

Correctly Understanding the Book of Malachi

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

The Book of Malachi is addressed to ancient Israel and describes the spiritual state of the nation before the First Coming of Christ. It is not a message to God's Church. Only those obeying God can be part of God's Church; all others cannot. Priests no longer teaching the truth and members no longer following the truth are not Laodicean; they are no longer part of God's Church.

Preamble

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 **[Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but o to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [\[God’s Son\]](#) might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [\[the glorified Christ\]](#) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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While in the Philadelphia Church of God (PCG), we (the author and a few individuals faithful to God's truth) have been exposed to and had absorbed a great deal of untruth about the meaning of the book of Malachi. We were being taught by a self-appointed false prophet and there was a great deal of confusion in his mind about the truth of God given the Philadelphia Era of God's church. This person and the so-called ministers of God who support him, are but several of the many human instruments used by Satan the devil, the deceiver and the destroyer and the author of spiritual confusion, in blinding mankind to the truth of God.

False religion, including false churches of God, is the means used by Satan to deceive the whole world. Many continue to be deceived by the PCG but we are not of those who are deceived. Let us examine what it is that the Book of Malachi is really talking about, to whom God is talking and what events are historical and which ones are prophetic in this particular book.

During the Feast of Tabernacles of 2001, we (the author and a few other faithful) were given the correct understanding of this book while listening for the 2nd or 3rd times to Mr. Herbert W Armstrong's (HWA) sermons. The more one listens HWA explaining God's truth, the more of this truth actually penetrates and remains in our minds building on one another until all of a sudden, a truth which we had never understood before or, of which even, we were unaware but had always been there,

suddenly becomes clear as day in our minds. This is what occurred with the book of Malachi.

What follows is that understanding which will be clear to any individual having the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman present in their minds.

Ancient Israel – A Carnal-Minded Nation

The first verse of the book makes it clear that the prophet's message is addressed to the unconverted physical nation of Israel. Malachi is one of the books of the Old Testament, the last one. The Spirit-begotten nation of Israel would not appear for another 400 or more years i.e., on the day of Pentecost. In the book of Malachi, we see the spiritual condition of Israel which was one of having forgotten the law and half-heartedly going through the process of offering sacrifices to God; giving in offering their sick and lame animals; and refusing to be corrected by God through the reprimands given them by Malachi as we will see as we go through the book.

A major point of understanding essential to properly comprehending what is being said in the Book of Malachi is that the physical nation of Israel was a carnal-minded nation which was unable to understand the spiritual truth of God. It was unable to obey even the letter of the law of God as the carnal mind as explained to us by Paul in Romans 8:7 is enmity or hostile against God; it is not subject to God's law, nor can it be. Ancient Israel's attitude toward God and His law was the very same as that of the unconverted walking the streets of this 21st century world. Ancient Israel was God's chosen **PHYSICAL** nation, **NOT** His **SPIRITUAL** nation. The presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman in their minds would have made it possible for them to understand the holy spirit God the Father's spiritual truth and would have made it possible for them to choose to obey Him or not. Ancient Israel was never called spiritually and never understood who was the being that freed them from Egyptian slavery and brought them into the Promised Land.

Ancient Israel as a nation and its priesthood are a stunning example and the undeniable proof to us that without God's presence in men's minds, it is impossible for them to make the decision to submit to God and be subject to His law because it is impossible for unconverted men to know of the existence of the true God and of His law. Ancient Israel had the same mind as all the heathen nations around them; they never were a converted nation. The Old Covenant made with ancient Israel

did not provide for their ever being given to know God's spiritual truth. However, ancient Israel was said to be glorious because it served a very important purpose. Israel was used to illustrate a lesson which will only be understood by mankind as a whole during the Millennium and the Last Great Day but which today, can be understood by God's called out and chosen ones who are remaining faithful. The lesson God taught through ancient Israel was that without His presence in the minds of men, it is impossible for them to know Him and to decide to obey Him.

It should be carefully noted that knowing and understanding God's spiritual truth does not enable men to obey God; it simply makes it possible for them to make the decision to obey or to not obey God to the best of their ability until the end of their natural lives. Committing to obey God to the best of one's abilities is what makes it possible for men's sins to be forgiven conditional upon maintaining their attitude of obedience to Him in all things. Truly converted men remain sinners until their death but God does not impute sin to those He has called and who have chosen to obey Him and are remaining faithful; their sins are then always forgiven by the grace resulting from Christ's perfect sacrifice.

This understanding along with a right and complete understanding of who and what is God's New Testament church and what is the purpose for which it was founded by Christ are essential to correctly understanding the book of Malachi. Many of the things God is saying in the book of Malachi have to do with ancient Israel's attitude of disobedience toward Him; this is the historical part of the book. God is also talking about a time when He will offer a New Covenant to Israel and where those who enter this New Covenant will become part of God's spiritual nation of Israel. This is the prophetic message which is woven in with the historical parts of the book. It is easy to determine which part are historical and which part are prophetic if we understand that ancient Israel was never able to obey God and God ultimately separated Himself from them, AND if we correctly understand who and what is God's Church in New Testament times — those who have been called, repented, believed and have maintained their conversions — then we can clearly know when God is speaking prophetically from when He is not. This will become clearer as we go along.

Let's understand and have it clear in our mind that ancient Israel was God's **PHYSICAL** church or congregation in the wilderness.

Ac 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, [This is the holy spirit of the Godhead who later became Christ. Jesus after His resurrection, glorification and ascension to His Father, is the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to God the Father's called and chosen ones. (John 7:39)] and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost [holy spirit] was not yet given; BECAUSE that Jesus was not YET glorified.)

God's promises to Israel were national and material. The following Scriptures serve to illustrate the major difference between the old and the new covenant. The major and most important difference for the purpose of correctly understanding the book of Malachi is that ancient Israel was only required to obey the letter of the law and that they were not even able to do that much. The verses below serve to confirm this.

Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Heb 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Heb 8:8 For finding fault with them [the promises of the first covenant], he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant [which has better promises] with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah [their physical descendants returned from their end-time captivity after Christ's 2nd Coming]:

Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers [The New Covenant will be different from the Old Covenant.] in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

However, there is a time coming when God will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah.

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts [The presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman in their minds will make this possible]: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: [This will be true for all those who freely chose to enter into the New Covenant, not all of them will anymore than it is not all that are called who follow their calling.]

Heb 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

The New Covenant is yet to be made with Israel (the combined houses of Israel and Judah back together as in the beginning before Israel after the death of Solomon separated into the Northern and the Southern Kingdom). It will be made with the descendants of ancient Israel who have remained alive while in their end-time captivity and who are resettled in the land of Palestine. When Christ returns the second time, He will spend 3 ½ years confirming the covenant with Israel returned from its end-time captivity (AC BCC 58; specifically, lesson 19). It is at that time that the New Covenant will be made with Israel.

This is also the time when Israel, those among them that follow their calling and are chosen, will become part of God's holy nation and a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6) in embryo which will be born at the time of the First Resurrection or at the end of the Last Great Day if called during the Millennium or the Last Great Day. In other words, they become part of God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church which is God's family, nation and kingdom in embryo i.e., begotten (conceived) but yet to be born to glorified spirit existence by a resurrection from the dead.

In the Old Testament and under the Old Covenant God had a physical nation made up of individuals who were carnal-minded and unable to follow His law even on the physical level i.e., the letter of the law. They failed to ever become God's holy nation and kingdom of priests in embryo that is, spiritually conceived but yet to be born by a resurrection from the dead as holy spirit beings in which dwell immortality. God and the Word are holy and are spirit, both are holy spirits. Their sons, the called, chosen and faithful will have fully the same nature as their Father, God just like the children of men are fully human as their parents.

However, in a time which is still future to our own, God will again use Israel; only this time, He will make a different covenant with the physical descendants of ancient Israel. He will make it possible for them to understand His spiritual truth or as the Scriptures states it: He will replace their heart of stone with a heart of flesh, and He will write His law in their minds. However, we need to understand that not all of those called to make the New Covenant will enter it. Many will not follow their calling (Matt 22:14).

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

In Malachi, God is speaking of the sins of ancient Israel and of the future glory of Israel during the Millennium and the Last Great Day when those who enter the New Covenant will become part of God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's Church.

Joe 2:28 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:

Mic 4:2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to **THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD**, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem

All will be called during the Millennium, but God's calling is individual and personal, not on a nation-wide basis. And, the mountain of the Lord and Zion are His Church which is not a physical organization in a specific geographical location but a spiritual organism or body made up of all those who are called, chosen and faithful wherever they may be in the world. alone or in small groups. For most of its existence God's Church has been small, invisible to the world with its members living all over the world and unknown to each other. Conversion is something that happens in the mind and which is not visible to others.

The truly converted are the temple in which God and Christ dwell, God does not dwell in brick-and-mortar buildings or in a specific geographical location. Spiritually speaking, all individuals in the nations of the world will be called and those following their callings will then **FIGURATIVELY BE THE NATIONS GOING TO THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD**, the house of the God of Jacob, to God's spiritual Zion and Jerusalem. In New Tes-

tament times, God's mountain and His nation are spiritual not a physical building and group of people in a specific geographical location. There is not and never has been a physical "headquarters Church."

One last point which needs to be reviewed and emphasized before we start examining the book of Malachi is to review who, what and why does God have a church.

God's New Testament Nation

Mr. Armstrong dedicated his last live sermon to the Worldwide Church of God to trying to explain to the Church, what and who is the Church and why, there is a Church. He said he would do his best to try and explain it but still he thought that those listening to him — including the ministry — would still not get it. The reason they could not understand he stated was because so much Protestantism had rubbed off on them. He said, everybody thinks that they had been called out ahead of the others simply for the purpose of getting into God's Kingdom now and that the others would follow later.

Here is a truth which has escaped the vast majority of those who once sat in the congregations of the organization built by HWA and which he called the Worldwide Church of God and this, with catastrophic results after his death.

God's church since the days of Pentecost is no longer a physical nation of which one becomes a member by simply being physically born into it. Also, God's temple since the days of Pentecost is no longer a physical structure made of wood, mortar, and bricks. Since Pentecost, God's church is made up — and this is a vitally important point which is not understood by the many — ONLY of those individuals who have been called, repented and believed, and who have **MAINTAINED THEIR ATTITUDE OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS**. Regardless of whether they be part of a visible, physical organization calling itself "Church of God" or whether they be on their own or in little groups, they are the ONLY ones who constitute God's spiritual nation of Israel or God's church on this earth today.

Mr. Armstrong emphasized, time and time again, that God's church was first and foremost a spiritual organism or body (the body of Christ) which in the first century, for a short time, was a visible organization made up of ONLY those individuals in whom dwelled the holy spirits of the God family because they had maintained their attitude of obe-

dience to God in all things. As HWA said repeatedly, **BEING PART OF AN ORGANIZATION OF MEN CALLING ITSELF "CHURCH OF GOD" DOES NOT IN ANY WAY MAKE ONE A MEMBER OF GOD'S CHURCH** which ONLY includes those called, chosen and faithful. This understanding is vital to realizing how the Philadelphia Church of God's foundational book, *Malachi's Message* is a massive distortion of the Scriptures. It should be obvious to us, if we understand who and what is God's Church, that anyone who may have been called out and who has not maintained his attitude of obedience to God in all things and is now teaching so-called "new truths" which are Biblically false, has ceased to be a member of the body of Christ (Col 1:18), that spiritual organism which is God's church.

This in turn leads to another point which has caused massive confusion. Is it possible for someone to be preaching falsities and calling his organization "Church of God," to be a member of God's Church? The self-evident answer is a resounding "NO." Did Christ say that the many false prophets would be in God's Church. No, a false prophet cannot be part of God's Church. Anyone not obeying God and/or preaching falsities cannot be part of God's Church which includes only those who have been called, chosen and are remaining faithful. Can the elect i.e., those who have chosen to obey God, be deceived? The Scriptures say that the elect cannot be deceived.

Mt 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

If the elect could be deceived about what is God's truth; how could they be judged as God does not hold us responsible for obeying Him until we come to the knowledge of the truth.

1Pe 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

This is why the world, which is blinded to the truth of God, is neither saved nor lost; they are simply not now being judged as they do not know the truth; they are deceived. In the future, during the Millennium and in the resurrection of the Last Great Day, their minds will be opened to God's truth and they will then enter into judgment.

Another point I would like to dwell on as an aside here, is the almost universal belief among those who once sat in the congregations of the WCG in the days of HWA that the reason why God has a church

is to preach the Gospel to the world. Since the death of HWA numerous “churches of God” have arisen with the intent of taking the Gospel to the world. They all want to be doing a “work.” Yet HWA explained that the Great Commission was given ONLY to the apostles NOT to the church. Preaching the Gospel to those who are in the world is also NOT the responsibility of the ministry. Its responsibility is to teach those whom God calls, the truth, which He, God placed in His church through the apostles and prophets. The reason why God has a church is not for the purpose of preaching the Gospel to the world. The preaching of the Gospel is NOT the means whereby individuals are converted. God has Himself, predestinated those whom He would call throughout the ages and He, God, has blinded all the rest until the 2nd Coming of Christ. God’s church in New Testament time is not being built by the efforts of men — even those who are truly converted Christians — but by His Spirit as He places it with those whom He has chosen to call since the foundation of the world. We are not placed in God’s church by baptism but by God the Father calling us and our accepting and following God’s calling.

I Co 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

If the preaching of the Gospel is the means used by God to bring men to conversion then how were they converted during the centuries when the Gospel message was not generally available and probably, even lost by those who constituted God’s true church during the long years of persecution (1,260) by the great, false church of Rev 17?

God’s church is first and foremost a spiritual body invisible to the world which in the early days of the Church, for a short time, was a visible organization. Today, the majority of ex-WCGers, (Worldwide Church of God) are looking for a physical organization which to their mind is God’s church in that from a physical, visible organization standpoint, it is the one which is closest in physical appearance to what existed in the days of HWA. The many are now sitting in the several so-called churches of God WHICH **ARE ALL BUT ORGANIZATIONS OF MEN.**

The false prophets (we would call them teachers today) who are obviously not obeying God, even if former members of God’s church in the days of HWA, are not members of God’s church. All those who were members of God’s church in the days of HWA and who today are sitting in the congregations of the many so-called churches of God are putting in grave peril their salvation. The New Testament tells us plainly

and clearly that the true servants of God will either be disfellowshipped from these false churches of God refusing to go along with their “new” truths or leave quietly of their own accord. Light and darkness cannot co-exist, two cannot walk together unless they be agreed and the Scriptures cannot be broken.

The false teachers are in the world and in the world’s false churches including the many false churches of God that have sprung up since the death of HWA. Those who may have arisen from within God’s one, true church, by their behavior, have made themselves workers of iniquity and are no longer part of God’s one, true church and indeed, cannot be. There is no doubt that many who became part of the the organization put together by HWA were called and chosen, initially, but as Christ clearly tells us, it is the few of those who follow their calling who remain faithful. There was some 100,000 members of the WCG but according to Christ it is the few who remain faithful.

With this background information in mind, let’s get on with our review of the book of Malachi and see how God is speaking both historically and prophetically about the only nation that was ever of any interest to Him, the physical nation of Israel anciently, and since Pentecost, His spiritual nation of Israel or God’s, one, true Church.

Malachi History and Prophecy

The first verse of the book tells us that God’s message through Malachi is addressed to [ANCIENT ISRAEL](#).

Mal 1 :1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

This Israel is a physical, carnal-minded nation whose mind is not subject to God’s law and indeed cannot be. These Israelites are those of the tribes of Levi, Judah and Benjamin who came back from captivity under the Persian Empire to rebuild the physical temple of God in Jerusalem which had been destroyed by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar when the same 3 tribes were taken in captivity to Babylon. They were the Southern Kingdom which became known as Judah whose capital was Jerusalem while the other 10 tribes formed the Northern Kingdom of Israel whose capital was Samaria. After the death of Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel had split into a Southern and a Northern Kingdom. At the time when this message is addressed to them, as the remnant of Israel still in the land given them by God as the Promised Land, they represent all of Israel i.e., the ancient, physical, carnal-minded nation

issued from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Northern Kingdom (the 10 tribes which kept the name Israel, had gone into captivity more than 100 years before the book of Malachi was written and had ceased to exist as a distinct nation).

2 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,

3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

Here God through Malachi is explaining to Israel that He loved Jacob yet hated Esau who was his brother. Why? They were of the same family, why would one be loved and not the other. One obeyed Him while the other did not. Just being part of the physical nation of Israel is not enough to be blessed by God; obedience is needed.

4 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.

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

Edom in defiance of God, affirms that despite the fact God will not bless him and the nation descended from him because of his refusal to obey Him; he will return and build the places that were made desolate because of his disobedience. God answers that He would again throw down what Esau would build; disobedience would not be rewarded with blessings.

Esau and Jacob are types of how God behaves with those that obey Him and those who don't. The Jews were not obeying; their attitude was defiant toward God. God was telling them what the result would be of their maintaining this attitude. They had just finished rebuilding the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. What they had rebuilt, like those things Esau had rebuilt, would be again destroyed if they would not cease their disobedience. What they had was once destroyed because of disobedience; it would again be destroyed if they would continue in their disobedience. God is warning them and telling them what will

occur to them unless they repent and start having an attitude of obedience toward him instead of their defiant and rebellious attitude. Remember, here Judah represents the whole of Israel. And God's prophecy (Mal 1:4) that Israel would be destroyed for disobedience, applies to them. This prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and of the second temple and the scattering of the survivors.

Verse 5 is talking about how people will react in the future (during the Millennium and the Last Great Day). Disobedience to God until that time is not a matter of concern for the world whose call to conversion is yet far in the future of the time of this prophecy.

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?

God tells Israel that they consider it only normal and right that a son would honor his father and a servant his master, then why is it that since God is a father (of their physical nation through the miraculous birth of Isaac to Abraham) that they show Him no respect. Their attitude continues to be defiant in that they say, tell us how we have not shown you the respect you deserve. They are like children who know they have done wrong and are defiantly asking what it is they have done that is wrong pretending not to know though they have been taught it several times before.

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.

God replies, your physical offerings (this is a physical, carnal nation) are not in accordance with what was commanded under Moses. They reply, again pretending not to know how they were dishonoring God asking "Wherein have we polluted thee?"

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.

God tells them what should have been obvious to them; they are not

sacrificing to Him the best of their flocks and herds but their sick, lame and injured animals which are of no value to them. God says, would your human governors be pleased and would you be accepted by them? They had not been faithful in following the physical, ceremonial rituals they had been commanded to observe.

9 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.

God through Malachi tells them to repent of their misbehavior and to urgently ask Him to reinstate them in His good graces (would receive physical blessings). God holds the priests guilty : “This has been by your means.” They did not do these things without knowing they were being disobedient and neglectful. And God says, will I be partial in the law as you have been? Will I fail to apply my law to you because you are Israel (regard your persons). Will I not take into consideration that you have not been obeying me and bless you as though you had been?

10 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.

God says, if they will not change their ways, they might as well stop all their ineffectual sacrifices, let the fire go out on the altar and shut the doors of the temple. It is all being done in vain.

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.

In verse 11 we jump ahead to the far future when during the Millennium and the Last Great Day, God's name will be greatly respected among those of the nations of the Gentiles who come to conversion. Recall that Paul turned away from the Jews and to the Gentiles because they strongly rejected him. His name will be greatly respected by those individuals in the Gentile nations who will have followed their calling and remained faithful when God the Father calls all men to repentance and belief. There is a time coming when salvation will be opened to the Gentile nations while at the time when the book of Malachi was written,

God had been only working with the nation of Israel. This is a prophecy that God would open salvation to the Gentile nations. The Jews in the days of Malachi should have understood they were special to God only in as much as they obeyed Him.

12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

The priests respond that those things God gives them as blessings are also polluted (this is why they sacrifice their lame and sick animals to Him) and that His blessings are not worth the effort, they are contemptible. They're excusing themselves for their offering the lame and the sick to God in supposed worship of Him. They were saying, God if you would give us good things as blessings we would not offer you our sick animals. Here we see a huge attitude problem.

13 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 priests come out and plainly say how boring they found it to have to offer sacrifices and to worship Him through the rituals they had been commanded to perform by God through Moses. God asks them, should I accept your offering of sick, lame and torn animals?

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* [in italic, not part of inspired text; should be, I will be] a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is [will be] dreadful among the heathen.

God answers His own question by saying, cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock the animals commanded for sacrifice but who offer instead a sick, lame or torn animal. He will not accept their offering. God says He is a great king and His name will be dreadful among the heathen. The "I am" there is in italic and not part of the inspired text. It should read, I will be a great king and my name will be dreadful among the Gentiles. He was not then a great king nor was His name dreadful among the Gentiles but it will be during the Great White Throne Judgment when the sheep are separated from the goats and there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mal. 2 :1 And now, O ye **PRIESTS**, this commandment is for you.

All throughout, God is addressing the priesthood of ancient Israel **NOT NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTS** whose continuing membership in the Church is wholly based on their continued attitude of obedience to God in all things. Once they are no longer obeying God as would be the case were they to become corrupt priests, they would no longer be members of God's church whether continuing or not to assemble with true believers. There can be no corrupt priesthoods in God's New Testament Church which is first and foremost a spiritual body consisting only of those individuals who are actively trying to obey God in all things.

2 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.

Here God is saying to the priests that if they will not obey Him, He will send a curse upon them and even, that He has already cursed them. God knew they would not obey. He would remove from them those things with which He had blessed them; He would curse their blessings; the blessings they were given would become a curse to them because of their taking them for granted and greatly abusing the prosperity and security they enjoyed to grow in evil doing rather than in obedience. They would go back into captivity and be scattered among the nations.

3 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.

They would go back in captivity after a huge slaughter of their own. God said their children or seed would be corrupted (with evil doing); He would spread dung (feces) on their faces, even the dung from the animal that they sacrifice on their (not God's) solemn feasts. This is what happened when the Romans overran and burnt Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

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.

This is speaking of a time when these priests and Israel would know their sinfulness which they refuse to acknowledge now as we have seen

in previous verses. This is the time of the second resurrection for them when their minds will be opened to understand God's truth and they will then realize they had not kept God's physical commands/rituals/ceremonies and were being rebellious.

This is described in the book of Zechariah:

Zec 3:1 And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

Joshua here represents all of ancient Israel which was unconverted and in this sense, he also represents the unconverted nations of the world and what will happen to them and to the people of ancient Israel at the time of the 2nd resurrection of the Last Great Day.

Zec 3:2 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?

Only 10% of the nations (Isa 6:13) constituting end-time Israel will survive the massive carnage that will occur during the Great Tribulation(GT). End-time Israel was about to be fully consumed or be exterminated at the hands of its captor (it was a firebrand pulled out of the fire before it was fully consumed by the flames) when God intervenes to cut the GT short because of the righteousness of His Philadelphian saints caught up in the GT. These are those that convert during the GT; those that converted before and remained faithful are in a place of safety; the Laodicean Era Church appears only after the events of the 6th seal; the Great Tribulation is the 5th seal and consequently, the Philadelphia Era has yet to end when the GT occurs; it will only end with the start of the Laodicean Era after the events of the 6th seal. God tells Satan that He has chosen Jerusalem (Israel, ancient and modern, and by extension, the world (all are carnal-minded unconverted nations; in time, those of the nations of the world who convert become spiritual Israel.))

Zec 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

God's people are clothed with fine, white linen which is the righteousness of the saints which is Christ's righteousness imputed to them; not in filthy garments which are symbolic of sin. Joshua, a type of Israel and of the unconverted world, was full of sin.

Zec 3:4 And he [the Lord] answered and spake unto those that stood before him, [the angels that serve God] saying, Take away the filthy garments from him [Joshua]. And unto him [Joshua] he [the Lord] said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

Here we see the Lord forgiving Joshua's sins. Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to Joshua because Joshua has obviously indicated his willingness to obey God now that he has been given the ability to know the truth; otherwise, God would not be imputing Christ's righteousness to him and forgiving his sins (I have cause thy iniquity to pass from you).

Zec 3:5 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 [Christ, see Act 7:38] stood by.

A beautiful, clean mitre is set on Joshua's head; his mind is regenerated by receiving God's Spirit, he becomes a new man with a mind now able to want to obey God when before he had a mind that could not obey God; he was unknowingly blind to God's truth and consequently was not able to choose it even if he would have wanted to.

Zec 3:6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

Then, the angel of the LORD which is the Lord of Hosts (The Word who became Christ Act 7:38) as made clear in the next verse, strongly urges Joshua to do something which is also explained in the next verse.

Zec 3:7 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.

The LORD of Hosts is Christ, the Logos or Spokesman through which God the Father speaks to mankind (Heb 1:1-2) through the Holy Bible which is Christ in writing. Christ tells Joshua, ancient Israel, and the world in the 2nd resurrection: your sins have been forgiven you and you will inherit eternal life in God's kingdom (I will give you places to walk among these that stand by, the eternal beings or angels which are presently part of God's kingdom and the saints of the first resurrection that occurred at Christ's 2nd Coming). But there is a condition, Joshua and all

those called by God the Father must commit themselves to obeying God in all things to the best of their ability as long as they are alive.

God's covenant will be with Levi i.e., all true servants of God that obey Him. Levi is a type of those who are obedient to God. All those who commit themselves to obey God when called are the ones with whom God's new covenant will be made; starting with those of Israel that will commit to obeying Him when given to know the truth with the process gradually extending to the whole world. Truly obedient Christians are spiritual Levites. And here being a Levite is simply a type of the obedient Christian. God is not here talking only about the Old Testament priesthood being obedient to Him but eventually, when the time comes, of all those in the world who commit themselves to obeying Him when given to know the truth.

It should be remembered and firmly kept in mind that only the sons of Aaron were the priests in ancient Israel. Much confusion has been caused by many wrongly believing that all Levites were priests and that when God is talking about the Levites, he is talking about the priesthood. He is only talking about the priesthood when He is talking about the sons of Aaron. In other words, some of the Levites were priests, the sons of Aaron but not all Levites were priests. In fact, most of them were not priests but they had a role in assisting the priests with their ministry.

Exodus 32: 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

Numbers 3:3 These are the names of the **SONS OF AARON, THE PRIESTS** which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.

Numbers 10:8 And the **SONS OF AARON, THE PRIESTS**, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.

Now, going back to the verses of the book of Malachi.

Mal 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.

Verse 5 explains very well what covenant God is talking about. God had covenanted with Levi as an individual because he obeyed God and re-

spected His authority. He will make the same covenant with all those who will obey Him. All God is saying here is what He has been saying all along up to that point in the Old Testament, He is the God of those that obey Him and He blesses those that do and curses those that don't.

Mal 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.

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.

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.

In verses 6-7-8 God continues to explain why He had covenanted with Levi. At the same time, He explains what the role of the priest should be. He is the custodian of the truth of God, he was to administer God's law (on a physical level) over the people of Israel.

In our case, HWA was used by God to restore some of the truth lost by God's Church because of persecution. He restored some of the foundational truths of God's Church given by Christ to the apostles. These truths were to be transmitted from one generation of true Christians across the centuries to our time and beyond but because of the great persecution that came upon God's Church (1,260 years) most of these fundamental truths were lost. This is why Christ said that one would come to restore them to the modern-day physical descendants of ancient Israel before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. For a detailed explanation of why and how these truths were to be restored to physical Israel in existence at Christ's Second Coming, I refer you to the following study: [Did the Second Elijah Already Come?](#)

The role of the ministry in God's Church when one existed in the apostolic church is to help converts become spiritually mature and to no longer be babes-in-Christ. New converts and those already converted are to be brought to a degree of spiritual maturity (Eph 4:14) where they can prove all things with their Bible (1Thes 5:21) and protect themselves from the many false prophets in the world (1John 4:1) and some of which would rise up right from among the ministry of God' Church (Act 20:30).

Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

God commands true Christians to study their Bible (2Tim 2:15) and this command could not have been given if Christ had given the Church all knowable truth to His disciples. The following studies provide detailed explanations of individual Christians responsibility to grow in knowledge and understanding: [The Ministry and God's Truth](#) and [Unity in God's Church](#).

This is done by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in them.

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.[\[in understanding\]](#)

And, Paul also very clearly states that He and the ministers appointed by him do not have dominion over true Christians' faith.

2Co 1:24 Not for that we [\[Paul and those appointed by him to teach the Church\]](#) have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

In other words, they cannot force someone to believe something they have not chosen to believe. What one believes is one's faith. And what one understands of the truth of God is the result of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman working in the mind of the truly converted (1Co 3:5-6). The faithful stand by faith i.e., they continue to be members of God's Church by what they have chosen to believe. God has made man a free moral agent which means no one can force him to believe something he has not chosen to believe. (Deu 30:19)

Church members are to prove all things taught them against their Bible (Acts 17: 10-11; 1 Th 5:21). They are not to follow men i.e., believe their teachings without checking them against the Bible. Mr. Armstrong urged all that heard him not to have blind trust in him but to check all he taught against the Bible. Paul, said as much to the Corinthians when he told them:

1Co 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

And the clear implication is, if you should see that I am not following

Christ, then don't follow me.

This was the case when there was a functioning ministry at the foundation of God's Church but this ended with the great persecution that came against truly converted Christians. The true church now exists and has existed through the centuries in little groups and individuals on their own scattered all over the world.

What is to happen when there is no ministry? Paul tells us in I Cor'n's 3:10 the following:

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Paul clearly says that the truth given him and the apostles is the foundation. It is not the whole building, more things can be added to it. And, true Christians are to build on the foundation of truth given the church. And Paul while a captive in Rome wrote in Philippians 2:12:

Php 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now **much more in my absence**, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Christians are individually responsible for working out their own salvation whether or not there is a ministry in existence; and the more so, when there isn't any which has been the case for most of the church's existence.

I Cor'n's 3:10 makes it clear that Christians are to build on the foundation of truth they have received at the time of their calling. When God calls, different individuals are given to know different truths and this is the foundation onto which they must add more truth by continuing study of God's holy Bible. God commands that Christians grow in knowledge and understanding and in the grace of Jesus Christ. This growth in knowledge must include understanding for the knowledge of the holy IS understanding.

Pro 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the **KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY IS UNDERSTANDING**.

The world only has knowledge; it has no understanding; it can only repeat but without understanding the words of the Bible. It is the same situation for true Christians. They do not understand many of the things

they read in the Bible but with time and regular study, they can come to understand some of them and have spiritual growth while for the world this is impossible.

We get spiritual growth and are live spiritual embryos feeding on the truth of God and growing in readiness for our birth as glorified spirit beings. But, we must have continuous growth or starve spiritually and a dead spiritual embryo will not be born again as a glorified spirit being at Christ's 2nd Coming. The parable of the talents makes it clear that God expects growth in individual Christians (Matt 25:25-30) and that the basic way of doing so is by studying the Bible.

Going back to Malachi 2, we read in verse 9

9 Therefore have I also made you [the ministry, the priests] contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

The Levites have lost the honour and respect they would receive from the people if they were impartial administrators of the law but because of their partiality in administering the law they are contemptible and base.

10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Their common father was God through His creation of the human family through Adam but in their case it was Jacob and they were all brothers and sisters as his descendants and should not have been partial in the application of the law. The covenant of the fathers which are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was that they would obey God and that obedience included the honest administration of the law over their brothers and sisters.

11 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.

The people have forgotten God and are committing idolatry having adopted as their god the gods of the heathen nations around them and marrying women from the gentile nations around them.

12 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.

The punishment for all, whether a simple man, a teacher or a well-educated man, or one that is preaching, is that they will no longer be part of the nation of Jacob and this includes the priests also. All who forsake God, no matter what office they hold, will cease to be members of the nation of Jacob or Israel, physically speaking in ancient Israel and spiritually in New Testament times.

13 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.

They are not blessed because of their refusal to stop sinning, yet do they cry out to God to bless them, to accept their offerings which are contrary to what God had commanded them. A very carnal attitude and approach to God saying essentially, God please bless us in our sins.

14 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.

Again, they say they don't understand why they are not being blessed. God in answer tells them of another one of their sins which they continue to do. They take wives and God says He is a witness to their marriage, and they are unfaithful to them, committing adultery. But God says, once married, she is to be your lifelong companion; she is the one whom you have promised or covenanted to be her husband for the rest of your life. There is to be no other ones. And spiritually speaking, God was Israel's husband which Israel has forsaken and went whoring after other gods which are not gods; has committed spiritual adultery.

15 And did not he [the Lord] make one? [In marriage, the husband and the wife become one] Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore [why are they made one; a family] one? That he might seek a godly seed. [That their children may be raised in the fear of God, be a godly seed.] Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

In this verse, God reminds them that it is He who has instituted marriage, He is the one who has commanded that once married, they become one, one family for life and a new entity which cannot be divided or separated by the authority of men as it was through God's authority that they were made one. And their children are a gift from God if they be begotten in a God-ordained marriage. They are then a holy seed. Their parents are holy to God through their obedience and their children would then also be holy and thus a holy seed conceived and raised in the admonition and fear (obedience to) of God as God commands. (Genesis 2). Therefore, God says, take to heart what I am telling you in this matter and let none of you be unfaithful to your wives or abandon your wives for other women you find more attractive or abandon Me your spiritual husband.

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, [\[to follow the truth that you have been given\]](#) that ye deal not treacherously.

They were putting away their wives contrarily to God's command. God reminds them to stop sinning in this way and trying to hide it from God. He gave this sin as one more example of why He was not blessing them when they were saying one more time, that they didn't understand why He wasn't.

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?

Again, the priests/people say they don't understand how they are wearying God with their words. And God tells them that they weary Him when they teach that you can sin and still be acceptable to God (a universally accepted teaching in the false religions of this world) or that they don't have to worry about God's judgment as they are not immediately punished when they sin and therefore God is not judging them. But God says:

Mal. 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.

Here there is a break in God pointing out to Israel their sinful ways. He says for them to behold, He will send His messenger (John the Baptist) to prepare the way before His messenger, Christ, at His First Coming as a human being to die as the perfect sacrifice for sin. This verse allows us to understand that it is the God personage the Word and Spokesman that will later be born as Christ that is speaking here to Judah. This messenger, John the Baptist, will prepare the way before me, Christ. God the Father, the other God personage will only come to this earth after the 3rd resurrection and the creation of a new earth.

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:

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.

In Malachi 3:1 God is talking about the First Coming of Christ as a human being to die for the sins of all mankind. In the 2nd and 3rd verses, God is talking of the Second Coming of Christ to restore all things (Act 3:21) to the end-time remnant of the physical nation of Israel returned from captivity and resettled in the Promised Land. There will then be a period of 3 1/2 years (Dan 9:27) during which Christ will confirm the covenant with Israel. At the end of Christ's end-time ministry with Israel, those of the remnant returned from captivity that follow their calling and convert become part of God's holy nation and kingdom of priests in embryo, His Church and spiritual nation of Israel. Christ did not sit (rule, reign) as a refiner's fire at the time of His First Coming. The time of the priests', Levi's and all of Israel's purification is yet future. It will occur after Christ's 2nd Coming.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Those of Judah and Jerusalem who become converted will then be obeying God as they should have been all along and their offerings will be pleasant to Him. In New Testament times, true believers offer themselves as spiritual sacrifices (Isa 66:2; Rom 12:1; Gal 2:20; Rom 6:4), fully dying to their old ways and adopting God's ways. We are crucified with Christ and we are a new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17). Judah and Jerusalem obeyed God at different times of their existence as under David but

they were never steadfast in their obedience to God.

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.

A time is coming when God will punish for sin and bless for obedience. There will be swift judgment meted out. This will occur only after their eyes have been opened to understand the truth of God and they have been given the opportunity to choose to obey or not obey God. The actual punishment of those who sin willfully after having been given the knowledge of the truth will occur at the end of the Last Great Day when the 3rd resurrection of the Great White Throne Judgment occurs.

6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

God will not go back on the promises given to Jacob, which he received because of the obedience of Abraham. God will not exterminate Jacob's descendants, Israel, because of their unwillingness to obey Him while a carnal-minded nation. They were to become God's holy nation and a kingdom of priests, and this will occur as promised after Christ's 2nd Coming when Israel returns from captivity and goes through a conversion process when Christ's confirms the covenant with them for 3 ½ years (Dan9:27). Those of Israel returned from their end-time captivity who enter the New Covenant will become part of God's holy nation and kingdom of priests in embryo to whom others will be added as the holy spirit God the Father calls all men to salvation.

Dan 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Christ died after a 3 ½ year ministry with Israel then represented by the Jews in Jerusalem (Benjamin, Levi and Judah) but after His 2nd Coming, Israel (the Northern and the Southern Kingdom (Jews)) will be brought back from captivity and Christ will teach them for a 3 ½ year period completing the 7-day (week) ministry started in the OT and cut short by

His death. In fulfillment of this prophecy, each day is a year (Num 14:34) as we can know from Christ first ministry which lasted 3 ½ years or 3 ½ days prophetically speaking.

Mal 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?

God is telling them that they have always been disobedient even from the days of their fathers. He tells them to cease their disobedience but again they say they don't know what disobedience God is talking about. So, in the next verse, God tells them of another one of their major sins.

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

They were not tithing and making offerings as required and God says this is the same as robbing Him. Old Testament Israel was required to make several different types of offerings which you can read about in the

first 7 chapters of the book of Leviticus. The people were to keep a tithe for their attendance to God's annual holy days and every 3 years they were to keep another tithe. Both the feast attendance tithe and the 3rd year tithe were to be shared with the fatherless, the widows, the strangers within their gates and with the Levites some of which (Aaron and his sons) were the priests of Israel. Aaron and his sons were also given for their use, God's part of the offerings required under the law of offerings (Lev 1-7). These offerings were not tithes of the herds, flocks, vineyards, fields, etc. of the people nor was God's part of these offerings that God gave to Aaron and his sons. The feast attendance and the 3rd year tithe was not given to Aaron and his sons to administer; it is the people who gave it and shared it as previously indicated with the fatherless, the widows, the strangers among their gates and with the Levites. None of these different tithe recipients received a full tithe rather the tithes of the people of Israel were shared with all of them.

This is all explained in detail in the following studies which you can access by clicking on the following hyperlinks: [Tithing in New Testament Times](#) and [Will a Man Rob God?](#)

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Because of their refusal to tithe, they were cursed as a nation. They would not receive any of God's blessings. The nations constituting modern-day Israel have inherited the promises made to Abraham and guaranteed by God Himself and are enjoying a level of prosperity and might no nation in the history of the world have ever had. But the promises would only continue if Israel obeyed God; prophecy reveals that it will not and that it will have a great fall and go off into captivity and slavery at the hands of their enemies (the modern-day Gentile nations).

10 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.

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.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Verse 10-12 describes how much and in what way God would bless them if they would obey His command to tithe. They would greatly prosper as a people. Even all the nations around them seeing their prosperity would call their land a land full of delight. Still they did not obey. God's promise is to Israel as a nation and to individual New Testament Christians and God says to prove Him; make your offerings as you were commanded to do and tithe to the fatherless, widows, the strangers in your gates and the Levites and see if God will not fulfill His promise.

13 Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD.
Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?

God tells them that they have spoken harshly and in strong terms to him. But again they say, what words did we use that were stout against You?

14 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?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

In verses 14-15 God tells them again what it was they were doing wrong. They were saying they were obeying God (that was not true) and were getting no benefits out of it. Why keep on doing it then they say? We now do wickedness instead and encourage and exalt those who do wickedness.

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.

Then when those who were obeying God heard and saw what those who didn't want to obey God were doing and saying, they spoke often to one another; they encouraged and comforted each other with the truth of God they had; they sought to stay faithful in their obedience to God. AND God heard it and paid attention to them AND a book of remembrance containing the names of those who obeyed Him was written and placed before (in front of) God.

WHY???

17 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.

God wants to be sure He will not forget any of them at the time when He makes up His jewels; He will be like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap (Mal. 3:2); all that will be left after this process of refinement and cleansing will be His jewels, those that obey Him and whose name are written in the book of remembrance.

At the time of the Great White Throne Judgment He will not punish those who are obeying Him; He will punish all the others who refuse to obey Him.

18 Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not

This is the time of the third resurrection when the wicked will know who indeed it was that was obeying God and who was only putting on the pretense of doing so. They cannot know it now. As we have seen, Israel was saying to God, why is it that you say we are not obeying you: We don't know; why aren't you blessing us, etc.? They were saying that God should be pleased with what they were doing for in their minds it was the right thing to do. But God says the time is coming when their eyes will be opened, and they will know who was and was not serving Him. They will also be given a chance to obey Him when that occurs and to choose whether to obey Him or not. They are not condemned as they never knew the spiritual truth of God, nor could they as ancient Israel never could have had God's holy spirit the Word and Spokesman dwelling with them because Christ at that time had not yet become God's perfect sacrifice for sin and being glorified.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that [Jesus was not yet glorified.](#))

In verses 16 to 18, God talks about those who at that time were in Israel and who were trying to obey Him that when they saw the wickedness of the people, they met and spoke often to one another. God remembered them in a book of remembrance. God takes notice of those who are obeying Him and will give them their reward at the time when Christ comes and brings salvation with Him for all those who fear the Lord.

Mal 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.

They had been saying that obeying God is not worth the effort and that it is better to do evil. God responds that there is a time of judgment coming and that those who are obedient will not be punished with those who are not. The disobedient will be burnt up and their existence forever be extinguished. This is the time of the 3rd resurrection and of the judgment at the end of the Last Great Day (sentencing) of the wicked who are those who have known the truth, rejected it and went back into the world. This is the second death from which there is no possible resurrection. The consciousness of the incorrigibly wicked will cease forever. It is a punishment that last forever but it is not eternal, never-ending punishing.

Great will be the reward for obedience as stated in Mal 4:2.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun [brilliance is the meaning of the Hebrew word NOT the sun in the sky that will arise] of righteousness arise with healing in his wings [overspreading to cover something]; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

The wicked will be punished but as for those who obey God (fear His name), their lives will be one of prosperity, abundance and safety as calves of the stall who are well taken care of, protected and fed by their owners, which in this case is God. This is symbolically speaking of the fate of those that will inherit salvation at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment as made clear in the next verse.

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.

The saints of the 1st resurrection and the saints of the Millennium and Last Great Day as glorified, spirit beings will walk over the ashes of the wicked i.e., those who refused to obey God after having had the truth revealed to them and who die the 2nd death in the Lake of Fire from which there can never be any resurrection.

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

God's final command and warning to Judah which then represented all of Israel as it was the remnant of Israel at that time is to remember the law, the statutes and the judgments. In other words, having just been told what the reward will be of those who do not obey, they would do well to start obeying as there are very real rewards to obeying God contrarily to what they had been saying a few verses back that the work required to obey God was not worth the effort.

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

In verse 5 God tells them that He would again send them Elijah the prophet. Elijah was already dead when Malachi wrote those words. The Israelites who heard these words would also be dead by the time Elijah would come. God would not resurrect Elijah as there are no resurrec-

tion to flesh-and-blood existence until the Last Great Day and the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Last Great Day. This Elijah to come would restore all things i.e., the truth given to the apostles by Christ at the foundation of God's Church (the foundational truth) which were lost to God's Church for the most part because of the 1,260 years of persecution that came upon it.

Mat 17:10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

Mat 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.**

God was giving them hope that despite their sinfulness, He would send them someone that would help them as when Elijah first came. He would give them the truth they needed to know to obtain salvation. They could not know how this would occur; that it was an event far in the future and which concerned a spiritual nation; those begotten by God's Spirit. Yet, it was a message of hope that God was not abandoning His physical nation; that despite their sinfulness there was hope.

6 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.

The Elijah-to-come was to restore the knowledge of the family, the right role of the father in the family, of the wife, the proper raising of children and as a result the children would once more respect their fathers and mothers who represent God the father and Christ to them.

Conclusion

As we can all see, this understanding of the Book of Malachi is very different from the interpretation that was given it by the Philadelphia Church of God, one of the most destructive false churches of God to come out of the disintegration of the WCG.

The Book of Malachi was never a message to God's Church after the death of Mr. Armstrong. It was a message of correction from God to ancient Israel who reminded them that they had been unfaithful in following the law of Moses, and the statutes and the judgments. Ancient Israel is defiant and refuses to acknowledge its guilt even going to the point of saying that it was not worth their while to obey God as He was not blessing them.

God tells them of the reward and punishment that come with obedience and disobedience and He encourages them by telling them He will send them Elijah who will restore the true knowledge of the family to THEM and set them back on the path to obeying Him.

The book of Malachi is God's message to ancient Israel that before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord, He will make a new covenant with them which this time will include the holy spirit God the word and Spokesman opening their minds to understand spiritual truth. Malachi is a message of hope to physical Israel, that at the appointed time, despite its sinfulness and rebellion, it will be given an opportunity for salvation.