

Sunday January 5th 2014
Malachi – God’s Messenger
Part Ten

1). 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. 12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this, being awake and aware, Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!*

a). We have seen in previous weeks how the priests of Malachi’s day had come to be contemptible of God as their Father by failing to realize the multifaceted demonstrations of His love towards them from the days of Abraham onwards which resulted in their deliberate mishandling of His Word and incorrect teaching causing many to stumble.

b). What was at stake in this of course was the Father / son relationship that speaks of rulership, as only firstborn sons of God can rule in the Kingdom which is yet to come - Ex 4:22 *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

c). To fail to give their Father the honor and reverence that should have been His was to treat with scorn their position as a firstborn son, thereby rejecting the reason for their creation.

d). And then to view this from our own perspective we had realized that we are at present children of God within the family of God looking to be adopted as a firstborn son at Christ’s Judgment Seat - 1Jo 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

e). In order for this to be accomplished however, we are in the present to give God, as our Father, the honor and reverence that is due Him by submitting to His child training in faithful obedience to His Word just as we are admonished to do in - 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? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become*

partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

f) Again what is at stake here is rulership in the coming Kingdom, and our failure to properly submit ourselves to our Father's training must result in our being regarded as 'illegitimate', thereby being rejected from the position of a firstborn ruling son.

2). Then in our opening verses this morning from Malachi Chapter 2 we see that both parts of the divided historical kingdom, Judah and Israel, therefore the whole of the Jewish people, had committed harlotry by marrying the daughter of a foreign god and have as a result 'profaned the Lord's holy institution which He loves' described for us here in - *Ezr 9:1 ¶ When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2 "For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass."*

With further commentary on this from - *Ne 13:23 ¶ In those days I also saw Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 24 And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people. 25 So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves."*

a). We see that we are looking at the assimilation of the people of God into the pagan nations that surrounded them, both condoning and participating in their godless practices, whilst maintaining, in their own eyes at least, their relationship with God - *Jer 3:13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the LORD. 14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion."*

b). As we see here in Jeremiah Israel is married to God the Father and therefore their involvement with the pagan nations is viewed as adultery or

harlotry – and here we see another facet of the picture of rulership that Israel treats with contempt.

c). Rulership in the coming Kingdom is pictured as taking place within 2 relationships – the first we have already seen being the Father and the firstborn son. The second is that which we see here within a husband / wife relationship. From the beginning, in foundation, God had set in place rulership within a marriage relationship - *Ge 1:27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion.....*

The Man, in this case picturing God in the person of Father, has determined that He will not rule apart from a wife and likewise God in the person of Son.

d). To be a firstborn son would automatically make Israel the wife of Jehovah and to be the wife of Jehovah would automatically make them a firstborn son. And the same of course would be true for us with respect to Christ.

e). And again, to deal falsely with the One who is their Husband is to reject the position of rulership to which they are called and to bring contempt and shame upon their Husband.

f). Israel's treatment of God as their Father and as their Husband are inextricably linked and really are one and the same thing – it would not be possible to act correctly in one relationship and not the other and vice versa.

3). Now we had seen last time how the origins of Israel's harlotry can be found in the doctrine of Balaam who was commissioned by Balak to bring a curse on the nation so as to prevent them from fulfilling God's purpose for them in the land – *Nu 22:2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4 So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 "Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."*

a). We see then a Gentile king under the god of this world attempting to thwart God's purpose for His chosen people, who are His firstborn son and His wife, and at the heart of this is the god of this world attempting to thwart the purpose of God – period.

b). But here's the thing, the desire to be involved in pagan practices did not begin with the teaching of Balaam – it was already there, passed on from the previous generation, in the golden calf incident - Ex 32:4 *And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"* 5 *So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD."* 6 *Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* 7 ¶ *And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. 8 "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them.*

c). What Balaam did, with the next generation, was to legitimize in the eyes of the people the wicked desires of their own hearts – Now this supposed legitimacy was found in the fact that Balaam was a prophet and a prophet to whom God spoke personally - Nu 22:12 *And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."*

d). That which God says to Balaam regarding Balak's request is quite clear and yet Balaam must reject this command of the Lord in order to proceed. In this we would see him to be a false prophet. From God's perspective then Balaam is a false prophet, but from the perspective of the disobedient in Israel his status as a prophet of God makes legitimate the desires of their own heart which he teaches as acceptable in the eyes of God. We will remember that the scriptures warn us that sin is deceptive as we will remember from - Heb 3:13 *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

e). So we can easily see then how the hearts of the people of Israel would become hardened against the Word of God as they deceive themselves into thinking that, that taught by Balaam would be acceptable to God. In fact there is another NT scripture that we could add here that would also describe this situation for us - 2Ti 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;*

f). Now all this is significant for us, not only because of our verse here from 2 Timothy, but also because of this which we see in - 2Pe 2:1 ¶ *But there*

were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

g). There will, according to this verse, be false teachers within the 'Church' even as there were false prophets among Israel. And these false teachers bring in heresies that lead to destruction for those who follow them.

h). With all this in mind then let's remember what we found in – Re 2:14 *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.*

i). Here then is part of the Judgment of the Church at Christ's Judgment Seat and we see that there are those in the Church who 'hold' the doctrine of Balaam, the implication being that they teach this doctrine just as Balaam did.

j). What we realize then is that within the Church at large, and maybe throughout much of the Church, there are those who through their position within the Church – whether they be pastor/teachers or evangelists, or call themselves bishops, apostles, prophets etc. legitimize that which is false – who teach that God is OK with the assimilation of Christians into the things of this world – which is exactly what many want to hear, just as we have seen with the example of Israel and corroborated in our 2 Timothy scripture.

k). At the heart of this is the god of this world attempting to thwart the purpose of God, the god of this world who has brought into the Church deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons through finding a place of acceptance with the Church which has grown after a fashion it was never supposed to do as we note from the Matthew 13 parables.

l). And all of this has come about through a corruption of and stepping away from the Word of the Kingdom, the leaven placed in the 3 measures of meal, which is exactly where we see the problem arising for the priests of Malachi's day.

m). What we will begin to understand then is that the greatest danger for Christians being embroiled in the things of the world does not necessarily come from the world itself but from worldliness within the ranks of Christendom that would even seek to adhere itself to those in pursuit of the Kingdom. Just because something is 'Christian' does not automatically make it safe or of God – everything must be tested against the Word of Truth and all doctrine must be thoroughly examined.

n). I think we know the scriptures only too well - Jas 4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with*

God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

Ro 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2Co 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted-- you may well put up with it!

o). We are betrothed to Christ awaiting the Day when we might become His wife and as we await that Day we are to remain 'a chaste virgin' – to involve ourselves with the present world system is to commit spiritual adultery and the consequences of doing so will be great.

p). And we have seen from Malachi Chapter 2 that those involved in spiritual adultery, who are 'awake and aware' yet still bring an offering to the Lord would be 'cut off from the tents of Jacob' – again for ourselves, we have the Word of God, we have received the Word of truth, therefore we could only be involved in the present world system being 'awake and aware', there is no possibility of ignorance on our part. And if we still bring an offering to the Lord we could only expect the same outcome as the Jews of Malachi's day – *2Co 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."*

4). Our verses in Malachi then continue - *Mal 2:13 And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. 14 Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt*

treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant. 15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. 16 "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

a). V13 here continues the thought from v 12 – those committing spiritual adultery still bring an offering to the Lord, but the Lord ‘does not regard the offering anymore’, nor will He ‘receive it with goodwill from your hands’ – and as a consequence those bringing the offering ‘cover the altar of the Lord with tears, With weeping and crying’.

b). In other words their prayers are not answered and their petitions not granted, nor their sin forgiven – all of which leads them to ask the question, ‘For what reason?’ – to which the answer is simple - *Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.*

c). We might remember that the treacherous nature of their relationship with God as their Father had resulted in them dealing treacherously each man with his brother - Mal 2:10 ¶ *Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another By profaning the covenant of the fathers?*

We had seen how the relationship with God as Father has a direct impact on the relationship of one with another – brother with brother.

d). And this is the same thought from a different perspective that we find in these verses – God had the expectation that those who were married should treat their wives after the same fashion as He treated the nation as their Husband – but this is clearly not the case as those in Israel have dealt treacherously with, ‘the wife of your youth’.

e). This phrase ‘the wife of your youth’ appears one other place in the scriptures and to see its use elsewhere in context will help us to understand what has taken place - Pr 5:15 ¶ *Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well. 16 Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. 19 As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love. 20 For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress? 21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths. 22 His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is*

caught in the cords of his sin. 23 He shall die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

f). Spiritual adultery had led to physical adultery and the profaning of the covenants of the fathers had led to profaning the covenant with their wives – but here is the thing, according to Malachi 2:14 the Lord has been a witness between them and the wife of their youth and is the guardian and protector of the covenant made between husband and wife - 1Th 4:3 *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 1Co 7:2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.*

g). Now let's understand from the outset that God is a personal witness to the vows made between a husband and a wife – from a legal standpoint there are 2 witnesses that sign the marriage license, but there is a far greater Witness whom we should be aware of and be in fear of who will not let human law supersede His holy law and who will not allow treachery within the marriage relationship to go unnoticed.

h). And again at the heart of this is the marriage relationship with respect to rulership – to destroy the marriage relationship on an individual level is to destroy the picture and pour contempt upon God's stated purpose.

i). The significance of this is of course found in foundation which is where v15 of Malachi Chapter 2 takes us - *15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.*

j). At the beginning God made the Man and the Woman 'one flesh' – He made them 'one' – and He did this even though He had a remnant of the Spirit. The thought here is that God could have created the Woman after exactly the same fashion as He created the Man, but chose not to do so, choosing rather for the Woman to be in the Man at his creation to then be formed from the Man.

k). Jesus speaks of this very thing in - Mt 19:3 ¶ *The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" 4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'*

5 "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" 8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

l). From God's perspective then as a man and a woman become married so He has 'joined them together' after the same fashion as the Man and the Woman were of one flesh in the Garden – what God has 'joined' together, man has no business trying to separate – and we will notice from the verses in Matthew that, "*Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.*"

m). It is then the hardening of the heart, not against the spouse, although this will happen, but against the commands of God that led to Moses permitting a certificate of divorce – but from the beginning it was not so.

n). You see within the scriptures we have the commands given with respect to the role and responsibility of the husband and wife and each spouse should soften their heart to the commands of Christ and in faithful obedience do that which the Lord requires of them. Should this be the case then the one flesh cannot be separated, neither could either spouse deal treacherously with the other and in so doing deal treacherously with our Heavenly Bridegroom.

o). If there are fights, contentions and bitterness within our marriages then one or other or both spouses are in sin and such a situation does not need to be prayed about, it needs repentance followed by faithful obedience to the scriptures – this is an individual responsibility irrespective of the response of the spouse.

o). Now according to our verses in Malachi, *the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence, But this will have to wait until next time, if the Lord is willing.*