

Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup> 2014  
Malachi – God’s Messenger  
Part Sixteen

1). Mal 3:16 *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. 17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." 18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.*

a). It is in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, led by religious leaders who had ‘departed from the way’, a generation marked by rebellion against the God of their fathers resulting in treachery against one another, that we find a group of faithful Jews who ‘fear the Lord and meditate on His name’.

b). These who feared the Lord were neither crooked nor perverse in their generation and although their religious leaders had departed from the way, they had not, following faithfully that which God had set out in the scriptures for all to see thereby setting them apart from the corrupt religious practices that had become acceptable to the majority.

c). And the encouragement that we find here for us in this is twofold. Firstly, we can be encouraged because we have seen that throughout the entire history of God dealing with His household servants, He has always retained a remnant who faithfully serve Him in the midst of a corruption of the Word of truth, in the midst of those who recreate God in their own image, having allowed their hearts to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, regardless of whether we are looking at Israel or the ‘Church’ –  
Mr 7:6 *He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' 8 "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such*

*things you do." 9 He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.*

*A faithful remnant in the midst of those - 2Ti 3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.*

d). Just as the Lord has said to the Church of the Laodiceans recorded in Re 3:20 *"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.*

So, throughout this dispensation, there have been and still are those who hear His voice and consequently open the door and dine with Him on the spiritual food of life in the midst of those who feed only their flesh; who say they are rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing not realizing that they are, from God's perspective, spiritually destitute.

e). Paul may have made this statement in - 2Ti 1:15 ¶ *This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me,*

But there still remained a remnant that had not turned away from the Apostle, or the glorious gospel which he preached.

f). And secondly, we find encouragement in the fact that the Word of God remains constant, consistent and without equivocation for all generations and is there to be seen and understood by anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, and it remains the indisputable truth - 2Co 1:20 *For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.*

g). It is one of the greatest blessings that we have that it is always the Holy Spirit who is our teacher – we are never dependent upon the intellect of finite Man but upon the grace and mercy of the infinite God who, by the power of the Spirit, is able to guide us into all truth through the scriptures – 1Co 2:13 *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

h). And then, in addition to this, it is one of the greatest privileges that we can have, that we are to participate in the process that leads to the salvation of the soul with respect to our brothers and sisters, something accomplished by doing exactly that which have seen in our opening verses from Malachi this morning, by gathering ourselves together and speaking to one another with a view to the coming Kingdom - Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there*

*no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

i). Not only do we need to consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, and not only do we need to exhort one another, which we are to do as we assemble ourselves together, but we can also clearly see that all of this works together to form part of the protection that God has provided for us, that we should not sin willfully and as a consequence lose our inheritance.

j). If we choose isolation then the opportunity to sin willfully becomes greater, not only for ourselves, but also for those we are choosing not to minister to – we need the accountability of community one with another in order that we maintain our focus, thereby allowing the metamorphosis to take place within us – this is something we find ourselves coming back to this morning yet again which demonstrates just how important this is for us – Eph 4:15 *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

k). It is the practice of that which we see here in Ephesians that demonstrates our commitment to the process that results in ‘agape’ love for one another – we might remember in this respect that it is the Church in Philadelphia, literally ‘the church in brotherly love’, that is the only church to receive no condemnation in the Revelation, but only promise - Re 3:7 ¶ *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": 8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

l). The love we have for one another then is expressed in our commitment to one another with respect to entering into the Kingdom, and is demonstrated in our actions as we assemble together to consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.

2). Our example of the rebellious generation of Israel in Malachi had asked the question - Mal 3:14b.....*What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts?*

a). The asking of the question of itself in this context clearly shows a woeful ignorance of the goodness and the mercy of God, but rather than throw His hands in the air the Lord provides an answer to their question through the

way He responds to those who fear the Lord and meditate on His name, who spoke together – a response that shows a present action on God’s part resulting in a marvelous promise with respect to the future - *And the LORD listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him*

b). And as we had seen last week the Lord keeps a book of remembrance in which is written not only the names of those who fear the Lord, who speak together, but also each and every word of exhortation, encouragement and admonition that they speak one to another.

c). And as we had also seen last week, this book is not to aid the Lord’s memory but to give us strong consolation concerning the hope set before us as we realize that there is nothing that we have ever said or will ever say by way of exhortation one to another that will be forgotten or overlooked – even though our words may never enter into the public domain for all to hear, or may escape our own recollection, nonetheless they are a matter of spiritual record that can never be denied, the Lord is not unjust to forget them or the faith from which they were spoken – Pr 15:2 ¶ *The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness. 3 ¶ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good. 4 ¶ A wholesome tongue is a tree of life,*

d). And as we appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ, so this book of remembrance, along with the Book of Life and other books, will be opened and the record will be clear and irrefutable and based on what is written there we will receive a just recompense of reward – the record of our labor will be evident and our wages paid accordingly.

3). Now a few last thoughts concerning the Book of Life - Php 4:3 *And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

a). The Book of Life we will remember is a book containing the record of the life lived by every human being from Adam onwards and is opened at the Judgment Seat of Christ with regards to the works of the eternally saved and at the Great White Throne with regards to the works of the eternally lost – and our entry in this Book is begun at the moment of our conception, as we had seen last week from - Ps 139:15 *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my*

*members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. KJV.*

b). So why does the record begin at the moment of conception when clearly from the scriptures we know that we are held accountable only for those things done after we have reached the stage of being accountable?

c). Well the answer hopefully will be self-evident – the eternally saved can have their name ‘blotted out’ of the Book of Life with respect to their failure to fulfill God’s purpose for them with regards to the Millennial Kingdom, which would be the result of choices made beyond the age of accountability; and the eternally lost will not find their name written in the Book of Life having failed to recognize the purpose for the creation of Man and having rejected the free gift of eternal salvation, again the result of choices made beyond the age of accountability – but for those who never reach the age of accountability, their names cannot be blotted out of the Book as they have never had the opportunity to produce works worthy of the Kingdom and once their name has been written in the Book of Life it must still be found there as they have never had the opportunity to make a choice to reject the purpose for Man’s creation and to reject the free gift of eternal life that would warrant it being otherwise.

d). And so we can conclude that every aborted fetus, every baby, every child, every mentally handicapped person who through death or mental impairment can never be accountable will still find their name in the Book of Life and must therefore have a part in the eternity of God.

e). For us though, we are accountable, and every righteous act on our part and every sin, the thoughts and intents of the heart and every idle word are recorded – but remember along with this that - 1Jo 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to [continually] forgive us our sins, and to [continually] cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

f). Our act of confession in this context is itself an act of righteousness and is recorded in the Book also, but that to which our confession relates, although written, will not be used at the time of our Judgment – but if we should refuse to deal with the sin in our life its record remains, neither overlooked nor forgotten - 2Pe 3:9 ¶ *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

g). There are those who spend hours of their day updating the details of their life on ‘Facebook’, but the Day is coming when we will all come face to

face with the Book and see our life from God's perspective – and in that Day there is only One we will want to be our friend.

4). In the present then we see that the Lord is keeping a book of remembrance for those who fear the Lord and meditate on His name and as we have seen this book, along with other books, will be used with respect to Judgment for both Israel and the 'Church'. And judgment for both groups has to do with the future promise that is given to those who would be faithful – a promise which we see in - 17 *"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels [lit. My special treasure] And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."* 18 *Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.*

a). Here then is the promise of rulership and regality with Christ in the earthly realm of the Kingdom, emanating from the city of the great God, Jerusalem, for those Jews who have been faithfully obedient in the past and repentant Israel in that future Day - Isa 62:1 ¶ *For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns. 2 The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name. 3 You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem In the hand of your God. 4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah [My delight], and your land Beulah [married with a view to dominion]; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married [Beulah].*

b). And there are echoes here of that promised to the overcomers in Philadelphia with respect to rulership from the New Jerusalem in the heavens Re 3:12 *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.*

c). This is a glorious promise that has its origins in Genesis with the promised Seed of the Woman - 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."*

d). A promise reiterated through Abraham - 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.*

e). Confirmed again through Moses for the physical descendants of Abraham - Ex 19:5 *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* Le 20:26 *'And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.*

f). And set out for the spiritual descendants of Abraham, the 'Church' in - 1Pe 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

Re 2:26 *"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' --as I also have received from My Father; 28 "and I will give him the morning star.*

Re 19:6 *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

g). And in the reference in Malachi to jewels, to treasure, is the echo of - 1Co 3:12 *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

h). What great and precious promises these are, but we will note that whether we are dealing with Israel as seen in Exodus 19:5 or the 'Church', as in Revelation 2:26, these promises are conditional upon faithful obedience - it is those who are faithfully obedient, those who fear the Lord, who will be a royal diadem in the hand of God in that Day and the faithfully obedient alone.

i). Ps 103:13 *As a father pities [has compassion on] his children, So the LORD pities [has compassion on] those who fear Him.*

5). Then as we come to the last verse in Malachi Chapter 3 we encounter what is the ultimate irony for the complaining generation of Malachi's day – we will remember that one of their most significant complaints had to do with God not making a distinction between the wicked and His chosen people – Mal 2:17 *You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, "In what way have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil Is good in the sight of the LORD, And He delights in them," Or, "Where is the God of justice?"*

a). Then in the last verse in Chapter 3 we find God's promise with respect to this - *18 Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.*

b). And the irony is that in the Day when He makes the faithful His special treasure, the faithful will be the ones who are counted righteous and the ones who have served Him – and those who have complained and asked, 'where is the God of justice?', will be those who God classifies as 'wicked', those who have not served Him.

c). And so, in that Day those who have complained and rebelled and dealt treacherously will be separated from those who fear the Lord and they will see the justice of God administered exactly, but it will be altogether different from that which they expected.

d). Whenever the Lord is dealing with a separation of the wicked and the righteous this is always within the ranks of the eternally saved, whether Jew or Christian, never the eternally saved and the eternally lost.

e). And just as those of Israel who have not served Him will be separated from those who have, so we find exactly the same distinction being made at the Judgment Seat of Christ with respect to Christians.

f). We see it prophesied in the Matthew 13 Parables - Mt 13:47 *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48 "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

g). And by comparing scripture with scripture we can know this from - Mt 7:21 ¶ *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons*

*in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

h). And this from - 1Co 3:14 *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

i). Something confirmed through each of the overcomers' promise in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3.

j). Ps 58:10 *The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked, 11 So that men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth."*

6). Mt 5:44 *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

a). In these days of grace that which distinguishes the good from the evil is the life of faithful obedience led by the good, demonstrated through the way they relate to one another, not through the intervention of the judgment of God on the evil – but the Day is coming when our life lived now will bring us either commendation or condemnation - Joh 5:28 *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 "and come forth--those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

b). And in that Day those books will be opened and all will be revealed, judgment is waiting – judgment leading to praise, honor and glory or judgment leading to shame - 2Pe 2:9 *then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,*

c). And here we are, assembled together that we may consider one another in order to stir up love and good works – to exhort one another and so much the more as we see the Day approaching.

7). We will pick this up again next week – if the Lord is willing.