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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Malachi 3.

(2014)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Malachi 3.

Topics.

- The Lord who you seek will suddenly come to his temple.
- The day of the Lord's coming like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.
- The Lord will be a swift judge against those who do not fear him.
- Will a man rob God" yet you are robbing me.
- Bring the tithes into the storehouse, that there maybe food in my house.
- Evildoers not only prosper, but they put God to the test and they escape.
- A book of remembrance was written of those who esteemed the Lord.
- They shall be mine, when I make up my treasured possession.
- You shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked.
- The glory of the spiritual temple God is building in Christ.

INTRODUCTION: Malachi means, messenger of Jehovah or my messenger. It is clearly after the Babylon exile. The Temple had been completed and sacrifices were being offered (Mal. 1:7-10) (Mal. 3:8). A Persian governor (the word for governor in (Malachi 1:8) is a borrowed word, used for the Persian governors in Palestine during the time after the Babylonian exile) was ruling in Jerusalem. This indicates a date later than that of Haggai and Zechariah. Although the urging of Haggai and Zechariah had brought the completion of the Temple (515 B.C.), this had not produced the Messianic age many expected. Zechariah's call to repentance had gone unheeded, and God apparently had not restored the covenant Blessings. Malachi, writing a short time later, called the people to repentance because: -

- The priesthood had become corrupt.
- Worship, had become routine.
- Social justice was being ignored.
- Tithing was neglected (the Tax System for the nation Israel).

Malachi predicted the coming of both John the Baptist and Jesus, referring to each as a "messenger" of God (Malachi 3:1).

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

The Lord who you Seek will Suddenly come to His Temple.

Malachi 3:1 ----- ¹"Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

The focus of this chapter is no longer upon the priests only as the first two chapters are, but the entire nation of Israel. Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament, Israel's' priests and the people are corrupt and perverting the laws of God so Malachi is calling the entire nation to repentance.

The Next book we read is Matthew who introduces us to the birth of Christ so these prophetic words of Malachi can apply (with limitations) to Christ's first appearing, but it also echoes his return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice joy and peace on earth during his millennial reign.

Malachi says: God will send His messenger of the covenant to prepare the way before the Lord. The messenger is referring to John the Baptist, while the Lord refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. Thousands of years later when speaking of John the Baptist Jesus in the following verse cites these words of Malachi: -

- Jesus said: this is he (John the Baptist) of whom it is written, "Behold, I (the LORD) send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you." ¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least (Jesus) in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matt. 11:10) (Luke 7:27).

At this time Jesus was despised by the religious leaders of his day this is why he refers to himself as being the least. On the eighth day at the circumcision of John the Baptist Zechariah filled with the Holy Spirit cites the words of Malachi saying: -

- And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. (Luke 1:76).

The Day of the Lord's Coming like a Refiner's Fire and like Fullers' Soap.

Malachi 3:2-3 ----- ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.

He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap applies to Christ's first appearing, because the words of Christ leave us all naked before God of any sense of self-righteousness to save ourselves. To see the truth of this see, Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU)

Added to this Jesus death and resurrection totally destroyed the entire Levitical priesthood, and stripped the religious leaders, (the, the chief priest, Pharisees and scribes) of their power and control over the lost sheep of Israel and all who were seeking God. This is because the temple, the high priest, the Levitical priesthood and all the Jewish ceremonial laws and customs were no longer needed for men and women to be saved to eternal life and know God.

Since Christ's death and resurrection the only high priest anyone needs is God's perfect and eternal High Priest the sacrificial Lamb of God the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thousands of Jews did accept Jesus message of righteousness, grace and the Gospel of salvation, but the following verses of Isaiah show that Malachi's message is not limited to Christ's first appearing only, but transcends beyond that era and travels even further ahead in time echoing Christ's return in glory when he comes not as the Lamb to be slaughtered, but as King of kings and Lord of lords to rule and reign and Israel and Jerusalem are pleasing to God and all nations come up to worship Christ (the Lord who Israel seeks) (v1).

John in the book of Revelations picks up on Malachi's theme telling us all nations will give the Lord honour, because they will have seen his righteousness, meaning his administration of justice for all and his care for the needy and his judgment on those who oppress others for their own gain.

- And they (those who endured in faith) sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, *O King of the nations!* ⁴Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. *All nations will come* and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed. (Rev. 15:1-8).

For further information see the title: -

- Future Kingdom of God in the New Testament.
- In, Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The LORD will be a Swift Judge Against those who do Not Fear Him.

Malachi 3:4-5 ----- ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. ⁵"Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

The fear of the LORD in this context is to fear to do the following things: -

- The practice of sorcery (this carries the idea of being an enchanter, soothsayer and fortune-teller).
- Commit adultery and have affairs.
- Swearing falsely, lying, cheating and deceiving.
- Oppressing workers through their wages.
- Oppressing widows and the fatherless.
- Oppressing the sojourner and stranger.
- Denying God and not obeying his laws and statutes.

The words, "The offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old," clearly show that these verses do not apply to Christ birth and ministry since the priesthood at Jerusalem not only denied Christ, but also plotted to have him killed.

Return to Me, and I will Return to You, Says the LORD.

Malachi 3:6-7 ----- ⁶"For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

The following shines a light on how longsuffering and merciful God's love is. Israel and Judah had turned from God, set their hearts diamond hard against the prophets and been so rebellious throughout their generations that their land was full of gross idolatry, Baal altars and star and planetary worship. They had acknowledged the pagan deity Moloch and sacrificed their children to him in the Hinnom valley. They had established altars for astrology and occultism for worshiping the host of heaven in the Temple court and had shed innocent blood.

Added to all this they had cheated the innocent out of justice, did not help the less fortunate and oppressed the poor for their own gain. All of these corruptions had permeated the land of Judah and Israel throughout their generations, yet God says, "Return to me and I will return to you," no questions asked, none needed, a new beginning, a new start, When a sinner returns to the LORD in honest repentance it is as though they have not sinned at all, God does not dwell on the darkness of their past or hold grudges.

How amazing is this, these people of Israel God's chosen people ask Malachi, "How shall we return to God?" (v7). Even though they the Priests are performing their duties in the Temple and the people are going to the Temple they are so spiritually blinded to their sin that they cannot even see that they need to repent and acknowledge all their wrong-doing and turn away from it.

Their entire service to God stems not from heartfelt love, passion and thankfulness, but from a sense of legal duty and tradition.

Will a man Rob God” Yet you are Robbing Me.

Malachi 3:8-9 ----- ⁸Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.

The entire nation is robbing God, because they are not bringing the first of their herds, flocks and crops to the Temple. The Levitical priesthood relied on these food offerings to feed their families; it was God's tax system for the nation Israel. Tithing ten 10% of all their cattle, flocks and crops was the only tax God required the nation of Israel to pay. Kings may have introduced others later, but God's original tax system was very simple.

Sadly most people today are paying 20-30% tax through personal tax and GST to the governments, of which a portion is used to help the poor and needy. Sadly, even though those seeking God are under this great financial burden some churches tell their followers they have to pay another 10% on top of that to the church or they will not be favoured by God or blessed by the Lord. This is a gross misuse of Malachi's message and those who teach such things are in danger of judgment, because throughout the Bible one of the greatest sins and offences before God is people in power oppressing the less fortunate and placing greater burdens on them.

NOTE: I am not saying it is wrong for someone to give 10% if they so choose, I am simply pointing out that it is wrong for religious teachers to teach it as a commanded law to be obeyed, before those seeking God can be blessed and receive favour from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ. New Testament giving is totally different to the Old Testament law of tithing ten-percent.

Bring the Tithes into the Storehouse, that there Maybe Food in my House.

Malachi 3:10 ----- ¹⁰Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

Malachi tells Judah and Israel that God will pour down a blessing if they bring the full tithes into the storehouse so that there will be food in Gods house for the priesthood. Notice the tithe is always food, most of the people's sacrifices and offerings of grain and wine, though offered to the LORD, became food for the priesthood and their families. They are spoken of as being offered to the LORD because the high priest and the Levitical priesthood were God's ambassadors on earth. At this time doing something for the priest was counted by God as doing it for Him. Likewise Jesus says, "When we help the poor it is the same as if we are helping him."

Some teachers in the Christian church today use these verses of Malachi to make those in their congregations feel guiltily if they are not giving 10% of their income to the church. The motivation of these manipulative teachers of course is to influence those who belong to Christ to give money to their church. When this happens it is a gross distortion and misuse of Malachi's message and a good example of how Scriptures when lifted out of their context and isolated from their historical period can be twisted and misused. No Christian today is under the Old Testament commanded law of tithing nor does any Christian have to tithe 10% of their income to receive God's blessing.

A personal note: many years ago I was in a church and the minister was asked, "Should we tithe 10% on our gross income or our net income?" His answer was, "That depends whether you want gross blessings or net blessings." One young family who were devoted and faithful to Christ and who had two five year old twin girls and one six year old boy stop coming to the church. When I asked them why, the mother almost with tears in her eyes said, "We feel so guilty after the service because we cannot give 10% percent of our income."

How tragic is this? And I wonder how many others have come under the same guilt; because of manipulative preachers who claim God's blessings are dependent on our finances.

For further information on tithing and New Testament giving, see the title: -

- Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).

All Nations will call you Blessed and the Land will be a Delight.

Malachi 3:11-12 ----- ¹¹I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹²Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

The ultimate fulfilment of these verses will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

For further information see titles: -

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Evildoers Not Only Prosper, but they put God to the Test and They Escape.

Malachi 3:13-15 ----- ¹³"Your words have been hard against me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' ¹⁴You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts?' ¹⁵And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.' "

The priest feel there is no profit in serving the LORD of course they feel this way, but it is due to their own corruptness they have led the people of Israel astray and caused them to stumble, one of the results of this is that the nation is spiritually dead and as a result the people are not bringing their food offering to the Temple so the priests are forced to do manual work or they will starve, obviously the priests are not happy about this.

The priests have become so corrupt they are actually speaking against the LORD saying the following three things: -

1. It is vain to serve God.
2. There is no profit in keeping the statutes of the LORD.
3. The arrogant and prideful are blessed.

In Malachi chapter two they also spoke against the LORD in the following ways: -

- By charging God's wisdom with injustice.
- By saying God delights in the wicked, because He does not punish them.
- By saying everyone that does evil is good in the sight of the LORD.
- By asking where is, the God of justice (implying there is no God of justice).
- By murmuring against God, because he did answer as soon as they called.
- By saying God has no delight in those that do good and faithfully serve him.
- By judging God's and His justice according to their judgments.
- By their perverse thinking and reasoning against God and his justice.
- By asking where is the proof that Israel's God is the God of judgment?

These priests upon seeing that the nations around them who served idols and believed in other gods were abounding in wealth and strong in body and possessing all that is accounted good in this world while they were themselves who had the knowledge of God where overwhelmed with want, hunger and servitude were saying that, "There is no advantage or gain in serving the LORD or following His ways. Then corruptly reasoned: -

- Evil pleases God, because the wicked prosper.
- Good things displease God, because those who have the knowledge of God are in want and struggle.
- God cannot be in the world, because there is no judgment and the wicked are not punished (see also Malachi 2:17).

This is the reasoning of many in our age and why some atheists' say that God does not exist because they see good people overwhelmed with want and sorrow while the wicked live in luxury and abundance. They reason if God is a God of justice where is He, since justice cannot be found in our world (at least not as we think of justice) since many who are innocent suffer while many who are wicked prosper.

Peter in his letters wrote: -

- Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.
⁴They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. (2 Peter 3:3-4)

Those who do not believe in the world to come raise these sort of questions when they see the wicked in power and prospering and the faithful in low estate and struggling. Peter says, because judgment is delayed scepticism will be rife before Christ's return in glory people will say, "Where is the God of judgment, why does he not arise and show himself to be a God that judges the earth, by taking vengeance on the wicked, and granting prosperity to his people? Due to the long delay of the Messiah's coming, this was the scoff of the Jews at the time of Malachi, because they expected immediate outward prosperity and happiness. Likewise in the last days this will be the scoff of unbelievers at the promise of Christ's return in glory. Malachi answers this scoff with the words, "The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple (Malachi 3:1).

Jesus said: -

- Concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— ³⁶lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake." (Mark 13:32-37).
- Watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke 21:34-36).

It could be said that we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace, but a day will come when the Lord will suddenly and unexpectedly return in glory as a consuming judge.

The author of Ecclesiastes wrote: -

- God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Eccles. 12:14).

The writer of Psalm Seventy-Three.

Feels that all his faithfulness toward God was in vain, he was envious of the arrogant when he saw the prosperity of the wicked whose bodies were fat and sleek, and who were not suffering trouble as others were even though they were full of pride and violence and their hearts overflowed with follies and malice and they set their mouths against God.

He feels his faith has been vain because he is suffering and stricken. Until he looked to their end and realised they were in a slippery place because in a moment they could be utterly swept away in terrors and destroyed to the darkness of the grave. He then praises God and declares: -

- Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. ²⁸But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works. (Psalm 73:25-28).

A Book of Remembrance was Written of those Who Esteemed the LORD.

Malachi 3:16 ----- 16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name.

One of the easiest ways to tell if someone belongs to God is by their conversation. They will enjoy talking about their faith, the Lord and Scripture and enjoy listening to the testimony of others. Added to this they will not use offensive language or tell crude jokes.

Those who feared the LORD carries the idea that they fear to live a corrupt and wicked lifestyle and to act contrary to God's will. It means they fear to inflict harm and hurt upon others and to oppress people for their own gain. It carries the idea that they have such a respect for God's Holy character that they will not do anything to offend Him or bring a bad testimony to His good name.

They shall be Mine, When I Make up My Treasured Possession.

Malachi 3:17 ----- 17 "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him.

How amazing is this, every-time the faithful talk about the Lord and esteem his name God hears it and records it in a book of remembrance. This means that our conversations about the Lord Jesus Christ are kept in God's eternal mind and that those who speak in such a devoted manner will make up the Lords treasured possession and be spared as a father spares his son who serves him. This means that they will be exempted from judgment and granted eternal life.

You shall see the Distinction between the Righteous and the Wicked.

Malachi 3:18 ----- 18 Then once more you shall see the distinction, between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

These words shine a brilliant light upon the truth that it is not enough just to say, I believe in the Lord, there should also be a clear difference in the lifestyle of those who have faith in Christ and those who don't. Since there are many good people in the world who do give their lives to doing good and to acts of charity and helping others and do live a lifestyle of decency and doing what is right this distinction between the righteous and the wicked will be mostly manifested by the faith of those who do believe.

They will not deny their faith, but gladly share it when able, added to this they will enjoy being with other Christians, reading the Scriptures and praise the Lord's name. It goes without saying that their lives should also be reflecting Christ's good character and the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., love, mercy, grace, compassion, kindness, forgiveness and such like things).

NOTE: simply going to church is not a clear sign that a man or woman is a Christian since many who do attend some churches are not attending them because they have a heartfelt passion toward the Lord, but simply because they believe by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days and keeping religious customs and traditions they will be saved to eternal life. Many of these people appear religious at church, but every other day of the week live totally indifferent to how their life and their speech reflects upon God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The resurrection: since the words, "You shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked," are spoken after the LORD talks about sparing his treasured possession as a father spares his own son they can also refer to the resurrection and the revealing of the sons and daughters of God spoken of in the following verses: -

- For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans. 8:19).
- In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (Gal. 3:26).

Though Malachi is speaking to the Jewish nation his message applies to all the faithful of the Old Testament and the faithful of the New Testament. This is because the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ. This means that all the promises to Israel are fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew) this means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called, a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

Malachi's prophetic message takes up wings and transcends time and history to travel a few thousand years into the future until they arrive at their final destination which is the awe-inspiring event Paul speaks of in the following glorious verses: -

- Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

The Glory of the Spiritual Temple God is Building in Christ.

Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity.

When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ.

God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building.

Peter wrote: -

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him Will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when: -

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

End.