

*MINOR
PROPHETS
III*

Haggai – Malachi

Dr. Brian J. Bailey

“Minor Prophets III: Haggai - Malachi”

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MAP OF ISRAEL



INTRODUCTION

This book entitled *Minor Prophets III* comprises a commentary on the last three prophets of the Old Testament. The history of Israel in ancient times is that of a nation that came up out of Egypt to inhabit the land of Canaan.

Mightily favoured by God, with His presence manifested in signs and miracles, the Israelites were the recipients of His laws. Although so favoured, they knowingly disobeyed God with the result that He raised up prophets to warn and bring them back to Him. Thus, throughout Scripture we have records of these men speaking on behalf of the Lord.

However, Israel would not listen; so God brought upon them the judgments that He had declared through Moses the Lawgiver. Essentially these judgments concerned the division of the land into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, both of which went into captivity. Israel was taken captive in 722 B.C. by the Assyrians, and Judah in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians, yet God promised restoration in the land.

This promise of restoration was fulfilled by the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. when the Jews returned to rebuild the Temple of Solomon, which became known as the Restoration Temple. The prophetic books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi covered this Restoration Period, which lasted until approximately 444 B.C. They are termed

the post-exilic prophets since their ministries commenced after the exile in Babylon. Their primary duty was to return the Jews to the purposes of God, the temple writings, and the service of God until the time of the first coming of their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**THE BOOK
OF
HAGGAI**

Background

Haggai is the first of the post-exilic prophets. He prophesied between August and December of 520 B.C., in the second year of Darius, the king of Persia, some 16 years after the return from Babylonian Captivity was decreed by Cyrus in his first year, 536 B.C.

Persian Kings

NAME	PERIOD
CYRUS II, The Great	536-530 B.C.
CAMBYSES II	530-522 B.C.
SMERDIS	522 B.C.
DARIUS I, The Great	522-486 B.C.
XERXES I (Ahasuerus)	486-465 B.C.
ARTAXERXES I (Longimanus)	465-424 B.C.
DARIUS II	424-404 B.C.
ARTAXERXES II	404-359 B.C.
ARTAXERXES III	359-338 B.C.
ARNES III	338-336 B.C.
DARIUS III	336-330 B.C.

Then followed Alexander the Great, King of Greece (330-323 B.C.).

The Sequence of Temple Restoration

- The Altar was erected—7th month, 1st day, 1st year of the reign of Cyrus.
- The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated.
- The foundation of the Temple was laid—2nd year, 2nd month of the reign of Cyrus.
- Building was halted until the 2nd year of Darius (520 B.C.), when through the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, the ruler Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest began to build. It was confirmed by a decree of Darius I (Ezra 6:8).
- The Temple was finished—the 6th year of Darius, 3rd day, month Adar (516 B.C.).

Note: The name of Artaxerxes is added to the text later by the author, to denote finality of approval (Ezra 6:14).

Introduction

Haggai prophesied during the Restoration Period, when Israel came back from Babylonian captivity. The messages of the prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—during this period are quite different from the messages of the other prophets. They are very relevant to our days, because they are speaking of restoration, which will be one of the main focuses in the coming revival.

Haggai was the first prophet to arise after the exile. He prophesied during the time that Persia dominated the Middle East and Israel. Zephaniah had prophesied approximately 70 years before him at the beginning of the exile, as did Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Haggai prophesied after the 70 years of captivity, foretold by Jeremiah. The prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the fall of Babylon, and the return to the land of Israel had also been fulfilled. The Babylonian Empire, which had destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C., fell to the Persian Empire, at the time of Haggai. Concerning Cyrus, Isaiah 44:28 says, “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” This prophecy was given about 150 years before the event and was fulfilled when the temple was rebuilt in the time of Haggai.

There were two people charged with the restoration of the temple: Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel. Under

Zerubbabel (who was a prince of Judah and a descendant of David), about 40,000 free men and 7,000 menservants and maidservants returned to Jerusalem. This is recorded for us in Ezra chapters 1-2. The decree to rebuild the temple was given in March of 536 B.C. by Cyrus, in his first year (Ezra 6:8). Then the Israelites restored the altar in the seventh month of that year. After that the foundation of the temple was laid in the second month of the second year of Cyrus in 535 B.C. (Ezra 3:8-10).

King Darius the Mede captured Babylon in October of 539 B.C. Cyrus, who was the captain of Darius' army at that time, actually took Babylon for Darius (Isa. 44:28). Darius the Mede reigned for three years, after which Cyrus, nephew of Darius and captain of his army, became the first king of Persia in 536 B.C., bringing the Persians into power. As Darius' captain, Cyrus, in a sense co-reigned with him during the three years Darius was king. For this reason, some historians list Cyrus as reigning from 539 B.C., but in actuality he did not take the sole possession of the throne until 536 B.C. He was captain to his uncle, Darius the Mede, who reigned from 539 to 536 B.C.

The foundation of the Temple in Jerusalem was laid in 535 B.C., but the enemy hindered and blocked the work for nearly 15 years. The rebuilding of the Temple began again in 520 B.C., due to the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, in the reign of Darius of Persia (Ezra 5:1-5). The Temple was at last completed in 516 B.C. We can see from these dates that the enemy was able to block the work that had been given by decree of the king for many years. We must persevere in

prayer against the decrees of authorities or against wicked people who use authorities to block the work of the Lord.

God raised up two prophets at this time: Haggai and Zechariah. They both prophesied and encouraged the leaders, Zerubbabel and Joshua, to finish the work in the time of Darius, king of Persia, in 516 B.C. When the temple was restored, they observed the Feast of Tabernacles. This is a type of the Last Day Church, for the Church will spiritually celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles after being restored. This is why Haggai's message is extremely relevant to our days.

Haggai's recorded prophetic ministry lasted 15 weeks. Everyone's ministry and calling is different because the Lord uses His people in different ways. Jesus' ministry lasted for 3 ½ years, and John the Baptist's was only about 18 months. However, Hosea and Daniel prophesied about 60 years.

God might use some of us for a short period of time, while others may be used for a long time. This may be analogous to a piano keyboard. Some of the keys are used nearly all the time, such as middle C, but other keys have their moment of glory only in one or two pieces. They are used only for a brief moment, yet they are essential to the piece for which they are chosen.

Haggai is a book of restoration. The significance concerning the restoration of the temple is that the feast Israel celebrated at that time was the Feast of Tabernacles. The Early Church experienced great glory. Then came the Middle Ages (or the

Dark Ages—a time of great spiritual darkness and confusion). Afterwards God used men like Martin Luther and John Wesley to restore certain truths to the Church.

There has been a constant restoration taking place to bring the Church back into the fullness of its glory, and to an even greater glory than the Early Church experienced. Haggai and Zechariah are the two prophets who prophesied during the restoration of the temple, but their prophecies also have an application for the Last Day Church. They did not prophesy during the Feast of Pentecost, which symbolises the Early Church outpouring, but during the Feast of Tabernacles. It was the last of Israel's major feasts and it symbolises the Last Day Church.

In 1967, when Israel got their land back, they blew the trumpet on Mount Sinai. By this, the Spirit of God was signifying that the Church was at the Feast of Trumpets. Then in 1973 there was the War of Yom Kippur, which started on the Day of Atonement. The Lord was showing that His Church had come to the feast of the Day of Atonement. The Last Day Church must come to maturity and glory before Christ returns. The Lord will accomplish this through the Feast of Tabernacles, when the glory of our risen Lord will be poured out in abundance upon His Church. We are now in the days when the Feast of Tabernacles is going to be celebrated spiritually by the Church.

Outline

Haggai prophesied in a space of fifteen weeks during the second year of Darius I. There were five recorded messages.

Part 1 Consider your ways and build the house of the Lord (1:1-12).

1st day of the 6th month

Part 2 I am with you (1:13-15).

24th day of the 6th month

Part 3 The glory of the latter house will be greater than that of the former house (2:1-9).

21st day of the 7th month

Part 4 From this day I will bless you (2:10-19).

24th day of the 9th month

Part 5 God will shake the heavens and the earth (2:20-23).

24th day of the 9th month

Part One

Consider Your Ways and Build the House of the Lord

(1:1-12)

1:1 - *“In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest...”* Haggai and Zechariah prophesied in the second year of Darius, the king of Persia (520 B.C.).

Zerubbabel, the governor who was appointed by Cyrus to rule over Judah, and Joshua the High Priest were commissioned to lead the people back from Babylon and to rebuild the temple. Zerubbabel was in the royal lineage of Jehoiachin (Mt. 1:11-13). He was the son of Salathiel, and the grandson of Jehoiachin; thus he is in the royal lineage of David and Christ.

Darius had 19 battles in the first two years of his reign before he finally established himself as king. This was a time of real turmoil in the Persian kingdom.

Satan did not want him to succeed because he knew the king would eventually give the order for the continuance of the building of the Temple. At that time, Satan was more concerned about the little colony of Judah than with all of the other empires

of the world. Satan always seeks to create instability because instability creates an environment in which he can operate. For this reason, there will be great turmoil in governments in the last days. Satan puts all of his energy into trying to defeat Israel and the Church because he knows that through these entities the purposes of God will be established in the earth as they are ordained in heaven.

1:2 - *“Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built.”* Because of the opposition from the Samaritans, whose high counsellors blocked the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, the people were discouraged and thought that it was not the Lord’s timing to build. That is too often the reaction of the people of God to opposition. They think that God is not supporting them because it is not time for His will to be established, rather than recognizing the tactics of the enemy to discourage, dishearten, and delay the work of God.

God prophesied in Isaiah 44:28 that Cyrus would give the decree to rebuild the temple, yet even when it is God’s time, His determined will can be hindered. We have to persevere in prayer until we see God’s will accomplished. Just because the work is hindered does not mean that it is not God’s time. We must not say, “Oh, well, it must not be God’s timing or else there would not be any opposition.”

If God commissions us to do something, we can be sure that there will be opposition from the enemy. He will try everything to block the work of the Lord. Even as Satan tried to hinder

the restoration of the Temple, so he will try to hinder the restoration of the glory of God to the Church in the last days. Church building programs are tremendous burdens. Many times there is great opposition from government officials and also demonic forces. Ministry-related buildings occupy an allotted space of land which becomes a stronghold for the Kingdom of God. Because Satan tries to keep the Church from occupying more territory, many pastors fail because the pressure of a building program is too much for them to bear. We must hear from God before we start a building project. If God speaks to us to build, then He will give us the faith to produce the finances to finish the building.

1:3-6 - *“Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.”* The Jews put themselves before the Lord. They built their houses, but left the house of the Lord in ruins. The Lord told them to consider their ways, and why they had not prospered during this time. God’s people should give abundantly toward the work of the Lord, and they will see a release of God’s blessings upon their lives.

1:7-9 - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the*

LORD. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.” God brought economic disaster upon the people who returned to Jerusalem because they were not building the house of the Lord. The tendency of pastors is to think of themselves first. They think they need a house, a better car, a new suit, and many other things. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Ministers should put God’s will and the work of the Lord before their own personal desires. Proverbs 24:27 illustrates the importance of taking care of our field before we build our house: “Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.” The Lord quickened this verse to me when I was pastoring in New Zealand. He told me to concentrate first on the mission field and then on our local church. When it was God’s time for us to build our church, we received over one million dollars in one Sunday service.

1:10-11 - *“Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.”* The Lord allowed the Jews to go through this economic crisis so that they would turn to Him with all of their hearts and cry out to

Him for His help in finishing the Temple. The Lord does the same in our lives many times. He sends difficult situations into our lives so that we will cry out to Him for enlargement.

1:12 - *“Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD.”*

At this time, Israel was blessed with rulers who feared God, obeyed the word of the Lord, and led the people in the ways of God. The key to prosperity is godly leaders who enable the will of God to be fulfilled. Therefore, we should pray the prayer of Jeremiah 3:15, that God will give us pastors according to His heart who will feed God’s people with knowledge and understanding.

The key to prosperity is godly leaders!

Part Two

I Am with You

(1:13-15)

1:13 - *“Then spake Haggai the LORD’S messenger in the LORD’S message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.”* If we will turn to the Lord, He will turn to us. He will be with us if we will obey His voice and put His work first.

1:14-15 - *“And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.”*

Psalm 69:9 says, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” God wants to stir up our hearts to do the work that He has purposed for our lives. The zeal of God should consume us so that we will not rest until God’s will is accomplished. David had tremendous zeal for the work of the Lord, saying in Psalm 132:3-5, “Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” We should ask the Lord to give us that same zeal to see the work of the Lord completed.

Part Three

The Glory of the Latter House Will Be Greater than the Former House

(2:1-9)

2:1-3 - *“In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying, Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?”*

After the Jews rebuilt the temple, the old men wept because they had seen Solomon’s Temple, and the restored temple could not compare to the glory of Solomon’s Temple. The young men who had not seen Solomon’s Temple rejoiced because they now had a temple; they had nothing to compare it to.

The presence of God was not as strong in the Restoration Temple as it had been in Solomon’s Temple. This applies to the Church Age as well. The Reformation Era under Martin Luther, when the truth of justification by faith was restored, was nothing in comparison to the manifest glory of God in the New Testament Church era.

2:4-5 - *“Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest;*

and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.” Verse 5 is a very precious verse. It is echoed in Isaiah 59:21. “*My spirit remaineth among you.*” We should make a covenant with God, asking for His Spirit to always remain upon us.

2:6-7 - “*For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*” Haggai 2:6 is quoted in Hebrews 12:26. To a certain extent, this happened when the Temple was rebuilt (Ezra 6:6).

2:8-9 - “*The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.*” These verses have two main fulfilments and applications: a literal, natural application and a spiritual application. Abraham has two seeds: a natural seed (Israel) and a spiritual seed (Church). Nearly all of the promises made to Israel have a fulfilment in the Church since the Church is the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) and the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19).

Literally, this verse applies to the building of the Millennial Temple that Ezekiel saw and described in his book (Ezek. 40-48). The Latter House (the Millennial Temple) will be more glorious

than the Former House (Solomon's Temple). The temple Ezekiel describes is a literal temple, not a spiritual temple because the Lord states that all the silver is His. Silver is not needed to build a spiritual temple.

Israel will be restored in the millennial reign of Christ and will be the centre of the world. King David, who received the pattern for Solomon's Temple and prepared for its construction before his death, will be resurrected, reign with Christ as the Prince of Israel, and be involved in the building of the Millennial Temple. This verse cannot possibly be referring to the Tribulation Temple that will be built in Israel in the last days, in which the Antichrist will offer up the abomination of desolation. The temple that the Lord is describing in Haggai is a temple that He builds and fills with His glory.

The spiritual application of this verse is that the glory of the Last Day Church will be greater than that of the Early Church. There are many verses and prophecies that confirm this, including Joel 2:28-29: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

Jesus said in John 14:12, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." The master of the marriage banquet told Jesus in John 2:10 that He had saved

the best wine for last. In the same way, Jesus has reserved the best of the outpouring of His Spirit for the Last Day Church.

Israel experienced great glory in the Temple of Solomon and then went through a period of darkness (losing the glory of God), followed by the restoration of the Temple. In the same way, the Church experienced great glory in the New Testament era, but then went into great darkness, especially during the Dark Ages. The restoration of the Church began under Martin Luther during the Reformation and continued with revivals under John Wesley, the Azusa Street Outpouring and Welsh Revival in the early 1900s, the healing revival in the 1940s, and the Charismatic Renewal in the 1970s. The Church Age will culminate with the complete restoration of the Church, when the Church will come into full glory, unity, and maturity.

In the last days, the Church will experience the latter rain outpouring of God's Spirit, as described prophetically in Joel 2:23: "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." James 5:7 makes it clear that the Lord will not return until after the "latter rain" outpouring: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

The Church will experience great glory in the last days. The promise of Isaiah 60:1-2 has an application for the Church as

well: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”

The Lord Jesus will return for a glorious Church, a Bride without spot or wrinkle, as seen in Ephesians 5:27: “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

Part Four

From This Day I Will Bless You

(2:10-19)

2:10-14 - *“In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.”* Even after the Jews were restored, they were unclean. They were not walking in righteousness before the Lord.

2:15-17 - *“And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.”*

The whole purpose of Israel's troubles was to bring them back to the Lord. Even after they returned to Jerusalem, the Jews were not fully committed to serving the Lord. They were more concerned about building their own houses than building God's house. Even after all He had done for them, they were still refused to follow Him with all their hearts.

2:18-19 - *“Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD’S temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”* The Lord is saying that the Jews were unclean because they disobeyed His decree to build the temple. However, because they repented and rebuilt His temple, God promised to bless them. When we put the work of the Lord first, it releases the blessing of God upon our lives.

God wants to turn your captivity as well, beloved. He wants to restore you to all of His blessings and most of all, to His presence. Maybe you have been away from the Lord or are just coming back to Him with a broken heart. God wants you to know that He desires to restore you and pour rivers of living waters upon your thirsty spirit. He wants to turn your desert into a rose garden and put a new song in your heart. He wants to give you this promise in Haggai: *“from this day will I bless you.”* Embrace the Lord today with all of your heart and you will once again see the goodness of God in your life.

Part Five

The Shaking of the Heavens and the Earth

(2:20-23)

2:20-22 - *“And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.”* Zerubbabel was in the royal line of David, and would have been on the throne if Jerusalem had not been overthrown; but there was another ruler, the king of Persia, and Zerubbabel lost his rights to the throne of Judah.

2:23 - *“In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.”* The Lord here gives a promise to Zerubbabel. In olden days, a signet ring was very important. It was used to sign and seal documents by pressing the signet ring into hot wax, thereby leaving the imprint of the ring in the wax. In essence, the Lord is saying to Zerubbabel, “You may have lost your earthly throne which was yours by birthright, but when I return, you will be by

My side as My signet ring. You will be able to speak and act on My behalf.”

This promise to Zerubbabel was not fulfilled in his lifetime, but it will be fulfilled in the Millennium. Many of the promises God gives us are not fulfilled in our lifetime, but they will be fulfilled either during Christ’s millennial reign on earth or in the New Heavens and New Earth.

**THE BOOK
OF
ZECHARIAH**

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Part One

Introduction

(1:1)

1:1 - *“In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet...”* Verse one gives us a brief introduction to the book of Zechariah. The name “Zechariah” means “the Lord remembers.” This is very appropriate considering that he ministered in the Restoration Period, prophesying with Haggai (Ezra 5:1). It was at this time that the Lord remembered His people in their Babylonian captivity and brought them again to the land of their inheritance. Zechariah was of priestly descent, the grandson of Iddo, the chief of one of the priestly families that returned from exile with Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest (Neh. 12:4).

Zechariah began prophesying in the eighth month of the second year of Darius, around 520 B.C., just two months after Haggai had commenced prophesying in the sixth month of the second year of the reign of Darius. His purpose was to stir up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah who was responsible for the rebuilding of the temple, and also the spirit of Joshua, the High Priest, who was the head of the religious community in Jerusalem. Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, was slain between the temple and the altar (Mt. 23:35).

Part Two

A Call to Repentance

(1:2-6)

1:2-3 - *“The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

This is a very important doctrinal statement, confirmed in James 4:8: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” It is important to understand that if we take a step toward God, God will take a step toward us. Here are two verses, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New Testament, confirming God’s readiness to meet with us when we turn to Him. This is a very similar message to Haggai 2:17, where the Lord said He had smitten them in order to draw them back to Him.

1:4 - *“Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.”* The former prophets referred to here include Jeremiah and the pre-exilic prophets, but extend all the way to Moses.

1:5 - *“Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?”* The Lord says that the former generations have all passed away.

1:6 - *“But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.”* There are no contradictions in the Word of God, but rather, it is marked by a flow of continuity. When something is only mentioned once or twice in the Bible, it applies to a certain historical event, but when it is repeated, it usually has a spiritual application as well as a historical fulfilment.

I want to just touch, for a moment, on the scattering of Israel that took place in the reign of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria. Zechariah is telling the people that their fathers did not listen to the former prophets. Consequently, their warnings of judgment came to pass. Less than two years after Israel came out of Egypt, the Lord warned them in Leviticus 26:33 that He would scatter them if they did not walk in His ways: “And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.”

When the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land, Moses warned the Israelites again in Deuteronomy 4:27: “And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.” Moses said in Deuteronomy 28:64, “The LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.”

Sargon II, king of Assyria, surrounded Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and took it in 722 B.C. Sennacherib, son of Sargon II, surrounded Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, but retreated after God delivered them in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah (2 Chr. 32:1-22). Later, Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, gave the order for the scattering of Israel.

Zechariah is essentially repeating the warnings of Moses that if the Israelites refused to walk in God's ways, God would scatter them. There is a prophetic flow beginning with Moses that can be seen in the writings of all the prophets; everything depends on this prophetic stream. The message of Israel's dispersion is repeated throughout the Old Testament. The Scriptures make it very clear that Israel would be scattered because of disobedience to God's commandments, but that God would ultimately restore them when Christ returns to the earth. Make no mistake about it, **there will be a literal restoration of Israel.**

Christ said in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." God wants us to walk in the Spirit so that we might keep the Law as well. Paul clearly makes this point in Romans 8:4, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The Jews said in Zechariah 1:6, "Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us." They were testifying

that the Lord did unto them exactly as He said He would. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the prophet Jeremiah said in Lamentations 2:17, “The LORD hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.” Jeremiah said that the Lord brought upon the Jews the judgments that He had promised if they disobeyed Him.

Part Three

Eight Visions Given on the Same Night

(1:7 - 6:8)

Now we come to Part Three of the book of Zechariah, a series of eight night visions given on the same night, the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, 520 B.C.

1. The Horsemen's Report—all the earth is at rest (1:7-11)
The Lord Comforts Zion and Jerusalem (1:12-17)
2. The Four Horns and the Four Carpenters (1:18-21)
3. The Measuring Line to Measure Jerusalem (2:1-13)
4. The Cleansing of the High Priest (3:1-10)
5. The Two Anointed Ones (4:1-14)
6. The Flying Roll—The curse upon evil (5:1-4)
7. The Woman (representing wickedness) taken to the land of Shinar (5:5-11)
8. The Four Chariots (6:1-8)

1. The Horsemen's Report— All the Earth Is at Rest (1:7-11)

These visions were given during the second year of the reign of Darius, the king of Persia. During the first two years of his reign, there was open revolt. He had to subdue nine kings and fight 19 battles in this brief period of two years. Because of the tremendous revolt that Darius encountered when he

ascended the throne, he employed many inspectors who rode on horseback called “the king’s ears and eyes.” They regulated the affairs of the kingdom. When they found injustices, they corrected them, and if they saw the beginnings of revolt, they quenched it immediately. The whole of the Persian Empire was patrolled by these inspectors on horseback.

To a certain extent, the kingdom of heaven is governed the same way. There are angels on horseback who give a report concerning the affairs of the kingdoms of this world to the Lord, the King of Kings.

1:7-9 - *“Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these be.”*

Zechariah asked the Lord what the interpretation of this vision was and the angel said he would show him what it meant. The interpretation of this vision is found in the next two verses.

1:10 - *“And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.”* These horsemen

were the ears and eyes of the King of Kings. There is a similar, but more exalted rank referred to in Ezekiel 1:18-19 and 10:12, when Ezekiel describes the four living creatures as being full of eyes. This truth is brought out very clearly in other passages of Scripture as well. We read in 2 Chronicles 16:9, “The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth.”

1:11 - *“And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.”* Darius had subdued the whole kingdom of the Medes and Persians. At the time these visions were given, the empire was finally at rest. In other words, everyone was very comfortable, but God was not pleased with their spiritual condition.

The Lord Comforts Zion and Jerusalem (1:12-17)

1:12 - *“Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?”*

The angel of the Lord, who is the same angel that interpreted the horsemen vision to Zechariah, cried out to the Lord, saying, “O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem?” The Jews experienced 70 years of indignation during the Babylonian captivity (606-536 B.C.). The angel asked the Lord when He would show mercy to the Jews.

1:13-15 - *“And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words. So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.”* The interpreting angel told Zechariah that God is jealous over Jerusalem and Zion with great jealousy. God is saying that He was displeased with the heathen who were at ease, but that His concern was for Jerusalem.

The heathen nations added to God’s intended judgments upon Israel and Judah. God raised up the Assyrians to destroy and disperse the northern tribes of Israel. However, the Assyrian army even came to the gates of Jerusalem, completely overrunning the land of Judah in the time of Hezekiah. Later God used the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem. However, both of these kingdoms were overzealous. God had intended to punish His people, but the cruelty exacted upon Israel and Judah by these heathen nations exceeded God’s intentions.

1:16 - *“Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.”* The Lord said that He was going to stretch a measuring line over Jerusalem. A measuring line is a plumb line, which is used for construction. At this time, the altar had been built and the foundation of the Temple had been laid, but construction had been blocked throughout the

intervening years until after the first two years of Darius. God was saying that construction was going to recommence and the work would be completed.

2. The Four Horns and the Four Carpenters (1:18-21)

1:17 - *“Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.”* The Lord promises to restore Zion and Jerusalem, and declares that all the cities of Judah would experience prosperity. For us, when God moves at the hub of a fellowship or denomination, quite often all the churches of that particular fellowship are blessed.

1:18-19 - *“Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”* The prophet Zechariah asked the angel, “What are these four horns that I see?” The angel replied that they were the four horns which had scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; but the angel did not reveal who these four horns were. A horn represents power (Dan. 8:6-8), as seen from the natural example of an animal. If an animal’s horn is broken, his power is broken.

There were four powers that scattered Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. The number “four” normally signifies universal (Rev. 7:1, Jer. 49:36,

Mt. 24:31). Egypt caused Israel trouble, especially under Shishak and Pharaoh Necho. Assyria scattered Israel under Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon (who deported the Jews). Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took the Jews captive back to Babylon. The fourth power is Persia, the nation that was reigning over the Jews when Zechariah had this vision. As is evident from the book of Esther, the Jews were dispersed throughout the 127 kingdoms of Xerxes (or Ahasuerus), the king of Persia. Thus we can see that these four nations are the four horns that scattered Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem.

1:20-21 - *“And the LORD showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.”* The Lord showed Zechariah four carpenters, who would destroy the four nations that had come against Israel. It was Alexander the Great who destroyed Persia (Dan. 8). After Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., his empire was divided into four kingdoms.

Four generals took over the empire of Alexander the Great and divided it amongst themselves. Cassander took Macedonia; Lysimachus took Thrace and part of Asia Minor; Seleucus took Syria, Babylon, Media and Sylicia, and conquered a major part of the Indian empire; Ptolemy took Egypt and Palestine. These four generals were responsible for the destruction of the four nations who had destroyed and scattered Israel and Judah—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia.

3. The Measuring Line to Measure Jerusalem (2:1-13)

2:1-2 - *“I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.”*

Zechariah saw a man with a measuring line in his hand, which he was going to use to measure Jerusalem to find out its length and breadth. Revelation 11:1 also mentions a measuring line, as John is commanded to measure the temple.

2:3-5 - *“And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.”*

Zechariah was shown the great prosperity that Jerusalem would experience. This promise was partially fulfilled in Nehemiah’s time, but the true fulfilment of it is in the Millennium (Ezek. 38:11, Rev. 20:8-9).

2:6-7 - *“Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.”* As there were three deportations (during the reigns of

Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah), there were also three returns from captivity:

1. In 536 B.C. under Zerubbabel
2. In 458 B.C. under Ezra
3. In 444 B.C. under Nehemiah

In verse 7, the Lord is speaking to the Jews who had not left Babylon yet. By far, the majority of the Jews did not respond to the decree permitting them to return to their own land. They had become so comfortable in their bondage in Babylon that they did not want to leave. They had lost their zeal for the Lord and wanted to stay in Babylon. God can tell us that He has freed us, but unless we take the shackles off, we remain in bondage. Many people like their bondage and do not want to let go of it.

2:8 - *“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”* Israel is the apple of God’s eye. The apple or centre of the eye is the most sensitive part of the body. We are the apple of His eye, and when anyone does something to hurt us, it hurts Him.

2:9 - *“For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.”* The Lord was going to shake all the nations of the earth. These prophecies have several fulfilments, one of which was the different stages of release for the Jews from captivity. However, these prophecies

will have their final fulfilment at the Second Coming when the Lord will shake all the nations of the earth and release His captive ones from all over the world.

2:10-13 - *“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.”* These verses have been partially fulfilled, but their complete fulfilment will be in the Millennium.

The statements, *“I will dwell in the midst of thee”* and *“many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day”* clearly refer to the Millennium. The thought here is that God is in command of every situation. When it is His time to move afresh, all flesh should be silent before Him. God will cleanse Israel before He comes again—through a series of judgments, culminating with the Great Tribulation.

4. The Cleansing of the High Priest (3:1-10)

3:1-5 - *“And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen*

Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.”

Joshua was the High Priest at this time. He was the senior religious leader of Israel, and Zerubbabel was the senior political leader.

Joshua was clothed with filthy garments not because he was practicing sin, but because he needed a deeper cleansing in his life. Zechariah had this vision in 520 B.C., 16 years after he had first come from Babylon to Jerusalem and 15 years after the foundation of the temple was laid. Why was this not dealt with beforehand, perhaps even before he left Babylon or in the initial building of the altar 16 years earlier? Perhaps it was because Joshua had not asked the Lord for a deeper cleansing before this time.

This vision was a fresh revelation of God about Joshua's spiritual condition, which was symbolic of the condition of the Jews. Revival starts with God's ministers being cleansed and renewed. In like manner, Isaiah's fresh meeting with God revealed uncleanness in his life as well (Isa. 6). Many times pastors think that revival will come when others change, but

that is not usually the case. Revival comes when the leaders have been revived. This is why we must constantly seek the Lord for fresh purity in our lives.

Satan has tremendous animosity against ministers. He is called “the accuser of the brethren” in Revelation 12:10. He constantly accuses God’s people before the Lord, even as he accused Job (Job 1:6-11). Although Joshua had filthy garments, the Lord purified him and justified him against his accuser.

3:6-7 - *“And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.”* This is one of the most beautiful promises in the Word of God to leaders. If we will walk in the ways of God and keep His commandments, He will cause us to judge His people, keep His courts, and He will give us places to walk among those who stand by.

The Christian life is like a journey through a mountain range. There are several valleys of blessing along the way where many Christians reach a plateau and stop moving on with God; but the Lord wants us to constantly press on. This is the promise that the Lord gave to Joshua, that He would give him *places to walk* among those that stand by. The whole purpose of life is to be ever growing, progressing in our spiritual walk, and receiving fresh revelation and truth from the Lord. Beloved, press on today to know the Lord in a new way!

3:8 - *“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.”* The Branch is Christ (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5).

3:9 - *“For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”* The seven eyes are the seven spirits of the Lord. “And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD”(Isa. 11:2). It is essential for leaders to have the anointing of the seven Spirits of the Lord, in order that everything they do might be according to the pattern or measurement that God has ordained for a work. The reason so many works are not according to God’s intended pattern is that the leadership does not have this anointing of the seven Spirits of the Lord. We will look later at the thought of God’s removing the iniquity of the land in one day.

3:10 - *“In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree.”* The thought in verses 8-10 is of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Branch, in the Millennium. The theme of this chapter is of the need for cleansing of the leadership, and also the precious promises that are given to the faithful leaders. Thus, the Millennium will be a time of peace and prosperity. The tribes of Israel will bring forth fruit in abundance.

CHAPTER 4

In Zechariah 4:1-14, we have the fifth vision. Here Zechariah is shown the candlestick, the seven lamps, the two olive trees, and the two anointed ones.

4:1-2 - *“And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof...”* This candlestick is analogous to the lamp stand or candlestick in the Tabernacle of Moses. The seven lamps are speaking of the seven spirits of the Lord.

4:3-5 - *“And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.”* Now we are introduced to the two olive trees, of which we are given the interpretation in verses 11-14.

4:6-7 - *“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the*

headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” Who is the great mountain? The great mountain is the Persian empire, which was prohibiting them from building the temple. The Persian empire extended from India, down to Egypt, and through Turkey, a colossal empire for those days. Judah was small and seemingly insignificant without a king, and the mighty empire of Persia was obstructing the rebuilding of the temple.

It is one thing to lay a cornerstone, but it is more important to lay the headstone. The cornerstone is the first stone laid in a building, but the headstone is the last, making it far more important to the completion of the project. Although beginning a building, with the laying of the cornerstone is a time of great pleasure, the definitive joy is found in the completion of the project and laying the headstone. A mountain in the form of the Persian Empire was blocking Zerubbabel and Israel from completing the temple, yet the Lord said to them, “Who are you, oh Persian empire, before My servant Zerubbabel? You are going to become a plain before him.”

God revoked the decrees of the king, and permission was given for that temple to be built. He empowered Zerubbabel, who had begun the work, to finish it. When God gives you something to do, beloved, believe that He will cause you to finish it. How was Zerubbabel going to overcome this mountain? He would finish the temple and say, “Lord, it is by your grace and your grace alone that we have finished it.” It took about four years (520 to 516 B.C.) to finish the work

of the temple; the completion of the building was accomplished through the grace of God and the anointing of the Spirit of God. The Lord removed the obstacles from the path of His chosen servant so the temple could be completed.

4:8-9 - *“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.”* God promised that Zerubbabel would finish the temple.

4:10 - *“For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.”* We must not despise the day of small things. Virtually everything God starts has a very small and insignificant beginning. This is like the parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13:31-32. What may start out as the smallest and least of all seeds, becomes mighty when God gives the increase. Job 8:7 says, “Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.”

The plummet is a plumb line (a piece of string with a weight on the end), and it is the measuring device for straightness of a building. The purpose of a plummet is to measure the accuracy of the physical building in accordance with the measurements contained in the cornerstone. Christ is the Cornerstone of the Church (Eph. 2:20, 1 Pet. 2:6). He is the standard that we must line up with—we must be in accordance with His measurements or His nature. In fact, everything we

do must agree with Christ's measurements and pattern, because He is the Cornerstone. The seven spirits of the Lord are the plummet, to interpret the measurements of Christ for us. They search us out—to see if we are straight, to determine if our life is in alignment with the will of God, and to gauge how we measure up to the stature of Christ.

4:11-14 - *“Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”* Now we come to the interpretation of the two olive trees. The two olive trees which Zechariah saw are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth, the Lord Jesus Christ. We find an account of this scenario in Luke 9:28-31, where Moses and Elijah appeared upon the Mount of Transfiguration, to strengthen Him for His crucifixion.

We have a confirmation that Moses and Elijah are the two anointed ones and the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, in Revelation 11:4,6: “These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth...These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as

often as they will.” Here John receives the revelation of who these two olive trees and two candlesticks are, whom Zechariah saw standing by the Lord of the whole earth. He very clearly tells us in verse 6 that they are Elijah and Moses. Elijah stopped it from raining in the days of his prophecy (1 Ki. 17), and Moses turned the water into blood and brought plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 7:20; ch. 7-12).

Many people have mistakenly thought that Enoch is one of the two witnesses by virtue of the fact that he walked very closely with the Lord and was translated without seeing death. However, there is no record of Enoch ever performing those miracles, and he was not on the Mount of Transfiguration, a place and experience reserved for only those who stand by the Lord of the whole earth—Moses and Elijah. Therefore, the two candlesticks and two olive trees, which are the two witnesses, are clearly Moses and Elijah, not Enoch. Moses and Elijah are always linked, as seen in Malachi 4:4-5 (the law of Moses and Elijah coming before the Second Coming). Scripture must flow together. Enoch was never linked with Moses or Elijah. They are the two anointed ones, and they foretell two anointed companies in the last days. “The two anointed ones” literally means “the sons of oil.”

Moses and Elijah are going to come again in the last days before the Lord comes again. They will minister for 1260 days (or about three and a half years, Rev. 11:3). In Zechariah 4, the prophet is having a vision of the spiritual ministry of Moses and Elijah, in heaven. It is significant that these two men are spoken of in Zechariah 4:3, after which the angel goes on to

declare that Zerubbabel will finish the temple by grace. This also represents the fact that Moses and Elijah fulfilled their ministries by the grace of God, not by their own personal strength or through the weight of numbers. We must all understand that the work God has given us to do can only be accomplished by His Spirit.

6. The Flying Roll – The Curse upon Evil (5:1-4)

5:1-2 - *“Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.”* These measurements are very interesting, and they help us with the interpretation of this vision, which we will examine shortly.

5:3-4 - *“Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.”* This flying roll or scroll is obviously speaking of judgment.

The measurements of this scroll are the key to its interpretation. These measurements given for the scroll are

actually the same as those given for the porch that Solomon built on the temple (1 Ki. 6:3), thought by some to be the place of judgment. Twenty speaks of maturity (Num. 1:3), and ten speaks of the Ten Commandments. In other words, when the commandments are being broken, and the cup of iniquity is full and mature, God will judge—He will not judge until the cup of iniquity and sin is mature and ripened.

We ask, “Why does God not move quickly and judge immediately in a certain situation?” Well, the cup of iniquity has to be filled and come to maturity, which is why the number twenty was added here. That scroll is a curse that comes upon all those who steal and swear falsely. We must be patient with iniquity, as it must come to its fullness before it is judged. This is brought out in God’s judgments upon the nations. God said to Abraham in Genesis 15:16, “But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

7. The Woman – Wickedness – Taken to the Land of Shinar (5:5-11)

5:5-11 - *“Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth. And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight*

of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.”

The fable about the stork bringing babies to homes is associated with this passage which speaks of great wickedness being established.

Zechariah saw a vision of two women. A woman in the Word of God speaks of a church (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 12; 2 Cor. 11:2). There are two women that flow throughout the Word of God—the *virtuous woman* who represents the true Church of Jesus Christ, the bride of Christ, and the *strange woman*, who represents the false church, the Mystery Babylon. Proverbs and Revelation also speak of a woman who epitomizes wickedness. In the book of Revelation, the woman is “Mystery Babylon” and in Proverbs, she is called the “Strange Woman.” Revelation 12 speaks of the true Church, and Revelation 17, reveals the false church, Mystery Babylon (Rome). She is the mother and source of iniquity (Rev. 17:5); she is the embodiment of wickedness (Zech. 5:8).

According to Genesis 10:10 and Daniel 1:2, the land of Shinar is Babylon. In this prophecy, one woman is going to be put into a house (a spiritual house) in Babylon, because she is

going to rise again. This vision was given to Zechariah in 520 B.C., about 19 years after the destruction of Babylon by the Persians in 539 B.C. Therefore, he was not seeing something that had already happened to Babylon or that would happen shortly. Consequently, it is clear that there is going to be a resurgence or a resurrection of this woman. She will be released and come to her fullness in the last days (Rev. 17). That is evident in Revelation 17. These truths flow throughout the Word of God. Everything has its beginning and everything has its end. As we said earlier, the cup of iniquity must be full.

There are periods when Babylon is resurrected, then dealt with and punished. However, in the end, prophecy must be fulfilled and final judgment must come upon Babylon, which has caused so much trouble throughout the world. Therefore, it has to be resurrected for judgment. Nothing will be left unfinished.

The Church will come to glory, and the false church will come to judgment; Israel will be judged, and then be wholly restored. This vision depicted the fact that God has not yet finished with Babylon, because it is going to come to its fullness in the last days, and will eventually be destroyed (Rev. 18).

8. The Four Chariots (6:1-8)

6:1 - *“And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass.”*
These four chariots came out from between two mountains

of brass. Brass is figurative, speaking of judgment, therefore, these two mountains were used for judgment. In Deuteronomy 27:12-13, we see two mountains, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, that were used for judgment. From Mount Gerizim, Israel received blessings as they obeyed God, and from Mount Ebal, judgment was pronounced upon the nation if they should forsake the Lord their God.

6:2-5- *“In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.”* Now we are given the interpretation of these four chariots, which are the four spirits of the heavens. These four spirits will strive upon the sea, as recorded in Daniel 7:2, to bring forth those four nations again—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Daniel 7:2-3 says, “Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.” In the Word of God, winds and spirits are translated from the same Hebrew word. We are seeing the rise of these nations again even today. Persia (Iran) and Babylon (Iraq) are already increasing in power and rising up against the other nations both in the Middle East and abroad. Rome and Greece will arise later, according to these prophecies.

6:6-8 - *“The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.”* There was a transformation in the north during the rule of the Persian Empire, for the animosity towards Judah at that time had been quenched.

This is not the total fulfilment of this prophecy. Today we are seeing Persia (Iran) and Babylon (Iraq) growing in prominence and power, and for a time it seemed that Persia could have gained dominance in the Middle East. However, God has chosen to restrict that nation to its present position, quieting them, as it were, for this time, because in His wisdom, it is not yet time for them to rise to the height of their power.

It is interesting to note that during the war between Iraq and Iran, Iraq was the victor. History was repeating itself, for at one time, Babylon subjugated Persia, to be defeated in turn by Cyrus, the king of Persia. In the last days, according to Revelation 16:12, the Euphrates River, which is the natural barrier for Iraq, will dry up and the Persians will rush across, to once again vanquish their foes.

Part Four

The Crowning of Joshua the High Priest

(6:9-15)

6:9-10 - *“And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah.”* Here, night visions had ceased, and the Lord again changes focus in speaking to His prophet. There were three main returns from Babylon—in 536 B.C. under Zerubbabel, 458 B.C. under Ezra, and in 444 B.C. under Nehemiah. Zechariah was prophesying around 520 B.C., after the first return of the Jews to their homeland; thus, only a small percentage of the Jews came with Zerubbabel. A large number of them elected to remain in Babylon. During this time, however, other refugees found their way to Jerusalem in small groups. The men spoken of in these verses had just returned from Babylon, and the Lord told Zechariah to go into the house of one of them, Josiah, the son of Zephaniah.

6:11 - *“Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest.”* Here Joshua the high priest was crowned. The crown speaks of a king, showing Joshua as a type of Christ, the King-Priest. This is also a type of the Melchizedek priesthood

(Gen. 14:18, Ps. 110:4, Heb. 6:20). However, Joshua was only symbolically crowned; he did not actually reign.

6:12 - *“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.”* The Branch is Christ (Isa. 11:1-5). Zechariah is told to “behold the man whose name is the Branch.” We find this phrase repeated in the New Testament, in John 19:5: “Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!” We see from this the beauty of Scripture and the plan of God, that He can cause even the ungodly to fulfil prophecy and demonstrate the flow in the Word of God.

6:13 - *“Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”* Christ united the priesthood and the throne. Here is the peace of the King Priest, who is also the Prince of Peace. When He comes to reign in the Millennium there will be peace.

6:14 - *“And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the LORD.”* Hen is speaking of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah (v. 10). The name “Hen” simply means “grace, or favoured one.” The crowns they had given would be placed upon the head of the high priest on this day. Then they were to be laid up in the temple as a memorial to the goodness of these

people, in giving their silver and gold to build these crowns. This is a very beautiful thought. What we give to the Lord for the building of a church, a work, or some other offering (according to the will of God) is laid up in heaven

as a memorial for us. It is very important for us to give our best because that is the memorial being prepared in the temple in heaven.

**It is very
important
for us to give
our best!**

6:15 - *“And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.”* There are three temples spoken of in this verse. The Lord speaks concerning the restoration temple (the temple built during the governorship of Zerubbabel). Those still afar off, the Jews from Babylon, would come and help build it. The second temple (which is a spiritual temple) the Lord Himself will build; the third is the temple in the Millennium, which Ezekiel saw. God will bring people from far away to build His temple (Isa. 61). As we please Him, the Lord will do this for us, too.

When we are moving in the Spirit, God will bring people from afar to help us build our church. Nevertheless, we must realise that all these promises have conditions. The Lord said all of this would come to pass, *if* they obeyed the voice of the Lord. Every promise has a condition to it. If we obey the Lord, He will bring to pass all His goodness and the promises He has made to us.

Part Five

The Question of Fasting

(7:1-14)

Now we come to chapter 7, the fifth part of the book of Zechariah, which deals with the question of fasting. Chapter 7 begins in the fourth year of King Darius (518 B.C.), in the fourth day of the ninth month.

7:1-7 - “And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu; When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezzer and Regemmelech, and their men, to pray before the LORD, And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?”

When these people came and asked if they should keep the appointed fasts that they had been observing for those 70 years in Babylon, God said, “Well, when you were fasting all those years, were you really doing it for me? And when you kept the feast days, were you keeping them for yourselves or for Me? In actuality, you were keeping them for yourselves.” The Lord showed them in verses 8-10 what He really wants.

7:8-10 - “*And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*” This is what God really wants, not outward sacrifice and keeping of religious activities, but a pure heart. God is saying that it is not sacrifices and offerings or fasting that He wants, but mercy, compassion, judgment, and a pure heart. This is similar to Micah’s plea for *true* religion.

Micah 6:6-8 reads, “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

7:11-14 - *“But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.”* They willingly closed their ears and hardened their hearts because they did not want to hear what the Lord had to say. As a result, the Lord scattered them among the nations.

The Lord gave Israel two laws. The first was the Ten Commandments; the second law, or aspect of the law, was the ceremonial law. The Israelites were required to fast on certain days and keep certain feasts. They did not find it difficult to keep the ceremonial law and regaled themselves and rejoiced in that ceremonial law which God had given them, but they were not keeping the first commandments of the Lord, which were the laws of the heart.

We, too, must be careful that we do not fall into the same snare that Israel did—keeping outward observances, but not keeping the law of the heart. The Pharisees paid tithes of everything they had, even of all the spices in their house. They washed their hands, and kept the ceremonial rules to

the very smallest degree; but Christ said that inwardly they were full of dead men's bones, because they did not keep the spirit of the law (Mt. 23:27-28).

We must understand these are the two aspects of the law that the Lord has given to His people. It is easier for people to keep outward observances. Even when Israel turned away from God and went into idolatry, they continued to observe the sacrifices and the ceremonial law, but they did not keep the law of the heart, the Ten Commandments. When man disobeys the laws of God in his heart while maintaining an outward appearance of righteousness, a religious spirit comes in. We must keep the law of the heart, allowing God's statutes to be written upon the fleshly tables of our heart.

The Lord is saying to them in this chapter that their fasting was useless, for fasting by itself has no merit. It is the purpose behind the fast that is important (see Isaiah 58).

Some people fast with the wrong motive. Some fast because of envy or jealousy, or to get praise of man, and this just strengthens the spirit of jealousy and love for the praise of man in them. It is good to fast, but be very careful. Fasting has to be done with the right motive, because fasting weakens people.

In the good sense, it is wonderful if God has spoken to do it, because it weakens the old man and strengthens the new man within us. Sometimes when we are on a fast nothing happens, but after the fast, we feel a change.

There is a great danger in fasting. If the motive is wrong and the purpose is wrong when we fast, it will actually weaken us and enable the wrong motive and the wrong spirit to be strengthened. I have personally seen this happen many times in people's lives. If the Lord does not clearly speak to us to fast for long periods of time, it can strengthen us in the wrong way, because we become weakened and the wrong spirit can come in.

If the motive for a fast is wrong, then that wrong motive is strengthened. We need to obey the Lord when He speaks to fast, but we must be very careful to keep our hearts right before Him so His purposes are accomplished and we are changed to be more like Him.

Part Six

The Restoration of Israel

(8:1 - 11:17)

8:1-3 - *“Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.”* This section is interspersed with Messianic promises and judgments upon nations. God is saying that He is going to return to Jerusalem, and He is going to make it a city of truth. All those who love the truth will dwell in it. Only in a very small sense was this accomplished during the Maccabean period; not until the Millennium will this prophecy be fulfilled in the most complete sense.

8:4 - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.”* In other words, the Lord is saying that He is going to give longevity of life to the population there.

8:5 - *“And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”* It is going to be a joyous time. The land will be inhabited once again in abundance, and be fruitful. It will be a time of prosperity again for all

ages—the old men and women, and the young children.

8:6-8 - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.”* In a certain measure this applied to the prophets’ own day, because there were still further restorations coming from the east and the west. Ezra and Nehemiah returned many years after this prophecy.

This is also being fulfilled in our day, in accordance with Jeremiah 30—the Jews returning to their land for the Great Tribulation. However, it has not been completely fulfilled, because Jerusalem is not as yet a city of righteousness. This transformation will not take place until the Lord returns again. In the lives of the prophets, there is always a sense of expectancy, looking forward to the ultimate restoration of Israel in the Millennium.

8:9 - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built.”* The Lord told them to strengthen their hands because He wanted the literal temple to be built now.

8:10 - *“For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour.”* This is a growing truth in America and many nations of the world as violence increases on every hand

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(Isa. 45:6-7) It is so important to see the Lord in all of this. The Lord said that He is the One who set every man against his neighbour. The Lord is supreme over all, evil and good, and is the Author of both. He rules over all events in the earth, even disaster. He is the One who has raised people up against their neighbours. He raises up one nation, and puts down another. He calls for famine, and also prosperity. Even as Isaiah 45:6-7 states, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”

8:11-13 - *“But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.”* This will come to pass in the Millennium, when Israel, who in the past was unfruitful and a curse to the nations, will become a blessing to those around them. Jerusalem will become the place of worship.

8:14-15 - *“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not: So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.”* The Lord is saying that He is going to restore and bless His people when Jerusalem and the temple are restored. In a certain sense this was fulfilled at the restoration of Israel from the captivity and rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem; however, the Lord is reserving His fullest blessing for the time when He returns to His people at the end of the Age.

8:16 - *“These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates...”* God is giving a promise here, but He is also laying down a condition. This will help us to understand the prophet Malachi, who states that there are conditions for the fulfilment of God’s promises (Mal. 3:10). At this time the people did not let the Word of God apprehend them, so God had to send the prophet Malachi to again promise them prosperity. The Lord’s promise to Israel and to us is that as we keep the law in our hearts, truth and peace will flow together. They are linked again in verse 19 and many other times in the Word of God (cf. Jer. 33:6, Isa. 39:8).

8:17-19 - *“And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD. And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth,*

and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.” The Lord is dealing with their hearts here. Ezra brought great joy and a love for the truth back into Israel at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles; but again this has not come to its fullness. Joy comes as a result of loving the truth and loving peace. We must have a love for the truth, or else we will be deceived. Second Thessalonians 2:10 says, “...And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” This applies to the wicked in the Last Days who will be deceived by the Anti-Christ—the son of perdition.

8:20-22 - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.”* This is strictly a promise for the Millennium, as no strong nations have ever come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord.

8:23 - *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”* Israel will be exalted. Israel saw this to a certain degree in the days of Solomon, but this promise is obviously

written prophetically after the days of Solomon. Isaiah also spoke of this in Isaiah 2:2-4, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” So, this is speaking of the Millennium, because we can find no historical fulfilment of these prophecies.

It is important to understand that prosperity and famine both come from God. God ordains them in order that He might rectify things in our lives. In particular, He wants to produce in us truth, judgment, compassion, and mercy for those in need (Isa. 1:7, Mic. 6:8, Zech. 7:9-10). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke concerning these things in Matthew 23:23, for this is what truly pleases His heart. When He sees these qualities in a person’s life, He is so delighted; it opens His hands to pour out a blessing on that person.

CHAPTER 9

9:1-4 - *“The burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the*

eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD. And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus, and Zidon, though it be very wise. And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.” God says that when Judah’s eyes are toward the Lord, He will judge Tyre and destroy it. This is the key to having God deal with our enemies—when we turn and look only to Him, He is free to move on our behalf and is able to deal with our enemies. God will avenge all disobedience when our obedience is fulfilled (2 Cor. 10:6).

Historically, this happened in the time of Alexander the Great. Nebuchadnezzar should have destroyed Tyre but he did not, and it was left to Alexander the Great to do it. Zechariah was prophesying in the Persian period, but it was at the beginning of the Grecian period that this judgment upon Tyre was fulfilled. Tyre was able to resist other sieges, but when Alexander the Great defeated the Persian army, he then came up against Tyre, besieged the city, and destroyed it. God was saying that even though Tyre was very rich, He would destroy it. Riches cannot save us from judgment.

9:5-7 - *“Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his*

abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.” Because God pronounced judgment on the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron, and the Gaza strip, it is impossible to make a peace agreement with these Palestinians (Philistines).

In verse 7 the Lord said that Ekron would be as a Jebusite. The Jebusites inhabited Zion and Jerusalem, but when David overran Zion, they came under the rule of David (2 Sam. 5:6-10). God is saying that Ekron, a Philistine city, is going to be governed by Judah. Those who remain in Palestine will come under the rule of Judah in the Millennium, and they will worship God.

9:8 - *“And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.”* God is saying that He is going to encamp around Jerusalem. This again speaks of the Millennium, because the oppressor will pass through the land until the Lord returns.

9:9 - *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”* This is speaking of the Lord’s first coming, which was fulfilled as He triumphantly entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Mt. 21:1-5). He came first on an ass, but in the book of Revelation, He is seen as coming upon

a horse (Rev. 19:11-16). The first time Christ came, He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, but when He comes again, He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, roaring out of Zion, and executing judgment upon the nations.

9:10 - *“And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”* A period of 2,000 years intervenes between verse 9 and verse 10. Verse 9 is speaking of His first coming, but the Lord certainly did not fulfil verse 10 at that time. His dominion was not from sea to sea at His first coming, as it will be when He comes again. It is important for us to understand that the ultimate restoration of Israel takes place at the Second Coming. Because 2,000 years can elapse from one verse to the next, we have to understand the timing of these prophecies, or else our interpretation will be in error.

9:11 - *“As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.”* At the final siege of Jerusalem, there will be many prisoners, and when the Lord comes again He will release them. Spiritually of course, this can be applied to the Church. In the last days there will be saviours who will come upon Mount Zion and preach deliverance to the captives. That was the message of Obadiah (Obad. 1:17,21). Through the blood of the covenant of Christ, He has wrought deliverance for the prisoners and for those who are in bondage.

9:12 - *“Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee...”* “Ye prisoners of hope” is a beautiful little phrase. It is clear that in one sense this is speaking of the Millennium, but it also has a spiritual meaning for Christians. When we are in a spiritual prison or a certain captivity, we are not like other prisoners who do not have any hope; we are prisoners of hope, knowing that there is going to come a time when God is going to release us.

The Lord spoke to my wife once, when she was in a trial. He said that He never puts His people into caves, but only sends them through tunnels, because there is light at the end of every tunnel. God always brings us out of a trial, regardless of how long it may take, for He wants to give us an expected end (Jer. 29:11).

9:13 - *“When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man.”* Here the Lord again speaks in reference to this prophecy’s fulfilment. The Persian empire was followed by Greece.

When Alexander the Great came into power, he did not really oppress Judah. As He advanced against Jerusalem, the Jews humbled themselves before God, and God gave a vision or a dream to Alexander the Great, showing him that the Jews were God’s people. When the elders of Jerusalem came out to surrender to Alexander, he sent them back because of the dream the night before. He spared Jerusalem, and was actually

sympathetic to them throughout his reign. Alexander died at a very young age in a drunken stupor, and was succeeded by four of his generals. In the lineage of one of them was Antiochus Epiphanes IV who brought Hellenistic worship, the spread of the Greek culture and idolatry into Jerusalem. The Lord was going to raise up Judah and Ephraim against the Grecians. This was accomplished through the Maccabean revolt, originally led by Judas Maccabeas, against Antiochus Epiphanes IV (c. 166-160 B.C.). Although this revolt threw off the power of Greece, it cannot be seen as the complete fulfilment of verse 13. This verse speaks of something that is going to happen in the last days.

9:14-17 - *“And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.”*

Again, this is obviously speaking of a time when God will come against Greece, a power that has taken the Jews captive. Historically, this was seen when the Maccabeans rose up against Antiochus IV, though he himself was not Greek.

However, because this revolt was not truly against Greece, something has to happen so that Greece will join itself with other nations against Israel. This has not yet come to pass; therefore, Greece must arise in the last days.

The Lord closes all this with a description of His beauty and goodness, of which He wants us to partake. The Lord appeared to me once and said, “Touch Me, I am altogether good.” The very nature of the Lord is goodness. Goodness means “incapable of doing evil to anyone,” and having the best interest of others in mind in everything that we do. The Lord is coming for a beautiful bride, without spot or wrinkle. Psalm 45 is a marriage song, and in verse 11, speaking prophetically of the Church, the Bride of Christ, we read, “So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.” The Millennium is going to be a time of great joy. However, now during the Last Days of the Church Age, corn (the abundance of the Word) and new wine (the fresh movings of the Spirit of God) will rejoice the hearts of the young, new converts.

CHAPTER 10

10:1 - “*Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.*” This period of restoration also speaks spiritually of the Church in the time of the latter rain. We are commanded to ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain. So, we see there is a *set time* when God gives revival. God has a timetable, and we must

move with God, according to His plan. There are set times of visitation, illustrated by Isaiah 55:6, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.” This is brought out again in Acts 2:1: “When the day of Pentecost was *fully come*.” God had a set time to pour out His Spirit upon the Early Church.

There is a principle in the Word of God revealed in 1 Corinthians 15:46: “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” Just as in the natural there are different seasons—winter, spring, summer, and fall—all of these seasons appear in the spiritual realm as well. There are times of spiritual winter, just as there are times of winter in the natural. This season is important because in winter, the ground is resting, and being broken up by the cold and the snow. In our lives, there are winter times—times of wilderness, captivity, darkness, and even seeming death—but at some point, it must turn to spring. It cannot remain winter forever. Winter must pass away and spring will come; and it will come for us, too (Song 2:11).

Spiritual winter has prevailed for a time, but God has declared that spring is coming and He will pour His Spirit out upon the earth. It is vital that we meet with God in each of the appointed seasons He has ordained for us. We are to ask the Lord for rain or revival in the time of the latter rain. In other words, when the Feast of Tabernacles is upon us, that is when we are to ask God to pour out His Spirit upon us.

10:2 - *“For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in*

vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.” The state of the leadership is almost the criterion and prerequisite to blessing. We cannot overemphasise the part and responsibility of leadership, because according to the leadership, so will the church be. The church can only go as far as the pastor goes, spiritually.

**Spiritually,
the church
can only go
as far as the
pastor goes.**

10:3 - *“Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.”* God’s anger against the shepherds is brought out in Ezekiel 34. The shepherds of Israel (pastors and leaders) thought of themselves, disregarding the needs of the people of Israel, the flock of God. The leadership or shepherds fed themselves from the flock of God, but did not care for and strengthen His sheep.

Remember that God is going to divide the nations (Mt. 25), separating the sheep from the goats. God punishes the goats which speak of the rebellious and the self-willed. Goats are very rebellious and stubborn, but sheep are quiet and submissive even before their shearers. When God visits His people He visits with blessing upon the sheep and with judgment upon the goats.

10:4-5 - *“Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor*

together. And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.” This has two fulfillments—in the time of the Maccabean revolt, but more fully when the Lord comes again.

10:6 - *“And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them.”* This was never fulfilled historically; so there must be a Millennial fulfilment of this.

The phrase “they shall be as though I had not cast them off” also has a spiritual connotation and truth. This is a quality of forgiveness and love that has to be worked out in our hearts toward those who have offended us. True forgiveness is being able to view that person as though he had never committed that sin. Husbands and wives must have this worked out when receiving back a spouse who has sinned. They need to receive them back as though they had never sinned. The second aspect of this concerns the backslider. Those who have fallen into sin, or left the path of God need to have such a meeting with God that they are completely healed of that sin, and it is as though they never fell away.

10:7 - *“And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the*

LORD.” Ephraim was a perpetual backslider, but the Lord says that He is going to make him a mighty man. Ephraim’s redemption is explained in detail in Hosea 14. Once again, this is a promise for the Millennium.

10:8-9 - *“I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again.”*

God says that He is going to bless Israel, and they are going to turn to Him again; He will bring them out of every country where they have been scattered. Israel has never returned to the Lord since their rejection of Christ. Thus this will happen when the Lord returns again.

10:10 - *“I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them.”* In the Millennium, the Lord Jesus is going to multiply Israel in a way that has never been seen before. This is also true of the Church in the last days. The Lord is going to pour out a blessing greater than at any other time in Church history, because the Lord has reserved the best wine until last (Jn. 2:10).

10:11 - *“And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought*

down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.” The Lord says that the pride of Assyria is going to be brought down. Zechariah is prophesying after the destruction of Babylon, the nation that conquered Assyria. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria had been destroyed in 612 B.C. by Nabopolassar the king of Babylon, over 100 years before this was prophesied. Without a doubt, Assyria (Iraq) will rise in power again in the last days. Otherwise the Lord could not destroy them. The Lord is speaking of future judgments. These nations must rise once more, to be judged by the Lord again. They all experienced historical judgments as a prelude to the judgments that are coming upon them in the last days.

10:12 - *“And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.”* The Lord promises to strengthen His people of Judah. When He comes again to His chosen people, they will walk up and down in His name.

CHAPTER 11

11:1 - *“Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.”* Lebanon was renowned for her cedars, which are a symbol or emblem of the country, becoming almost synonymous with that country. However, the Lord prophesied in many places that He was going to destroy all of her cedars. This judgment upon the wealth and pride of the nation is still evident today, for these trees are exceedingly rare in the nation of Lebanon. God has utterly destroyed Lebanon, and will yet judge them.

11:2-3 - *“Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.”* It is also interesting to note that Jordan is also completely denuded of trees. There are now no forests as there were in olden times in the Kingdom of Jordan. Due to the destruction of the forests, the young lions had no place to hide, and there are now no lions in that area.

11:4-5 - *“Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter; Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not.”* There was a tremendous traffic in taking the Jewish people captive and selling them as slaves; yet, the Jewish leaders had no pity on them.

11:6-8 - *“For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour’s hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.”* This is speaking of the Lord’s judgment upon the rulers who refused to care for His flock.

11:9-13 - *“Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder; that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.”*

This was fulfilled in Matthew 26:15 when Judas sold Christ for 30 pieces of silver. Then he suffered remorse and cast the 30 pieces of silver down in the temple before the priests; and the priests said in Matthew 27:6, “It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.” So, they bought the potter’s field (Mt. 27:3-10). God broke His covenant with Israel when they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, and broke the bond of brotherhood between Judah and Israel, as we see in the next verse.

11:14-17 - *“Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the*

flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”

This is a principle in churches. When a church rejects God’s minister (and sometimes people do reject the godly pastor that God has put over them), God gives them into the hands of an idle shepherd, a man who does not care for them. Israel rejected Christ, the Good Shepherd; so they are going to get a false shepherd in the person of the Antichrist.

This is what Jesus brought out in John 5:43, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” In other words, Israel will accept the Antichrist. God gives a nation leaders according to the merits of that nation. When a country turns to God, God will raise up good leaders.

Part Seven

The Second Coming

(12:1 - 14:21)

12:1-2 - *“The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.”*

Part 7 is interspersed with judgments upon nations and Messianic prophecies. Very clearly, in the time of Zechariah, the Lord is speaking of another siege of Jerusalem. The siege of 586 B.C. had already taken place; but this could not have been referring to the Roman siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because it speaks of victory for Jerusalem in the end. He was looking to the last siege of Jerusalem, just prior to the Second Coming of Christ, showing clearly that there is another siege of Jerusalem in the last days.

12:3 - *“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”* This was not fulfilled in A.D. 70, because Jerusalem was not really a burdensome stone for all the people of the earth at that time. This is happening today—Israel is a burden to everyone. The whole world has occupied themselves with Israel. One cannot read

a national newspaper or watch the news, without references being made to Israel. Everyone who has become involved with Jerusalem in the past has failed. Historically, every nation that has occupied itself with Jerusalem has fallen. This has been true from Israel's beginning, as evidenced by those empires who oppressed them—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. All these empires came down.

In principle, this is similar to Uzzah, who presumed to put his hand upon the ark of the covenant, and suffered God's wrath (2 Sam. 6:6-7). Today the desire of the nations is to divide the land, but at what cost? The Lord says in Joel 3:2 that He will bring great judgment upon those who part or divide the land of Israel, which He has called His land.

12:4 - *“In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.”* He is speaking of those who are encamped around Jerusalem in the last days.

12:5 - *“And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.”* God is going to bring many nations against Jerusalem in the last days. That is confirmed in Joel 3:2, where the Lord spoke prophetically through Joel and said, “I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my

heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.” God will strengthen Jerusalem when He comes to fight for her.

12:6 - *“In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.”* It is very important to understand that this takes place after the siege of Jerusalem just prior to the return of Christ to the earth.

12:7 - *“The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.”* There is obviously going to be a tremendous move of the Spirit at the same time; and those in Judah will turn to the Lord almost sooner than those in Jerusalem.

12:8 - *“In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.”* God is obviously going to do something supernatural for the defenders of Zion in the last days.

12:9 - *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”* The Lord has graciously shown me in a vision the final siege

against Jerusalem prior to the Second Coming, during which many nations will come against the city of God.

When my wife and I were on the Mount of Olives in 1973, just prior to the Yom Kippur War, the Lord visited us in our hotel room. We had just come from Jordan where we had experienced revival; the meetings were glorious, and all the people were very kind to us. Then, coming into Israel, we had to go through the Israeli customs, and they made things very difficult for us. They were throwing our belongings around unsympathetically, while making us stand in the intense heat. I was not very fond of the Jews at that moment.

When we reached our hotel room, the Lord came into our room and said, "I love Israel," three times. On the third time I forsook the feelings that had risen up in me when we had to pass through customs, and I said, "I love Israel, too, Lord." When God speaks, you always agree with Him. He then started to show us things that were going to come upon Israel, saying, "There is going to be war in Israel, and they will not have peace from this time onwards." He showed us the siege of Jerusalem, and the Arab armies in the valleys of Israel, encamped against Jerusalem; and I saw Jerusalem broken into.

A few days later we were in a meeting in Jerusalem, where the man in charge knew me and asked me to speak. When I asked the Lord what I should speak on, the Lord told me to simply relate the vision He had given me. So, I shared the vision with the people. The leader got up after I spoke and said, "We respect Brother Bailey, but we do not agree with

him. We believe that Israel has suffered enough, and it will not have to suffer any more.” Here I was in this meeting, and the leader got up after I spoke and said he disagreed with what I had said; you can imagine how I felt.

However, there were missionaries from all over the world in that meeting, who agreed with me, saying that while they were coming, the Lord had been speaking to them about war. The whole meeting divided into two groups—those who believed Israel was going to suffer, and those who believed that Israel would not suffer any more. Well, only seven or eight weeks later, the Yom Kippur War proved that the other side was wrong.

12:10 - *“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”*

When the Lord returns again, He will literally descend from heaven to Jerusalem and all Israel will see Him. There will be a literal Second Coming of the Lord. We must be very clear about this, because some people say He will just come spiritually to His Church. However, that is false, because if you are looking upon someone who is really there, it is not just spiritual. There will be national repentance for those who are left in Israel when the Lord comes again. This verse is prophetic of Christ on the cross, when they pierced His hands

and His side (Jn. 19:34), but it is also speaking of His Second Coming, when the Jews will accept Him. They rejected Him when He came the first time; they crucified Him and pierced His hands, His feet, and His side; but when He comes again, they will embrace their Messiah. After the nation has mourned and repented, the Lord will fulfil Isaiah 61:2,3, restoring their joy and gladness in His presence.

12:11 - *“In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.”* This is the great mourning of Israel when Josiah died in the valley of Megiddo. Second Chronicles 35:24-25 says: *“And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.”* This is the same mourning that is going to take hold of them when they behold their Messiah with those nail prints in His hands.

12:12-14 - *“And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”* The tribes of Israel will mourn when the Lord returns, because they will realise that they have indeed crucified their very Messiah. It is interesting that it mentions the house of Nathan, the son of David. Christ descended from Nathan

through Mary (Lk. 3:23-31); Joseph was the descendant of Solomon (Mt. 1:1-16).

CHAPTER 13

13:1 - *“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”* In that day Israel shall be cleansed. This happens at the Second Coming of the Lord, and is a confirmation of the fountain that will be in Jerusalem in the Millennium (see Joel 3:18).

13:2 - *“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.”* It would appear that the Antichrist will raise up idols, otherwise God would not say that He would cleanse it. It is confirmed in Revelation 13:12-15, that the Antichrist will raise up an image, and make people worship it. This is seen in type from Daniel 3, when Nebuchadnezzar erected an image for people to worship.

13:3-5 - *“And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied;*

neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.” There will be much false prophecy in the Last Days, which we can see already coming about today. It will culminate in the appearance of the False Prophet and the Antichrist.

It is not the world that prophesies, but the Church. Therefore, the Church has to be careful to discern which prophecies are of God, and which are not. We must learn the voice of the Lord by hearing from Him daily. Then we will not be deceived when someone prophesies under a false anointing because we will recognise that it is not the voice of the Lord that we know so well.

13:6 - *“And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”* This is the conversation that takes place between Israel and the Lord when He returns. They will see the Lord, and, not understanding, will ask Him about the wounds in His hands. He shall answer, *“They are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.”* Then all of Israel, tribe by tribe, will mourn bitterly and repent and embrace their Messiah. Thus, it is clear that Israel does not return to the Lord until the Second Coming.

13:7 - *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn*

mine hand upon the little ones.” These prophecies are not in chronological order, because this is reverting to His first coming. This is what happened on the night of the Lord’s crucifixion. The Lord Himself quoted this verse in Mark 14:27, as being fulfilled when the disciples forsook Him. “And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”

13:8-9 - *“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”* There will be much bloodshed in Israel in the last days. Literally two thirds of Israel will be slain in fulfilment of this verse.

CHAPTER 14

14:1-2 - *“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.”* The Lord is going to bring all nations against Jerusalem with the purpose of cleansing His chosen city. In that day, it will once again be called “The city of righteousness, the faithful city”

(Isa. 1:26). The Lord gave me a vision when I was upon the Mount of Olives, showing me that the Arab armies will break into Jerusalem, and half of the city will fall.

14:3 - *“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.”* The Lord then returns again and fights against the enemy nations when half of Jerusalem falls, but not before. Jerusalem will fall in the last days, but Mount Zion will *not* fall.

14:4 - *“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.”* There is a fault line that goes around the world. It starts in Alaska, then travels down the west coast of America, cuts across through Guatemala, and continues right below South Africa. Then it comes up in the Rift valley of Kenya, and ends on the Mount of Olives. Truly the Lord does all things well!

The Lord’s feet will touch the Mount of Olives, and it will be divided. There will be an earthquake, and a river will flow out of the mountain. The Mount of Olives is where He ascended up into heaven after His resurrection (Acts 1:9-12), and that is where He will return.

14:5 - *“And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye*

shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” It is very clear that there is an earthquake when the Lord comes again. There are the two great earthquakes—the earthquake in the days of Uzziah (also referred to in Amos 1:1), and the earthquake at the time of the Second Coming of the Lord, when His feet shall touch the Mount of Olives, and break it open. The topography of the land will obviously change at that time.

The saints will come with the Lord when He returns upon the Mount of Olives. This is exactly what is prophesied in Jude 14-15, speaking of the prophecy of Enoch, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” The Church and Israel, no matter what judgments they might pass through, will come out victorious over their enemies *in the end*.

14:6-7 - “*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.*” There will be a miracle at His Second Coming in that it will be light in the evening. Only the Father knows the day and hour of Christ’s coming. The Lord Himself said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father

only” (Mt. 24:36). This is confirmed also in Acts 1:7 where the Lord said, “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” Therefore, we cannot predict dates concerning His Second Coming, nor should we believe those who claim to know the time of His return.

14:8 - *“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”*

Ezekiel 47 speaks of the living waters flowing out from Jerusalem at the coming of the Lord. There has to be a temple built in Jerusalem for living waters to flow out (which we see in Ezekiel 40). Zechariah 14:8 is speaking about a river. Ezekiel saw Jerusalem and the temple in the Millennium. These living waters flow out from the temple in the Millennium.

14:9 - *“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.”* This is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a sense here that all the idols will disappear, and Satan’s power will be broken, for he will be locked in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years.

14:10 - *“All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of*

Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.” It appears as though that earthquake will shake the whole earth and there will be a straightening out of the topography, but this is not something from which we need to form a doctrine.

14:11 - *“And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”* This can only be fulfilled in the Millennium. Jerusalem will be safely inhabited again, and there will not be any more destructions of it.

14:12-14 - *“And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.”* God is going to slaughter the nations that came against Jerusalem, and the remnant that is in Jerusalem will fight against them. Then the wealth and gold of the nations will be brought to Jerusalem (Hag. 2:7-8).

14:15-16 - *“And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to*

pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” The feasts will be kept in the Millennium. The Feast of Tabernacles has a spiritual fulfilment in the Church Age, to bring the Church to maturity. There were three main feasts in Israel that all males were required to keep in Jerusalem under the old covenant—Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 16:16).

Passover was first celebrated in Egypt, and continued in Israel until our Lord fulfilled it on the Cross. Passover represents the Age of the Law from Moses to Christ. Whenever Israel had a revival, they kept the Passover. It is the feast that governed the age of the Law. Pentecost was celebrated in Acts 2:1-4, and spiritually governs the Church Age. In the Millennium, the predominant feast will be the Feast of Tabernacles. However, in the Church, we spiritually celebrate all three. The Feast of Passover speaks of our salvation experience and Christ as our Passover Lamb. Pentecost is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We also must have the Feast of Tabernacles, which we will experience in the last days. This will be the outpouring of the latter rain revival.

14:17-18 - *“And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of*

tabernacles.” Here again, rain and the Feast of Tabernacles are linked. Jerusalem will be the centre of worship in the Millennium. Satan will be bound during the Millennium, the false prophet and the Antichrist will be in the lake of fire, and all the demonic forces will be removed from the earth. Nevertheless, even though the enemy is immobilized, nations will choose to rebel against the reign of Christ and will refuse to go up to Jerusalem for these feasts.

The problem is that the sinful, Adamic nature will still be in the Millennium. Everyone is born with that nature, and people will still disobey at this time. Isaiah said that the *sinner* would live to be 100 years old (Isa. 65:20). It is the sinful nature that will cause rebellion in the Millennium. There will be an open pit for people to see into hell (Isa. 66:24), so that they may be thoroughly instructed concerning the ultimate judgment that will befall them at the end.

14:19 - *“This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.”* We see that when Egypt rebels in the Millennium, and does not go up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, God will punish that nation.

14:20-21 - *“In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there*

shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.” Everything will be holiness unto the Lord in the Millennium. Judah will be a holy nation, and all nations will come up to worship in Jerusalem. The sacrifices and sabbaths will be re-instituted, as Ezekiel tells us (Ezek. 46). Although the Messiah has fulfilled these sacrifices, Israel has not fulfilled them. Through them, the people will be instructed concerning their fulfilments by Christ.

Israel will return to the Law, and all nations will have to go up to Jerusalem to worship, as they did in the Age of the Law. Isaiah and Zechariah confirm this fact, and I have seen this in a vision. However, the Canaanites, or Philistines (Palestinians) will not be there, for they have been the continual enemies of Israel since their coming to the Promised Land. There is going to be a mass exodus of the Palestinians from Israel, and the land will belong entirely to Israel. The prophecies of Zechariah confirm Ezekiel’s vision.

**THE BOOK
OF
MALACHI**

Outline

Introduction

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Introduction

The name “Malachi” means “Messenger of Jehovah.” That was his principal promise and theme. He prophesied at the time of Nehemiah, who actually served two terms as governor of Jerusalem, returning to Persia after his first term of 12 years (c. 433 B.C.). Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem after a year or two only to find that the Israelites had become extremely lax in obeying the law and the statutes laid out first by Ezra and then Nehemiah a few years before.

Many conditions confronting Nehemiah (recorded in Nehemiah 13) were the same as those mentioned by Malachi. The people were greatly discouraged, looking for a revival that had not come. They were losing the vision of the Lord’s coming, and, therefore, were casting off all restraint. In order to understand Malachi and the truth that this book contains, it is important to understand the period in which he lived and the spiritual state of the people.

It was a time of great difficulty in the nation. Because of the sins of Israel, the northern tribes had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Later, despite all the warnings, Judah followed Israel’s decline into idolatry and gross evil.

Through Isaiah and Jeremiah, God warned that they would be taken into captivity in Babylon. In fulfilment of these prophecies, the final siege and fall of Jerusalem took place in 586 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied that the captivity would last 70 years, and after the elapse of this time, the first return

of the Jews to Judah took place in 538 B.C. Dating from the first captivity, which was in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim in 605 B.C., the foundation of the Restoration Temple was laid in 535 B.C.

This is a remarkable episode in the history of the children of Israel, because so much is prophesied of this restoration period. Isaiah 44:28 names the actual Persian king, Cyrus, who decreed that the walls of Jerusalem and the temple were to be rebuilt. So when the Jews were in captivity and Cyrus became king of Persia, the devout and pious Jews knew that the time was fast approaching when Babylon, who had held them in captivity for all those years, was about to be destroyed.

The destruction followed in accordance with the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah in the minutest details, even to the extent of how Babylon was to be taken—the moat being dried up and the spirit of drunkenness coming upon the inhabitants of that city.

The fall of Babylon occurred in 539 B.C., and the decree of Cyrus for the restoration of Jerusalem was given in 536 B.C. Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest left Babylon that same year, leading the captive Jews back to Jerusalem. In 535 B.C., just 70 years after the first siege in 605 B.C., the altar was built and the foundation of the temple was laid, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah about the 70 years of captivity.

All seemed to begin perfectly, but the enemy was able to stall the building of the temple for 16 years, until 520 B.C. Haggai

and Zechariah were raised up by God to encourage Zerubbabel and Joshua through their prophetic ministry, enabling them to finish the task in 516 B.C., about 19 or 20 years after the foundation of the temple was laid. That was the first and main return from Babylon to Jerusalem, but there were also two subsequent returns. The second return was under Ezra in 458 B.C., and the final return was under Nehemiah, in 444 B.C.

Nehemiah governed Judah until 433 B.C., and it was he who completed the rebuilding of the walls surrounding Jerusalem. Throughout this time of restoration the Jews were expecting a revival. During this period of long waiting the people became discouraged and despondent, eventually leaving the pathway of God. Thus, after Nehemiah's return from his sojourn in Persia, the Lord once again raised up a man to speak in His Name, Malachi, the last of the prophets of Israel.

Malachi, the last of the writing prophets, wrote the final book of the Old Testament. He prophesied after the restoration of the temple had been completed. His book begins with the Lord comparing Esau, whom God hates, to Jacob whom He loves. Then follows an assertion that although the priests have not honoured the Lord in their offerings, the name of the Lord shall be great among the heathen.

Levi is held up as an example to the priests; Levi was one in whose mouth was the law of truth and who turned many away from iniquity. Judah is warned concerning their treachery in putting away or divorcing the wives of their youth. God declares that He seeks a godly seed, and that He hates divorce

(putting away). Yet the Lord promises that He will send His messenger, who will purify the sons of Levi. He continues by admonishing them to bring the tithes into the storehouse so that He may open the windows of heaven upon them, and rebuke the devourer for their sakes.

It is important to understand the historical setting of the prophets of the Restoration Era, because their prophetic messages were not only for their day, but for our day, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Cor. 10:11). Malachi's message is very relevant to our days. He prophesied during a time when Israel was anticipating the coming of the Lord. It is very clear in Scripture that in the last days, the Church is waiting expectantly for Him, and He will come later than anticipated. In the discourse on the Mount of Olives, concerning the last days Jesus said, "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming" (Mt. 24:48). It is impossible to say that the Lord has delayed His coming unless the date of His return has been calculated and proved wrong. We must be very careful not to set dates on the Second Coming.

Israel was expecting her Messiah to come during the Restoration Period, 400 years before He came. Certain events had to occur, preparing the way, before He could come the first time, and this is true for His second coming as well. The Jews had anticipated that He could come at any moment, and after a time they became discouraged because He had not yet appeared. It is important that we do not become consumed with the date of His coming, for that will take our focus away

from what God is speaking and wants to accomplish in the earth now. The Jews lost hope when the Lord did not move according to their expectations. It is vital that we give ourselves wholly to the Lord and His purposes for this present time, so that we may see the fulfilment of His promises and plans for the Church in our day!

The Promises for the Last Day Church

1. **DISCERNMENT**—Those who fear the Lord’s Name, will receive discernment to distinguish between the wicked and the righteous (3:16-18).
2. **HEALING**—The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings (4:2).
3. **CALVES OF THE STALL**—Those in the Church will grow up as calves of the stall (4:2). Cattle exposed to the elements produce a coarse leather, while the leather of the cattle brought up in stalls is very fine grained and supple.
4. **THE LAW OF MOSES**—Israel is exhorted to remember the law of Moses (4:4).
5. **RESTORATION OF FAMILY LIFE**—Elijah will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers (4:5-6).

Part One

The Lord's Love for Israel— Distinction Made Between Jacob and Esau

(1:1-5)

1:1-3 - *“The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 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, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.”*

Israel was questioning God’s love for them because they realised that the Restoration Temple could not compare to the glory of Solomon’s Temple. They had heard from the other prophets that the glory of the latter house would be greater than the former (Hag. 2:9), but they had not seen the fulfilment of these promises. They as a people and a nation had been diminished from the great state of Israel they had once been. Under David and Solomon, all nations came to Jerusalem to worship God, yet now they were reduced to being an insignificant province in the Persian Empire.

The people were expecting the Lord to come and restore Israel as He had promised, but they were mistaken in their timing; so, they gave in to despair and began to think that the Lord did not love them. The Lord graciously responded,

assuring them of His love. When we expect something and it does not come to pass, it is so easy to become depressed and think that the Lord does not love us. The Lord not only had to address the situation they were in, but He had to address the period they will come into in the Last Days. The Antichrist will not touch the Kingdom of Jordan (or Edom), the descendants of Esau. God is assuring Israel that He will personally visit judgment upon the kingdom of Jordan (Esau), to comfort His people for all the evil they had suffered at the hands of that nation.

This is developed in Isaiah 63:1-6: “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”

1:4-5 - “*Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD*

of hosts, 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 for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.”

The Lord is showing Israel His love for them by His judgments upon the nations. Because Esau (Edom) had greatly afflicted them, the Lord says, “If you want to see the proof of My love for you, just look at Edom and see how I have judged them because of all the evil they have done to you.” God’s love to us is manifested when He judges our enemies, because we are the apple of His eye. The Babylonians destroyed Edom. The Lord was affirming His love for the Jews in order to comfort them in the difficult times that they had suffered and would yet experience.

There were revivals among God’s people and prophets sent to them from 400 B.C. until the first coming of Christ. One of these was the great revival in Egypt (200 B.C.), when the Septuagint version of the Old Testament was translated. However, with the ministry of Malachi, the Lord had finished His message to Israel until the time of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the Messiah.

Part Two

Israel's Sinful State

(1:6 - 2:9)

1:6 - *“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?”* In the times of discouragement, people tend to fall into legalism and traditionalism. Although in their hearts Israel had left the love and fear of the Lord, they continued to offer sacrifices to God, seeking to win His approval by following the ceremonial law rather than the law of the heart (Mic. 6:8).

1:7 - *“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.”* They were saying that they saw no purpose in obeying the law.

1:8 - *“And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.”* The governor spoken of here was not Nehemiah. The Lord says, “You are continuing to offer up sacrifices, but you are not offering your best. You are offering sacrifices with blemishes, the lame and sick, that which you do not need, and you expect Me to be happy!”

The Lord told them to give those offerings to their governor and see whether his reaction would be one of joy or anger. Naturally, he would not receive those offerings with joy; so how could they think the Lord would be happy with them?

Does not the King of Kings deserve better than what we would give to our governor or ruler? Nobody would dare think of giving anything but their best to the governor, but many people think they can give the Lord their left-overs, and their cast-offs, thinking He will accept them. The Law (Ex. 12:5) said that their offerings had to be without blemish, and they were manifestly breaking His Word.

1:9-10 - *“And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.”* The Lord is saying that if we do not offer ourselves to the Lord as a living sacrifice, He will not be pleased with whatever service we render to Him or with any sacrifices that we make for Him. The Lord wants relationship not sacrifice; but when we do sacrifice we must give our best to Him. It is of no use to give offerings and service unto the Lord if our lives are not right. He only accepts our sacrifices if we are pleasing Him.

At this time the Israelites expected to be paid for doing any kind of work in the temple. No one would even open the doors

of the temple without wanting to be paid. This attitude has become prevalent among many Christians who want to be paid for their service to the church, for leading worship or for being a deacon. The Lord wants us to see that it is a great privilege and joy to serve the Lord and work in the church (see 2 Cor. 11:8; 12:17). The servants of the Lord have no reward except the Lord Himself, as seen with the tribe of Levi.

1:11 - *“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.”* Here, the Lord is speaking prophetically of the Church Age when the Church would worship the Lord and He would be magnified in their midst.

The Lord said to Israel, “You are not offering up a pure offering and you are not magnifying My name. Therefore, the day is coming when I am going to bring in the Gentiles and they will offer praise (or incense), a pure offering to Me.” Incense speaks of praise (Jer. 17:26). Psalm 113:3 says, “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised.” In the revival of the last days and in the millennial reign of Christ, the Lord will have pure praise from His people in every country around the world.

His name will be great even among the heathen nations. This is a promise for the last day Church—the Lord is going to bring revival and open the doors into nations that were formerly closed to the Gospel.

1:12-13 - *“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. 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.”*

The people of God were saying that they were weary of going to church. They were in the pit of discouragement and despair.

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.”* We must make sure that everything that we offer unto the Lord is the very best that we have.

There was a godly lady pastor in London, England to whom a missionary came, asking for some sheets because she did not have any. The pastor went to get some sheets to give to the missionary, intending to give her some of her used sheets. However, the Lord spoke to her saying that she could not give the missionary those sheets. Instead she was to give the missionary some brand new sheets that she had. She said, “Lord, I can’t give her those sheets; they are brand new and they are the best sheets I have.” The Lord quickly responded, “And what are you going to offer unto Me?” We must give our best. So many people give the church only what they do not need, but that does not please God.

CHAPTER 2

2:1-3 - *“And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, 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 ye do not lay it to heart. 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.”

**The Lord will have
pure praise from
His people in
every country
around the world!**

Because the priests and the people of Israel did not honour the Lord in their sacrifices, God purposed to corrupt their seed. We must do everything with a pure heart, honouring the Lord with our best.

A certain man we used to know had an old suit that he did not like. He thought that the way to get a better suit was to give the old suit to the Lord. Thinking thus, he gave that suit to a fellow Christian, expecting to receive a better one in return. He did receive another, but it was worse than the one he had given to the Lord.

When we give, we must give the best we can. If the Lord came to us, we would give Him our best. The sad thing is that He does come to us, many times, in the form of the poor. Yet, we choose to give Him, as we give to the poor, what we do not need and what we could not use anyway.

Matthew 25:44-45 says, “Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”

2:4 - *“And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.”* Levi is the original pattern for a minister, showing what qualities please the heart of God. In the following verses, the Lord shows us some of the virtues He looks for when He selects ministers. This is the description of a true minister of God.

2:5 - *“My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.”* The Lord gave Levi a covenant of life and peace. These are two things that we need desperately—the life of Christ constantly flowing through us, and the peace of God. The peace of God is truly wonderful; it enables us to remain at rest and untroubled through storms. To receive this peace, we need to enter into a covenant relationship with the Lord.

Levi also feared the Lord, a quality essential for our own lives. Proverbs 9:10 says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We must have a godly fear of the Lord, for this reverential fear causes us to do only those things which please Him.

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 Lord continues His description of a true minister (Levi) in verse six. We must have the law of truth, the Word of God, in our mouths at all times; we want pure doctrine. The only thing that is true is the Word of God. It is the only thing that brings satisfaction.

We need to ask the Lord to reveal to us what He wants us to know. We must also have our lips purged with a coal from the altar, as Isaiah did (Isa. 6:1-7). Those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes are those who have no guile in their mouths (Rev. 14:4-5). We must walk before the Lord in peace and equity. Walk in peace, and do not fret or worry.

Equity is above law, rules, and principles. It is higher than judgment. Proverbs 1:3 says, “To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity...” It is the Lord’s will in a given situation. It is not enough to quote a scripture and give a “pat” answer. We have to know which one of the 31,102 verses of the Bible applies to that situation. Daniel 12:3 says, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” We want to be those, who, like Levi, turn many away from iniquity to the pathway of righteousness.

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.”* The priest or minister has to keep

knowledge. Proverbs 23:23 says, “Buy the truth, and sell it not.” We must also seek the Law at the mouth of the Lord. We must never stop studying, but must constantly be seeking fresh truth from the Lord. God has called us to be His messengers, speaking His mind and not ours.

2:8 - *“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.”* The priests in Malachi’s time were not living uprightly; hence they caused many to stumble.

2:9 - *“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.”* The priests at this time accepted bribes and gifts to sway judgment. We need to be impartial, administering the judgment of God, and not favouring one person above another for any reason.

Part Three

Mixed Marriages and Divorce

(2:10-17)

2:10-11 - *“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? Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.”* Here the Lord is addressing mixed marriages. Second Corinthians 6:14 says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

A Christian must marry another Christian. They were marrying unsaved people at this time, those who worshipped other gods. There is a great danger in marrying an unbeliever, for a spouse has tremendous influence and can lead the Christian partner away from following the Lord, as in the case of Solomon (1 Ki. 11:4). Yet, it is not sufficient to simply marry a Christian. We, as followers of Jesus Christ, are responsible for marrying one who has the same vision and calling that we do.

My wife and I never had to adjust to each other, because we thought alike and even liked the same food. It reached the

point that when I was about to say something, she said it before I could. We flowed together in perfect unity, having one heart and one mind, because we were committed to keeping Christ as the head of our marriage. However, this was the fulfilment of a prophecy the Lord gave my wife before she came to Switzerland and met me, in which the Lord told her that He was going to give her a husband with the same vision.

I remember a lady who had a call to the ministry upon her life, but she became involved with a man who did not have a call upon his life. In order to get her to marry him, he said that he had a call, too. A few years ago I heard that she had grown very bitter, blaming her husband for keeping her from fulfilling her call. Those with the call of God upon their lives must marry someone with the same call, or else it will be a life of agony because the one who has the call never fulfils it. They are never happy, and usually become bitter. One key to a happy life is to marry the mate of God's choice with the same call and vision.

2:12-13 - *“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. 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.”* If you make a wilful mistake in marriage, you must live with the consequences. These people were marrying when they were in the pit of discouragement,

and as a result, they were making very bad judgments concerning who they married.

Many times the problems in a marriage stem from the fact that the couple married in a backslidden or discouraged state. In these situations, a person nearly always chooses the wrong mate. The Lord said He would cut off the person who married an unbeliever. God does not look upon this matter lightly. A person can lose his or her salvation by marrying an unbeliever, because so often the unsaved spouse can turn the Christian away from the Lord, causing them to join in their abominations.

The Lord was saying to the Israelites at this time that it was of no use to weep before Him. God would not listen to their crying because they chose to ignore His laws and intermarry with the heathen nations surrounding them. Some people who have the call of God backslide or become discouraged. At this time in their lives, they marry someone who does not have the call of God; when they turn back to God, they expect their spouse, who has neither the call nor the grace needed, to follow them in their call. This brings such sorrow upon them. Once a person marries someone without the call, they have to live with the consequences. They have to accept the fact that they will never fulfil their calling.

However, the Lord gives hope to those who have already made this mistake. Although the original call will not be fulfilled, the Lord, as the Master Potter, can make another vessel, pleasing in His sight, of those who have truly repented. "Then

I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it" (Jer. 18:3-4).

2:14-15 - *"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. 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."*

This is why God hates divorce so much. Marriage is a covenant relationship. In marriage you become one flesh. Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

That is why Christ said, in Matthew 19:4-6, when the Pharisees asked him if it was lawful to divorce your wife, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." God is very particular about this issue because He values faithfulness so highly. Marriage is a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church, His Bride

(Eph. 5:22-33). Thus, when people divorce, they are breaking the type of the relationship between Christ and the Church.

God wants a godly seed—He wants us to produce a godly seed, naturally and spiritually. It was a terrible situation in the time of Malachi because of the mixed marriages (Neh. 13); the children could not even speak the Jewish language. Marriage is not only for the husband and wife, but it is also for the children.

2:16 - *“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.”* We have to pause and consider what the Lord is saying here. “Putting away” is the King James language for divorce. Therefore, here in the Old Testament, the Lord says that He absolutely *hates* divorce. Yet in Deuteronomy 24, the Lord *permitted* divorce. How can this be? God cannot contradict Himself, but He can give statutes that do not profit. Ezekiel 20:24-25 says, “...Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers’ idols. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.”

In the Old Testament, the Lord permitted and allowed divorce, but it was never His purpose. In Matthew 19, when the Pharisees asked the Lord Jesus Christ if divorce was allowable, the Lord went back to the Garden of Eden, and

showed that divorce was never in the heart of God, nor was it His purpose. Divorce came after the Fall, after hardness of heart set in. Christ said that divorce is wrong; then the Pharisees asked Him why Moses told them they could divorce if divorce was wrong (Mt. 19:7). The Lord replied in Matthew 19:8, “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”

God hates divorce, and always has, but in the Old Testament, He allowed it for a time, because of the hardness of heart. However, when the Lord came the first time, He took us back to the beginning to the original purpose of God, and condemned divorce.

2:17 - *“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?”* They got to the place where they were saying that the one who does evil is being blessed of God. It seemed to them that because God was not punishing the evildoer yet, he must be pleasing to the Lord.

Part Four

The Coming of the Lord

(3:1-6)

3:1 - *“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.”* Christ affirms that He is indeed going to come. He is saying, “What I have promised before will come to pass. I will come and visit My people.” We know that this promise did come to pass when Christ came the first time.

Habakkuk 2:3 says, “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” This is a principle of God. What God has promised will come to pass, but only in its appointed time. The Lord was going to appear, but He came more than four hundred years after the Jews of this time thought He would come.

3:2 - *“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 fullers’ soap.”* This is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:12, “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn

up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Christ is like a refiner’s fire. In the last days, He will appear suddenly in His Church in world-wide revival. One cannot understand revival without experiencing it. Revival is not just the outpouring of the Spirit of God—it is also the manifest presence of God, which results in tremendous conviction. Everything is revealed and exposed in revival; nothing remains hidden. Revival brings deep conviction and purification.

3:3 - *“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.”* This is speaking of the Lord Jesus sitting as a Refiner. We are the New Testament priesthood, and our offering is our body (Rom. 12:1, Heb. 7:27). In revival, God is going to purge and purify us, burning up all the dross in our lives, so that we become that offering in righteousness.

When my wife and I went to the Rand Refinery in South Africa, we learned much about the refining of gold. The refiner was purging the gold of its dross, but he had to watch the heat carefully because he could not allow the gold to become overheated and damaged. The Lord purges us in like manner, but He carefully measures the temperature of our trials and will not allow the trial to become hotter than we can bear.

3:4 - *“Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the*

**What God has
promised *will*
come to pass,
but only in its
appointed time.**

LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant unto the Lord because He is going to purge them as gold and silver. Therefore, Judah and Jerusalem would have to go through many trials prior to the coming of the Lord, so that they could be purified and be pleasing unto the Lord, as in the days of old.

The Lord is going to purify His Church during the last day revival, because Christ is coming for a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26-27). The Church is far from that today. Clearly, the Lord has to purge her before He comes again for her. The Church will have to pass through many trials and afflictions, and to suffer much persecution in order to be purified. There is no way to have pure gold without fire, and there is no way to present the Church glorious and purified, without spot or wrinkle, unless the Lord purifies it through many fiery trials.

3:5 - *“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 the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.”* God is saying that when He comes in revival, there is also going to be judgment.

3:6 - *“For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”* The Lord does not change. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

Part Five

Repentance and Tithing

(3:7-14, 4:1)

3:7 - *“Even from the days 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 the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”* Israel has been a backsliding nation ever since their exodus from Egypt. Here the Lord calls them to return unto Him.

The Lord said that if they would return unto Him, He would return unto them. This is a principle in the Word of God. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (Jas. 4:8). Zechariah 1:3 says, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you.”

3:8-10 - *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. 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.”* Tithing is our duty. We rob God when we do not tithe, because we are taking what *belongs* to Him and using it for ourselves. We must concentrate on becoming a giving person.

It is estimated that a pious and devout Jew gave about 30 percent of his income to the Lord, including tithes, offerings, and devoted things. Yet, many of the Jews of this time were not even paying the minimal tithe required by the Lord for the support of the priesthood and the House of God.

It is a fact that two-thirds of the parables of Jesus deal with finances. Thus, it is very important that we be good stewards of our finances. Isaiah 32:8 says, “But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand.”

Be open-handed in giving, and the Lord will pour out His blessing upon you. However, the motive in giving is extremely important. We must not give in order to get; nevertheless, another principle of God is that if we give, we will receive. What we really want is spiritual blessings, and they come as we give freely.

3:11 - *“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.”* This comes as a result of giving to the Lord, and being faithful to give our tithes and offerings.

3:12 - *“And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.”* This is similar to Isaiah 62:4. He is looking ahead to the Millennium, saying that there is a day coming when all nations would call Israel blessed. This has a spiritual fulfilment in the Church, too. God wants to bless us and cause us to prosper,

but the key to unlock God's blessing upon our lives is to give, and give cheerfully. If you want your church to be blessed, make your first offering to the mission field.

3:13-15 - *“Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, 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? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.”*

The Israelites were seeing evildoers seemingly prospering and being blessed; they said it was not worth it to serve the Lord and go through trials. How false that is! The rewards for serving the Lord are eternal. The path of the righteous becomes more and more glorious towards the end.

We do well to remember the heart cry of that pious writer of Psalm 73 who said, “Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart” (vs.1). However, he was envious of the fools when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. He continues in verse 17-18, “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.”

Part Six

Promises to the Godly

(3:16-18, 4:2-3)

3:16 - *“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.”* This is the type of marriage or friendship that we want to have, whereby we can share with each other what the Lord is doing in our lives, or share a Scripture or a word that the Lord gave to us. This is sweet fellowship, and it is pleasing to the Lord. A book of remembrance is written by the Lord when we do this. God writes the things that we say about Him in His book. There will come a day when the Lord will reward us for all the good that we have done. We speak often about the judgment upon the wicked, but we must not forget that there is a reward for the righteous.

In speaking of the Lord with our friends, we shall have a special place in His Book of Remembrance wherein are recorded the thoughts, words, and actions of His beloved ones. May our names be among those who are written in Mount Zion. Psalm 87:6 says, “The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.”

3:17-18 - *“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. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

Discernment is based upon righteousness, and is a tremendous blessing—to know who is really serving God and who is not.

Discernment is a gift from God, and it is obtained in the home. If we talk about the goodness of the Lord in our home, with our wife or husband and family, and with our friends, we will get discernment, and will not be fooled into mistaking the bad for the good. We want the Lord to always be the subject of our conversation and thoughts.

CHAPTER 4

4:1 - *“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.”* This is speaking of the judgments at the time of the Second Coming, but it is also speaking of the judgment that comes with revival. We see that in the book of Acts, with the account of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11).

4:2 - *“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.”* The thought here is that if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we will not only be filled, but the very Sun of Righteousness will arise and bring healing in His wings. The Church and

those Christians who are seeking righteousness will be rewarded with healing. We not only want the gifts of healing, but we want the very Sun of Righteousness to arise upon us and upon our churches. Our desire is to have that healing stream flow through us and for all who come in contact with us to be healed.

Another promise to those who fear His name is that they will grow up as calves of the stall. Calves that are raised in the stall are fed the finest grain, and are protected, growing up very quickly. They produce very supple leather of the most expensive kind.

4:3 - *“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.”* After God’s blessing comes upon us, He brings judgment upon those who have opposed us.

Part Seven

Moses and Elijah's Return Is Promised

(4:4-6)

Now we come to the last section of Malachi, wherein the return of Moses and Elijah is promised. Moses and Elijah are consistently linked throughout the Word of God. Revelation 11 tells us that Moses and Elijah, the two witnesses, will come in the last days to minister in Jerusalem for three and a half years, before the Second Coming of the Lord. We have seen the two anointed ones, the two olive trees, in Zechariah 4. This is later confirmed when two men stand before the Lord of the whole earth on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17. It is substantiated here in the Old Testament.

4:4 - *“Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.”* The Lord says to remember Moses because this is the last book of the Old Testament before Christ comes. This book is the end of the old covenant. The new covenant was going to be instituted when Christ came. The old covenant was the law of Moses, the law of God written upon the tables of stone. The new covenant is the law of God written upon the fleshly tables of our heart (Heb. 8:10).

4:5-6 - *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he*

shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Here Elijah is promised to come before the Second Coming of the Lord. The Jews were expecting Elijah to come at any time after this prophecy was given. This is seen in the New Testament (Mt. 16:14; 17:10-13).

His ministry, when he comes in the last days, will be to restore family life, to turn the children to their fathers, and the fathers to their children. The blessing comes when family life is in order; but when it is not, it tells us here that it brings a curse. When the relationships between a husband and a wife and between the children and the parents are right, then the Lord commands His blessing. If the family life and relationships are not in order, there is a curse—and regretfully, in so many cases, we see the iniquities of the parents passed on to the children. So, let us be righteous so that we can pass on to our children, spiritual and natural, a blessing and a godly heritage!

Epilogue

As we close this book, the last in the series of the minor prophets, we do well to briefly recapitulate the historical background. This series began with the Book of Hosea, which was both a warning and a call to Israel to return to the Lord and repent from her sinful ways.

Then book after book takes up this call to Israel until after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, when the call goes to Judah. Judah had become as faithless as her sister Israel and merited the same judgments in 586 B.C. as Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians.

Following the destruction of Jerusalem was 70 years of captivity, culminating with the return of the Jews from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest. This is recorded in our companion book entitled *The Restoration Period*.

Through the opposition of the Samaritans and the edict of the Persian kings, the Temple restoration was halted. After a time, the building was resumed through the encouragement and the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah.

Many years later the Lord raised up the last prophet of the Old Testament era, Malachi, to again bring back the backslidden Jews into a holy and pious walk with Him. The Book of Malachi promises the coming of the Messiah as well as the return of both Moses and Elijah.

The period between the last prophet, Malachi, and the first coming of Christ is known as the Inter-Testamental Period. The events of this era are prophesied by Daniel in minutest detail in chapter 11 of that book. (Please see our commentary on the Book of Daniel for further detail.)

We who are living in what the Scriptures term the “last days” would do well to meditate on these last three books—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—for encouragement and renewal of a godly, holy, and pious life while we wait for the Lord to come as a Refiner to His Church. The Church of our days will see the glory, power, and majesty of our God bringing in the End Time Harvest.

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