

**Sermons
on
Malachi**

By A. S. Copley

PREFACE

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation—abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

DISCLAIMER

This document has been formatted, proofed, and its verbiage modernized so as to save it into an easily read and/or printed electronic format.

SERMON 1

"The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi." [Mal.1:1]

Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He prophesied about 400 years before the time of Christ. There was a period of silence after his message went forth until the new order of things, introduced by John the Baptist and brought about by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Zechariah and Malachi are among the prophets, who make use of the phrase, "*the burden of the Word of the Lord.*" It means a load, something that weighs us down, or something lifted up. It occurs in connection with judgment. Now the message of grace is not a burden. It is a delight to speak of God's love, goodness and grace; but to speak of the wrath, or judgments of God is a burden on the heart of His messenger. We are loath to speak of the terrors of the Lord, because they are so terrible, and yet so sure. I have heard men preach about hell and damnation as if they were glad that men would be lost because of their sins. An elderly minister said to a younger minister,

"Before you speak on the judgments of God, fill up on the love of God by reading the Word, and be steeped in prayer, fragrant with the mercy and goodness of God."

Malachi means "*messenger of Jah*" or "*my messenger.*" He was the messenger of Jah. The 2 opening chapters are somewhat like Isaiah 1. They are addressed to Israel, setting forth their pitiful, disobedient condition. They are a fitting picture of Christendom today; and the Lord has some Malachi's who are speaking forth His Truth. They are His messengers, declaring the grace and goodness of God and also warning people against the judgments that are sure to come upon all the world.

GOD'S FEELINGS EXPRESSED

God says through the Prophet,

"I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob." [Mal.1:2]

He proves that He loved Jacob and hated Esau by adding,

"I laid his (Esau's) mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness" [Mal.1:3]

He has no reference here to Jacob and Esau as individuals, but their posterities. The house of Jacob, the 12 tribes of Israel, were God's people. He chose Abraham with whom He made a covenant. He renewed that covenant to Isaac and then to Jacob. Hence, He loved them because of His own sovereign choice and covenant. He had not thus chosen Esau. In that sense He hated Esau (compare Mat.10:37 with Luk.14:26). This is Paul's interpretation in Romans 9:10-13. A further word as to why God made this statement. He loved Jacob and hated Esau because when Malachi wrote

this, they had both shown forth their characters—Esau of the old creation, the flesh; and Jacob of the New Creation, the Spirit.

That Divine Choice is full of significance. God has always had a people upon earth, whom He chose for Himself. They are a new creation. He does not choose individuals arbitrarily against their will, but “*through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*” [1Pe.1:2]. People have to believe the truth; for it is not the will of God that any should perish, but rather that all should turn to Him and live. If any among the descendants of Esau believed the Word as it came to Israel, they were considered proselytes to the faith and were accepted. Thus Gentiles came into the household of faith under the old covenant; for instance, Ruth, who was not an Israelite, and the harlot Rahab. But God here is teaching us a spiritual lesson. Jacob and his family stand for a spiritual house, a new creation; but Esau and his family stand for the flesh, the old creation.

THE FLESH SHALL NOT PREVAIL

Edom (Esau's land) said, “*We will return and build the desolate places.*” But the Lord said, “*They shall build; but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation forever*” [Mal.1:4]. Jehovah is against the flesh. When Israel came up out of Egypt and were on their way to Palestine and sought to pass by peaceably, the Edomites persecuted them; but the Lord remembered their persecutions and dealt with them accordingly. Nobody can persecute God's people without suffering for it. “*Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord*” [Rom.12:19]. He overrules the persecution for the good of the saints. He may use other folks to chastise His own people; but afterwards, He punishes the instrument of chastisement. He also makes His foes to acknowledge Him. He said to Edom,

“And your eyes shall see and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel.” [Mal.1:5]

God loved Israel. Therefore, though He chastised them because they were disobedient and unfaithful; yet His eyes were always on them, and a remnant will believe, and He will bring them back into the land of promise. God will fulfill His Word. The fellow that says there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, does not know his Bible. We are at liberty to draw many lessons from God's dealings with Israel and apply them to The Church; but God says one thing to Israel and He has one purpose for them; He has another purpose for The Church and says other things to The Church. Paul's epistles (except Hebrews), for instance, were written to The Church, and most everything in them, except Romans 9-11, was concerning The Church.

REVERENCE EXPECTED

“A Son honoureth his father and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?” [Mal.1:6]

Here God speaks to them as their father. This is unusual. The Fatherhood of God was generally unknown under the old covenant. The words "*Thou art our Father*" [Isa.63:16, Isa.64:8], are prophetic. Israel will address the Lord thus in the near future. When our Lord Jesus shall reign as King of kings, the Jews will call Him, "*the everlasting Father*" [Isa.9:6]. Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "*Our father which art in heaven*" [Luk.11:2]. He introduced the Fatherhood of God. The Son had to come and be revealed to men as God's Son before they could understand their sonship toward God and His Fatherhood toward them. That is why it was postponed. You see the Scriptures bring to us a constant unfolding of the truth. There is a time for certain phases of truth, and they are depending on portions of truth that have come forth before. Four hundred years before His Son is to appear, Jehovah intimates that they do not honor Him as such; for He had treated them as dear children. They should have revered Him as their Master (Lord).

AGAINST THE PRIESTS

"O priests, that despise my name." God's chief complaint here is against His representatives. Malachi 2 opens with the same charge. In the 7 letters in Revelation [Rev.2-3], the charges (commendations) are first of all to the angels (pastors); for they represent the Lord to the people. "*And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?*" In this little chapter of Malachi 1 we have the word **name** mentioned 6 times, referring to the Lord; twice in Verse 6. How sad it is when the leaders despise the Lord's name: "*And ye say, wherein have we despised thy name?*" The Lord answers,

"Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, the table of the Lord is contemptible." [Mal.1:7]

Notice also in Malachi 1:12, "*But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, the table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.*" God held the kings (shepherds) and priests responsible for the spiritual condition of the people; for they were His messengers to the people. The kings were to rule as shepherds or caretakers, over Israel, and the priests were to bear the people on their hearts to God. They were intercessors. Both kings and priests were types of Jesus Christ. When He was here, He fulfilled the prophetic office for 3 years. Later, he began the priestly office, which He is still fulfilling. He intercedes for His followers and bears them on his heart to the Father.

As the Lord had a controversy with the priests in Malachi's time, so he has a controversy with the ministers today. The 7 letters to the 7 churches [Rev.2-3] indicate His view of Christendom throughout past years. The letters are all addressed to the angels (messengers, that is, the pastors), because He holds them responsible for the condition of their congregations. Only 2 out of the 7 churches are found to be without blame, namely, Smyrna and Philadelphia. A small minority of ministers are walking in the light and will of the Lord. Hence, He arraigns the priests today for permitting error, and for not giving their flocks the whole Truth. No marvel that He removes the candlestick, that is, those saints who have the light and walk in it, and leaves the unfaithful shepherds with those who are lifeless and formal, heady and worldly minded. This explains why there are come-outers today. Some may come out with a wrong spirit, not being led out by the Lord. That is unfortunate. But when He leads people out, they gather together in His name and that name they honor.

They learn His Word, yield to its power, walk in the Spirit, and glorify God in a practical, everyday life.

God charged the priests that they despised His name, and offered polluted bread upon the altar. They said also,

“The table of the Lord is contemptible; the table of the Lord is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even His meat is contemptible. What a weariness is it! They snuffed at it.”

That is the way many people treat the pure Word of God now...they call evil good and good evil. It wearies them to hear the Truth. They prefer light entertainment. Not only the Catholic priests, but Protestant priests also are to blame for this perverted appetite. They mix a little truth with much error. As Israel's priests offered blind, lame, and sick animals in sacrifice to God, they were denying that Christ was that perfect holy Lamb of sacrifice, and saying He was lame and sick; Christ is misrepresented to the people. He is not proclaimed as a complete Savior, an all-sufficient Savior, a gracious Savior, able to save to the uttermost and heal all who come to Him in simple faith.

No marvel if hungry sheep hunt better pasture. They cannot be blamed if they jump over the fence because they smell the sweet clover of the truth elsewhere. Now and then someone writes like this...

“What do you think about it? A few of us are disappointed and discouraged; for the meeting is dead. There is no spiritual life, nor power, nor food. Is it right for us to assemble by ourselves elsewhere and worship the Lord?”

“Yes,” we say, “It is right.” Doubtless the Candlestick Examiner is again removing the light-bearers to themselves. They long for liberty to pray in the Spirit and witness for Jesus. They yearn to know the Scriptures and the power of God. The Holy Spirit is grieved with the dearth in the regular meeting, and is leading the thirsty ones out into the green pastures and by the still waters of peace, plenty and refreshing. In clarion tones, the Lord is saying, *“Come out of her (Babylon), my people and be not partaker of her sins”* [Rev.18:4]. Wherever Babylon is, come out. *“Be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, saith the Lord, and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my people”* [2Co.6:17-18].

“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.” [Mal.1:11]

God will have His name honored, magnified, and glorified. The name of Christ is above every name and deserves our respect. If we deny the virgin birth and the meritorious death of Jesus Christ, we are despising the name of Jesus. Today, men are saying that the table of the Lord is polluted and the meat is contemptible. They do not believe in the deity of Christ; and of course they deny the merit of His blood. They say that it is no better than the blood in the veins of anybody else. But blood, untainted by sin, flowed through the veins of the Son of God, and was poured out for us. Happy are the people that believe this and declare it. Cursed are the people that deny it

and decry it. They defame the name of Jesus and the curse of God will rest upon them forever.

"Ye said also, behold, what a weariness is it? And ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn and the lame and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand saith the Lord?" [Mal.1:13]

Men snuff at the only sacrifice that has brought salvation to lost souls and say, it is "a weariness." To them reality is a weariness. When a person prays so happily and freely in the Spirit, my heart rejoices in the reality of realities and I say, "How real is reality." It is the real truth of God." It satisfies our hearts and the heart of God also. Thus we honor His name. We treat God as our Father and fear Christ as our Master. We hold Him as our Lord and Head. That gladdens the heart of the Son of God. Thus we fulfill the Scriptures to the uttermost and are able to walk in the light. Of course, the will of God is wrought in us and by us. When we pray, God hears us. When we preach the Truth, it goes home to hearts. It convicts the careless and indifferent and strengthens the weak. Yes, they say, It is tiresome to listen to the folks who pray so long and loud and testify so boisterously and shout the high praises of God. Well, it is a weariness to us to listen to the fellow that is dry, cold and intellectual, precise, legal and lifeless. When we are filled with the Truth of God in our minds and hearts and are partakers of the life, spirit, and faith of the Lord, our very flesh recoils from that which is carnal, worldly, cold and intellectual, and fleshly.

Finally, notice Malachi 1:14:

"But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen."

Some priests brought animals that were corrupt. There was some defect in them and they knew it; and they offered them to God. He also knew it, and could not accept them. That is the kind of a redeemer that some priests recommend to the people; not the Redeemer, who is symbolized, or typified by those pure offerings of bullocks, or sheep, or goats, or pigeons under the old covenant. Christ was a pure offering. God was well pleased with His Son because He was "*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and knew no sin*" [Heb.7:26]. He was absolutely without blemish. God accepted Him. The kind of teaching that some people give makes out Christ a minister of sin. They make it appear that He is not that pure, clean, holy offering that God accepted, hence, the curse rests upon them.

Happy are the people who honor the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and give Him the place that God has given Him. Happy are the people that enjoy such a Gospel and offer it to others. God's blessing is bound to rest upon all such. And God has such a people in these closing days, who are walking in the light and seeking only His will. Sometimes they are scattered. There are individuals, who are not known to anybody; but they are known unto the Lord. Known unto the Lord are all His saints, and He is making up His jewels, He is gathering them together.

SERMON 2

"And now, o ye priests; this commandment is for you" [Mal.2:1]

As stated in Sermon 1, God's complaint is first and chiefly against the priests. The same is true today. The priests, or ministers stand before the people for the Lord. They are His representatives, His servants, His messengers. By choosing the ministry of the Gospel, they assume those relationships. Therefore, God has a right to expect of them good conduct and faithful service; and the people have a right to expect good spiritual food and tender care from them.

Malachi 2 is freighted with valuable lessons concerning God's ministers. This chapter falls naturally into 5 parts:

1. A Devine Threat
2. Real Priests
3. Unfaithful Priests
4. Judah's Failure
5. The Questions Answered

These 5 parts contain 7 significant segments. These segments are 2-fold in a number of cases. The close language student would term much of this chapter poetic.

1. A DIVINE THREAT

"If ye will not hearken, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart."
[Mal.2:2]

Consider who uttered these words...*"the Lord of hosts."* This lends weight and solemnity to them. This title of God occurs several times in Malachi:

- 8 times in the 1st chapter,
- 6 times in the 2nd chapter and
- 24 times in the entire book.

The name **Lord** is translated **Jehovah** in the Revised Version. The whole phrase is **Jehovah of hosts**. He who speaks herein has just dominion over all created intelligent beings: angels in heaven, good and bad; disembodied spirits in heaven and under the earth; and over all mankind. In a very special sense, He is Lord of His own people, His spiritual *"hosts."*

God demands a hearing ear and attentive heart. Such an attitude commands His favor and kindness. His chief claim upon us is to *"give glory unto my name."*

Men, carnal men, wicked men get plenty of undeserved praise; our God gets very little. Oh, let us give Him all the glory due to His precious name. The **Lord** of hosts deserves it; hence, He requires it for every good and perfect boon cometh down from Him [Jam.1:17]. Neglecting these attitudes toward Jehovah, incurs a curse, even upon our blessings. Israel murmured, and God gave them flesh to eat until it stuck between their teeth, fulfilling this word, *"I have cursed them already."*

"Behold I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it." [Mal.2:3]

The margin says, *"Reprove your seed"* because their offspring followed in their steps. This is the 4th segment.

The 5th segment is still worse: *"and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts."* The shame and reproach which enveloped those priests for their conduct before God, was as if their faces were covered with refuse (study the disgraceful conduct of Eli's sons and their deserved end [1Sa.2 & 4]). *"And one shall take you away with it."* Thus was the *"remnant of the house of Jereboam"* taken away [1Ki.14:10].

Finally...

"And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts." [Mal.2:4]

God gives ample proof that His Word is His Word and not man's puny word. He had chosen Levi and covenanted that his offspring should be the priestly line; and He demonstrated it beyond contradiction. The unyielding sons of Levi (Aaron) learned that to their deep sorrow and shame. Jehovah in every age sovereignly chose and equipped certain persons to know and declare His will, and make others to know it. **HE DOES THE SAME TODAY.** Those who refuse and oppose them suffer for it.

2. REAL PRIESTS

"My covenant was with him of life and peace: and I gave them to him that he might fear; and he feared me and stood in awe of my name." [Mal.2:5 RV]

This refers to the day the golden calf was made. God was displeased greatly and judged Israel. Moses exclaimed, *"Who is on the Lord's side?"* and the children of Levi did according to the Word of Moses. They *"gathered themselves together unto him"* [Exo.32:26]. Thus, Levi earned the priesthood (see Exo.32:19-20).

Malachi 2:5-7 sets forth 7 important facts about true, acceptable priests of God. They contain excellent lessons for us, who are ministers today; for the character and qualifications of prophets and priests under both covenants are practically the same.

1. **Life and peace** were the 2 main planks of that covenant. Reference is made to the words said to Phinehas [Num.25:12] and to Ezekiel (Eze.34:25 and 37:26). The word **life** is omitted in them; only **peace** is

named. But we must bear in mind that as the Aaronic priesthood was only typical, so was also the covenant. The anti-typical covenant was made between the Father and His Son Jesus. Therefore, we read, that He was made a priest, “*not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*” [Heb.7:16]. “*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men*” [Joh.1:3]. His priesthood is eternal, the guarantee of our eternal salvation. Let the reader look up the 3 citations named above [Num.25:12, Eze.34:25, Eze.37:26]. God will yet fulfill His covenant to Israel to the uttermost.

2. Why were life and peace given? “*That he might fear*”; *and he feared me and stood in awe of my name*” [Mal.2:5 RV]. Every true priest did as here stated, but Jesus revered the name of His Father in a sense and degree beyond all others. He showed no pity to the flesh and recognized no natural ties. Let us ministers be provoked to deep awe and reverence by those Old Testament priests and by the unflinching loyalty of Christ. Let us take Christ in us to stand in awe of His name and of the Father’s name.

3. Malachi 2:6: “*The law of truth was in his mouth*, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.”

“*The law of truth was in His mouth.*” Of course “*iniquity was not found in his lips.*” In Exodus 13:9, “*the law of truth*” is called “*the Lord’s law*”. We are apt always to regard The Law as hard, cold, and stern. It simply means the rule or will of God. If our hearts are full of Divine Love and our minds full of Divine Truth, iniquity will not be found in our lips either. As Paul admonished, we should be imitators of him as he imitated Christ, to whom the above verse ultimately refers.

4. “*He walked with me in peace and equity*” What a testimony! A true priest (minister) enjoys the covenant of peace to the fullest extent. Jesus did nothing apart from his Father; neither should we. Even Enoch walked with God and had this testimony that he pleased God. Why may not we, who have Christ in us, our life and strength? Let us, God’s servants, persistently say and believe that “*it is no longer I that live; but Christ liveth in me*” [Ga.2:20] and it is “*Christ speaking in me,*” not weak toward others, but mighty in them [2Co.13:3]. Then we too shall walk and please Him.

5. Then the following also will be true of us: “*And did turn many away from iniquity*.” Our testimony and teaching will be effectual. We will bear fruit to God’s glory and results will follow our ministries. The same Holy Spirit who enabled Jesus to go about doing good and healing the oppressed, will enable us to do the same mighty works.

6. Seek The Law at His mouth, Malachi 2:7: “*For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*” Such was the instruction given to the priests and people at the beginning as declared in Deuteronomy 17:9. Ezra was a fine example of a true priest; “*For he had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments*” [Ezr.7:10]. The ministry of the priests, including Ezra, in Nehemiah’s day, is praise-worthy. “*So*

they read in the book of the law of God distinctly (or with interpretation) and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading” [Neh.8:8]. Preachers should ponder this verse and imitate those sons of Aaron. Paul admonished Timothy, and thus admonishes all of us ministers, saying, “*Preach the word*” [2Ti.4:2]; “*study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (literally: “*holding a straight course in the truth*”) [2Ti.2:15]. Complaint comes to us continually from the pens and lips of God’s people that the shepherds do not instruct them in the Scriptures. They entertain the people with catchy stories and eloquent statements. What a pity! What a shame! Our blessed Lord set before us an example which we should seek earnestly to heed. Twice we read in Matthew that He went about teaching and preaching and healing all manner of sickness [Mat.4:23, Mat.9:35]. He expects no less of us today. Happy and successful are they who follow in His steps.

7. “For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” The Lord had definitely chosen Aaron and his sons to be His messengers. No one else could fill the priest’s office. If he attempted to do so, he suffered for it. King Saul lost his kingdom because he forced himself to offer a burnt-offering, when he thought Samuel was not keeping his promise [1Sa.13]. Many men choose the Gospel ministry as an avocation, but are egregious failures, for God has not sent them. They may continue therein; but they do not minister God’s Word. They lecture, make religious speeches, get a following, but prove to be false prophets. One who is really chosen by the Lord, brings the Lord’s message. He does not need credentials from men to advertise him. “*A man’s gift maketh room for him*” [Pro.18:16]. God credentials him and causes people to give heed to his message and accept it as divine. The same facts are true of women whom Jehovah may choose and send forth as His ministers.

3. UNFAITHFUL PRIESTS

“But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. 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?” [Mal.2:8-10]

Malachi 2:8-10 records 7 pitiful facts concerning half-hearted, selfish priests. God said to them: “*Ye are departed out of the way.*” They knew God’s way and will, and were responsible for walking in it; for He would have enabled them to do so, if they had chosen His will.

As a result of departure, they “*caused many to stumble at the law.*” It is a very solemn fact, that everyone of us exerts an influence over others. Especially is this true of people in an official place. If we go right, others will go right. If we go wrong, others will go wrong.

They “*corrupted the covenant of Levi.*” A minister’s misconduct makes it appear that the truth is evil. It misrepresents the Lord. Peter’s compromise with legality, because he feared the Jews, made it appear that Christ was the

minister of sin [Gal.2:17]. To stand against the truth is to give God the lie. In the 4th fact, the Lord exposes such.

“Therefore, have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people.” Let no minister think that he can continue in his own self-devised way and get by. God will show him up. The spiritual will surely discover his departure from the truth. The full meaning of the departure of the priests from the way is stated in the 5th point.

They were *“partial in the law.”* The margin says, They lifted up the face against The Law, which expresses the will of God. And no one can step out of God’s way into his own way without going against God’s will. It is for the people’s safety, the Lord exposes self-seeking leaders and blows up their religious works.

“Ye have not kept my ways.” Priests, who start in their own way, go from bad to worse. They deal treacherously with their fellows, even with their brethren. The true saint inquires, “How can they? Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?” We are members of the same family. “We be brethren,” said Abraham to Lot. Rather than mistreat his nephew, or have strife, he suggested a peaceable separation.

What a sad climax is God’s verdict of the priests’ departure from the right way. He calls it, *“Profaning the covenant of the fathers,”* the covenant which the Lord made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Profanation against that covenant was against God’s Son Jesus Christ, who is the very core and ultimate object thereof. Today, departure into one’s own way ends finally in fearful defeat and shame, if not in modernism.

What a warning to the servants of the Lord. Let us take it deeply to heart and flee from the first and smallest intimations of self-will and the faintest desires of going in our own way. Let us shun the ways of supposedly wise men and women, who appear to have fabulous success. Young ministers especially need to be wary of Satan’s snares. Paul recognized the traps that trip them, some of which he named in 1 Timothy 6. He said concerning them, *“but thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, patience, meekness”* [1Ti 6:11]. Then later, he exhorted, saying, *“Flee also youthful lusts.”* [2Ti.2:22]. Doubtless he meant the lusts for an easier place, a ministry with less persecution, popular, promising and on a larger scale. Others have great success. Why not I? Persons with strong will, strong personality, self-conceit, and great ambitions are easily trapped by the enemy here. Many young fellows seemingly are making it go today; but in God’s sight, they are on the rocks of spiritual defeat. Let us profit by the failures of others.

SERMON 3

4. JUDAH’S FAILURE

Judah’s failure is briefly described in Malachi 2:11-13. This portion also falls into 7 segments.

"Judah hath dealt treacherously and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem." [Mal.2:11a]

Judah's chief error is expressed in the first statement, "*Judah hath dealt treacherously.*" We saw that this was one of the last complaints laid against the priests. Now the whole tribe is accused of the same wicked conduct. This charge is mentioned 5 times in this chapter. The word **treachery** means "*deceit, trickery, unfaithfulness to a trust, the breaking of an alliance.*" How sad that God's people thus mistreat one another; but they are sure to follow a self-chosen path if the old man is not judged. The Lord's estimate of that conduct is expressed in calling it "*an abomination,*" that is, an impure, detestable vice.

"For Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which He loved." [Mal.2:11b]

The priests had profaned the covenant of the fathers. This charge goes further back; for God's holiness preceded His covenant and gave birth to it. It is a very serious thing to tamper with and belie the holiness of Jehovah. We are exhorted to praise the beauty of holiness and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. God's throne is a throne of holiness and He has sworn by His holiness. We, who believe, are partakers of His holiness. Having been created in righteousness and true holiness; we are to bring forth fruit unto holiness (sanctification), without which no man shall see the Lord [Heb.13:15].

"And hath married the daughter of a strange god." [Mal.2:11c]

Ezra records a painful description of that transgression in Malachi 2:11c:

"The holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands." [Ezr.9:2]

The princes and rulers were chief in that trespass. They engaged in the abominations of the heathen. Ezra's loyal heart was deeply grieved and heavy. In his fervent prayer, he exclaimed,

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head and our trespass is grown up unto the heaven...Should we again break thy commandments and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Wouldest thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant?" [Ezr.9: 6, 14 RV]

Here is where Paul found his burning material for 2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" [2Co 6:14]

Many saints never learn the experimental care of God and His fatherly love and fellowship; they never become sons of God in experience because they mix with the world, which He pronounces "*unbelievers,*" "*unrighteousness,*" "*darkness,*" "*infidelity,*" and "*idolatry.*"

"The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts."
[Mal.2:12]

Yes, if we do not cut ourselves away from worldly alliances, we will be cut off from fellowship with the Father and from His protection and service. Even though one be "*the master and the scholar*," there is no escape; for God cannot condone such mixture. Sometimes in testimony and preaching, men think to pull the wool over other people's eyes and make them believe that they have the victory; but spiritual listeners discern the emptiness and want of reality in them. Such men are severed by God's providences from the faithful flock; for He determines to keep His house clean.

The clause, "*him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts*" is explained in Nehemiah 13. The Lord cannot accept the worship and service of ministers who continue in unholy and unscriptural associations. An assembly cannot put up with their ministry and go on faithfully with God. Therefore, He raises up a Nehemiah, who thrusts them out by the Word of God, which is living and energetic.

"And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand." [Mal.2:13]

Have you observed how pious some leaders act? They have a faculty of crying and whining. They seem very religious, make loud and long prayers, squeeze out pious tears and sobs and fool the people. But God knows the life and the heart. He cannot endorse, nor bless, apologetical speeches and prayers. They court sympathy and sometimes get it from the fleshly minded, but not from the spiritual. Neither the Lord, nor His faithful flock can receive such service or worship.

5. THE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The remaining 4 verses of Malachi 2 record and answer the 3 selfish, unfair questions propounded by unfaithful priests. God answers by asking 2 other questions, and then explains.

"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." [Mal.2:14]

The question, "*Wherefore?*" refers to the scathing Divine Threat in Malachi 2:12-13. Why would God cut off such priests? Here is the plain answer: "*Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth.*" Four arguments are given here against unfaithful treatment of a man against his wife. She is his companion; for he chose her to be such. He ought therefore to treat her as his companion. She is the wife of his covenant; that is, he made overtures and promises to her. He promised to be faithful to his companion, and would allow no other lover to come between. That is man's side.

But there are 2 items on God's side.

"And did not He make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth." [Mal.2:15]

Yes, did not the Lord create Adam and Eve, 2 persons, and join them together as one? *"And what God has joined together, let not man put asunder"* [Mat.19:6]. If a Christian man has chosen a lady to be his wife, believing that God has joined them, he should not deal treacherously toward her. If she misconducts herself and leaves him, then he is free (see 1Co.7:15).

Jehovah *"had...the residue (excellency) of the Spirit"* with which He was ready to anoint the priest and enable him to do God's will. Divinely-Appointed priests (ministers) are also Divinely Equipped. *"As thy days, so shall thy strength be"* [Deu.33:25b], saith the Lord. He has always met His servants' needs, if they were honest and wholehearted toward Him and sought only His glory. It is no different today; hence, He has some true, unselfish servants now. To everyone who cries out to Him in faith, He gives the excellency of the Spirit.

"And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed" [Mal.2:15]. Adam and Eve were made one, that sometime down the line of their offspring, a child might be born, who should be the great Benefactor of mankind. He should be *"a godly seed,"* a seed of God. But they failed the Lord. Adam's immediate descendants were human only and sinful. He begat a son in his own likeness, that is, sinful. But the seed of God, the Lord Jesus, is **holy, harmless, undefiled**. The marriage of every priest should be intact and never broken, because the priest's son was a reminder of the promised seed of God announced in Genesis 3:15.

Furthermore, the marriage relation foreshadows the union between God and His people. God is faithful to His own. He never deals treacherously with them. He might possibly have found some brighter and abler folk among the nations; for Jesus said, *"The people of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light"* [Luk.16:8]; but, He never flirted with the nations. He loved His people and sought their comfort, happiness, and usefulness...He does so yet. Praise His name! Every man who marries should be a type of Christ, the coming glorious Bridegroom. Every woman who marries should be a type of the Bride of Christ. This is the meaning of Paul's injunctions to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5. Ministers especially should set the example in this respect before the saints. The God of Israel hateth putting away. He divorced Israel because He was compelled to do so; but there will never be a divorce between Jesus and His heavenly bride.

"For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" [Mal.2:16-17]

Is it not strange that people can insult the Lord, walk in the flesh, follow their own lusts; then, when chastised and corrected for it, they enquire of Him why He punishes them? They even say, *"Wherein have we wearied Him?"* or, *"Where is the God of judgment?"* [Mal.2:17]. I have heard them say,

- “Well, what have I done? What harm is there in that?”
- Oh, do you want to put me under law? You are not my boss.”

If children impudently address their parents after that fashion, generally the parents slap them in the face and send them away with a severer chastisement; but the Lord in mercy replies to His impudent servants and gives them an opportunity to repent and mend their ways.

“*Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet, ye say, **WHEREIN HAVE WE WEARIED HIM?***” What a charge Jehovah was compelled to file against His representatives, the priests. Is it possible that men can make the Almighty God weary? Yes, His heart grows tired of His people’s insincerity, unfaithfulness, unreality, lightness, and falsehood. He is deeply grieved and pained. Then, what is worse, they ask the impudent question, “*Wherein have we wearied Him?*” as if they did not know. God quickly and plainly answers, stating, “*When ye say, Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delighteth in them.*” In speaking thus, the priests acknowledged that some of them did wrong. And they knew very well that God abominated all kinds of wrong-doing. “*Cease to do evil and learn to do well,*” is His injunction [Isa.1:16-17]. He condemns calling evil good, and good evil [Isa.5:20]. He delights only in faith and obedience; for He furnishes the enabling to believe and obey.

One of the most deplorable things today is lasciviousness, and treating such conduct lightly, and even teaching that God overlooks and does not hold it against us, because He knows we are weak. Paul bewailed such a state of mind. Some sinned but failed to repent of their uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness [2Co.12:21]. Jude wrote of those who are “*turning the grace of God into lasciviousness*” [Jud.1:4]. They take advantage of grace and abuse it. Some fanatics on eternal security teach that we may do as we please, let the natural man run riot, and God does not care. Then some enemies of Divine Grace declare that we also teach such a devilish heresy. Nay, we teach a life of victory over the flesh; not only is that possible, but the Lord requires it, because He has made ample provision for it. Paul’s Gospel shows us the way of overcoming and the Holy Spirit leads us in that way and becomes our enabling to overcome. Malachi taught this triumph over evil.

Note the priests’ last query: “***WHERE IS THE GOD OF JUDGMENT?***” as if God were indifferent to their evil conduct. That very question wearied the Lord. Evidently such people have no conscience before God. He is not in their thoughts. They do not believe that “*the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*” [Pro.15:3]. If they read Revelation 2-3, they must have their eyes closed. Jesus, as Judge, is even now walking in the midst of the churches, discerning the evil and the good, condemning the one and confirming the other, threatening chastisement of the former and promising rewards to the latter. Nothing is plainer than that we shall be judged for the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad [2Co.5:10]. Men expect the wicked to be judged; but 1 Peter 4:17 declares that “*judgment must begin at the house of God.*” Oh, let us heed Paul’s earnest words,

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believer, in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to the reading, to the exhortation, to the doctrine.” [1Ti.4:12-13]

SERMON 4

*"Behold, I will send **MY MESSENGER**, and he shall prepare the way before me; and **THE LORD**, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the **MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT**, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith **THE LORD OF HOSTS**."*
[Mal.3:1]

Two messengers are mentioned in this verse: "*my messenger*" and "*the messenger of the covenant*."

1. The 1st, "*my messenger*," refers to the incomparable John the Baptist; for the words in Malachi 3:1 are quoted in Matthew 11:10 with reference to him. Jesus there gives a great eulogy of John as His forerunner. It requires more than a casual reading of his career in the Gospels to arrive at a worthy appreciation of him and his ministry. We ministers may learn some very deep and valuable lessons from him.
2. The other, "*the messenger of the covenant*," refers to our adorable Lord Jesus. He is the Chief Messenger. The same Hebrew word **MALAK** here is translated "*angel*" in the Old Testament (see Gen.22:15 and Isa.63:9 for examples). In the New Testament, the Greek word **AGGELOS** (angel) is rendered "*messenger*" fewer than a dozen times. In both Testaments the term means "*messenger*." The word **covenant** refers to Genesis 15:18, where we read that "*the Lord made a **COVENANT** with Abram*." It was the covenant of grace, of which God's Son is the leading character. He is Abraham's seed after the flesh.

In Malachi 3:1, two Hebrew words are translated "*Lord*":

1. The 1st Hebrew word is **ADON**; in the Hebrew it means "*master*." David called Him "*my Lord*" in Psalm 110:1, which Jesus quoted in Matthew 22:44. He is termed "*Lord and Christ*" in Acts 2:36, and the "*One Lord*" in Ephesians 4:5. He is the Head (Master) of His body The Church. This is one of the trinity of titles, which He bears in the New Testament: **The Lord Jesus Christ**.
2. The other Hebrew word here for "*LORD*" is **ADONAI**. In the Revised Version it is rendered "*Jehovah*": "*Jehovah of hosts saith that the Lord, the Angel of the covenant will come*" [RV].

The clauses "*whom ye seek*" and "*whom ye delight in*" are significant. The 1st Advent of the Lord Jesus is not mentioned, not even intimated. The Prophet leaps over His human birth and on over this Church Age to His 2nd Glorified Advent. When Jesus came in lowly guise, the nation rejected Him. They would not accept the Babe of Bethlehem, nor the despised Nazarene. They were looking for a mighty deliverer, who would at once fight their national battles and restore the kingdom to Israel. They despised the Man who aimed at the throne by the way of the cross, because, that meant their death also. They sought for and delighted in a powerful conqueror. Even today, the Jews are looking for such a one as their Messiah and King. But when He comes, they will be compelled to acknowledge the Man of Nazareth and the Victim of Calvary. He will judge and deliver Israel from the

standpoint of the cross, having died in their stead and risen for their justification.

TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT

"But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap": And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."
[Mal.3:2-3]

These verses describe the nature of Jesus' 2nd Coming. His severe judgment of the nations is here implied. *"The day of His coming"* is the judgment period mentioned by so many of the Old Testament prophets; it spans nearly 7 years. The question is asked, *"Who may abide the day?"* Only those who will surrender to God; and some of them will suffer physical death because of their faith in God; but their souls will be saved. *"And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap?"* The dross of international boast, strength, pomp, and pride will be consumed by the fires of Divine Judgment. All the devil-directed nations of the world will be the fuel of just wrath in those dark days.

The Lord will not be in a hurry; *"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver."* He will kindle the purifying flame and watch over it with a jealous eye. Through Isaiah God said, *"I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin"* [Isa.1:25]. To what purpose? *"That they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."* Then Jerusalem will be a holy city and Israel a righteous nation. In the previous lessons, we saw that God's complaint was chiefly against the priests. Therefore, His cleansing chastisements will be applied first to the priests, that is, the sons of Levi. When they accept the truth and its saving effects, *"then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord"* [Mal.3:4].

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress (defraud) the hireling in his wages, (and that defraud) the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger (refusing to help him) from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts. For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." [Mal.3:5-6]

Malachi 3:5 indicates the Lord's unsparing attitude against those who will not accept the Divine Process of purification.

The clause, *"fear not me"* in Malachi 3:6 explains why some will be guilty of the aforementioned wicked things. They will perish with unbelieving Gentiles. He is faithful and just, saying, *"For I am Jehovah: I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* I will fulfill all My covenant promises to you and concerning you. I will punish the nations which sought your destruction, and will save you from your sins and from the thralldom of the Gentiles.

JACOB'S PENURIOUSNESS

"Even from the day of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them. Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?" [Mal.3:7]

The word **ordinances** means "statutes" or "decrees." In Malachi 3:14, it is another word, which means "a watch," "a guard," or "observation." The next 3 verses indicate what particular statute is meant, and in what they should return. Jehovah answers Israel's query by a significant question.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." [Mal.3:8]

"Will a man rob God?" It never occurs to people that they are robbers of God. Hence, He says further, *"Yet ye have robbed me."* They could not understand, but put another query, saying, *"Wherein have we robbed thee?"* Then the Lord put His finger on the weak spot, the most touchy spot with most folk: *"The love of money is the root of all evil"* [1Ti.6:10]. Money is useful and necessary; but it is not to be loved. It is not to be hoarded up as if it were our god. It is to be distributed according to God's direction. Therefore, the Lord gave the short, but pungent answer: *"In tithes and offerings."* Ever since Jacob took advantage of his uncle Laban, his descendants have been grasping after **filthy lucre**; and, the misuse of it has made it **FILTHY**. Gentile Christians have not lagged behind the Jews in this disobedience. Mark the next scathing verse, the reflex result of withholding from God.

"Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." [Mal.3:9]

No one but God Himself can compute the great damage and loss which follows penuriousness. The first and chief loss is that of spirituality. **No one can be stingy and spiritual at the same time.** Liberality and spiritual fatness are twin sisters. They always abide in the same hut (house). People grow cold, lose interest, and quit testifying in power when they withhold what belongs to the Lord; and, sometime later they lose physically and financially. It is because the heart, the will is not wholly yielded to God in this matter. A controversy is on. They say,

- "I do not believe in tithing."
- "That belonged to the Mosaic law."
- "I refuse to be put under bondage."
- "I worked hard for my money."
- "Old age is creeping on."

All such is the voice of self-will, of the old creation. Oh, hear the Lord's entreaty.

*"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and **PROVE ME** now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts."* [Mal.3:10-12]

When Israel observed this injunction, there never was any want among the people. Let believers in assemblies in Christ today practice this rule, not as under cold law, but as cheerfully obeying a loving Father, and see if every need will not be met. Even the poorest will be provided for, despite hard times. Note Jehovah's challenge, *"and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."* Five positive practical blessings are promised to the above command:

1. Provision in God's house [Mal.3:10].
2. An uncontainable blessing, material and spiritual [Mal.3:10].
3. Rebuke of devourers of fields [Mal.3:11].
4. Fruit-bearing just on time [Mal.3:11].
5. The eulogy of the nations [Mal.3:12].

All these are certain to come to Israel when they turn to the Lord in the near future. God is faithful and cannot lie. But Christians may be surprised to what astonishing extent these 5 blessings will become facts to those who heed the fatherly voice of God. *"**PROVE ME**,"* He exclaims. Oh, let no one's words be stout against Him. Forbid that any should say, *"It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"* [Mal.3:13-14].

CONDUCT OF THE CONTRITE

The next 2 verses [Mal.3:16-17] are among the most precious in the entire Bible. They are true of all such believers from the beginning to the end.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." [Mal.3:16]

They comfort and admonish one another. Experience recited helps experience and makes it excited to press on. Filial fear longs for fellowship and must have it. But the root of this fear is that they *"thought upon His name."* Pondering the sweet and mighty name of our Lord begets fear (or love) toward Him. That name is as ointment poured forth. **Jesus** means "Savior." **Lord** means "Master," one who tenderly takes charge of us. He is our wisdom, our strength. Do you know that a great ear is open to every testimony about the Lord? Read it: *"And the Lord hearkened and heard."*

The 2 verbs “*hearkened*” and “*heard*” mean the same thing. Does the Holy Spirit resort to tautology? No. There is either a shade of difference; or, the words are used for special emphasis. Both are true here. The Hebrew word QUA-SHAB, translated **hearkened**, means to “*give attention*.” The Hebrew word SHAMEA means “*to hear because deeply impressed and with profound interest*.”

- QUA-SHAB is illustrated in Psalm 5:2, “**HEARKEN** to the voice of my cry, my King.”
- SHAMEA is illustrated in Exodus 2:24, “God **HEARD** their groanings.”

The Lord gives such close attention to testimonies and conversations concerning His Son that He is impressed with them and He hears them with special concern. If they are uttered for His glory and for the good of others, He has them recorded. We have a very pronounced example of this fact in Luke 24 when 2 men, with bleeding hearts, were traveling toward Emmaus lamenting their great loss, and a stranger appeared on the scene. He gave them heartburn by opening to them the Scriptures. Later, He disclosed Himself as their very loving Lord Jesus. Oh, it pays to speak often one to another of Him who has redeemed and saved us. It pays now to speak often of His coming. Paul exhorts us to “*comfort one another with these words*” [1Th.4:18].

ETERNAL SAFETY

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”
[Mal.3:17]

Over a thousand years before, it was written, that “*the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance*.” God will not forget His Word, nor His own possession in the end. He will keep them as the apple of His eye [Deu.32:9-10]. He says here, “*I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him*.” The overlapping days which close this age and introduce the next will be a time of sorrow and darkness and waste; but the Lord will arise in behalf of the remnant of Israel.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” [Mal.4:1]

The battle of Armageddon will completely overthrow the nations that will be against Israel and against the Lord. God will fight from heaven for His own people and spare them. The manner of His interference is expressed in the next 2 verses.

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.” [Mal 4:2-3]

This will take place during the Millennium. The healing power of Christ, “*the Sun of righteousness*,” is set over against the blistering, burning heat of the

natural sun with which He will consume the wicked. He will also give Israel power to “*tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes*” under the soles of their feet. That will be the crowning day for God’s inheritance in the earth. That day is near at hand. We will no doubt see more marked evidences of it before this year closes. Hallelujah for the hope!

But who are “*my jewels*” mentioned in Malachi 3:17? In the margin, they are called a “*special treasure*.” The Hebrew word SEGULLAH, here translated **jewels**, is rendered “*peculiar treasure or people*” in Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 14:2, 26:18; and Psalm 135:4. In each place it refers directly to Israel. As compared with the nations, Israel is God’s special (or peculiar people); even His treasure, His jewels. As a jeweler gathers his costly gems into a beautiful case to preserve them and, in due time, to exhibit them, so the Lord will soon assemble His earthly treasure, the remnant of the Jews, into their longed-for land. 1 Peter 2:9 is the New Testament answer to these Old Testament citations. He terms them “*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*.” The “*peculiar people*” phrase in the margin is “*a purchased people*.” More fully expressed, they are “*a people protected, preserved, purchased and possessed by being encamped around about*” [1Pe.2:9 Transliteration]. It will not be long until they shall be gathered and placed in their “*glorious land*,” whither every orthodox Jew today is gazing with yearning eyes.

A FINAL WORD

“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” [Mal.4:4]

This is the last mention of The Law for about 400 years. The next mention of it is our Lord’s spiritual interpretation of The Law in His sermon on the mount [Mat.5-7].

“Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” [Mal.4:5]

The ministry of John the Baptist was the fulfillment, as least in part, of this prophecy. Jesus said of him, “*And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come*” “*Elias truly shall first come and restore all things: but I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist*” [Mat.11:14, 17:11-13].

Luke explains how John was the fulfillment of Malachi’s words:

“And he (John) shall go before Him (Jesus) in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” [Luke 1:17]

Many suppose that Elijah will be one of the 2 powerful witnesses of Revelation 11; but not so. Rather, as Luke says, as John came so 2 men will arise and prophesy in the spirit and power of Elijah and Moses. Whoever they may be, they will not be those 2 prophets; for Elijah was translated and Moses was raised from the dead. Both have glorified bodies, and it is

impossible that they should die; but the 2 witnesses shall die and lay dead for 3½ days in the streets of Jerusalem, then be raised and caught up to God. Will our God be short of men that He must disturb the rest and mar the glory of 2 faithful fellows who have served their day? Nay!

The first book of the Bible begins with man in a garden and ends with him “*in a coffin in Egypt*” [Gen.2:8, Gen.50:26]. The last book of the Old Testament begins with God’s love for His people and ends with the threat of “*a curse*” upon the earth [Mal.1:2, Mal.4:6]. John the Baptist closed the Old Testament canon and opened the new. Four hundred years of Divine Silence followed Malachi’s unique prophecy. That silence was broken by the announcement of the births of John and Jesus...two **J’s** appeared:

- **J**ohn was the last prophet of the Old Covenant.
- **J**esus was the 1st and Chief Prophet of the New Covenant.

-- √ --