



## Going Deeper into

### Malachi 4:1-6 – “Prepared for the Lord”

1. Throughout Malachi, God has contrasted the future hope of the righteous with the judgement of the wicked; in Malachi 4:1-3 we finally see the great upheaval that will come.

Outside of this sermon series on Malachi, when was the last time you heard a lesson, sermon, or talk that mentioned the subject of hell? What was the general tone of that message?

Why do you think hell or the punishment of the unsaved is not mentioned more in church settings?

Which has generally motivated you more in your Christian walk: the hope of heaven or the dread of hell? Why?

Looking at Malachi 4:1-3, what aspects of the coming day of the Lord would you emphasize?

***Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, I praise you for your righteousness and your patience. Guide my thoughts toward the praiseworthy, loving, and just aspects of your plans for humanity. Amen.***

2. One of the applications of the sermon was that salvation was not so much about a location, whether being rescued from hell or received in heaven, but rather the presence of Jesus Christ.

What are your oldest thoughts, or understanding, about what heaven will be like?

What, if anything, has changed regarding your view of heaven since you have grown in your understanding of the Bible?

Read Revelation 21:6-8 & 21:22-22:5. What do you feel is the primary focus of these two passages? How do these passages describe our future relationship with God and Jesus Christ?

Rate the top three aspects of heaven that you are looking forward to the most:

How can you share one of the aspects mentioned above in a gospel conversation with another person? Try to mention at least one of these aspects of heaven during the next gospel conversation you have.

***Pray: Heavenly Father, you have given us a picture of the world to come; help us to hold on to the hope we have in Jesus Christ, so that we will overcome this world and enter into the fullness of our relationship with you. Amen.***

**3. Malachi 4:5-6 foreshadows the coming of a prophet who will turn the people back to God. It also highlights the fact that we need God's help to be able to turn back to him.**

Think about the times in your life that you have turned to God. Who or what has God used to help you turn to him (a sermon, a book, an experience)? What steps did you take as you turned to him?

If someone around you expressed that they were feeling the impression that God wanted them to move closer to him, how would you help them to respond to this feeling?

Part of Elijah's work would be turning "the hearts of fathers to their children." As you have grown as a Christian, how has your heart been turned toward other people, especially your closest relationships?

Read Matthew 5:23-24. Based on this passage and the Malachi passage, what connection do you see between our relationship with God and with one another, especially those we are estranged from?

***Pray: Thank you, Father, for helping me to turn toward you and for pursuing me. Change my heart to be tenderer toward my family and other believers, and help me to pursue those who have something against me, not to push them away. Amen***