

Title: **CHRIST THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Text: Malachi 4:2

Subject: *Christ Coming Compared to Sunrise*

Date: Sunday Evening — March 21, 2010

Tape: Malachi #19

Readings: *Allen Kibby and Ron Wood*

Introduction:

Malachi closes his prophecy by comparing the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to the rising of the sun, calling our blessed Savior “**The Sun of Righteousness.**” That is my subject tonight. — **CHRIST THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Our text will be Malachi 4:2.

“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.”
(Malachi 4:2)

God the Holy Spirit here gives us five pictures of what the coming of Christ signifies. He inspired Malachi the prophet to use five vivid metaphors to teach us what the Lord Jesus does for those who are awakened by his grace and taught to fear the Lord. — “*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.*” When Christ comes to chosen sinners...

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1. He comes as a rising sun.
2. He shines with beams of righteousness.
3. He arises with healing in his wings.
4. He breaks stalled calves out of the stall.
5. He makes the freed calves of grace to be leaping like calves in the open field.

RISING SUN

*First, The Lord Jesus, the prophet tells us, comes to his people as the rising sun. — “Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise.” **Peter speaks of this rising of the Sun of Righteousness in 2 Peter 1:19, a “a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”** And what is “the day-dawn, and day-star,” arising in the hearts of God’s elect, but Christ Jesus the Lord, “the dayspring from on high, visiting us”? Is not the Lord Jesus “the bright and morning star, the light and the life of men?” Of course he is. He is “the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings!” And when he arises on our dark, benighted souls, he arises as “the day-dawn, and the day-star, as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings!”*

- All was darkness **in the creation of God**, until Christ arose. His coming was as the breaking forth of the morning, the Sunrise of Grace, sure herald of a bright

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and blessed day.

- **He was “the day-dawn, and the day-star,” in the light of redemption, before the world was formed.** In the council of peace, as man’s light and salvation, he arose, at the call of the triune God, in the beginning, before ever the earth was made.
- **In due time, Christ arose in the earth** and throughout all the days of his eventful life and ministry upon earth, the Lord Jesus was “*a light to lighten the gentiles and the glory of his people Israel.*”
- **And, today, our blessed Savior still arises as the Sun of Righteousness,** “*the day-dawn, and day-star*” of all the promises, with healing power and virtue beneath his omnipotent wings of grace!

Until we see Christ in the promises of God they are nothing. It is he who makes them all “*yea and amen.*” He is “*the day-dawn, and day-star*” of all ages. His word, his providence, his grace, his ordinances; all are dark, until “**The Sun of Righteousness**” arises to give us light. — Blessed Sunrise! — When he shines in upon them, all is clear and bright!

When he withdraws his light, nothing can be seen, nothing can be read, nothing can be understood.

And what is this blessed Sunrise the Lord promised by

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Malachi, if not that which takes place in the hearts of chosen, redeemed sinners, converting them from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God? — The Sunrise is the Lord Jesus shining by his Holy Spirit in our hearts, bringing us to the knowledge, love and enjoyment of himself.

O my soul, what a blessed Sunrise, what a blessed day that was! It is a day forever to be remembered, when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined in upon my heart. On that day of grace the Lord Jesus, “*the Sun of Righteousness,*” arose in my soul to give me “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ!*” O glorious Light and Life of my soul, ever continue the sweet influences of your grace, morning by morning and evening by evening, until, after many dark dispensations, and wintry days of my blindness, ignorance, and senselessness, in which will renew me, in the precious discoveries of your love, I am carried through all the twilight of this poor dying state of things below. Then I shall awake to the full enjoyment of your fulness in glory, to see you, my blessed Savior, in one full open day, and to be made like you in the kingdom of light, and life, and happiness, forever and ever. — “*Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness!*” (Psalm 17:15)

(Psalms 84:11) “For the LORD God is a sun and

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shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

“The LORD God is a Sun.” The words of both Malachi and the psalmist might be rightly applied to all three Persons in the Sacred Trinity. But our text speaks specifically of our Savior Christ, the Second Person in the glorious Godhead, Immanuel, God with us. He is compared to the sun, as it rises in the morning in the eastern sky, blazes across the earth’s midday sky. — What a beautiful representation it is of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CENTRAL — The sun is the center of our solar system. It is only by the attraction of the sun that the earth is kept in its orbit. Without the sun the earth would could not even exist in its present form. Everything would be chaos and darkness, confusion and an empty void. So the Church has no existence apart from Christ. He holds her in her orbit and draws her to himself by his own attractive influences, just as the sun attracts and draws the earth. — *“Draw me, we will run after Thee.”* — **As the sun is the center of our solar system, Christ is the Center of all to his people.**

- The Center of God’s Decrees
- The Center of His Word
- The Center of His Church
- The Center of our Worship
- The Center of our Hearts

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When the sun arises light appears, where all was darkness before. When Christ comes to his chosen, he brings light where all before was darkness. **And when you have light, you can see.** Christ arising in our souls causes us see things like they really are. He makes sense out of things. Our Savior said to Pilate, *“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”* And Pilate mocked him and said, as though he were living today, *“What is truth?”*

That is the tragic and cynical cry of our age: What is truth! Not because there’s a passion for truth, but because there is so much skepticism that any such thing exists. And the effect of this skepticism and relativism is moral and intellectual and personal and social bankruptcy. Why do many families come apart? Because they have no anchor of truth. The husband and father and wife and mother have no clear vision of why they and his children exist. And so all they can do is pass on a few tips about making money, staying out of jail, and staying healthy. And the emptiness gets deeper and deeper with each unbelieving generation.

But **Christ is the light of the world. He brings sense and meaning out of absurdity.** He shines light upon us and in us, and causes us to know and understand...

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- Ourselves
- God's Word
- God's Salvation
- God's Judgments
- God's Providence
- God's Judgments

When Christ comes he comes as a sun. He is light in the darkness of confusion and ignorance and skepticism. He gives a fixed point of truth in a world where every standard seems to have come unglued. And in doing this, he guards us from destroying our lives and keeps us safe.

The sun is but a creature — a dead and lifeless creature. Christ is the Creator. **The sun shines only by divine command**, and exists only by divine sustenance. Christ shines in the rays of eternal Deity, and will continue to shine when the light of the natural sun is quenched. But as **without the light of the sun** the world would fall into desolation, so without the light and sustaining influences of the Son of God the Church would fall into nothingness. As, too, the sun gives light to the whole earth, **“his going forth being from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it”** (Psalm 19:6), so our Lord Jesus gives light to all his believing people. There is not a ray, nor a sparkle of divine light in the soul which does not come out of his glorious fullness.

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But was not the sun made to shine? Is not this its appointed office? When the creating voice of God set that glorious orb in the sky, was it not placed there by Omnipotence itself that it might shine forth in countless rays of blazing splendor? Thus we may say that in shining the sun only fulfils the office which God gave it to perform; and the more brightly and gloriously it shines, the more does it accomplish its appointed work. So we may say of the blessed Lord Jesus. He is the Sun of the church; and when God set Him as the great High Priest over the house of God, at His own right hand, in the heavenly places, He put Him, so to speak, as a Sun in the spiritual skies; that, as the natural sun gives light to the world, so Christ might give light to the church. — **“The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory”** (Isaiah 60:19).

We read, therefore, of John the Baptist, **“He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”** (John 1:8, 9). Does the sun wait until it sees some light previously kindled on earth before he begins to shine? No! It rises at the appointed hour; and when it bursts forth from his chambers in the east, it gives forth his bright beams without waiting for any previous light to be kindled.

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So it is with the Sun of Righteousness. He rises to give light at the appointed hour; and until he arises in the soul no light can be found within. — All is darkness!

Is it not so? You try to elicit some light from the depths of your own heart; you search its inward recesses, hoping to find in them some cheering beams of hope, some rays of divine comfort. But what heavenly light can you find in that fallen nature of which the apostle said, — “*I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing*”? To look for light in ourselves is to look into a dark cavern for sunshine. It is not there! **But when Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, rises upon the soul with healing in his wings, He brings light with him**; and in his light we not only see him, but every other object upon which he shines.

OBSCURED — But sometimes the sun is obscured. Sometimes it is eclipsed. When the day is cloudy, the sun’s bright beams are veiled from sight. We have light enough to see one another and things around us by its light; but the sun itself we cannot see. It is hidden behind the dark, heavy clouds. Yet, the sun is the same. It has not changed. All that has changed is that which is below, on earth and in the earth’s atmosphere.

So it is in grace. The Sun of Righteousness does not always shine brightly in our souls. We do not always feel the

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Lord's presence gladdening our hearts heart. The Sun of Righteousness is sometimes hidden behind thick, heavy clouds. Yet, the Sun still shines. The light in which we walk is not as bright as it was the day before, but the light in which we walk is still the same light. It is his light! We walk in the light of the living.

As the sun sets in the evening, it sometimes appears that the Sun of Righteousness sets, too. Sometimes it seems that the Lord is gone from us, and gone forever; but the Sun of Righteousness arises again at the appointed season. Then, what rejoicing, as he said to the disciples, "**I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you**" (John 16:22).

WARMTH — It is the shining sun that gives warmth and heat, too. It is not only the fountain of all light, but the source of all heat upon the face of the earth. So Christ Jesus is the source of all divine warmth in the soul. How cold, how frozen, our hearts often are — faith, hope and love are often locked up in blocks of ice in our hearts. In those wintry seasons we find it impossible to raise up one living affection towards the Lord of life and glory. We cannot produce a single glow of warmth, or the least melting heat. Our very souls seem frozen! We long for, but cannot melt ourselves into contrition, brokenness, godly sorrow for sin, weeping and mourning with and over a suffering Man of

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sorrows, any more than the earth can thaw itself into softness, or frozen stream can melt its own ice and flow freely. The chilled earth and ice-bound stream need the sun to shine upon them and into them. But when the sun's beams burst forth with heat upon the earth and stream, more is done by them in five minutes than without its warmth they could do for themselves in five centuries.

So it is in grace. We try to pray, read and meditate, and thus seek to warm our cold, icy hearts into love, submission and obedience. Our efforts are utterly fruitless. We remain frozen, until Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, arises and shines upon us and into us by his grace! Then...

- What Melting!
- What Weeping!
- What Rejoicing!

The shining in of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness puts gladness into the heart. What joy and gladness His presence creates in the soul of a downcast sinner! — “**Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness**” (Psalm 30:11).

LIFE — And, in a certain sense, the sun is the source of all life. In winter all creation seems buried in death. But when, the sun climbs to its springtime height and its beams again

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warm the earth, the earth is revived, the tress bud forth, the flowers bloom and the birds are again heard singing the praises of their Creator.

So it is with the Sun of Righteousness! When the Sun of Righteousness arises, our souls are revived with life. When the Sun of Righteousness rises in our sky, he revives our souls with life. Then our prayers, our preaching, our hearing, our singing, our meditations, so dull in soul's winter, spring with new life! This made David cry, in Psalm 85:6, “**Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?**” — “**After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight**” (Hosea 6:2).

FRUITFULNESS — The sun causes fruitfulness. Where would the harvest be without the sun? **Again, so it is with the Sun of Righteousness.** We are utterly unable to bring forth any fruit to the honor and praise of God except as that gracious Sun of Righteousness is pleased to our souls it fruitful in every good word and work! It is he who makes his church a fruitful garden. He says, “**From me is thy fruit found**” (Hosea 14:8). — “**Without me ye can do nothing,**” is the testimony of Holy Scripture and the express declaration of our Savior.

Have I described the experiences of your soul? If I have,

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you know what David meant when he sang, “**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.**”

SECURITY — Another thing implied by his being a rising sun is that our blessed Savior brings security where there was danger. When it is dark, there is more danger because you can't see the path in front of you. You might fall off a cliff or trip over a log or bang your head against a branch.

When the sun rises, you can move with security. That's the way it is with Christ. He is the way. He puts us in the way. He keeps us in the way. And he points out the way before us, again and again. He shows up the danger and the foolishness of many choices before we make them. He guards us from many evil forces that only have power in the dark.

BEAMS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I have to hurry; but I want you to see the other suggestions in our text.

“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.”
(Malachi 4:2)

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With the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in our souls beams of Righteousness appear in the bitter-sweet work of Holy Ghost conviction (John 16:7-11).

(John 16:7-11) “ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

When the Lord Jesus comes to chosen, redeemed sinners in the mighty operations of his saving grace, he makes things right. He makes the sinner right with God...

- By Blood Atonement — Satisfaction.
- By Free Justification — Imputed Righteousness.
- By Regeneration — New Creation — Imparted Righteousness.

And in the end, he will make right all the wrongs that his people have suffered in this world, so that we do not have to carry the burden of indignation and revenge. He will have the last word in all matters and about all matters.

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HEALING WINGS

This Sun of Righteousness rises with healing in its wings. Did you ever watch the sun rise across the rim of the ocean? A thin line of orange and red appears along the water. Then it intensifies, brighter and brighter, and you see the brightness focusing more and more on the center of the line, until the flaming ball surges up out of the water. And then you watch it rise up, and in a sense it brings that whole red line on the rim of the water up into the air as though the sun had wings.

When Malachi saw that, God told him: the coming of the Messiah will be like that and the effect of his coming will be healing. The Lord Jesus Christ, our great Savior is the great Healer, the great Physician. — “**Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases**” (Psalm 103:3).

- All Temporal, Physical Healing — “*The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness*” (Psalms 41:3).
- All Spiritual Healing
- Everlasting Healing

(Revelation 21:4) “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death,

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neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

BREAKING OUT OF A STALL

Next we are told that, when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings, —”**Ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.**” Those words speak of freedom. When Christ comes to the sinner in saving grace, all is freedom. Bondage is over. When the Sun of Righteousness rises with healing in his wings and we are set free from the stall of bondage, we will not merely walk, or run; we will leap like calves. — “**If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!**”

The word translated “*stall*” comes from a root word that means “tied up” or “yoked.” When the Sun of Righteousness arises in your soul, he breaks the yoke of bondage. The young calf breaks out of the stall into freedom.

- Freed from the Curse of the Law
- Freed from the Bondage of the Law
- Freed from Religious Tradition

All who are born of God are born free!

LEAPING CALVES

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The Lord Jesus not only breaks the stalled calves out of the stall, He breaks stalled calves out of the stall, — He makes the freed calves of grace to be leaping like calves in the open field. The words translated “*grow up*” mean “leap around,” or “become frisky.” Malachi is saying, “When the Sun of Righteousness arises in your souls, you shall break out of the yoke of bondage and frolic about as young calves in the open field. — You shall be free!” — “**Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy!**” (Luke 6:23) — “**By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall**” (Psalm 18:29). I say, give the calves room. Let them leap for joy!

Amen.