

Sunday October 20th 2013
Malachi – God’s Messenger
Part Two

1). Mal 1:1 ¶ *The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 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). The nation of Israel at the close of the OT is seen once again to be complacent, ungrateful and filled with contempt for the Word of God especially with regards to His love for them and the expression of His love in the promise of their future.

b). The situation with them is such that the Lord raises up Malachi, His messenger, to both admonish and prophesy to the nation. This is done using the literary device of question and answer as if God and Israel are in conversation with each other.

c). That which God says through Malachi, as we had noted last week, are the final words of the OT scriptures – as Malachi finishes, the Word of God is complete – the very Word of God who became flesh and dwelt amongst us.

d). From God’s perspective then the complete revelation of His Son and His purpose both through and for His Son were now finished and there was no more that needed to be added - Lu 24:44 *Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."*

Col 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

e). All that needed to be said was now said and all that needed to be revealed was now revealed, the counsel of God was complete. All that was required now was repentance, faithful obedience and patient endurance on the part of Israel as they awaited the One of whom their scriptures so eloquently spoke.

f). But evidently, although some individuals did heed the Word of the Lord, the nation in a general sense did not, and therefore did not change from the days of Malachi over the 400 years leading up to Messiah's birth - 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!"*

g). Now what is so uncomfortable in all this is the fact that the Lord's 'Church', for whom He gave Himself, is in no better a place spiritually than Israel was at the close of the OT - Re 3:15 *"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 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-- 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.*

h). So deplorable is this situation that the Lord speaks using imagery of vomiting Christians out of His mouth and we find the challenging, descriptive words, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked; all pointing to how those described here will appear in the Lord's presence unless there would be repentance.

i). The word's John records in the Revelation complete the whole counsel of God to His 'Church' – the mystery that was hidden in the OT scriptures has now been fully opened - Col 1:26 *the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

Eph 3:8 *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

j). The scriptures having been opened through the types, through metaphor, through figurative language and opened to the extent that God needs to add nothing – Jesus Christ having been fully revealed.

k). All that needed to be said has now been said and all that needed to be revealed has now been revealed, the counsel of God is complete. All that is required now is repentance, faithful obedience and patient endurance as the ‘Church’ awaits the One of whom the scriptures so eloquently speak.

l). And evidently, although some individuals throughout this dispensation will have heeded the Word of the Lord the ‘Church’, in a general sense, will not have done so. That which Christ records for the ‘Church’ in Revelation Chapters 2-3 constitute, not only a warning for us in the present, but also the actual Judgment that will be given at Christ’s Judgment Seat.

m). And in both Malachi and Revelation we find the same starting point that leads to a catastrophic conclusion for those who do not have ears to hear – to repeat one of our opening verses – *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?'"*

And then from Revelation - Re 2:4 *"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."*

2). The means of rectifying this condition with respect to the ‘Church’, which would also have been true for Israel, is then given in the verse that follows - Re 2:5 *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent."*

a). Quite clearly it is only possible to remember that which was already known and the act of remembering tells us that, that which was already known was forgotten, hence the need to remember. So we can see then that forgetting is at the root of leaving our first love.

b). And then, as a result of remembering, repentance is to follow with the works that were done at first – when they were fully cognoscente of their high calling – reinstated.

c). And this we can quite readily see with respect to Israel in Malachi – to ask the question, ‘In what way have You loved us?’ must demonstrate that they have forgotten all the ways that God as their Father and their Husband demonstrated His love for them over and over from the days of the calling of Abraham onwards - Ro 3:1 ¶ *What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.*

d). There seems to be then an intimate connection between failing to remember and drifting away from the Word of truth – with this in mind then we might remember that we had seen this in - 2Pe 3:5 *For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water,*

Those referenced here had deliberately chosen to forget that which they had already known and this I think we would have to apply to Israel in Malachi and the 'Church' in the Revelation.

e). This then is not a case of amnesia or dementia, it is not being absent minded about where we left our car keys – no this is a deliberate choice to forget for a deliberate purpose.

f). It is quite impossible to forget God's love, as it is manifest in every breath we take, unless there is a deliberate choice to do so. Likewise it is impossible to forget our high calling and therefore leave our first love unless we deliberately choose to do so. And the reason for making this deliberate choice, whether it be Israel or the 'Church' we have seen previously in our study of 'the Lord's prayer' - Ex 12:19 *'For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20 'You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'*"

g). We had seen how choosing to not deal with the sin in our life inevitably leads to despising the Word of God, even to the point of changing it, which ultimately results in despising the land and our calling in that land; which if unchecked, must result in the forfeiture of our inheritance.

h). This is the experience of Israel as we find it recorded in the Book of Malachi and this is/and will be the experience of the eternally saved if God's Word is not heeded.

i). 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). 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; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

3). And this is the very thing that we see pictured through Esau and Jacob – God has loved Jacob, but has hated Esau.

a). Jacob, picturing for us the man of the spirit, being a type of the faithfully obedient, God has loved and God does love and will continue to love all who live in the antitype of Jacob in this respect.

b). But for those typified by Esau, the man of the flesh, who live according to their own desires, whose god is their belly, God has hated, and God does hate and will continue to hate all who live in the antitype of Esau.

c). All of which is made very clear for us at the apex of the warnings found 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.*

d). We have seen clearly here that to live according to the flesh leads to despising the birthright and those who do so cannot receive an inheritance in the Kingdom - 1Co 6:9 ¶ *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

e). The seriousness of this is further exemplified for us in God's dealings with Esau/Edom recorded in both – Mal 1:3 *But Esau I have hated, And laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness." 4 Even though Edom has said, "We have been impoverished, But we will return and build the desolate places," Thus says the LORD of hosts: "They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever. 5 Your eyes shall see, And you shall say, 'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'* And - Jer 49:7 ¶ *Against Edom. Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Is wisdom no more in Teman? Has counsel perished from the prudent? Has their wisdom vanished? 8 Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of Dedan! For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, The time that I will punish him. 9 If grape-gatherers came to you, Would they not leave some gleaning grapes? If thieves by night, Would they not destroy until they have enough? 10 But I have made Esau bare; I have uncovered his secret places, And he shall not be able to hide himself. His descendants are plundered, His brethren and his neighbors, And he is no more. 11 Leave your fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; And let your*

widows trust in Me." 12 For thus says the LORD: "Behold, those whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. And are you the one who will altogether go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink of it. 13 "For I have sworn by Myself," says the LORD, "that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual wastes."

f). And again this is all put very succinctly for us in - Ga 4:22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise.....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."

g). What is set out as an unalterable truth through Ishmael and Isaac is then repeated through Esau and Jacob - Ro 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.....13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

4). We have remembered then the process to disaster that begins with not dealing with the sin in our life that produces a deliberate forgetfulness that enables us to despise and even change His Word to suit our own ends by denying His love for us, ultimately leading to our despising our birthright and rejection at the Judgment Seat.

a). And we have also seen that to avoid this certain outcome we need to constantly remember that which God has done and that which God has promised - De 8:2 "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

b). Before the second generation of Israel enters the land of promise God calls on them to remember - and He calls on them to remember no less than 5 times that they were a slave in Egypt - they were to remember that which He had already done on their behalf - De 5:15 And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

c). He calls on them to remember that which He had promised -

Jos 1:13 *"Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.'*

d). He also calls on them to remember the consequences of their actions De 9:7 ¶ *"Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD.*

e). And they are to remember the work of God's hands from creation onwards - De 32:7 ¶ *"Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you:*

f). But as we know Israel did not remember, bringing us to where we find them in Malachi - Jg 8:33 *So it was, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 Thus the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.*

g). And for ourselves we are to remember that which God has done for us - Eph 2:11 ¶ *Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh--who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands-- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

h). We are to remember all that God has shown us - 2Ti 2:8 ¶ *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,*

i). And we are to remember the work of God's hands from creation onwards - Isa 46:9 *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

j). And we are to remember not only what we have received from the Lord, but also how we received it - Re 3:3 *"Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.*

k). We must remember the coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ –

2Pe 1:12 ¶ *For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,*
And Peter, one of the eyewitnesses to His coming in His Kingdom, makes an especial point of reminding those to whom he writes, to continually bring to their remembrance, these things even though they know and are established in the present truth.

l). And seeing the importance of remembering it must be the passion of all those who will teach from this podium 'to stir you up by reminding you'.

m). And interestingly enough one of the very last things that God says to His people Israel at the conclusion of the Book of Malachi is this –

Mal 4:4 ¶ *"Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments.*

n). Will we remember even now the love of God? And if we have left our first love will we remember from where we have fallen?

o). Heb 2:1 ¶ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

5). Mal 1:6 ¶ *"A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'*

a). That which Malachi records next is said directly 'to you priests who despise My name'.

b). It is of course the priests, the ones who perform the service of the Lord on behalf of the people in the Temple of the Lord who should hold God's name in reverence and honor perhaps more than any other and yet, according to our scripture, this is not the case.

c). And the extreme nature of this neglect is given through the contrast between the honor given to the earthly father and earthly master and that not given to their Heavenly Father and Heavenly Master.

d). To honor an earthly father is a commandment of God –
Ex 20:12 ¶ *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

And would equally apply of course to God the Father, our Heavenly Father.

e). And this commandment remains the same when brought over into the NT - Eph 6:1 ¶ *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

f). And what we see clearly here is that honor is given by children, while they remain children, through obedience to father and mother – Something not done by Israel to their Heavenly Father - Lu 6:46 *"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"*

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.*

g). And the same thing is true with respect to obedience and masters – Eph 6:5 *Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,*

h). Yet, according to what we see in Malachi there is no obedience to God the Father either as father or Master and therefore He is given no honor nor respect and consequently His name is despised – and this of course must be because they chose not to remember, 'In what way have You loved us?', spurred on by their refusal to deal with their own sin, rather than taking heed. The situation is summed up for us in – Heb 12:9 *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?*

i). Then a little later in Malachi there is a provocation to jealousy by the Lord that takes us into the Millennial Kingdom that would no doubt have been shocking to the Jewish ear – Mal 1:11 *For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts.*

6). The sin that the priests have continued in, that places them in disobedience, thus causing them to despise God's name and forget His love is clearly seen in the verses that follow –Mal 1:7 *"You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.' 8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.*

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