

BIBLE CLASS 12.12.2024 MALACHE 3:1 – 3 The MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

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, says the LORD of hosts, but who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appears? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

The MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

This is an amended version of the writing of our well beloved brother and teacher of Brother John Thomas in his work:-

THE MYSTERY OF THE COVENANT OF THE HOLY LAND EXPLAINED

“I do not forget what the Lord Jesus said of John the Baptist, and what Mark and Luke say concerning him. Matthew says that John was he of whom Isaiah spoke, and Luke makes the same reference. Mark quotes both Malachi and Isaiah to prove that a messenger and a proclamation were to precede the appearance or manifestation of the Lord; and having said this, he proceeds with his history of events. Speaking of John, the Lord Jesus says, “This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.”

“But in Malachi’s prophecies above quoted “a great and terrible day” is spoken of, even the day of the Lord’s coming and appearance as a refiner’s fire and fuller’s soap. Now before that day, says the prophet, a messenger shall be sent; and at the close of his prophecy tells us his name in these words: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall

restore ('hashiv' = understood, restore, turn,) the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." Now the contemporaries of Jesus understood this in its obvious sense, namely, that the identical Elijah who was translated should return to Palestine on a mission to Israel before their being made to pass through the refining and purifying process on the day of terror. This appears from the question put by the disciples to Jesus after seeing Elijah on the mount with Moses—"Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?" This was a reason urged by the scribes for rejecting Jesus. As if they had said, "This Jesus cannot be the Messenger of the Covenant, for Elijah has not yet made his appearance." The disciples were in a difficulty. They acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, (the anointed one = the messiah) but they had seen him before Elijah, which did not harmonize with Malachi's testimony. Jesus admitted that the Scribes were right about the coming of Elijah; for he said, "Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things." This is a truth that must not be lost sight of. Elijah's mission is to restore all things when he comes. What things? Not things pertaining to Gentiles; for there is nothing Gentile worth restoring. Destruction, not restoration, is to come upon the things of the Gentiles, both ecclesiastical and civil. The things to be restored are the things of Moses' law, as far as compatible with faith in the blood of the New Covenant, establishing the Amended Law. Consequently in the verse preceding that about Elijah, the Lord says to Israel, "Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even the statutes and judgments." (Mal. 4:1.) These are the civil law of the nation, the law of the state, the existence of which is quite compatible with the New Covenant to which it will be accommodated in the time of making an amendment.

"On a previous occasion, Jesus said to the multitude, "If you will receive it, John is the Elijah being about to come"—(Elias ho melton erkesthai in Greek) (Matt. 11:14). So we understand Jesus to teach by these words, that this Elijah's coming is referring to an event still future.

Jesus also says, “John is Elijah”—but in what sense are they identical? Let the Angel of Jehovah, who appeared to John’s father, answer the question—“John shall go before the Lord, Israel’s God in Elijah’s spirit and power, to restore to posterity the fathers’ dispositions, and disobedient ones to the just persons mode of thinking; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (Luke 1:17.) Then “Elijah’s spirit and power,” like his mantle on Elisha, had fallen upon John; and therefore the identity, which, however, did not at all affect the proper coming of Elijah at the appointed time. In this sense Jesus said to his disciples, “But I say unto you (though there is truth in what the Scribes say) that Elijah once came (elthe Gk. aorist) already, and they did not know him, but have done to him whatsoever they listed.” (Matt. 17:12.) John said of himself plainly, “I am not Elijah.” (John 1:21.)

“The appearances, then, of the messenger of the Covenant to the nation are preceded by messengers individually two but officially and spiritually one. The power and spirit of Elijah, that is the one spirit and power through whoso ever manifested, the operation of which in regard to Israel prepares them for the appearance of the Messenger of the Covenant in their midst. This one spirit-power is exhibited in the history of Elijah. On comparing it with John’s, their identity evidently consisted in their both being possessed of the same spirit of prophecy and a like authority in Israel, which appears to have been “the power” referred to by the Angel. The word of the Lord came to them both while sojourning by the Jordan, and thence their influence was felt among all ranks and classes of the nation. But “John did no miracle” (John 10:41); Elijah performed many of great magnitude: John’s identity in power with Elijah was therefore not wonder-working. Christ’s mission to Israel was covenant-confirming and individually enlightening and converting (Jer. 23:5), “Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth”, but not political: his political mission relates to the future (Luke 1:32–33).

Yahweh’s messengers, who precede and introduce his king’s appearing,

have each a mission corresponding to Christ's. Hence John's mission in Elijah's spirit-power was confirming and personally enlightening and converting; while Elijah's, when he comes in his own proper person to Israel, will be nationally enlightening, converting, and political. The combined result of the Elijah-spirit-power mission is the spiritual and political restoration of all things before Christ's manifestation to the Twelve Tribes as their king sitting on David's throne in Zion. The restoration effected by this power through John was a spiritual restoration affecting the hearts of many of the people, not of all; a restoration of the Abrahamic mind and disposition in his contemporaries. Beyond this nothing was restored. But through "Elijah the Prophet" the same spirit-power will "restore all things," and among these the tribes of Israel, when its mission will be complete."

DHH