

Sunday December 15th 2013
Malachi – God’s Messenger
Part Nine

1). Mal 2:10 ¶ *Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?* [KJV]

a). We had seen last week that God’s expectation of His people Israel was that they should relate to one another in exactly the same way that God related to them – with justice, mercy, grace, compassion, faithfulness and love – and the covenant of their fathers is replete with the details of what the Lord expected of them with regards to this.

b). We will look at a few verses from Leviticus that will demonstrate this for us - Le 19:9 *'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 'And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God. 11 ¶ 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. 12 'And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. 13 'You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning. 14 'You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I am the LORD. 15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. 16 'You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. 17 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke [reason with] your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 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. 19 ¶ 'You shall keep My statutes.....*

c). And what we see within this catalog of requirements begins with providing for the poor and needy with respect to the produce of the field and the vineyard and then progresses to the way individuals are to treat one another on an individual level – a series of commands that conclude with that

which we saw in James to be, 'the royal law' – 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'.

d). This then exemplifies the 'covenant of our fathers' that the priests in Malachi and those under their charge had profaned thereby dealing treacherously each man with his brother and because of this there is the promise of the Judgment of God - Mal 3:5 *And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien-Because they do not fear Me," Says the LORD of hosts.*

e). And we see that with respect to this Judgment the Lord will be a 'swift witness' against the individuals who are responsible for profaning the covenant and therefore dealing treacherously with one another.

f). And we find a parallel for this very same thing, recorded with regards to individuals within the 'church', in the Revelation - Re 22:12 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." 14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. 16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."*

g). Our Lord will, in that future Day, come near us for Judgment – and this will happen 'quickly', literally 'suddenly'; the same thought conveyed through the word 'swift' in Malachi 3:5.

h). And when that Judgment occurs He will reward 'every one according to his work' – and in the context of this Judgment we see those who are then excluded from the city having received a negative 'reward' – but, exactly what they deserve – the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters and whoever loves and practices a lie.

i). And all the behaviors itemized in this list are of course relational and therefore present a picture of Christians dealing treacherously with one another – an exact parallel to that which we see in Malachi.

j). Now, any or all of these behaviors can take place with regards to individuals outside of the body of believers to which the Christian belongs – but even if this is so we must understand that a lifestyle of this kind of

behavior is to deal treacherously with our brother even though our brother is not the direct recipient of the behavior.

2). Here in Romans we begin to see why this must be so - Ro 12:4 *For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

a). Together we all comprise one body in Christ and within that one body we are individually 'members of one another'. Although we are all individuals, on a corporate level with respect to the race of the faith, we are all interdependent just as we would see with the different parts of our natural body.

b). This same phrase, 'members of one another', is found again in – Eph 4:25 *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

c). That which is contained in these verses has to do with the way we are to relate to one another – then if we add to this some verses from earlier in this Chapter of Ephesians this should all come into focus - Eph 4:15 *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.*

d). We see then that speaking the truth in love with our neighbor causes growth – causes us to 'grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ'.

e). This growth to spiritual maturity is further defined as the result of every part of the body doing its share which then impacts the other parts of the body as we come together, by that which every joint supplies.

f). Not to do our 'share' in the maturing process with respect to ourselves, or to forsake the assembling of ourselves together means that we cannot supply that which is necessary for the growth of the body as a whole – and in this sense we would deal treacherously with one another because we would be a hindrance to our brother or sister.

g). Then to take this one step further – if we are not doing our share of growing spiritually and if we are forsaking the assembling of ourselves together then we are being disobedient to the Word of God that commands otherwise – and in this sense also, we would need to see all unresolved disobedience to the Word of God on our part as an act of treachery ‘every man against his brother’.

h). Like it or not, what we do and how we live individually cannot be contained in a vacuum – it walks through these doors with us to the blessing or the detriment of all - 1Co 12:25 *that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.*

And if what we bring into the assembly is not founded upon the Word of God then there can be very serious consequences - 1Co 1:10 ¶ *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

i). There were divisions in the camp of Israel in the golden calf incident and the flaunting of the Midianite woman to name but two – and these divisions came about because they did not ‘all speak the same thing’ and they were not ‘perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment’.

j). And God dealt with those who caused these divisions very severely – Ro 16:17 ¶ *Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.*

3). What we see here then with regards to the body being perfectly joined together in this fashion is in effect exactly the same concept as with the husband and wife becoming one flesh, but then how could it be any other way?

a). As we are transformed into the image of Christ, who is our Bridegroom, so we must become ‘one flesh’ with Him - Ga 4:19 ¶ *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,* And if we are ‘one flesh’ with Christ then we must of necessity be ‘one flesh’ with each other.

b). And to be ‘one flesh’ with each other must result in loving each other as Christ loves us – the very thing that we saw last week which is to be the goal to which our spiritual maturity moves as we diligently participate in the process set out for us in 2 Peter where we abundantly supply in our faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly love and

agape love - Joh 15:12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*

Ro 13:8 *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

Jas 2:8 ¶ *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;*

2Jo 1:5 ¶ *And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. 6 This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.*

4). Then as we search the scriptures within the context of loving our neighbor as our self we find the requirement to take care of those in need –

1Jo 3:17 *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

Jas 2:15 *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*

a). And the scriptures are replete with examples of how we are to relate to one another; summed up for us here 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." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. 11 ¶ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*

b). We may not have come to this realization before, but to be found worthy at the Lord's Judgment Seat through our faithful obedience and patient endurance cannot be separated from our interaction with each other.

c). If we believe we can be faithful to the Lord and yet still deal with one another according to our flesh we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us - Ro 14:10 *But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." 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.

d). And to stir us up by way of reminder let's remember how the scripture defines the love we are to have for one another – the very love that is the nature and character of the God of the Universe - 1Co 13:4 ¶ *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 ¶ Love never fails.*

5). And as we consider this 'agape' love within the context of the One who said 'I am the way, the truth and the life' there will I hope be 2 interrelated things in particular that will stand out to us above all else.

a). The first of these we can see in - Ro 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

'Agape' love is sacrificial love – God's love led to the sacrifice of His Son for the sake of those whom He loved - 1Jo 5:1 ¶ *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.*

If we truly love the one who is brought forth from God then we are prepared to sacrifice our-self for them.

b). Jesus had this to say about it in - Joh 15:12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*

c). To love one another then, as Christ loves us, will cost us our life – the setting aside of self, the setting aside of flesh for the sake of those who are our friends, who keep His commandments – even while they are still sinners – Mr 8:35 *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.*

Pr 19:11 ¶ *The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to pass over a transgression.*

d). And our verse from Proverbs brings us to the second of our 2 things, forgiveness - Eph 4:32 *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.*

e). To love one another then as Christ loves us is to forgive one another, just as God in Christ forgave us – the very thing we had seen in our study of the Lord's prayer - Mt 6:14 *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your*

heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Forgiveness of others may well be the greatest expression of love that there is.

f). And both of these things are interrelated as to forgive will always involve the death of self – but greater love has no man than this –

Col 3:12 ¶ 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.

g). I hope we are beginning to remember or maybe see clearly for the first time, the enormous significance of our relationship with each other which must be played out through our personal growth to maturity with respect to the saving of our soul – this cannot be overemphasized.

6). *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. 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). Our verses in Malachi Chapter 2 then continue by drawing attention to the ‘abomination’ that ‘has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem’.

b). And this abomination as we see is described as profaning ‘the Lord’s holy institution which He loves’ by Judah marrying the daughter of a foreign god.

c). Now we are of course not looking at the individual son of Jacob by that name and not even just the lineal descendants of that son, but at that part of the divided historical kingdom that bore his name – the kingdom of Judah. And we also see that this same abomination has been committed in Israel – the other part of the divided historical kingdom – we are then looking at the entire Jewish people, the same that have been the subject of Malachi’s prophecy so far.

d). Nor are we of course looking at the literal daughter of a foreign god, but at that which is conveyed through this image – the intermarriage of the people of God with the offspring of the pagan nations that surrounded them with the subsequent acceptance of and involvement in their idolatrous practices.

e). This is a situation that has been prevalent throughout Israel’s history which we find described here in - *Jer 3:6 ¶ The LORD said also to me in the*

days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 "And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 "Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 "So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.

f). As we know the Lord describes these actions as 'harlotry' because the nation in effect, as we see from our verses, committed adultery against the One who was their Husband.

g). We will remember that from the beginning God had instituted the marriage relationship as the means by which rulership in His restored Kingdom would take place – the Man and the Woman in Genesis provide a foundational picture not only for Christ and His Bride, but also for God the Father and Israel - Eze 16:8 *"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.*

h). Marriage is therefore the institution which He loves, which He takes very seriously and for Israel to turn away from this relationship with God was something that could not be countenanced.

i). Now although we are dealing here with harlotry on a national scale this was in effect played out on an individual level – individuals in Israel, through the corruption of the Word and the profaning of the covenants joined themselves to pagan wives with pagan practices and it would seem from our verses in Malachi that they attempted somehow to blend the two - *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!*

j). Here in v12 we see the individual 'man who does this' – and he does this 'being awake and aware', literally, knowing exactly what he is doing – and yet despite knowing what he is doing, and we would assume knowing that it was wrong, he still brings an offering to the Lord of hosts.

k). And we see that such a person who does this should be 'cut off from the tents of Jacob'.

l). All of this is of such paramount importance because the pagan nations and their practices were under the sway of the god of this world and any involvement with those nations was to align the people of God with Satan. And such was Satan's purpose to bring destruction upon God's people – something we had seen through the work of Balaam on behalf of Balak the king of Moab.

7). And as we will remember we find reference to that which Balaam did within the context of the 'church' – once again in the Book of 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."*

a). Now for ourselves we are not about to be rushing off to participate in pagan religious rites in a pagan temple, but we are surrounded by that to which our OT picture points – we are surrounded by the world system under the control of the enemy of our souls - 1Jo 5:19 *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

b). And should we choose to become embroiled in the things of this world our Lord sees this for what it is – spiritual adultery - Jas 4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

c). And should we choose to be friend of the world thereby becoming an enemy of God then we have dealt treacherously with one another – we profess our Christian beliefs, we pray, we sing, we read our Bible – we bring an offering to the Lord of hosts – but all the while we are in Satan's pocket.

d). Then as we consider this whole idea of friendship with the world we need to remember that which is taught in the Matthew 13 Parables – and particularly this - Mt 13:31 *Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." 33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*

e). As we know, the mustard seed was never meant to grow into a tree, but did indeed grow unnaturally so as to become one and as a consequence

the birds of the air, the emissaries of Satan, found a place to nest within it, bringing with them deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons that many have given heed to, departing from the faith.

f). In conjunction with this the word of the Kingdom has become thoroughly corrupted so as to be almost non-existent.

g). Therefore just because something has the name 'Christian' attached to it does not automatically make it a good thing – we might remember with Israel and the golden calf that they called the calf 'Elohim', the name of God, but it was not God, and we have seen in the Revelation that the doctrine of Balaam is to be found within the 'Church'. All of which should cause us to think very carefully.

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