

An Uncertain Ending

Scripture Reading — Malachi 4

“Remember the law of my servant Moses ...”
Malachi 4:4 —

My wife often skips ahead to read the end of a novel. She needs to know how things turn out for the hero. More often than not, the story ends positively, and her fears are allayed.

Today we’ve read the end of the Old Testament, but this ending doesn’t sound so encouraging. For hundreds of years, God’s people have repeated a cycle of obedience, disobedience, punishment, repentance, and restoration. And now, as the curtain falls on the Old Testament, God’s people are again turning away from God, and again God warns that judgment will follow.

But judgment is never the last word! Four hundred years after Malachi, John the Baptist came, and he called the people to turn their hearts back to God (see Matthew 3:1-2; 11:11-15). John prepared the world for the coming of Jesus. And Jesus came to do what Israel couldn’t do— and what we cannot do on our own. Jesus lived the life of perfect obedience, fulfilling the law in our place (Matthew 5:17-20) to reconcile us with God.

One day Jesus will return. All of creation will be judged, and only those who believe in Jesus will escape punishment. Are you ready? God calls us to prepare for his return by living in thankful obedience. Let’s prepare for Jesus’ return by dedicating ourselves to him and committing to a life of gratitude for his great salvation.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we look forward to seeing you face to face! Strengthen our hope in your coming, and help us to prepare for your return. In your name, Amen.

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Printed on July 9, 2020

