**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**March 18th 2018. Living with the end in mind**

**Discussion notes: Day of the Lord: Malachi 4.**

Stephen Covey, best-selling author of ‘7 habits of highly effective people’ says ‘begin with the end in mind’. The Bible narratives all point towards an end and Jesus’ parables often address those who fail to live with the end in mind. Malachi in the last book and the last verses of the Old Testament points towards the great and terrible day of the Lord. If it happened tomorrow would that be good news or bad news as far as you are concerned?

1. How is the prophecy in Malachi about Elijah fulfilled in the eyes of the New Testament writers? (e.g. Matthew 3:12)
2. What do you think it means to ‘turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers to the children’ lest the land be ‘cursed’?
3. The division between those consumed by the fire of that day, and those released from captivity like calves from a stall, seem very stark in Malachi’s prophecy. Does Jesus really bring that kind of division? (Matthew 10)
4. How motivated are we to engage in ‘turning of hearts’? Is this what John the Baptist was doing? How can we do that today?

The picture of the end of the age and our present reality could be compared with a pregnancy. New life is definitely there but it isn’t ‘born’ yet. Matthew 24:8 talks about turmoil in the world being like ‘the beginning of birth pangs’. Do you think there is an acceleration of this process today? What is it like to live in the ‘now and not yet’? Are we seeing people released from captivity today? Is there any sense of judgement and accountability to God now or are we waiting for that to happen?