

Sunday January 26<sup>th</sup> 2014  
Malachi – God’s Messenger  
Part Thirteen

1). Mal 3:1 ¶ *"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, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.*

a). In the midst of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God and their treachery towards each other comes the reiteration of an age old promise which was first detailed in the Garden - Ge 3:15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

b). It is the promise of the coming of the Seed of the Woman to overthrow the present system of rulership, the promise that ‘the Lord whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple’, the promise that proclaims the justice, faithfulness and mercy of the Lord as He remembers and honors the covenant made with His servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with respect to a land and with respect to the rulership that will emanate from that land in complete fulfillment of His Word.

c). And as a precursor to this momentous event the Lord will send His messenger to prepare the way before Him to make ready a people who will be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

d). And with this in mind it is interesting to note that Malachi is literally God’s Messenger, who has brought from the Lord a message of conviction and repentance for a disobedient nation in anticipation of Christ’s first advent.

e). And it is also interesting to note that the last words God gives to His messenger for the nation as recorded in - Mal 4:5 *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."*

Are the first words spoken by the angel Gabriel as the messenger of God to Zacharias, who will be the father of John the Baptist, preceding the births of both John and the Messiah recorded in the opening verses of the Book of Luke Lu 1:16 *"And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17*

*"He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

f). To read these words spoken by Gabriel makes it seem as if the previous 400 years had not intervened and that God was moving directly to beginning to fulfill that which He had promised – Amazing though these events concerning the birth and ministry of John and Christ's first advent are they remain just a partial fulfillment of that which has been promised. Although John is God's messenger preparing the way for the coming of Messiah he makes a very clear statement with regards to his identity – Joh 1:19 ¶ *Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."*

g). He is not Elijah and therefore the fullness of God's promise cannot be completed at this time, but nonetheless, even though these events are a partial fulfillment of that which God had promised accompanied by a call to repentance through His messenger John they are by no means insignificant as these events make possible and make even more certain the complete fulfillment which is to come, just as prophesied in the scriptures – a partial fulfillment of this nature with God's ultimate purpose in view, would also be true of the events of the Day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection as recorded in - Ac 2:15 *"For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.'*

h). What took place this day was, 'what was spoken by the prophet Joel', but was not brought to fulfillment at that time because there was no national repentance on the part of Israel – however, the very fact that this prophecy began to be fulfilled confirms both its authenticity within prophecy and its

future completion; all of which speak to God's faithfulness to the nation with regards to their future restoration and regality.

i). And then, as we ponder on God's dealings with Israel, we might remember the parallels that we have seen between the Book of Malachi and the opening Chapters of the Revelation, seeing through these parallels that the spiritual condition of Israel in Malachi's day is essentially the same as the spiritual condition of the 'Church' today. And with this in mind it is interesting to note how Christ begins to deal with the 7 churches as recorded in that Book Re 2:1 ¶ *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write....."*

j). The word translated 'angel' here is the Greek word, 'aggelos', which literally translated is 'messenger' – it may well be an angelic messenger in this instance, but the word angel does not convey of itself the idea of a messenger, which I think would be more helpful for our understanding. He doesn't just impart these things to His angels, but He imparts them to His angels for a purpose – [speaking of angels] Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

k). And do you remember what is essentially the message given by Christ to these angelic messengers to be conveyed to all the eternally saved of this dispensation? It is a message of conviction of sin and a call to repentance within the context of the impending and inevitable Judgment of the Church with the promise of regality for those with ears to hear, as we see in these examples - Re 2:14 *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam.....16 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Re 2:20 "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.....26 "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—*

l). And in our 2 examples given to the 'Church' at large through that spoken to the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira we find reference to the same spiritual harlotry brought about through Balaam in the days of Moses and reference to the same spiritual darkness present in the days of Israel's greatest depravity brought about through Jezebel, the wife of king Ahab, in the days of Elijah, within the 'Church' of these last days prior to the Lord's second coming - Mal 4:4 ¶ *"Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments. 5*

*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.*

And it is with reference to both Moses and Elijah that the Lord finishes all He has to say to Israel at the conclusion of the Book of Malachi and it would be good for us to remember what happened to Israel in the days of Moses because of Balaam and the depth to which the nation had sunk during Elijah's day as we consider the state of Christendom and our part in it as Man's Day approaches its end - 1Co 10:11 *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

m). And those with ears to hear during this present dispensation should be convicted of their sin and heed the call to repentance before Judgment comes - Re 3:18 *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

n). And we cannot help but hear the echoes of the refiner's fire of Malachi Chapter 3 – for Israel the refiner's fire is to purify the priesthood of Levi for their ministry in the Millennial Temple, and for the eternally saved we see the purification of those with ears to hear so that they may become kings and priests for the purpose of ministry in and from the New Jerusalem.

o). In that Day, yet future, the Levites as a result of their purification will again bring an offering in righteousness as in the days of old and in anticipation of that same Day and their future ministry those of the eternally saved who are presently buying for themselves gold refined in the fire are now to continually bring an offering in righteousness before the Lord as described for us in – Ro 12:1 ¶ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

p). The parallels between Israel immediately prior to the Lord's first advent and the 'Church' immediately prior to His second advent have been inescapable, a fact that must inevitably lead us to conclude that, that which the Lord says to Israel with respect to tithes and offerings must find its parallel within the 'Church' also.

2). Mal 3:8 *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; 12 "And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts.*

a). We had seen last week that Israel's withholding of tithes and offerings was classified by God as robbery – they had stolen that which belonged to God – and here is the thing to remember in this – the tenth part of their increase was God's, it was not theirs, and they were therefore to give to God that which was His in recognition of the fact that all that they had came from His hands – He caused the land to produce abundantly and gave them the power to get wealth - De 8:18 *"And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.* And the tithe was an act of faith in recognition of this.

b). And we will notice from our scripture that this is all for the purpose of establishing His covenant which He swore to their fathers – a covenant that has regality as its focus and the 7<sup>th</sup> Day as its fulfillment.

c). And so the tithe and the offering cannot be separated from God's purpose for the nation – regality as a firstborn son within the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

d). And as we know regality for Israel is to be accomplished within the land, the same land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – therefore the withholding of the tithes and offerings transgresses God's covenant purpose, thereby causing the land to be dealt with treacherously.

e). The land was to be a delightful land and all the nations were to call Israel blessed because of it – yet because of their treachery, instead of blessing the land would be cursed.

f). This is a principle that is established in the opening Chapters of Genesis - Ge 3:17 ¶ *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.*

g). Exactly as we see in Malachi 3:9 *You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.*

Which echoes that seen in - Mal 2:2 *If you will not hear, And if you will not take it to heart, To give glory to My name," Says the LORD of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, Because you do not take it to heart.*

h). And is described in - Mal 3:11 *"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,*

i). All that is required for this state of affairs to be reversed is for Israel to return to God so that He will return to them – and if they would do this the promise is that He would cause the land to produce so abundantly for them that the tithe would increase to such an extent that there would not be room in the storehouse in which the tithe was kept to contain it.

3). And what we see with the tithes and offerings being directly connected to God's purpose for Man can be traced back to the origin of the tithe that we find in Genesis - Ge 14:18 *Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.*

a). The picture here of course is not lost on us – Melchizedek is a type of Christ as the great King/Priest and Melchizedek's encounter with Abraham comes after the battle with the kings in which Abraham has been victorious. And as we see Melchizedek blesses Abraham with respect to both realms of the Kingdom, the heavens and the earth and he blesses God who has delivered Abraham's enemies into his hands.

b). God Most High is the 'Possessor' of heaven and earth which He has promised to Abraham's descendants and it is God Most High who is responsible for the overthrow of the kings – all of which looks to a future time when the descendants of Abraham, both physical and spiritual, will possess the heavenly and earthly realms of the Kingdom and Satan and his angels along with Gentile world power will have been overthrown – and it is within both this immediate and prophetic context that Abraham gives Melchizedek the tithe, the tenth of all - Ge 22:17 *"blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

c). We might also remember the commentary that we find on this encounter between Abraham and Melchizedek in - Heb 7:1 ¶ *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.*

d). Now the Book of Hebrews we will remember is a Book that has the Millennial Kingdom as its focus - Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

e). A Book that deals with those who are partakers of the heavenly calling with respect to their faith to that end – and it would be quite clear from that which we have looked at in Hebrews 11:9-10 that Abraham's actions were in response to his faith – he believed that which God had said and acted accordingly – and so within this context we must conclude that Abraham's giving of the tithe was not a spontaneous, random event, but rather an act of faith in response to that which God had previously said.

f). There is no scriptural record of God instituting the tithe but this does not mean to say that He didn't – there is no scriptural record of Abraham's eternal salvation either and yet we know that to be certain – in fact we could trace this back to man's earliest days and the offerings brought by Cain and Abel.

g). We see the same thing with Abraham's grandson, Jacob, from whom the nation of Israel comes, who is also described in Hebrews 11:9 as a man of faith looking to the same promises – Ge 28:20 *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 "so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. 22 "And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth*

h). Now what is important to note about the tithe with respect to Abraham and Jacob is that it was set in place before the giving of the Law of

Moses – it was set in place during a period of grace not during the period of the Law – and it was set in place with respect to both the heavenly and earthly realms of the Kingdom and was practiced by those in pursuit of the promises of God with respect to this.

4). This tithe did not pass away but was current within the Mosaic economy as the descendants of Jacob continued that which was done by Abraham and his grandson. Then, in addition to this the Law of Moses also included another 2 tithes, making 3 altogether. And it was all of these that those of Malachi's day had failed in.

a). We find commentary on the introduction of the Law, and therefore the introduction of the additional tithes, in - *Ga 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19 ¶ What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

b). Our verses here confirm for us that rulership with regards to the earthly and heavenly realms of the Kingdom under the sovereignty of Christ was given by promise and would therefore be inextricably connected to faith – it could not be brought about through and nor could it be annulled by the Law *Ro 4:13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*

c). The Law as we see was introduced 'because of transgressions' – hence the 2 additional tithes introduced by Moses could only have been given because of transgressions concerning the original tithe.

d). We are also told in these verses from Galatians that the Law was in existence 'till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made' – at Christ's first advent then our Lord fulfilled the Law which then passed out of

existence - Mt 5:17 ¶ *"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.*

e). With the passing of the Law the 2 tithes added by Moses also passed away, but the original tithe which is not under the Law but under grace did not – it could no more be annulled or removed by the termination of the Law than the promise to which it is connected.

f). It existed with respect to faith some 400 years or so before the Law – it existed, still with respect to faith, during the period of the Law, and continues to exist with respect to faith even now, and will continue until the promise is fulfilled in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day.

g). And interestingly enough as our Lord fulfilled the Law we must know that He paid the tithe also – it could not have been any other way. Note what He says recorded in - Lu 11:42 *"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

h). And what He says concerning tax money in - Mt 22:19 *"Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

i). So then, to bring all of this into our own context, we will realize that we pay taxes to the government because that is the correct thing to do scripturally – we believe what the scriptures say and act accordingly – Ro 13:7 ¶ *Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

j). And if we would do this with respect to the earthly authorities that the Lord has set in place we must also render to God the things that are God's as we willingly choose to subject ourselves to the God of the Universe – Ga 3:5 *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? -- 6 ¶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

*Ga 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

k). We will continue with this next time – If the Lord is willing.