

Sunday October 27th 2013
Malachi – God’s Messenger
Part Three

1). Heb 2:1 ¶ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

a). The history of the Children of Israel throughout their generations provides us with the most vivid and enduring word picture with respect to the outcome of both faithfulness and unfaithfulness with regards to the plans and purposes of God – if we will have eyes to see and ears to hear, Israel, the people of God, chosen and adopted as a firstborn son for rulership, offer us the richest source of encouragement and the severest of warnings.

b). Just as we read in our verses from Hebrews, if every transgression and disobedience on their part received a just reward, they got exactly what they deserved, then we, if we continue in transgression and disobedience, will not escape exactly the same outcome as them, getting exactly what we deserve, as a result of neglecting so great a salvation – the future salvation awaiting the eternally saved – the salvation of the soul - 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.*

c). Ro 11:17 *And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and*

severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

2). And then in conjunction with this we have seen that Israel, as described in the Book of Malachi, is really no different to how we find the 'Church' in Revelation Chapters 2-3 – there are individuals who hear the Word of the Lord and organize their lives accordingly, and then there is the majority who don't - And all of this it would be good for us to remember, particularly when faced with the temptation to complacency and lethargy in our race of the faith as we find ourselves growing weary while doing good.

a). What we have now come to realize is that the unfaithfulness, disobedience and foolishness of the Jews over the centuries is not peculiar to their ethnicity, but is rather a part of the human condition experienced by all the eternally saved, Jew and Gentile alike, because of the sin nature with which we wrestle – that we have the propensity and opportunity for unfaithfulness, disobedience and foolishness is without question, but it is in overcoming this propensity and opportunity which present themselves through the onslaught of the world, the flesh and the devil that will set us apart and result in us being called out of the called - 1Jo 5:4 *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*

b). God's dealings with Israel in the past and in the future, as well as His dealings with us in the present, are exclusively in relation to His purpose for the creation of Man – that of rulership over the earth within a Theocracy – this is the highest calling and the greatest privilege imaginable and something not to be taken lightly or despised as Esau despised his birthright and we would do well to remember that we are not immune from the possibility of the shipwreck of our faith through the very things we have just looked at – 2Pe 3:14 *Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles.....*

c). Let us therefore learn from God's Messenger, and let us take to heart that which God says through him that we may be neither naked nor ashamed in the Day of His glory.

3). 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?' 7 "You offer defiled food [polluted bread] 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. 9 "But now entreat God's favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.*

a). In the Book of Exodus God tells Moses what he shall say to Pharaoh the ruler of the most powerful nation on the earth at that time, who rules within the kingdom of Satan - Ex 4:22 *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.*

b). Israel is adopted as God's firstborn son with the rights of primogeniture that are attendant upon that position and therefore God is literally their Father – not in a general sense, but in a very specific sense and yet in Malachi we see that they give their Father no honor, in direct contradiction to the first commandment with promise - 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.*

c). Neither is honor, reverence or respect given to the Lord as their Master and yet apparently such honor is given to earthly fathers and earthly masters – that which was done in the world then being of more importance in their eyes it would seem than that which was done for God.

d). As a consequence, as we see in the scripture, they have 'despised' His name – they have, through their actions, demonstrated that they consider Him contemptible.

e). God's name, His purpose and His role as Father cannot be separated one from another therefore in despising His name they are in effect despising their birthright, just as Esau had.

f). And at the heart of this is sin that has not been removed from the house, sin to do with God's altar and the offerings to be presented there on behalf of the eternally saved.

4). Le 22:21 *'And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be*

perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22 'Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. 23 'Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24 'You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land.....31 "Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I am the LORD. 32 "You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, 33 "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD."

a). Now we had seen last week how giving honor to the Father is seen through faithful obedience and we see here in Leviticus that the Lord sets out quite clearly what is and what is not acceptable in a sacrifice that is to be offered to Him and He states very clearly in v31, 'Therefore you shall keep My commandments and perform them', because not to do so would 'profane' His 'holy name' – And equally clearly in Malachi we see that God's commands concerning what is acceptable as a sacrifice have been ignored and that His name has indeed been profaned.

b). We should keep in mind here that when dealing with these sacrifices we are dealing with that which needed to be done to take care of the sins of the saved that they may have fellowship with a Holy God.

c). What we see here in Leviticus would be the equivalent of our approaching our High Priest to confess our sins and receive cleansing through our Lord's blood on the Mercy Seat in the Heavenly Tabernacle - 1Jo 1:9 *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

d). What the Lord had set in place here in Leviticus then typifies that which would be accomplished through the High Priestly ministry of Christ. – Something which of itself would demonstrate the necessity for the 'perfect' sacrifice within the Mosaic economy.

e). What we find in Malachi is that the indictment concerning the unacceptable sacrifices is directed specifically to 'you priests', those who ministered in the Temple before God on behalf of the people, the keepers of the law.

f). Now within this dispensation as the Lord deals with His 'Church' there is no priestly class as there was in OT times, instead every eternally saved person should see themselves in this role. We find this is - Re 1:6 *and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father,*

g). This does of course speak to a future role during the Millennial Kingdom, but in the present, as we look at the imagery at the beginning of 1John – a Book which parallels Leviticus in the OT – we have seen many times that it relates to the Tabernacle in the Heavens and therefore has to do with priestly service - 1Jo 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

h). And all that we see at the beginning of 1 John with regards to the Heavenly Tabernacle takes us back to the words of the Lord to Peter on the night of the last supper, also recorded by John - Joh 13:6 *Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." 8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."*

i). That which is recorded here in John's Gospel and that which is recorded in his first epistle are dealing with events that are to take place at the brazen laver positioned outside the sanctuary, events that lie beyond the sacrifices of the brazen altar, and all have to do with how the priests of God are to present themselves in His Holy presence – this then is how we need to see ourselves.

j). So when, through Malachi, God speaks to 'you priests' these are words we need to hear for ourselves and not try to pass off onto someone else.

5). 7 *"You offer defiled food [polluted bread] 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?*

a). So then in disobedience to God's commands in Leviticus offerings that are classified by the Lord as 'evil' are the norm for the sacrifices presented to God – the blind, the lame and the sick are offered on behalf of the eternally saved and this is the way they seek to approach God's Holiness.

b). And it will not escape our notice that the nature of these offerings reflect the spiritual condition of those bringing them and the priests who sacrifice them – the blind, the lame and the sick amongst the Jewish people were the recipients of the miraculous signs and wonders performed by the Lord at His first advent pointing to the spiritual healing that will be Israel's upon repentance with respect to the 7th Day – Lu 7:22 *Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see,*

the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Isa 35:6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

c). The offering of the blind, the lame and the sick within the context of Malachi must be seen from 2 perspectives – firstly the bringing of the evil offering, a sin committed by the people, is condoned and even encouraged by the priests. They should have been the ones to bring correction to the people, being the keepers of the law, but instead they were happy to compromise, presumably for some personal gain.

d). Secondly if we go on further in Chapter 1 we find - Mal 1:12 *"But you profane it, In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.' 13 You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD.*

e). The priests were to live from the proceeds of the Temple – a certain part of that which was brought for sacrifice they were allowed to keep to eat for themselves. Now as that which was brought for sacrifice was blind, lame and sick, so was the meat provided for them to eat of a sub-standard quality and in consequence they complained about that which God had provided for them, saying that both the meat and therefore the One who had provided the meat for them was contemptible.

f). Then as we view this from a typological standpoint we come across a familiar theme – in the evil offerings we see sin that is not dealt with before a Holy God the consequence of which is to despise the Word of God, pictured in the meat, the spiritual food that He provides – here we see Israel in the wilderness and their attitude to the manna once again - Nu 11:6 *"but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"*

g). And here we see Christians after the same fashion – 1Ti 4:1 ¶ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

h). Dealing with sin properly in order to approach a sinless God is the very thing taught in 1 John – 1Jo 1:1 ¶ *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked*

upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

i). John states in v3 that he is writing this epistle so that his readers would have what is necessary to have ‘fellowship with us’ – he then points out that, ‘truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ’, he writes these things to them so that their ‘joy may be full’.

j). The word translated ‘fellowship’ literally means to be ‘like-minded’ – And so, by inspiration of the Spirit John is presenting the Word of truth for his readers so that they can be like-minded with him which in effect would make them like-minded with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. In other words, by knowing the Word of truth both He and they would think the same way about things as God the Father and God the Son.

k). Now if we take this on a little further in 1 John we come to familiar verses - 1Jo 1:6 *If we say that we have fellowship [are like-minded] with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship [are like-minded] with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.* To ‘walk in darkness’, to follow the Tabernacle imagery, would place us outside of the sanctuary in which the light is to be found, pictured in the candlestick. This would mean that washing at the bronze laver would not have taken place, and therefore the sins of the saved are not dealt with – Consequently we cannot say that we are like-minded with God and not deal with our sin because this would mean that we lie and do not practice the truth.

l). If however we are in the light, placing us in the sanctuary, in the holy place, where the light of the candlestick is to be found, then we have washed at the bronze laver, the sins of the saved have been dealt with and we find that we are like-minded with God with respect to dealing with this sin and His blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

m). And here is a very significant key for us, we must have exactly the same attitude towards sin as God has, we must be like-minded with Him in this respect, because if we don’t we will not be like-minded with Him with respect to the rest of His Word.

n). Israel in the wilderness was not like minded with Him about putting the leaven out of their house and as a consequence they despised the manna, they were not like-minded with respect to what was necessary for their pilgrim journey and were overthrown because of it.

o). The priests in Malachi were not like-minded with God about dealing with the sins of the saved and as a consequence they despised God's provision that would have enabled them to properly minister to the people, to prepare them for the coming of Messiah.

p). And likewise for ourselves we need to be like-minded with God about the nature of sin, about the necessity of dealing with it and the means by which this is to be done, because if we are not then we cannot be like-minded with Him about how we are to run this race of the faith – as John said we would lie and would not practice the truth. To borrow from James –
Jas 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

6). The Lord has made it very clear to us that we should hate sin just as He does and we would realize that sin can never have fellowship with God. The importance of knowing the Word of God and allowing the Word of God to bring about the metamorphosis in us cannot be over emphasized – let the Lord never stop reminding us of this - *1Jo 3:9 Whoever has been born [brought forth] of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*

a). If we are being brought forth 'of God', brought forth from above, not our new birth but the continual process of the work of God in us through the Spirit by the Word then we do not sin, because sin cannot be brought forth from above; sin cannot originate from that which God gives us from His Word *Jas 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. 18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

b). Now the reality is that being in a body of flesh, having a sin nature, we cannot continuously remain in the position of being brought forth from above and when we find ourselves thus the Lord through John has presented the solution - *1Jo 2:1 ¶ My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus*

Christ the righteous. 2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

c). The importance of dealing with our sin according to the scripture should by now be very obvious and the extraordinary way that the Lord has made this possible should keep us forever grateful and forever humble. We might remember the words of David - Ps 32:1 ¶ <<A Psalm of David. A Contemplation.>> *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found;*

d). Ps 119:9 ¶ BETH. *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. 10 ¶ With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! 11 ¶ Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! 12 ¶ Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes!*

7). As we close for today let us ponder for a moment what would be the cost of failing to prayerfully open the scriptures and failing to allow the Lord to bring us forth from above?

a). What would be the cost of being complacent about our sin? Or ignoring the blood of Christ for our cleansing?

b). Heb 10:39 *But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

c). We will continue with this next time – if the Lord is willing.