Title: The interpretation of "sun of righteousness" with wings in Malachi 4:2

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Abstract:

Divided understandings of the “Sun of righteousness” that was to arise with healing in its wings was an issue. The disagreement on the interpretation is whether the metaphorical figure of the Sun of righteousness refers to a personal agent or an abstract metaphor for divine salvation. According to a critical view, it is an influence of Zoroastrianism. The “Sun of righteousness” is a symbolic description of Yhwh’s self-revelation on Yhwh’s day with reference to the messianic figure who has been manifesting Himself in various stages of the Old Testament history. Since the winged sun disk as a symbol of divinity was a common emblem, the relationship between the winged sun disk and Malachi’s “Sun of righteousness” need to be analyzed.

The critical analysis of the winged sun disk depictions in the ancient Near Eastern arts reveals that it is likely to have originated from the common source of theophanic divine self-manifestation. Furthermore, the winged sun disk portrait is one of the most common religious emblems in the ancient Near East and it may be considered as a common symbol of divinity. The depictions from Mesopotamia, Syria and Persia find certain similarities with the Old Testament portraits of Hebrew God. There are evidences of winged sun disk symbols adapted by Hebrew kings as the symbol of divinity also. Since the Assyrian and Achaemenid Persian kings had a seeming affinity with Hebrew religion, their common portraits of winged sun disk may
suggest some common religious features. Therefore, the prophet Malachi may have juxtaposed the “Sun of righteousness” with his contemporary symbol of divinity.

Exegetical analysis indicates that the metaphorical figure of Malachi is \textit{Yhwh}, the forthcoming promised “Lord,” “the Messenger of the covenant” (Mal 3:1). Moreover, the parallel between “My messenger” (3:1) and “Elijah” (4:5) who would prepare the way for \textit{Yhwh} (of host) and the call for the repentance before the dreadful day of \textit{Yhwh} ratify that the “Sun of righteousness” is a metaphorical figure of Messiah.