

# Healing Wings –The Healing Wings of Ultimate Restoration

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Date: 15 December 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] it's never been the story of Christmas alone and chanting as it is that makes people want to sing all these lovely carols were written by people who really understood what the birth of Jesus means and our final reading takes us back in time again some 450 years before the birth of Jesus to Malachi the very last prophet of the Old Testament era it was his words in fact that Zechariah picked up in his song listen to how Malachi explained the implications of the coming of the Lord the Lord who had promised that he would at last come and make Christmas real the prophet said to the people you have wearied the Lord with your words but you say how have we wearied him by saying everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord and he delights in them or by asking where is the God of justice behold I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight behold he is coming says the Lord of hosts but who can endure the day of his coming and who can stand when he appears for he is like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap for behold the day is coming burning like an oven when all the arrogant and all evil doers will be stubble the day that is coming will set them ablaze says the Lord of hosts so that it will leave them neither root nor branch but for you who fear my name the son of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings you shall go out leaping like calves from the stall and you shall tread down the wicked there will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act says the Lord of hosts if there is a God then why is there such suffering such injustice such war all over our world where is the God of justice now that's a common complaint today but actually it's nothing new in 450 BC in the time of the prophet Malachi he too was addressing in many ways a post-God culture rather like our own people were saying if God is real well he needs to show it where is this God of justice is what they said how should we serve God and why why should we keep his charge his ways when in fact it's the arrogant who seem to be blessed it's the evil who seem to prosper where is this this righteousness this rightness that he stands for well says the Lord through his prophet God's righteousness shall certainly be revealed that day is coming it is a day of searing white hot justice today that will be burning like an oven the day of God's justice will be like a blazing fire of judgment for all who have scoffed at God for all who have rejected his rightness his righteousness and instead chosen unrighteousness chosen evil they will be utterly destroyed he says root and branch but it will be a day of great division because for those who fear the Lord's name he says that day will bring a very different kind of heat

not a destroying heat but quite the opposite a warming a healing a life-giving heat the wings of the sun for you he says the sun of righteousness will rise with healing healing in his wings it's a lovely picture isn't it if the sun's rays like like wings carrying it up into the sky as the dawn breaks wings of wonderful healing wings that bring righteousness that is utter rightness restoration and abundant joy the leaping liberation of of calves the leaping liberation of those who are who are set free from darkness and from bondage into the the glory of everlasting light that's what i want to focus on for a little this evening that the sunrise of christ's coming according to malachi it would at last bring these healing wings of ultimate restoration for humanity and indeed for our whole world he comes says malachi to make all things right again and i want us to think about what that really means and and how it is that the coming of jesus could possibly have achieved that so first in malachi foresaw jesus coming as the rising sun of righteousness the coming of one who would restore all things to rights in this world and to god forever where the prophets promised a coming righteousness that's that's what they meant meant ultimate restoration of all things in the whole world putting everything to rights where everything has gone so badly wrong in our world and that was the promise of god to to a broken world right back at the very beginning of the human disaster story so malachi calls his people at the end of his prophecy to remember the words of mooses long long ago this is what god promised long ago way back in in genesis chapter 3 god promised rebellious mankind that the seed of the woman would one day crush the serpent the destroyer of righteousness in this world and he would restore the rightness of that beautiful picture of eden destroying all the curse of sin and then much later on when when god rescued his people redeeming them out of slavery in egypt he promised that he would be their god forever and that his people would be his treasured possession again that's the language malachi uses of them but of course mooses who spoke those words wasn't naive he spoke very openly about the sin of his people and the fact that they would continue to rebel against god and yet he also knew that god would be faithful faithful to his promise to abraham to bless through his seed all the nations of this earth and mooses it was who first spoke of these latter days when god would restore the world at last to righteousness and that was the promise of all the later prophets that god's righteousness his rightness would be utterly restored to this world he would come and make all things right listen to a few excerpts from the prophet isaiah we heard from him earlier shower oh heavens from above and let the clouds rain down righteousness let the earth open that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit i bring near my righteousness it's not far off and my salvation will not delay my righteousness draws near my salvation has gone out and my arm will judge

the peoples the coastlands hope for me and for my arm they wait the rightness salvation that is what the world longs for that is what god has promised right from the start to make all things right forever and it's so desperately needed because this world is so far from righteousness it's so far short of what it should be think of those words that we heard earlier on from isaiah also chapter 59 what a grim picture it painted of our world do you remember and yet so little has changed didn't you think those words describe our world today violence evil exploitation of the innocent their feet run to evil they're swift to shed innocent blood the way of peace they do not know well we can sing a lot can't we about peace on earth at christmas but there's no peace in the middle east today there's no peace in ukraine and many other places righteousness stands afar off truth has stumbled in the public squares well can you remember a time when in our public life there's been so much that is discredited so much public scorn and leaders have been so mistrusted no one goes to law honestly said isaiah you can't trust the law or the courts you can't trust politicians or big business either they rely on empty pleas he says they speak lies they conceive of mischief they give birth to iniquity could have been written in this morning's newspaper because isaiah's world and malachi's world badly needed a restoration to righteousness and our world today most certainly does but that is what the prophets were promising listen to isaiah again the lord saw it and it displeased him that there was no justice he saw that there was no one to intercede then his own arm brought salvation and his righteousness upheld him he put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on his head no one on earth you see could make things right no prince no politician no president so god himself put on his armor to bring righteousness to a broken world to bring restoration to a deeply fractured world to write all the brokenness all the rupture and to restore true health between the nations within societies within families he himself he himself he said would restore all things and when he does says the prophet it'll be like the sunrise of righteousness that malachi so longs for and isaiah after the after the grim outpouring of the reality about the world he also saw that same light of of beauty that was going to dawn arise shine for your light has come and the glory of the lord has risen upon you for behold darkness shall cover the earth thick darkness the peoples but the lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you and nations shall come to your light and you see centuries after isaiah malachi is saying well remember that remember that promise

hold on to it whenever doubts arise because it's coming it is coming because he is coming but how how can all things be made right when everything's so wrong in our world well the prophets tell us that too because his coming sunrise of righteousness according to malachi will bring these healing wings of reconciliation the ultimate ultimate restoration for our world can only come through ultimate reconciliation above all reconciliation of man to god himself and he came to make people right to make us right with god and for all eternity what is it that is at the root excuse me of all the problems of our world well malachi is very clear he says from the days of your fathers you've turned aside from my statutes and not kept them or as we heard from isaiah your iniquities have made a separation between you and your god your sins your sins have hidden his face from you and that is the root problem you see and israel's story is just mankind's story in miniature there is a huge rift between man and god and that is the problem at the heart of our universe and for righteousness for restoration there has to be a reconciliation there must be the healing mustn't there of that broken relationship that terrible rupture that has inflicted so much damage so much disaster on our world see what the bible calls sin be confused about that it's fundamentally talking about that terrible rupture of right relationship with god and when that relationship is broken every other relationship is broken there's a trail of tragedy we know that don't we even in our human experience it's so sad that when a marriage is ruptured the pain doesn't stop there does it it inflicts pain on the whole family inflicts pain down the generations and that's the way it is in our world the rupture that you read of in genesis chapter 3 that put man at odds with god leads right on to genesis chapter 4 and what do we find man at odds with man brother brother and when you think about it it is relationship rupture that is at the very heart of all our world's problems nation at odds with nation in trade wars and diplomatic wars and often sadly military wars we live in a world where race has been at odds with race and where exploitation where resentment has poisoned whole cultures for generations we live in a world where employers are at odds with employees a world of strife and strikes and misery we live in a world where man is increasingly at odds with women and alas we've seen haven't we relationships destroyed societies fractured communities disintegrate because of all of these ruptures our world is so so wrong in so so many ways and all of it is a result ultimately of the curse

that we brought upon ourselves because as Malachi says from the days of our fathers we have turned aside from God's ways we've rejected him and it is into this sorry mess this tragedy this darkness of our human world that he himself comes with healing healing in his wings the healing wings of reconciliation he himself has to come because he sees that we ourselves are powerless there was no man there was no one to intercede says the Lord not the rulers of our world not the prime ministers not the presidents whether establishment or populist not the civil servants not the United Nations not the European Union not the bombs of NATO not even the prophets or the priests of establishment religion they too are utterly helpless and sadly much of the time they're utterly hopeless but God can and God will bring that reconciliation that's a truly astonishing thing isn't it because God's not blind

[ 17 : 23 ] Isaiah says I have seen their ways says the Lord I've seen their ways but I will heal them the son of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings ultimate restoration through ultimate reconciliation of rebellious human beings you and me to the God of heaven that's how ultimate righteousness comes and only that way think how difficult it is to bring reconciliation between two people never mind two nations at war never mind this whole wide world it is such a monumental task that it takes the mighty intervention of the creator and the lord of this whole universe in a deeply personal way even for that task to begin and friends it is a task that can only be achieved with great and grievous cost and that cost is to God himself because he is the great reconciler

Isaiah speaks of the one that he saw in his vision one high and lifted up on the throne of heaven but he saw him coming to earth and being also lifted up as a servant to die to become that great healer upon him he said was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed that's how these healing wings rose on our world the lord jesus said I when I am lifted up he meant to die on the cross I will draw all people to myself in christ and in his death for our sins the apostle says God was reconciling the world to himself he says through our lord jesus christ we have now received that reconciliation the son of righteousness has risen in the healing wings of true reconciliation that can be ours now now through the lord jesus christ and that is the message of christmas what malachi promised and foresaw it has come in the person of our lord jesus christ and it's true yes we don't yet see all things made right in this world not all things restored far from it but but the bible is not embarrassed about that it's quite clear about that it's quite clear in telling us that the full light of that glory still remains in the future because we're saved in hope the apostle paul tells us the whole creation is still groaning is waiting for the fullness of that day but he says it is a certain hope because of the resurrection of jesus from the dead and the message of christmas is that that restoration has begun daybreak has come already those those healing wings of ultimate restoration they're filtering into the darkness of this world like sunbeams in the morning beginning to chase the shadows away and already you see what that means is that all of those who know and love jesus christ have been touched now by those wonderful beams of light they know what it is to have peace with god through the redeeming restoring love that has been poured into our hearts by the holy spirit of jesus christ christian believers experience already that grace that mercy that love of real reconciliation with our heavenly father and that's the real joy of christmas already we have that through through knowing jesus christ the savior and as a result you see people who love jesus are already experiencing restoration to real health to real health in their earthly relationships even now restoration recreation of right relationships the apostle paul says you see where anyone is in christ behold there is new creation already there is restoration there's an invasion into their life into their personality into their psyche an invasion of rightness and wholeness and healing it's begun already there's a long way to go but but just like a sick man in hospital who has the source of the terrible sepsis cut out and drained out of his body the decisive intervention has happened and now he's

convalescing he's awaiting the final complete restoration of full health and strength that is the message of christmas that is what the coming of jesus christ means for our world and for you but our god and our savior wants you to know the healing wings of ultimate restoration but to know that in your life now already to warm your cold heart to soften your hard heart to restore and to heal your broken heart in the healing wings of his glorious righteousness his rightness that will make all things new and right again and isn't it true that there are so many areas of our lives that need those healing wings of restoration maybe for you tonight it is with your your spouse your wife your husband or your children or your parents perhaps or your in-laws or or some friend some colleague we're all very conscious aren't we of the pain of broken and damaged relationships but the good news of christmas is that the sunrise has begun and even now the warming rays of god's healing grace can touch your life and bring that warmth bring that joy of the lord jesus christ why would why would anyone want to resist that and force themselves instead to to one day have to face that searing fire of his perfect but just and righteous judgment why would you do that when instead you can turn to him today you can experience that glorious warming healing wings of his wonderful mercy you can know it and experience it in your life right now his righteousness the righteousness that one day is going to fill this whole wide world so friends i want to urge you to take malachi's message to heart this christmas the coming of jesus into our world promises the healing wings of ultimate restoration he came to make all things right and he wants to make you right this christmas right now today and that's what this christmas season is all about for our sake he made him who had no sin to be sin that in him we might become the righteousness the rightness of god so will you be reconciled to god will you be part of that glorious future of righteousness i don't know why anyone would want to do anything else this christmas amen let's pray together oh come all ye faithful come joyful and triumphant to bethlehem behold him born the king of angels come let us adore him christ the lord and may that be indeed the response of all of our hearts this christmas time amen tonight