

Sunday November 3rd 2013
Malachi – God’s Messenger
Part Four

1). 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 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). We had seen last week the corrupt state of the priesthood in Israel at the time of Malachi’s prophecy – not only did they condone and therefore encourage the sins of the people by accepting unacceptable offerings that the Lord considered to be evil but they then had contempt for the Lord because they had to eat portions of the nasty animals the people had brought as an offering in the first place.

b). In so doing we find the priests just as described in –
Eze 22:26 *"Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.*

c). To have, ‘hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths’, would be to hide their eyes from the reason the Sabbath was set in place, to hide their eyes from that which lay ahead in the 7th Day – simply put, to ignore the purpose for their very existence and to consider their inheritance as a common thing of no particular value just as Esau had done. In fact we could say that they had chosen to willfully forget that to which the Sabbath pointed.

d). And in this we would see a significant warning for ourselves – we must not only be able to distinguish between the holy and the unholy in terms of recognizing one from the other, but this must also be demonstrated through our choices - 2Co 6:16 *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them*

And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

e). What we look at, what we listen to, what comes out of our mouth, who we associate with must all come under scrutiny and be subjected to the Word of God – this world is not our friend nor our home, but rather one of the unholy trinity that would seek to overcome us by smothering the life from us.

f). And as we consider this we might remember the words of the Lord recorded in the Revelation - Re 2:14 *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.*

The doctrine of Balaam simply would be the doctrine of assimilation – which would say that it is OK to participate in the things of this world, to enter into intimate relationship with them, because no harm can come to the people of God if they do so, because they are the people of God. To do this means that the line between the holy and the unholy and the clean and the unclean becomes blurred to such an extent that it's not possible to distinguish one from the other. This should never be and yet this is the warning given to the 'Church' as we see and is the practice of so many of the eternally saved – particularly those who have willfully forgotten what the Lord has said about the 7th Day - 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, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 ¶ But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day..*

g). Consequently that which we are to eat is to be pure and unadulterated not contaminated with the doctrine of demons pictured through eating things sacrificed to idols in Revelation and pictured through the blind, the lame and the sick in Malachi and our relationship is to be pure and unadulterated with our Savior the One who is to be our Bridegroom – the One who is holy and true, not an adulterous relationship with the world.

h). Peter has this to say about it in - 1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not*

conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." 17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

i). In all of this we will see the necessity of being like-minded with the Lord. We need to know that which God calls holy and that which He calls unholy for without that how can we be in agreement with Him and be like-minded with Him? – we will remember that in order to be in the light as He is in the light as we saw in 1 John Chapter 1 we must avail ourselves of the cleansing pictured through the priests washing their hands and feet at the bronze laver and in order to do this we need to think the same way as the Lord does about our sin and how it is to be dealt with – and this being like-minded with the Lord about our sin is not just reserved for the moment when we have sinned but should accompany us throughout our day, throughout every choice we make, in every situation we find ourselves so that we think the same as the Lord with regards to that which is holy and that which is unholy, that which is clean and that which is unclean – Eph 5:3 ¶ *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

j). And again, we cannot be like-minded with the Lord in this unless we are in His Word, unless we give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, unless we remember, unless we are diligent to show ourselves approved, rightly dividing the word of truth – and there is no short cut to this – it requires patience and diligence, and need we even mention it? – Faith. And how does faith come? By hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. After all what is that that overcomes the world? 1Jo 5:4 *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*

k). That which is Spirit, that which is life, that which is the life sustaining breath of God must continually and continuously fill us. And to be so filled is a matter of personal choice in the sense that it is something we can choose to do or choose not to do. We must choose for it to be so though, because if we truly desire to enter into the Kingdom as a firstborn son there is only one option open to us.

l). The priests of Malachi's day were complacent and even comfortable with their sin – they did not make a distinction between that which was holy and that which was unholy and although they were the keepers and teachers of the law they saw only the letter of the law and not the spirit and therefore violated it and profaned the name of the Lord in doing so and the Lord deals with them accordingly - 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.*

m). 2Co 3:4 *And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 ¶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7 But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?*

2). And yet even though we may be continually filled with the Spirit and are brought forth from above, and even though we might make a distinction between the holy and the unholy, and even though we might be like minded with the Lord concerning our sin we still live in a body of flesh with a corrupt and depraved sin nature – this the Lord knows very well – and this we cannot deny – 1Jo 1:8 ¶ *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

a). Now Paul addresses the conflict that exists between the man of the flesh and the man of the Spirit through drawing from his own experience recorded in – Ro 7:19 *For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the*

law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

b). That which we read here in v19-24 would no doubt describe our own experience also – which would not be surprising as this would be common to all the eternally saved.

c). As we then move into v25 we find the answer to Paul's question and our own question, 'Who will deliver me from this body of death?' – This is the answer, 'I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!'

d). Who will deliver us from this body of death? – Jesus Christ our Lord. Well we are already delivered through Christ's sacrifice for us; we are in the process of being delivered by being brought forth from above and confession, and we will be delivered yet future as a result of the salvation of our soul – all of course through Jesus Christ our Lord – we just need to be like-minded with God about each of these.

e). The scripture we have just read brings us to the end of Chapter 7 in the Book of Romans, but if we then continue to the beginning of Chapter 8 we find a full explanation - Ro 8:1 ¶ *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

f). Now to walk according to the flesh is to have our focus on the things of this world, it is to view our present to be of more consequence than our future, it is to be mindful of our own plans and purposes rather than of God's plans and purposes for us – This we would clearly see in the priests of Malachi and reflected in the doctrine of Balaam.

g). So here is the thing, according to - 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. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

h). If we are conformed to this world the sacrifice that we bring, within the letter of the law, which should be holy, acceptable to God, will instead be

blind, lame and sick and will ultimately lead us to treat His Word with contempt.

i). Where our focus is will determine how we choose to live, as Jesus said - Mt 6:21 *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

j). God speaks through Malachi to Israel with a single purpose – 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.*

k). It is for the purpose of calling Israel to repentance in preparation for the coming of Messiah and do we realize that God has sent His Holy Spirit to His 'Church' to prepare the way for the second coming of Messiah? This demands our undivided attention.

l). So, to go back to where we were a short time ago – how is Christ delivering us from the body of this death if we still have a corrupt sin nature? And how can we walk in the Spirit with sin ever present in our lives?

m). Well we know the answer already as we have seen it many times – Christ is delivering us from our sin nature in the sense that He is the propitiation for the sins committed in our flesh so that we need not come under condemnation at His Judgment Seat at which time we will be fully and irrevocably delivered from this body of death – and we walk in the Spirit with respect to this by believing and practicing that which the Lord has said – 1Th 5:22 *Abstain from every form of evil.*

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.*

n). The word translated 'confess' is the Greek word 'homologeo' which literally means 'to say the same thing as', in this case, that God says about sin. This then moves far beyond the idea of just 'owning up' to the place of acknowledging what our sin is and feeling the weight of it and seeing it within the context of our approach to a Holy God.

o). Are we yet at the place, when 'confessing' our sin, that we find David in? - Ps 38:3 *There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin. 4 For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. 5 My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness. 6 I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.*

p). Let's pray that to look upon our sin will cause the fear of the Lord to course through every fiber of our being that we may be horrified at what we

have done and what we see and let us be quick to say the same as the Lord says about it.

q). Remembering the good news that as we do this He is faithful to continually forgive us our sins and to continually cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

r). If we approach that bronze laver with a nod and a wink and think that the Lord gives a nod and a wink back, if the cleansing we seek there is just a perfunctory action on our part then maybe we are no better than the priests of Israel.

s). But again the good news is that we can be transformed by the renewing of our mind through the washing of water by the Word remembering - 1Jo 3:9 *Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*

t). 1Co 2:15 *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

u). 1Co 11:31 *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*

3). We have noted already in our study today, as we have in past weeks, that there is a parallel between that which the Lord says to Israel in Malachi and that which the Lord says to His 'Church' in Chapters 2-3 of the Revelation and we might remember the words to the 'Church' of the Laodiceans - Re 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'*

a). The 'Church' of the Laodiceans having need of nothing is directly connected to them having become 'wealthy' - what we might see then is that security for them is found in their financial abundance, the very place where no security exists - 1Ti 6:17 *Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

b). And this after a similar fashion is what we see with the priests in Malachi, and we will look at this verse in the KJV as it more closely conveys what is meant in the original language - Mal 1:10 *Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*

c). The Hebrew word translated 'nought' here literally means to be devoid of cost. In other words then the priests are not about to do anything,

neither shut a door nor kindle the fire on the altar, unless they get paid for it, unless there is some advantage to them personally.

d). This is exactly the situation that we find described in - Mic 3:11 *Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us."*

e). And it would not be difficult to see this within the context of Christendom today where for the most part it will cost you even to receive the Word of the Lord. Christian bookstores are full of it and church websites market it. The words of the Lord seem to have been forgotten - Mt 10:8 *"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."*

f). Even within the so called ministry those supposedly called of God will want to assess the financial package they will receive from you before they would choose to minister to you.

g). We have already mentioned Balaam today in the context of his doctrine referenced in the Revelation, and along with this let's also remember what we find concerning him in and a false representation of the Word of God in - Jude 1:11 *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

h). Now please understand that to support the pastor/teacher and to honor those who come from afar to preach the word is entirely the right thing scripturally to do – but no one who comes here comes with the expectation that they will receive something – they come because it is their passion to share the Word of truth with us. Nonetheless, according to the scripture – Php 4:16 *For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account.*

i). And the scripture also says - 1Ti 5:17 ¶ *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

j). And Paul under inspiration of the Spirit says this same thing even more forthrightly in - 1Co 9:11 *If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?*

k). This then is right and this is proper, but this is not the motivation of the minister and the emphasis here is really on the part of those who receive

the spiritual things to do what is right scripturally with their material things. This would be a part of storing up treasures in heaven.

l). The problem as we would see it with the priests in Malachi and with the 'Church' in Laodicea is that financial gain has taken the place of reliance upon the Lord – in fact it would go as far as to say that they do not consider the Lord is capable of providing for those whom He appoints to teach the Word of truth within His 'Church'.

m). And within this reliance on financial gain we will find covetousness and we know that covetousness in scripture always appears in the same context as sexual immorality - Ro 1:29 *being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,*

n). And thinking still of the Laodicean condition of the 'Church' we might remember this from - 2Pe 2:3 ¶ *By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;*

o). Then if we go back to Malachi Chapter 1:10 for a moment we see that because of this action the Lord had no pleasure in His priests and would not receive an offering from their hand.

p). So then we can see that having the correct perspective on serving the Lord and His provision within that service will affect the relationship He has with us. This is something that we will find again later in Malachi from a slightly different perspective - 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.*

q). But this will have to wait for another time – if the Lord is willing.