

Sunday October 13<sup>th</sup> 2013  
Malachi – God’s Messenger  
Part One

1). Pr 12:15 ¶ *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.*

We have seen in our previous weeks of study that the legacy of fools is shame whereas those who are wise will inherit glory and it is without doubt true to say that our Father provides all the ‘counsel’ that we need that we should not be foolish and yet our nature is such that we will fluctuate between being wise and foolish throughout most, if not all, of our Christian life. Such would inevitably be the case because this is just what we see with regards to the Children of Israel throughout the OT – Jg 17:6 *In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*

Jg 2:11 *Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;.....14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.....16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers,*

a). The history of the Children of Israel has been marked by a continuing cycle of unfaithfulness followed by repentance and restoration followed again by unfaithfulness.

b). The unfaithfulness of the nation always led to times of oppression and captivity, yet despite the chastening they brought on themselves God was always ‘moved to pity by their groaning’ and delivered them as they cried out to Him.

c). And within the context of this unfaithful – faithful - unfaithful cycle, after the historical kingdom had been divided following Solomon’s death, Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians and then Judah by the Babylonians - who also conquered the Assyrian empire. The Babylonian empire and the captivity lasted for 70 years and in the same time that the Babylonians were overcome by the Medes and Persians so a remnant of Jews returned to the land exactly as God had said.

d). The very thing we see in - Da 9:1 ¶ *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans- 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*

e). And it is about 100 years on from this time, the Temple having been re-built in the days of Haggai and Zechariah and the wall of the city re-built by Nehemiah that we come to the writing of the Book called ‘Malachi’ that is to be the subject of our study.

f). And by this time, 100 or so years on from the captivity, the nation was once again headed down the path to unfaithfulness, complacency and contempt, having forgotten the lessons that God had previously taught them – coming to the very state that we have seen described by Isaiah - Isa 1:5 *Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.*

g). The name ‘Malachi’ literally means, ‘the messenger of Yahweh’ [God’s messenger] – and that which is written in this Book is the last that God speaks to the nation of Israel through a prophet for 400 years, until the coming of John the Baptist - Mt 3:1 ¶ *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"*

h). This Book then constitutes the ‘counsel’ of God that is to be heeded by the wise in Israel – there is then, as far as the Lord is concerned, nothing further that needs to be said to the nation than this.

2). Ga 4:4 *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

a). So then the words that Malachi writes in this last Book of the OT are the final admonishments and final encouragements given to the people of God for the purpose of carrying them through the 400 years as they wait for the coming of Messiah for the purpose of establishing His Kingdom.

b). And what is so intriguing for us is that God has also spoken to us in the last Book of the NT, the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, giving us the final admonishments and encouragements to carry us through the time of this dispensation as we wait for the coming of the Son of Man to establish His Kingdom in glory and power. That which the Lord says to His Church in Revelation Chapters 2-3 constitutes the 'counsel' of God that is to be heeded by the wise, and there is then, as the Day approaches, as far as the Lord is concerned, nothing further that needs to be said to us.

c). Mal 1:2 *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?'"*

Re 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."*

d). Not only then does Malachi parallel Revelation Chapters 2-3, but the spiritual condition of Israel as seen in Isaiah also parallels the spiritual condition of the 'church' as it would be at our Lord's return –

Re 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

e). Because the spiritual condition of Israel so closely parallels the present spiritual condition of Christendom and because the intent of the final words which God had to say through Malachi to Israel parallel God's intent through the final words He speaks to His Church, that which God said through Malachi will inevitably be most instructive for us.

3). Mal 1:1 ¶ *The burden of the word [ lit. oracle/prophecy] of the LORD to Israel by [by the hand of] Malachi.*

a). The first thing we will note here is that this is 'the word of the Lord to Israel' and this is significant because there are other occasions where we see 'the word of the Lord against Israel' as we see in - Jer 36:2 *"Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day."*

b). When God 'speaks against' someone this is when He is in direct opposition to those to whom He speaks just as we see in this next scripture with regards to Judah before the Babylonian captivity recorded in – Jer 21:5 *"I Myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. 6 "I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence.* But when He 'speaks to' someone this is the time when His voice can still be heard and heeded – this is the time for repentance, this is the time to get it right whilst looking to the promise given for faithfulness.

c). This is certainly what we see with respect to Malachi and what we see with respect to the 7 Churches in Revelation - Re 2:7 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*

d). Mal 4:1 ¶ *"For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

e). God's purpose is glorious and regal, His mercy and grace ever available for those with ears to hear, but there is coming a Day for all Christians when mercy and grace will be replaced by judgment - Ps 98:3 *He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

f). Ro 11:22 *Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*

4). Mal 1:2 *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?'"*

a). There is a sense of deep sadness giving way to indignation at the beginning of verse 2 as God makes the statement 'I have loved you' – and the way this is written in the original language would tell us, 'I have loved you and continue to love you' – to which Israel replies 'In what way have you loved us?'

b). It seems that they do not see God's love for them either in their past or in their present. With the passing of the years from the Babylonian captivity the memory seems to have faded and they have forgotten that they were in captivity and that God had sent them there to teach them, but now

with the passing of time and their lives having become 'easier' their need for and reliance upon the Lord diminishes and they drift away not having given the more earnest heed to the things they have heard.

c). Here then is the love of God for His people Israel - Isa 43:3 *For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in your place. 4 Since you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you; Therefore I will give men for you, And people for your life. 5 Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather you from the west; 6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!' Bring My sons from afar, And My daughters from the ends of the earth-*

d). As we see here in Isaiah God's love for His people is expressed in salvation and deliverance – both in the past when they were brought out of Egypt and looking to the future when He will bring them back from the captivity during the Tribulation - Jer 31:1 ¶ *"At the same time," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people." 2 Thus says the LORD: "The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness-Israel, when I went to give him rest." 3 The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. 4 Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice. 5 You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; The planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food. 6 For there shall be a day When the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the LORD our God.'"*

e). God's love for His people is seen in their separation from other peoples and their multiplication in number while in Egypt to form and create a nation that would be at the head of the nations with the God of the Universe in their midst - Ge 46:2 *Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." 3 So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. 4 "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."*

Isa 43:1 ¶ *But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*

f). His love for His people is seen in their adoption as a firstborn son with the rights of rulership over the earth, His destruction of the Egyptians,

the goodness of the land of promise; in His covenants and His promises and His love for His people is seen in His faithfulness and compassion despite their unfaithfulness and disobedience - Mal 3:6 *"For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.*

g). And yet despite all of this and more, all that is documented in Moses and the prophets concerning it, Israel still asked the question, 'In what way have you loved us?'

i). And this is a question that we will ask, even if we do not voice it out loud, unless we maintain a proper perspective on the love God has for us – especially when life appears to be good and we come to think that we have little need of God as we have become rich and in need of nothing.

5). Ro 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

a). This is no small thing – we were dead in trespasses and sins, totally within the sway of the wicked one and yet so great is God's love for us, that even though we could choose to reject Him, Christ died for us – His life was given that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin – His blood was shed that our sin could continually be cleansed and He has offered us, through His sacrifice, resurrection and High Priestly ministry, the opportunity to be adopted as a firstborn son, to be a joint heir with the King of kings and the Lord of lords – this is God's love for us.

b). Heb 12:5 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

c). And as we have seen here in Hebrews on a previous occasion, the Lord chastens those whom He loves, the child training of the Lord – and we have also seen that the original recipients of this letter had forgotten this – and in their forgetting we can hear the words, 'In what way have You loved us? This possibility we must keep ever before us – the original recipients of this letter were not seeing the love of God in their suffering, but we must.

d). To question God's love is to deny His very nature and character – to deny who He is - 1Jo 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.*

e). And if we have truly seen the love of God for us, and continue to see it even through our times of suffering and our times of ease, if we really have grasped this as a reality then this will inevitably effect how we relate to one another – Joh 15:12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

Jude 1:21 *keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal [age lasting] life.*

f). God's love for us then is inseparable from His purpose for us, a purpose that is to be realized at His coming, fulfilled in His Kingdom power and glory - Tit 2:11 ¶ *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing [lit. the appearing of the glory] of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.*

g). But what did we see in - Re 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*

h). Our first love is our love of His appearing in His Kingdom glory, our redemption of soul and body, our inheritance, His Kingdom rule and the overthrow of evil and as His appearing in this fashion is His love for us, to leave our first love is to call into question that love – 'In what way have You loved us?' To call into question our redemption of soul and body, our inheritance, His Kingdom rule and the overthrow of evil – it is to turn our attention from the purpose of His love and the love of His purpose to the things of this world and the god of this world.

6). Mal 1:2 *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; 3 But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness."*

a). In response to the question, 'In what way have You loved us?' the Lord draws attention to the fact that Isaac had 2 children, Esau and Jacob, and yet it was Jacob, the one who is their father, whom He had loved and not Esau. And we would know that His love for Jacob is expressed even before Jacob's birth - Ge 25:23 *And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."*

God's decision concerning the 2 being made before either one was able to do anything.

b). It is to Jacob alone, not Esau, that the covenants and promises are given - *Ge 35:9 Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. 11 Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 "The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land."*

c). And the extent of God's love for Jacob is demonstrated in the contrast between love on the one hand and hate on the other.

d). Now we will realize that when God says, 'Esau I have hated', that this is not random. That God 'hated' Esau, literally to be personally opposed to him, cannot be separated from His foreknowledge of Esau's actions - *Ge 25:34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

e). Here then is the basis for God's opposition to Esau and indeed the basis for His opposition against all those who would despise their birthright as Esau did.

f). And here also is the irreversible law of God set in place before time began that the first shall be replaced by the second - this is so because this is how God decided it would be, whether we are dealing with the first man and the second Man, our first birth and our new birth, Isaac and Ishmael or Jacob and Esau and this is the very thing that Paul draws attention to by referencing this verse in Malachi in - *Ro 9:7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son." 10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

g). *Ga 4:30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with*

*the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

This is the way God has set things in motion, in complete keeping with His nature and character - Pr 8:13 *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil;*

And there is nothing that we have to say about it - Ro 9:20 *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?*

h). We have nothing to say about that which God has established, it is what it is – but the good news is that we can choose whether or not we will be a vessel for honor or a vessel for dishonor, but God's decision with respect to the outcome for either will never change.

7). Therefore, in God's statement in Malachi we see not only the sovereignty of God to set in place things as He wishes, in accord with who He is, but also spiritual truth concerning that which He has set in place which will never change – those typified by Esau will always have God in opposition to them and those typified by Jacob will always have God's love and blessing – Those typified by Esau will never receive an inheritance in His coming Kingdom whereas those typified by Jacob will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

a). And here, recorded in Malachi, we find Israel once again coming close to despising their birthright, walking in the footsteps of Esau, being enmeshed and entangled in the things of this world –Mal 2:11 *Judah has dealt treacherously, And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, For Judah has profaned The LORD'S holy institution which He loves: He has married the daughter of a foreign god.*

j). To tell them that He loved Jacob and hated Esau contains the warning that His love is always for the righteous, but His anger is against the wicked. That His love is for those who set their mind on Him, but those who set their mind on earthly things He will hate - Ge 25:27 *So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.*

k). 1Jo 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Php 3:18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is*

*destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

l). And for ourselves of course it is Esau whom we find at the apex of the warnings in the Book of Hebrews - Heb 12:14 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

m). But this will have to wait until next time, if the Lord is willing.