is wicked** IN GOD'S EYES. Does all this sound familiar? Isn't this the attitude of our **society** – the attitude pushed on **us** and our **children** from all sides? Isn't this the attitude promoted by **Hollywood** – by many TV shows and even politicians? FORGET God – go do whatever you want!

NOW it seems like the “**arrogant and evildoer**” prosper. The people of Malachi's day complained, “**It is futile to serve God. Evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.**” Asaph complained of the same thing in Psalms 73. “**I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. From their callous hearts comes iniquity. The wicked are always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.**”

But then Asaph continued. “**When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.**” Or to quote Malachi here, “**Look! The day is coming**” and it will be WOE to the arrogant.

Malachi graphically pictures that woe. “**Look! The day is coming, burning like a blast furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble. The day that is coming will set them on fire.**”

Judgment Day will not be like the FLICKERING FLAMES of a fireplace on a **cold winter's** night. The Last Judgment will be like a **“blast furnace”** heated hot to **refine** metal. But **“on the day that is coming”** the arrogant will NOT BE metal but **“stubble”** – dried up and highly flammable. ONLY the fires of hell are **eternal** and do not result in the **destruction** of the person.

**“Look! The day is coming”** and it will be WOE for **“the arrogant and every evildoer.”** That **“day will not leave behind a root or branch for them.”** A plant can take a REAL BEATING but if a branch or **some root** is **“left”** there's the POSSIBILITY the plant might come back. If you don't get ALL the root of a **weed** it WILL be back! But with **“not a root or a branch left for”** the arrogant there will be NO COMING back – no SECOND CHANCE. The last words they will hear from God will be, **“Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels.”** Imagine hearing God tell you, “GET AWAY from Me! GO to hell!”

**“Look! The day is coming”** and it will be WOE for **“the arrogant.”** God repeatedly announcing that Judgment Day **is coming** is an urgent call for **“the arrogant and every evildoer”** to repent. **“God will not be mocked. The one who sows to please his sinful nature from that nature will reap destruction.”** Rather than envy the **“arrogant”** we need to be busy praying for them and witnessing to them.

God repeatedly announcing that Judgment Day **is coming** is also an urgent warning for us Christians STILL STUCK with a **stubborn** sinful nature. We can grow complacent as we wait. We can start joining in the **arrogant ways** of the world. DON'T KID yourself! Look at the TOLL our sinful world takes on Christians – **how many** have FALLEN AWAY from Jesus and FALLEN FOR the **“arrogant ways”** of the evildoer. “I don't need God. God can't tell me how to live my life!”

**“Look! The day is coming”** and it will be WOE for the wicked. But it will be...

## II. Wow for us Christians!

God described the **“arrogant”** and his ways and now God describes us Christians. **“But for you who fear My name.”** To **“fear”** God's name is to live with an AWE – a RESPECT – a **deep REVERENCE** for God and His Word. To **“fear”** God's name is to live with a “WOW – what a God I have! **Wow** – to think God would DO ALL that for me! **Wow** – what God has all PROMISED me!”

WOW! – and so it should be for us Christians. Looking at the **“arrogant”** and his attitude – did that get a BIT UNCOMFORTABLE? Can you see yourself at times having that SAME ATTITUDE as the **“arrogant”** – God doesn't know what He's talking about – God can't tell me how to live my life”? Our sinful natures can be SO ARROGANT – so full of themselves.

But WOW – we have God's own Son as our Savior! We hear that in EVERY service and **sermon**. We are reminded of that **every time** we see that font – **every time** we kneel at this altar or look at that cross. It's so familiar but **pray God** that it never loses its WOW IMPACT on us!

WOW! – what a love God has for us sinners. **Grace** is the ONLY WAY to explain it – **totally undeserved** love. Yet it's REAL! **In grace** Jesus – the eternal Son of God – took on our human flesh and blood and took our place under God's law. **In grace** Jesus actually lived a **life perfect** in every way and He gives us all the credit for it. **In grace** Jesus took the blame for the souls of the whole world – He took our place on the cross and was punished for our sins. **In grace** Jesus personally paid for every one of our sins with **His own** innocent sufferings and death. Then come Easter morning Jesus came out of His grave **alive** and **victorious** over death and hell.

WOW! Because Jesus did all that for us God HAS forgiven all our sins. Trusting in Jesus we have peace with God – we are now the redeemed, beloved children of God – we are going straight to heaven when we die. What else can we say but “WOW!”? That “wow” now shapes our lives – moves us to live with an AWE – **respect** – **deep reverence** for our Savior.

***“But for you who fear My name, (the day is coming when) the sun of righteousness will rise, and there will be healing in its wings.”*** The ***“sun rising”*** is the PICTURE of a new day dawning. The night can be SO LONG – so DARK and **dreary**. Will it NEVER end? FINALLY the sky brightens in the east. The sun rises higher and higher BEAMING light and **warmth**. The darkness gives way to a NEW day.

SO it will be with **Jesus’ coming** on the Last Day. Jesus who is **“our righteousness”** – who has MADE THINGS RIGHT between God and us with His perfect life and innocent death – our Jesus is COMING BACK. The **Last Day** will be the dawn of a NEW DAY – a new life in that ***“new heavens and new earth, the home of righteousness, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, where God will have made everything new.”***

Malachi pictures the joy of that **glorious** day. ***“You will go out and jump around like calves from the stall.”*** Picture the calf penned up in its stall now released into a GREEN, OPEN pasture bright with sunshine. The calf doesn’t just plod along ALL DREARY and down. It leaps and **frolics** – WOW! – this is so great! SO FOR US when Jesus returns and invites us, ***“Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”***

***“You will trample the wicked. They will surely be ashes under the soles of your feet.”*** Our enemies now SEEM so powerful – so **determined**. DAY AFTER day the devil hounds us – the **wicked world beckons** us – our sinful natures fight us. **Day after day** death claims its victims. We carry friends and loved ones out to the cemetery realizing that **one day** it will be OUR TURN – our dead body put in the grave.

**When** you GROW WEARY of **life** and the **constant** battle listen to your God say, ***“Look! The day is coming!”*** – and WOW! – what a day it will be. We’ll trample our enemies like ***“ashes under”*** our feet. STEP **barefoot** on a nail – some glass – **even just** a pebble and you notice it. But walk on ashes – there’s NOTHING TO IT – nothing left of our enemies. The TOTAL DEFEAT of sin, death, the devil, our sinful natures will be the TOTAL VICTORY of God’s people. WOW!

***“On the day when I take action, says the Lord of Armies.”*** The Last Judgment may seem like a LONG TIME in coming but it IS coming - and WOW! – what a day it will be for us Christians! Amen.

APOSTLES’ CREED