

Sunday June 29th 2014
Malachi – God’s Messenger
Part Thirty

1). 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.*

a). We had seen last week that by the hand of Moses God had set out in typology and in promise the events that would befall Israel throughout their history, both the negative and the positive – but overall if the Law of Moses with the statutes and judgments is remembered by the Jewish people with respect to the spiritual truth which they contain then the absolute certainty of Israel’s deliverance and restoration and establishment as God’s firstborn son at the head of the nations cannot be missed – something we can see here from just a smattering of verses - Ge 1:28 *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

Ex 12:5 *'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.*

Ex 14:30 *So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.*

Ex 19:6 *'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*

Ge 22:15 ¶ *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - 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. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

b). And this command to 'remember' is given to Israel at the close of what we call the OT – and given its positioning here we would realize that it was in anticipation of the Lord's first advent – these things should be remembered by the nation then as Christ comes to the earth and the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens is made.

c). And this offer of the Kingdom, with the Messiah in the midst of the nation, is made initially in conjunction with the ministry of John the Baptist, of whom the Lord says this recorded in - Mt 11:14 *"And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come."*

d). However, contained in the typology written by the hand of Moses, that Israel should remember, was the inevitable outcome of the Lord's first advent - Ex 2:13 *And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" 14 Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us?"*

Ac 7:23 "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24 "And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 "For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand."

e). As Moses first appeared to the nation to be their deliverer and was rejected, so the Messiah at His first appearance to the nation would be rejected – this is the inevitability contained in the scriptures – but just as inevitable is the fact that when Moses came to his brethren a second time he was received and by the power of God delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt which foreshadows the events of the Lord's second advent.

2). Now, at the Lord's first advent Jerusalem was occupied by the Roman Empire and ruled by the provincial governor Pontius Pilate under the authority of Caesar – in effect then Jerusalem, the city where God has put His name, from which rulership of the earth through God's firstborn son was to emanate was 'trampled by the Gentiles'.

a). And according to the Lord - Lu 21:24 *"And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

b). The 'times of the Gentiles' then have to be 'fulfilled', before God's purpose for His people Israel can be accomplished – and if we understand why this period of Gentile domination came into existence we shall also know what brings it to fulfillment.

c). We will remember that Israel was delivered from Egypt in order to receive the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their inheritance and Israel, as God's firstborn son, was to rule the Gentile nations within a Theocracy. And we had noted to this end that a Tabernacle was erected in the wilderness following the Old Covenant being made with Israel at Sinai. On the completion of the Tabernacle the glory of God filled the Tabernacle and God was then seen dwelling in the midst of His people as their King and the Theocracy began - Ex 40:33 *And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. 34 ¶ Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

d). Even though the Theocracy had come into existence its continuance and its fulfillment was conditional, as we will remember from – 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.'*

e). And we will of course also remember that Israel's history is marked by the nation's disobedience and unfaithfulness over centuries of time.

f). Faithfulness and obedience are the criteria for the fulfillment of the Theocracy and so it was, and is, necessary for Israel to choose these and God will do that which is necessary to bring His people to make this choice, whereby they will be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'.

g). Despite innumerable warnings by the prophets Israel's disobedience and unfaithfulness continued to such an appalling degree that in 722BC the Assyrian Empire was allowed to take the Northern 10 tribes of Israel into captivity – and this set the stage for what was to happen just over 100 years later.

h). Although 10 of the 12 tribes had been taken into captivity, the Southern 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin still remained in the land and therefore while they remained in the land the Theocracy was still in existence.

i). In 612BC the Babylonians along with the Medes and the Scythians conquered the Assyrian empire, completely destroying its capital city of

Nineveh, and it is from this time onwards that the Babylonian empire rises to prominence with Babylon, the original city of Nimrod, as its center.

j). In 605BC Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father Nebopolassar as king of Babylon and it is shortly after his succession to the throne that the southern 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin are taken into captivity, bringing the Theocracy to an end and initiating the times of the Gentiles – times that have existed from that day to this and will continue yet until those times are fulfilled.

k). But let's please keep in mind that the times of the Gentiles have been brought into existence for a very specific reason - Eze 22:14 *"Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and will do it. 15 "I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and remove your filthiness completely from you.*

l). Israel is to be cleansed outside of the land, their filthiness is to be removed completely while they are scattered amongst the nations and the verses we have just read from Ezekiel Chapter 22 echo those we have seen in Mal 3:2 *"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.*

And the verses from Ezekiel describe for us in a very succinct form both the events of and the purpose for the Tribulation.

3). Just as the times of the Gentiles began because of Israel's continued unfaithfulness, so the times of the Gentiles will be brought to an end as a result of Israel's repentance. We will I am sure remember the message of John the Baptist - 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!"*

a). And the subsequent message of the Lord, the 12 and the 70 following John's imprisonment and death - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

b). And the message proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost following the Lord's ascension and proclaimed throughout the time when the offer of the Kingdom was being remade by the 'Church' to that same generation of eternally saved Jews alive at Christ's first advent - Ac 2:38 *Then Peter said to*

them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

c). The repentance being sought by John, Jesus and subsequently the Apostles was national repentance – the whole nation turning from unbelief to belief and confessing their iniquity. This of course never happened during the days of the scriptural examples we have just looked at, but we do know from our past weeks of study that this national repentance will take place following the Lord's return to the earth through the ministry of Elijah the prophet at the conclusion of the Tribulation.

d). And just as Jerusalem was quite literally trampled by Gentiles prior to the Lord's first advent, so Jerusalem will quite literally be trampled by Gentiles before the Lord's second advent just as we had seen earlier in Luke 21:24 *"And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

e). And if we take this back even further we realize that it was a Babylonian king who came against God's people in Jerusalem that began the times of the Gentiles and it will be a Babylonian king who will come against God's people in Jerusalem yet future that will precipitate the end of the times of the Gentiles

Ec 3:14 I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him. 15 That which is has already been, And what is to be has already been; And God requires an account of what is past.

f). And again as we consider all of this we can realize just how significant Israel's national repentance, while still scattered amongst the Gentile nations, is – without Israel's national repentance the times of the Gentiles cannot be brought to an end and this fact alone helps explain the desperate and frenzied efforts of the man of sin to exterminate the nation before that repentance can take place.

4). The Book of Daniel is the place to go to see the full scope of the times of the Gentiles and its subsequent overthrow.

a). We see this pictured firstly in Daniel Chapter 2 in the great image from Nebuchadnezzar's dream - Da 2:31 ¶ *"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 "This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 "its legs of iron, its feet*

partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 "You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 "You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 "and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all-you are this head of gold. 39 "But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 "And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 "As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold-the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

a). The 4 parts of the image from Nebuchadnezzar's dream picture the 4 phases of Gentile world power that have their power base in Babylon – the first 3 are a matter of historical record with the 4th yet to come in the not too distant future. The picture begins with a king ruling from Babylon and must end after the same fashion, just as we saw from our verses from Ecclesiastes - *what is to be has already been*.

b). And following the image to its conclusion we see a 'stone cut without hands' striking the image on its feet causing the entire image to be utterly destroyed so that 'no trace of them was found' and the interpretation is given

in Daniel 2:44, so that there can be no confusion *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;*

c). Then exactly the same picture is given after a slightly different fashion, but with the same end point in Daniel Chapter 7 - Da 7:2 *Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 "And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 "And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' 6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. 7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. 8 "I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. 9 ¶ "I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened. 11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 "As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.*

d). The 4 beasts in our verses here correspond to the 4 parts of the great image with the final part of Daniel's night vision revealing 'One like the Son of

Man' receiving a Kingdom and dominion and glory and 'His Kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

e). That which God has set in the prophetic verses of His Word must come to pass and if we consider this once again alongside our verse from Ecclesiastes, *what is to be has already been* – we can know with absolute certainty that which must take place with regards to Gentile world power when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled following Israel's national repentance.

f). And where would we see that which has already been so that we can know what is to be? Well, we know the answer don't we. In the Law of Moses – Ge 11:6 *And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.*

g). Ex 14:30 *So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.*

h). And not forgetting the flood of Noah's day, the overthrow of Babel, the destruction of the cities of the plain and the battle of the kings.

i). What has already been is God's intervention to completely overthrow Gentile world power within the context in which it is found.

j). So, that which is to be cannot be anything else but the same.

k). It is then, in the total destruction of Gentile world power that the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled – it is at this time that the scepter of rulership that passed out of the hands of Israel in 605BC into the hands of the Gentiles will be returned to Israel once more.

5). Isa 14:24 ¶ *The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand: 25 That I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, And his burden removed from their shoulders. 26 This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, And this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.*

a). What is to come is certain and within prophecy we discover where that certainty is to be brought to pass.

b). The Assyrian is of course the Antichrist who will originate from the geographical region covered by the old Assyrian empire, the empire that was conquered by Babylon in 612 BC.

c). 'My land' and 'My mountains' is reference to the land of Israel, the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which God sees as His own land.

d). And it is in the land of Israel that we see that the Assyrian will be trodden underfoot – an image we have also seen in Malachi in connection with this exact same event - Mal 4:1 ¶ *"For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up," Says the LORD of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves. 3 You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet On the day that I do this," Says the LORD of hosts.*

e). This then is the 'great and dreadful day of the Lord', when the great supper of God will be accomplished - Re 19:17 *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the great supper of God, 18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."*

f). Detail and commentary on this great and dreadful day has also been provided for us in prophecy, recorded in Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39 – but our study of the verses contained there will have to wait until next time – if the Lord is willing.