

Sunday December 8<sup>th</sup> 2013  
Malachi – God’s Messenger  
Part Eight

1). Mal 2:10 ¶ *Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with one another [lit. a man with his brother] By profaning the covenant of the fathers? 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. 12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob The man who does this, being awake and aware, Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!*

a). We have seen in past weeks the faithfulness of God with respect to His people Israel – this had been demonstrated to us in Chapter 1 – Mal 1:2 *"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."*

God’s righteous judgment is against Edom, personified through His hating Esau, and yet although Israel is corrupt and sinful and in this sense indistinguishable from the rest of the sinful world, He has loved Jacob – not because the people of Israel have earned His love, but because He is faithful to the covenants and promises made to His servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

b). God is unchanging in this respect - Mal 3:6 *"For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob."*

c). God’s faithfulness is also seen through His covenant with Levi – Mal 2:5 *"My covenant was with him, one of life and peace, And I gave them to him that he might fear Me; So he feared Me And was reverent before My name. Again, although the descendants of the Levitical priests who were zealous for the Lord’s holiness, the priests of Malachi were completely contrary to the faithfulness of their fathers - Mal 2:8 But you have departed from the way; You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi," Says the LORD of hosts.*

d). And yet, despite this, despite the fact that they had corrupted the covenant of Levi, the Lord is faithful to His covenant – therefore the time will

come when the descendants of Levi will be purified and refined to bring them to the place of repentance so that they will again bring an offering in righteousness and the covenant of Levi will be restored to its former fullness - Mal 3:3 *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.*

e). We would clearly see then that God has acted towards His people in faithfulness, in righteousness, with compassion and mercy and justice throughout the centuries.

f). And as He has acted towards His people so He expects His people to act towards each other. How each one is to act with regards to one another and most particularly with regards to brother with brother is of paramount importance in God's economy - Zec 7:10 *Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.'*

2). And all of this brings us to the verses we began with this morning that draw attention, not only to why the children of Israel should deal correctly with each other, but also the purpose for which they have been placed together in relationship.

a). This is done through asking what are in effect 2 rhetorical questions, but questions nonetheless that bring us right to the heart of the matter - 'Have we not all one Father?'

b). This is a rhetorical question as it really doesn't need an answer - God is their Father and therefore they all have just one Father - the God of the Universe - but contained in this we must see the purpose for the Father / son relationship. It is of course that of rulership as only firstborn sons can rule in the coming Kingdom of Christ.

c). And this is then complimented by the next question - 'Has not one God created us?'

d). Again this really doesn't need an answer as the same God who is their Father is the same God who has created them - they are the old creation in Jacob with echoes back to the Garden and the creation of the Man and the Woman - again all for the purpose of rulership.

e). And all of this leads into the question that really does need to be addressed - If the God of the Universe is their Father, which He is; and if He is the one who created them, which He did; and if He has been faithful to them, which He has and if all is for the purpose of rulership, then - 'Why do we deal

treacherously each man with his brother by profaning the covenant of the fathers?’

f). And as we have seen in previous weeks the reason the priests and therefore the nation have dealt treacherously one with another is because of their failure to rightly divide the Word of truth thereby corrupting the way that would lead to life and holding the one God, who is their Father, in contempt.

3). 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;*

a). Here in Peter we find that our focus is to be on the revelation of Jesus Christ, the coming of His Kingdom, and as we look to this time when He will be revealed our conduct in the present is to be holy – ‘Be holy, for I am holy’.

b). We might not have made this connection before but within the parameters of being holy comes the way that we are to relate to one another. We cannot be holy as God is holy unless we relate to one another with the same faithfulness, compassion, mercy, justice and love as God as our Father relates to us - 1Jo 4:11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

c). What we will realize then is that the Lord places us together in community for the very purpose of providing us with the opportunity to act with His nature and character towards one another - Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12 ¶ Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

d). In consequence we can see that no one is here just to make up the numbers, no one is a spare part, but rather we are all an integral and essential part of the spiritual growth of each other – just as the scripture says – Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 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.*

e). Now we will also realize here, that just as we have seen in the marriage relationship, we can make the progress towards spiritual maturity easier or more difficult for one another depending on our faithfulness to the Word of God.

f). We have seen within the marriage relationship that if the husband and the wife fulfill their role and responsibility according to the scripture then not only is their marriage particularly good, but they also make it easier for their spouse to do that which God requires of them.

g). This very same principle we can bring over from the marriage relationship into the relationship we have one with another – For example if I will submit myself to the Word of God and then act accordingly it will make it much easier for you to do the same. If I don't, this remains an issue between me and the Lord, but it doesn't absolve you from being submitted to the scriptures, it just makes it much more difficult – because my lack of submission provides you with a much greater temptation to stumble and act out of the flesh - Ro 14:12 *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. Jas 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!*

4). We will remember from last week the incredible verses of – Ps 133:1 ¶ <<A Song of Ascents. Of David.>> *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil*

*upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing-Life forevermore.*

a). And we will remember that with respect to us dwelling together in unity, the unity that we are to have is the unity of the faith just as we saw in Ephesians 4:13 – and it is the commonality of our faith that draws us closer together and makes us mindful of the spiritual welfare of one another – 1Pe 3:8 ¶ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;*

b). And it is in the commonality of our faith that we hear the echo of the questions from Malachi – ‘Have we not all one Father?’, ‘Has not one God created us?’ - Heb 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

c). Knowing that we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give an account of that which we have done in the body whether good or bad and realizing that a part of this Judgment will be how we have treated one another it would not be rocket science to work out that it is incumbent upon us to do all that can to help one another to finish the race of the faith well - Heb 3:13 *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Heb 10:24 *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.*

1Th 5:11 ¶ *Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

d). This must become our passion to the extent that we would have the same mind as the Apostle Paul - 1Th 2:19 *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.*

e). But this must begin with our own faithfulness to the Word of truth.

5). For the priests of Malachi’s day they had dealt treacherously with one another by profaning the covenant of the fathers and we would find a reference to this in - Le 19:18 *'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any*

*grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*

a). Our verse from Leviticus is helpful to us as it settles the often asked question, 'Who is my neighbor?' – According to our verse the word neighbor would refer to any of 'the children of your people'; specifically then the children of Israel, those who all have one Father, who were created by one God. And the command given in this verse is certainly emphatic, 'You shall not...'

b). At the Lord's first advent He is asked a question concerning the commandments - Mr 12:28 ¶ *Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" 29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

c). We find commentary on this, brought over into a Christian context, in Ro 13:9 *For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

d). And again in - Ga 5:14 *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

e). And we find the same thing again in - Jas 2:8 ¶ *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;*

f). And what is most intriguing here in James is that by inspiration of the Spirit James describes this command as 'the royal law' – this is a phrase that we can understand in a twofold manner. Firstly, as an attribute that belongs to our Sovereign – God is love and in this sense He loves us as Himself, and secondly that this command has to do with regality. In other words if we desire a regal position with our King in the age to come then we would do well to love our neighbor as our self.

g). This then is the fulfillment of the law, this is the bond of perfection that we are to put on – With regards to the way we are to relate to one another this is the goal to which we must be striving – we may not be there yet, but this is place to which we must be headed.

h). To take this back to where we were some weeks ago to love our neighbor as our self is to be like minded with the Lord with respect to this, it is to think about others in the same way our Lord thinks about them.

i). *2Co 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

*Ga 4:19 ¶ My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,*

And as through the work of the Spirit through the metamorphosis we are transformed into the image of Christ so we must come to love our neighbor with the love with which Christ loves us.

6). This will take us again to the scriptures we closed with last week –

*1Jo 4:7 ¶ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.....11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. ....20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

a). Now the key understanding this is to be found in v7, ‘everyone who loves is born of God and knows God’ – to be ‘born of God’ is to be brought forth from God, or brought forth from above. This has nothing whatsoever to do with our spiritual birth whereby we passed from death into life, but with the ongoing process of the work of the Spirit guiding us into all truth. We are constantly being brought forth from above, brought forth of God as the Holy Spirit reveals to us the truth of the Word of God, the ‘epignosis’ and then takes that Word to work in us the metamorphosis.

b). Only through the work of the Spirit in us can we progress in our spiritual maturity so making this kind of love possible. This is a process that we had studied in - *2Pe 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue*

*knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

a). And it won't do us any harm to review what we had studied previously with regards to this progression.

b). And so to begin we see faith as our foundation and we are told to 'add to your faith virtue'

c). 'Add to' literally means to 'abundantly supply' - and this is how the use of the phrase 'add to' needs to be understood throughout v5-7.

d). The first thing then that we are to abundantly supply in our faith is virtue.

e). Virtue is a word that has to do with moral excellence and when used relative to God it has to do with God's power and so the thought in this verse has to do with Christians exercising moral excellence under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and in doing so God's power would be active in their life.

f). We are then to abundantly supply in our virtue, knowledge - Knowledge here is the Greek word 'gnosis' - the accumulation of facts with a view to knowing.

g). We are then to continue to accumulate all the knowledge that we can concerning Christ and His coming Kingdom.

*7). 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,*

a). To our knowledge we are to abundantly supply 'self-control'

b). This is a translation of a word that means having 'mastery over oneself' - keeping the passions and desires of the man of flesh in check; and this is accomplished through allowing the Holy Spirit to govern and control our lives, which would again take us back to God's power that we saw in connection with virtue earlier.

c). And then we are to abundantly supply in our self-control, 'patience' - literally 'patient endurance'.

d). And it would be pretty obvious to see why patient endurance needs to be abundantly supplied in our self-control as we battle to keep the passions and desires of the man of flesh in check in order to allow the Holy Spirit to govern and control our lives especially with regards to dealing with one another.

e). And we are to abundantly supply in our patient endurance, 'godliness'

f). And so, as we patiently endure the trials and testings of life we are to do so with an abundance of piety and reverence. In other words we put into practice those things we have already looked at acknowledging that we know who God is, what He expects of us and what He has promised us. In this word then is the acknowledgment of our complete dependence on God as our source and our hope and our complete submission to Him as His bondservant. It is keeping God in the right place in our lives in every circumstance on every occasion, realizing once again that He is the one who is our Father and the one who created us – all for the purpose of rulership.

8). *7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

a). Then to godliness we are to abundantly supply, 'brotherly kindness' which we know to be fraternal affection:--brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren.

b). Again here we will see that abundantly supplying brotherly kindness, that is the 'phileo' love of being around and keeping company with those who are of a like mind, is not automatic, but a stage in the process – something we had seen in - 1Pe 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

c). Purifying our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit would give us a good description of the progressive process we see in these verses from 2 Peter.

d). And then in our brotherly love we are to abundantly supply, 'love'.

e). This is 'agape' love - the divine love which God is in His nature and character.

f). Once again, 'agape' love for one another is not an automatic and nor can we will ourselves to do it in our own strength. Agape is the highest form of love attainable and is a love that is produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of the faithful believer through the metamorphosis – the one who has abundantly supplied in his faith in our process. Agape love is the final stage in

the process because it is placed at the very pinnacle of the Christian experience and nothing more can be added to it.

g). We don't attain agape love apart from the process and we don't participate in the process apart from the metamorphosis that is worked in us by the Holy Spirit through the 'epignosis' of God brought forth from above. This is why it is those who are brought forth from above who love one another.

h). And as we reflect on this whole process it should become obvious why all the commandments are summed up, brought to summation, brought to their conclusion in, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' as to love like this is the manifestation of the Divine nature in our lives, it is this command fulfilled that leads to regality and God has provided the means by which this must become a reality for us by placing us in community together to work together towards this goal – but, each joint in the body must do its share if the body is to grow for the edifying of itself in love.

i). We find ourselves then facing 2 choices – to follow the way that leads to life by replicating the faithfulness, compassion, mercy and love that God has demonstrated to us in our relationship with each other - or we can choose to depart from the way as the priests in Malachi did thereby ignoring God's faithfulness, compassion, mercy and love and so dealing treacherously with one another.

j). But to encourage ourselves as we close - 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.*

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