LIFE-STUDY OF MALACHI

MESSAGE ONE

THE INTRODUCTORY WORD AND JEHOVAH'S LOVE OF JACOB AND HIS DEALING WITH THE SONS OF LEVI

Scripture Reading: Mal. 1:1—3:4

In this message we will begin to consider the prophecy of Malachi. The book of Malachi is the concluding word of the Old Testament.

I. THE INTRODUCTORY WORD

Malachi 1:1 is the introductory word.

A. The Meaning of the Name Malachi

The name Malachi in Hebrew means "My messenger," signifying that Malachi was a messenger of God to minister the word of Jehovah to His people Israel.

B. The Time of Malachi's Ministry

The time of Malachi's ministry was about 400 B.C., at Nehemiah's time.

C. The Place of His Ministry

The place of his ministry was Jerusalem.

D. The Object of His Ministry

The object of his ministry was the returned Israelites.

E. The Subject

The subject of his ministry is Jehovah's dealing with the sons of Levi (the priests among Israel) and with the sons of Jacob (the people of Israel).

F. The Central Thought

The central thought of the prophecy of Malachi is the correcting of the priests among Israel for the coming of Christ as the Messenger of God and the advising of the people of Israel for the appearing of Christ as the Sun of righteousness.

G. The Revelation concerning Christ

In Malachi Christ is revealed in His first coming as the Messenger of God (3:1-3) and in His second coming as the Angel of the covenant (3:1) and as the Sun of righteousness (4:1-3).

H. The Sections

The book of Malachi has four sections: the introductory word (1:1); Jehovah's love for Jacob (1:2-5); Jehovah's dealing with the sons of Levi (1:6—3:4); and Jehovah's dealing with the sons of Jacob (3:5—4:6).

II. JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR JACOB

Malachi 1:2-5 speaks of Jehovah's love for Jacob.

A. Jehovah Loving Jacob but Hating Esau

In verses 2b and 3a Jehovah utters a very frank word related to Jacob and Esau. He says, "I loved Jacob; but Esau I hated."

B. Edom Being Called the Territory of Wickedness

Jehovah goes on to say that Edom (the country of Esau) would be called the territory of wickedness and the people with whom Jehovah is indignant forever (vv. 3b-4). Both the place and the people were displeasing to God.

C. Jehovah Being Magnified over the Territory of Israel (in Edom)

Verse 5 says, "Your eyes will see it, and you yourselves will say, Jehovah is magnified over the territory of Israel." Here "over the territory of Israel" means outside this

territory. Even though the nation of Edom has been condemned and the people of Edom are the object of God's indignation, yet even in Edom, outside Israel, Jehovah will be magnified.

III. JEHOVAH'S DEALING WITH THE SONS OF LEVI (THE PRIESTS)

In 1:6—3:4 we have Jehovah's dealing with the sons of Levi, that is, His dealing with the priests.

A. The Degradation of the Priests

Malachi 1:6-14 is a word regarding the degradation of the priests.

1. Despising Jehovah's Name and His Table

The degradation of the priests was seen first in their despising Jehovah's name and His table (vv. 6-7, 12-13a). They cared neither for Jehovah's name nor for the enjoyment of His table.

2. Presenting to Jehovah Blemished Offerings

The priests presented to Jehovah blemished offerings, offerings that were blind, lame, or sick (v. 8). They brought what was stolen, lame, and sick and offered it as a sacrifice (v. 13b). Thus, Jehovah said, "Cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and when he makes a vow, he offers what is blemished to the Lord" (v. 14a).

3. Jehovah's Abhorring of Their Offerings

Jehovah did not have any joy in receiving their blemished offerings. On the contrary, He abhorred them (vv. 9-10).

4. The Greatness of Jehovah's Name among the Nations

In verses 11 and 14b we have a word concerning the greatness of Jehovah's name among the nations. In verse 11 He said that His name would be great among the nations, and in verse 14b He declared that His name was feared among the nations.

B. The Priests' Breaking of Jehovah's Commandment and Their Corrupting of Jehovah's Covenant

The priests broke Jehovah's commandment and they corrupted Jehovah's covenant. This brought Jehovah's curse to them (2:1-9).

C. The Treachery of Judah among the Brothers and Their Profaneness toward Jehovah

Verses 10 through 12 speak of the treachery of Judah (actually the priests, who lived in Judah and served in Jerusalem) among the brothers and their profaneness toward Jehovah.

D. Jehovah's Hatred of the Treachery of Man toward His Wife

In verses 13 through 17 we see Jehovah's hatred of the treachery of man (mainly referring to the priests) toward his wife.

1. The Treachery of a Priest toward His Wife Damaging His Priesthood

Verses 13 and 14 indicate that the treachery of a priest toward his wife damages his priesthood. Probably some of the mistreated wives came and wept at the altar (vv. 13a, 14). Because of this, Jehovah no longer regarded the sacrifices or received them with pleasure from the priests' hands (v. 13b). Here we see a very important matter. If a servant of the Lord cannot have a proper life with his wife, his service will be annulled.

Every young person must consider his or her marriage very carefully. All the brothers and sisters are priests. If we cannot live well with our spouse, how can we serve the church? If our married life is improper, our priesthood will be finished; it will be brought to nothing.

2. Jehovah Making the Priest and His Wife One in Order to Produce the Seed of God

In verse 15 Malachi goes on to say that in marriage God

has made the husband and wife one in order to produce "the seed of God," that is, godly children.

3. Jehovah Hating Divorce

Jehovah hates divorce; and the one who divorces his wife behaves in violence (v. 16). In the sight of God, divorce is a violent act.

4. Jehovah Being Wearied with the Priests' Words

According to verse 17, the priests wearied Jehovah with their words. They wearied Him by saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and He delights in them; or, Where is the God of justice?" Such words were wrongful accusations.

E. To Refine and Purify the Priests by His Coming as the Messenger of Jehovah

Jehovah's dealing with the sons of Levi is to refine and purify the priests by His coming as the Messenger of Jehovah (3:1-4).

1. This Prophecy Having a Threefold Fulfillment

This prophecy has a threefold fulfillment.

a. In the Coming of the Prophet Malachi

First, this prophecy was fulfilled in the coming of the prophet Malachi, the type of Christ as the coming One.

b. In the First Coming of Christ with John the Baptist as His Forerunner

Second, this prophecy was fulfilled in the first coming of Christ with John the Baptist as His forerunner (Matt. 11:7-13). In His first coming, Christ came as a Messenger and even as the message sent by God to adjust, refine, and purify the priests. In the Gospels the Lord Jesus frequently rebuked the priests.

c. In the Second Coming of Christ with Elijah as His Forerunner

Third, this prophecy will be fulfilled in the second coming of Christ with Elijah as His forerunner (Isa. 40:3-5, 9-11; Matt. 17:11; Rev. 11:3-4).

2. Christ Suddenly Coming as the Angel of the Covenant

Christ will come suddenly as the Angel of the covenant, whom the people of Israel seek and whom the people of Israel desire (Mal. 3:1; Hag. 2:7a).

a. To Execute upon Israel the Covenant That He Enacted through His Death

Christ's coming suddenly as the Angel of the covenant will be to execute upon Israel the covenant that He enacted through His death (Matt. 26:28). He came in the sense of an Angel to serve God in forming the new testament. When He established His table on the night in which He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus told us that He was enacting the new covenant: "This cup is the new covenant established in My blood" (Luke 22:20). Thus He formed the new testament, in which God is obligated to dispense Himself into our being to be our life, our life law, and our everything as our content. Although the Lord Jesus enacted the new covenant nearly two thousand years ago, generally speaking the Jewish people have not benefitted by it. Instead, the benefit has gone to the Gentiles. However, when Christ comes back, He will come as the Angel of the covenant to execute His covenant over the repentant and believing Jews. At that time they will become beneficiaries of the new covenant.

b. To Refine and Purify the Sons of Levi

Christ will come also to refine and purify the sons of Levi, mainly the priests, like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap that they may offer to God the proper sacrifice (Mal. 3:2-4). In the millennium the repentant Jews who are regenerated through the new covenant will be the priests to take care of all the nations. For this they will need much refining and

purifying. Therefore, in His second coming Christ will renew, sanctify, and transform Israel to be His refined and purified priests.

LIFE-STUDY OF MALACHI

MESSAGE TWO

CHRIST IN HIS TWO COMINGS AS REVEALED IN MALACHI

Scripture Reading: Mal. 3:1-3; 4:1-3

The book of Malachi is on Christ directly. In this message I have the burden to give a further word on the revelation of Christ in Malachi.

CHRIST COMING AS THE MESSENGER OF GOD

The book of Malachi reveals Christ in His first coming and in His second coming. In His first coming He is the Messenger of God. As the Messenger of God, Christ not only brings a word or a message from God to God's people; He Himself is the living message. This is fully proved by the four Gospels, which are a complete and perfect record of Christ as the living message sent by God to His chosen people. While the Lord Jesus was living on earth, as He traveled through the cities and as He spoke to the people, ministering Himself into the intrinsic part of their being, He Himself was the message.

CHRIST COMING AS THE ANGEL OF THE COVENANT

Enacting the New Covenant

In His second coming, Christ will be the Angel of the covenant, the Desire of nations (3:1), and the Sun of righteousness (4:2). Actually, Christ was the Angel of the covenant even in His first coming. As the Angel of the covenant, Christ enacted the new covenant. Before going to the cross, the last thing He did was to establish the new covenant at His table (Matt. 26:26-30).

The Believers, as Sons of God, Being One with God in His Life and Nature

Based upon this new covenant (Heb. 8:10-12), we are forgiven by God, who even forgets our failures. God is then able to dispense Himself into our intrinsic being to be our life, to be the law of life, and to be everything to us as our inward content that we may live Him. This means that the new covenant is to make us absolutely one with God. He becomes us, and we, being constituted with Him, are one with Him in His life and nature. The New Testament reveals that He and we form a mutual abode (John 14:20, 23). What a miracle this is!

We need to have the proper understanding of what it means to say that God has been constituted into us to become us and that we have become one with God in His life and nature. The New Testament reveals that God is our Father and that we are His sons. We are not sons who have been adopted by God but sons who have been born of God. God is our Father because He has begotten us, and we are His sons because we have been born of Him. Just as a child shares the life and nature of his father but not the fatherhood, so we as sons born of God share God's life and nature but not His fatherhood nor His Godhead. We are the same as God our Father in life and nature, but we surely are not God in His Godhead or the Father in His fatherhood. This is the intrinsic revelation of the Bible, especially of the New Testament.

In our daily living, we need to remember our status as sons of God possessing the life and nature of God. For example, if a brother and his wife both realize this, knowing that they are not only human but also divine, they will respect each other to the uttermost. Instead of disputing, they will honor each other and be kind to each other. Also, this realization will keep them from losing their temper. When we are tempted to lose our temper, we need to remember that we are sons of God. Even in such a matter as shopping in a department store, we should not forget our status as sons of God.

CHRIST COMING AS THE DESIRE OF THE NATIONS

In His second coming, Christ will also be the Desire of the nations (Mal. 3:1; Hag. 2:7). Christ is the One whom we desire. Day by day we desire Him to be our love, our humility, our meekness, and our joy. Nothing is better than joy. This joy becomes our strength, our healing, our feeding, and our nourishment. Real joy comes from Christ being our life, our virtues, and our everything. I can testify that I have been loving this One for over seventy years, and I love Him today much more than ever. Daily I desire Him, love Him, and consider Him. He surely is our Desire.

CHRIST COMING AS THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS

As the Sun of righteousness, Christ will come with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2). Today the Pentecostal people practice what is called divine healing. Actually, Christ Himself is our healing. He is the Sun that heals us as it shines upon us.

In His first coming, the earth rejected Christ; therefore, the earth lacks His healing. But because we have received Him in a secret, hidden way, we receive His healing every day. His healing causes us to have joy so that we forget our anger and anxiety. We are sick from sin, death, and many deficiencies and imperfections. Only this healing Christ can make us whole. To be healed is to be saved. To be healed, to be saved, is to be made whole. He will heal us, but we must give Him the freedom to use His wings to fly above us, around us, and within us.

In His first coming, Christ healed the degraded priesthood, but in His second coming, He will heal the remnant of the people of Israel. Then He will be everything to the earth and to us. This healing Christ will come suddenly. Thus, we need to be alert, ready to receive Him.

THE CENTER OF THE BOOK OF MALACHI

The center of the book of Malachi is the healing Christ. This healing Christ is the Messenger of God, the Angel of the covenant, and the Desire of the nations. Christ's being our healing is based upon His being the Sun of righteousness.

The word “Sun” indicates life, and the word “righteousness” indicates justice. The whole earth is filled with death and injustice, but with the healing Christ we have life and justice. We are waiting for Him to come as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings.

LIFE-STUDY OF MALACHI

MESSAGE THREE

JEHOVAH'S DEALING WITH THE SONS OF JACOB

Scripture Reading: Mal. 3:5—4:6

In this message we will consider Malachi 3:5—4:6.

IV. JEHOVAH'S DEALING WITH THE SONS OF JACOB

A. Jehovah's Judgment by His Drawing Near

Malachi 3:5 and 6 speak of Jehovah's judgment by His drawing near. In our experience, every time the Lord appears to us, He rebukes us. His rebuking is His judgment.

1. On Those Who Do Not Fear Jehovah

Verse 5 tells us that Jehovah would be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker, the widow, and the orphan, against those who turn the stranger aside, and against those who do not fear Jehovah. Jehovah's concern for the stranger indicates that He is very human and that He is not happy when His people ill-treat a stranger instead of giving him hospitality.

2. Because of Jehovah's Not Changing, the Sons of Jacob Not Being Consumed

Verse 6 says that Jehovah does not change; therefore, the sons of Jacob are not consumed.

B. Jehovah's Advice to the Sons of Jacob

In verses 7 through 12 we have Jehovah's advice to the sons of Jacob.

1. Instructing Them to Return to Him so That He Would Return to Them That They Might Be Blessed by Him

"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Jehovah of hosts" (v. 7). Here Jehovah instructed the sons of Jacob to return to Him so that He would return to them that they might be blessed by Him (vv. 10, 12). To be blessed by God is to be healed (4:2), and to be healed is to be made whole.

a. Not Robbing God in Tithes and Offerings

Whereas Haggai touches the laziness of God's people in their not working to build God's house, Malachi speaks concerning their robbing God in tithes and offerings. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. With the curse you are cursed, yet you, even the whole nation, rob Me" (3:8-9). Here we see that after advising the sons of Jacob to return to Him, Jehovah charged them not to rob God in tithes and offerings that the curse would not be brought in to them. To rob God is to not give Him what He is due. He established the principle that of all the produce from the land, one tenth should go to Him (Lev. 27:30). The top tenth must go to Him.

b. Bringing the Whole Tithe to the Storehouse That There May Be Food in God's House

"Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it" (Mal. 3:10). Here we are told that when the first tenth is brought to the storehouse, God opens the windows of heaven and pours out a blessing until there is no room for it.

This verse speaks of food in God's house. This food is not for us—it is for God. God is hungry and needs food. What is God's food? God's food, the divine food, is the offerings, especially the burnt offering, the meal offering, and the peace

offering. The peace offering is enjoyed mutually by God and His people. We enjoy this offering before Him and with Him.

c. Jehovah Rebuking the Devourer for Their Sake

In verse 11 Jehovah went on to say that He would rebuke the devourer for their sake, not allowing the devourer to destroy the fruit of the ground and not allowing the vine to lose its fruit in the field before it ripens.

2. All the Nations Calling Them Blessed, and They Being a Land of Delight

According to verse 12, all the nations will call them blessed, and they will be a land of delight.

C. Jehovah's Encouragement to Those Who Fear Him and Serve Him

In verses 13 through 18 we see Jehovah's encouragement to those who fear Him and serve Him.

1. The Words of Some of the Sons of Jacob Being Strongly against Jehovah

The words of some of the sons of Jacob were strongly against Jehovah (v. 13a).

a. Saying That It Was Vain to Serve God

They said, "It is vain to serve God," and they asked, "What profit is it that we have kept His charge and have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?" (v. 14). They worshipped and served God, but they did it mournfully, not at all happy that they were required to do these things.

b. Calling the Arrogant Blessed

Those who spoke strongly against Jehovah also said, "Now we call the arrogant blessed; not only have those who act wickedly been built up, but they also try God and escape" (v. 15). This indicates that these opposers of God seemed to be saying, "The way to be blessed is not to be humble but to be arrogant. The ones who act wickedly not only are built up, but they try God, not believing Him and not giving Him

the tithe, and they escape from any kind of calamity. Instead of suffering, they escape tribulation."

2. The Word of Encouragement by Jehovah

Verses 16 through 18 are the word of encouragement by Jehovah.

a. Those Who Feared Jehovah Speaking to One Another

Those who feared Jehovah spoke to one another, each to his neighbor, and Jehovah gave heed and listened (v. 16a).

b. A Book of Remembrance Being Written before Jehovah

Verse 16b tells us that a book of remembrance was written before Jehovah of those who feared Him and considered His name. We today consider, love, regard, respect, and sanctify God's name, and He keeps a record of this. We may not remember our fellowship concerning Christ and the church, but God keeps a record of this fellowship in His book of remembrance.

c. The Sons of Jacob
Being Jehovah's Personal Treasure

According to verse 17, the sons of Jacob will be Jehovah's. They will be a personal treasure in the day that He prepares (the day of His anger), and He will spare them, as a man spares his son who serves him.

d. The Sons of Jacob Returning
and Discerning between Him Who Is Righteous
and Him Who Is Wicked

Finally, in His word of encouragement to those who fear Him and serve Him, Jehovah said that they will return and discern between him who is righteous and him who is wicked, between him who serves God and him who does not serve Him (v. 18).

D. Jehovah's Warning by the Day of Jehovah

Malachi 4:1-6 is Jehovah's warning by the day of Jehovah.

1. The Day Coming, Burning like a Furnace

The day of Jehovah comes, burning like a furnace, and all the proud ones and all the ones who act wickedly will be stubble. The coming day will set them ablaze, so that it will not leave them root or branch (v. 1).

2. Unto Those Who Fear Jehovah's Name the Sun of Righteousness Arising with Healing in His Wings

Unto those who fear Jehovah's name the Sun of righteousness—the healing Christ—will arise with healing in His wings. They will go forth and leap about like well-fed calves. They will trample the wicked; for the wicked will be ashes under the soles of their feet in the day that Jehovah prepares (vv. 2-3).

3. Charging the Sons of Jacob to Remember the Law of Moses, the Statutes and the Judgments

In verse 4 the sons of Jacob were charged to remember the law of Moses, that is, the statutes and judgments. The law is the Ten Commandments; the statutes are detailed items of the law; and the judgments are ordinances. When a judgment is added to a statute, that statute becomes an ordinance. For example, the commandment to keep the Sabbath and not to profane it, lacking any mention of judgment, is simply a statute. But when a judgment is added, perhaps the sentence of death by stoning, the statute becomes an ordinance.

4. Promising to Send Elijah the Prophet to Them before the Great and Terrible Day of Jehovah Comes

Finally, in verses 5 and 6, God promised to send Elijah the prophet to them before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes (Matt. 17:10-11; Rev. 11:3-4). Elijah will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest Jehovah comes and strikes the

land with a curse. This is the closing word of Malachi and the last word of the Old Testament.

LIFE-STUDY OF MALACHI

MESSAGE FOUR

THE REVIVAL REVEALED IN THE MINOR PROPHETS

Scripture Reading: Hab. 3:2a; Hosea 6:2; Joel 2:28-29; Hag. 1:14; Mal. 3:1b; Hag. 2:7a; Heb. 7:22; Acts 26:18b; Col. 1:12; Mal. 4:2a; Rom. 8:20-22

In this message, I have the burden to speak a word concerning the revival revealed in the Minor Prophets. We may say that this matter of revival is the "kernel" within the "shell" of the books of the Minor Prophets.

I. THE ASPIRATION OF GOD'S ELECT

Habakkuk 3:2a speaks of revival: "O Jehovah, revive Your work / In the midst of the years." Among God's elect there has always been an aspiration to be revived. As long as you are a saved one, every day, consciously or unconsciously, there is an aspiration with a spontaneous prayer within you: "O Lord, revive us." Although we may not realize it, such an aspiration has been within us through all the years of our Christian life.

We may think that Habakkuk's prayer for revival was good for him but has nothing to do with us. However, regarding his prayer, we need to realize that with God there is no time element. In the eyes of God, one person among His elect represents the whole. God always considers His elect as a corporate Body. This means that Habakkuk and we are one in the unit of God's elect. Thus, when Habakkuk prayed for revival, we also prayed. We prayed for revival twenty-six hundred years ago. Such a prayer is an everlasting prayer.

Many times in the last six years I charged the saints to put the God-ordained way into a living practice, but without a revival, how could we have anything living? If we endeavor to practice just the first step of the God-ordained way—to

visit people for the gospel—without being revived, this will be a heavy burden that no one can bear. We all need to realize that we have been saved and kept on earth to do one thing—to go to disciple the nations, beginning from "Jerusalem" and spreading to "Judea," to "Samaria," and to the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). If we live for our education, a career, a good marriage, or a nice house, that is vanity of vanities. We are living here for the spreading of the Lord Jesus, not merely to our neighborhood but to the entire world. If we would do this, we need to be revived. This is why the Lord has led us to practice the morning revival.

This matter of morning revival is according to the natural law in God's creation. God created the universe so that there is a sunrising every twenty-four hours. We believers should follow the sunrising to be revived every morning. Every day we need a "sunrising," and this sunrising is a revival. If we experience a daily revival, then we will be living and qualified to practice the God-ordained way and to help the church to take this way.

II. THE DESOLATION OF THE "TWO DAYS" AND THE RESURRECTION ON THE "THIRD DAY"

On the one hand, Habakkuk prayed for revival; on the other hand, Hosea spoke of the desolation of the "two days" and the resurrection on the "third day": "He will enliven us after two days; / On the third day He will raise us up" (6:2). Since to God a thousand years are as one day (2 Pet. 3:8), these "two days" may refer to a period of two thousand years. For almost two thousand years, from the time Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, Israel, our representative, has been desolate. From that year Israel lost the priesthood, the sacrifices, the prophets, the king, and the temple. Eventually, there will be the "third day"—the thousand years of the millennial kingdom—when Israel will be raised up, that is, restored.

The principle is the same in our Christian life. At a certain time we became desolate. After the two days of desolation, there is the third day, which signifies the pneumatic Christ in resurrection. Today we may receive the pneumatic Christ

in resurrection and thus enjoy the reality of His resurrection. If we have the resurrected Christ, we are in the morning, the sunrising, and this is a real revival to us.

In 1984 I realized that the recovery was in a dormant condition, like the desolation of the two days in Hosea 6:2. However, if we experience a real revival, we will be in the third day.

III. THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

Joel 2:28 and 29 speak of the outpouring of the Spirit. Every day we need the outpouring of the all-inclusive, consummated, compound, life-giving Spirit as the processed and consummated Triune God. This all-inclusive Spirit includes Christ's divinity and humanity, the effectiveness of His death, and the power of His resurrection. This Spirit is our portion, our inheritance.

IV. THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S ELECT

"Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people" (Hag. 1:14a). Here we see the response of God's elect, who were stirred up by the Lord in the order of God's authority. When they responded by being stirred up in their spirit by the Lord, we all were included.

In the Minor Prophets there are both the divine Spirit, the consummated Spirit of God, and the human spirit, the stirred-up spirit of God's elect. The divine Spirit has been poured out, and our human spirit (the key to experiencing and enjoying Christ) responds to such a Spirit by being stirred up.

We may feel that our spirit was stirred up early in our Christian life but that it is no longer stirred up. However, this is not true. Unconsciously, the spirit of every regenerated believer is stirred up. If we go to a place of worldly entertainment, our spirit will be stirred up to tell us to leave that place. Whenever we grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30), we have no peace. This is the stirring up of our spirit. When we read the Bible, we feel calm and peaceful. Even in this

calmness, our spirit is under the stirring up by the Spirit. Every day we cannot avoid the stirring up of our spirit. The Bible reveals that once the consummated, compound, life-giving Spirit comes into us, He will never leave. As He dwells in us, He is often a "troublemaker," stirring us up either negatively or positively. If we take care of this negative or positive stirring up, we will be revived, and we will be strengthened and encouraged to carry out the God-ordained way.

V. THE ENJOYMENT OF GOD'S CHRIST

The Minor Prophets also reveal that God's Christ is our enjoyment. The enjoyment of God's Christ is actually the enjoyment of God Himself.

A. As the Desire of God's Elect

We may enjoy Christ as the Desire of God's elect (Mal. 3:1b; cf. Hag. 2:7a). Whether we are hot or cold toward the Lord, we desire Christ. Can you say that you have no desire for Christ? Every day we desire Christ.

B. As the Angel of the Covenant

We may enjoy Christ also as the Angel of the covenant (Mal. 3:1b). For Him to be the Angel means that He is a serving one. In His coming back, Christ will be the Angel of the covenant. He enacted the new covenant with His blood at His table (Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:20). In the new covenant, God is imparted into us as life and as our life supply, and we have the forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31-34).

1. To Execute as Its Surety the New Covenant Enacted through His Death

Christ not only enacted the new covenant through His death, but in resurrection He executes the new covenant as its surety (Heb. 7:22), making it real to us. In particular, He assures us that our sins have been forgiven and that we have Him as our life and life supply signified by the bread at the Lord's table. Day by day we may enjoy Him as the surety of the new covenant.

2. To Dispense the Riches of the Covenanted Triune God into His Elect

As the Angel of the covenant, Christ dispenses the riches of the covenanted Triune God into His elect. According to Acts 26:18b, we have received not only the forgiveness of sins but also "an inheritance among those who have been sanctified." This inheritance is the Triune God Himself with all He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people. The Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ, who is "the allotted portion of the saints" as their inheritance (Col. 1:12).

C. As the Sun of Righteousness

Finally, Malachi 4:2 tells us that we may enjoy Christ as the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings.

1. For Growing in Life, in the Dispelling of the Darkness

As the Sun of righteousness, Christ is our enjoyment for growing in life, in the dispelling of the darkness. Just as the shining of the sunlight enables plants to grow, Christ's shining as the Sun of righteousness is for our growth in life.

2. For Healing in Life, in the Effacing of Unrighteousness

As the Sun of righteousness, Christ is our enjoyment also for healing in life, in the effacing of unrighteousness. Before we enjoy this healing in life, unrighteousness prevails, but through this healing unrighteousness is effaced and is replaced by righteousness.

AN ADDITIONAL WORD

At this juncture, I would like to give an additional word on the matter of revival.

The Universal Aspiration for Revival

The revival revealed in the Minor Prophets can be applied to the family, to the church, to the nations, to the entire human race, and even to the whole universe. In principle,

everything and everyone on earth are in the desolation of the two days spoken of in Hosea 6:2.

Since the fall of man, there has been in all of creation an aspiration for revival. Concerning this, Romans 8:20-22 says, "The creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now." As a result of Adam's fall, corruption, slavery, and death have come into the whole creation. Today everything is decaying and is under the slavery of corruption. All the things that are under this slavery aspire to be revived.

Christ—the Reality of the Third Day

Man's fall brought in corruption, and with corruption there is slavery. Because of this corruption and slavery, there is the need everywhere for revival, for restoration. This need can be met only by Christ and in Christ. Christ was resurrected on the third day, and as the pneumatic Christ in resurrection, He is the reality of the third day. Christ, therefore, is the element of the revival for which all of creation aspires. The corruption and desolation can be swallowed up only by Christ's resurrection.

Unbelievers as well as believers aspire to be revived, to have a new beginning. Everyone wants something new. Only Christ is the renewing factor. Only Christ, who rose up on the third day, is the renewing power. For the whole universe and for all of mankind, Christ is the reality of the third day.

When we received Christ, we received Him as the One who is Himself the resurrection (John 11:25). Immediately after receiving Him, we had a new beginning in our human life. That new beginning was a revival. However, eventually we again entered into a state of desolation and thus needed another revival. This cycle of desolation and revival, revival and desolation, has been repeated again and again.

The way to have the revival we need is to contact Christ, repenting and confessing our sins, failures, and darkness. By doing this we are brought from the desolation of the two days to the resurrection of the third day. Whenever we are in desolation we need such a revival. We need to come to the third day, and the third day is nothing other than the person of the resurrected Christ with the reality of revival. In addition, we have the outpouring of the Triune God as the consummated, all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, and our spirit responds by being stirred up.

Enjoying Christ as the One Desired by Mankind

When our spirit is stirred up in response to the outpouring of the Spirit, we enjoy Christ not only as the resurrected One but also as the One desired by all of mankind. He is mankind's unique need. Everyone, the believers and the unbelievers alike, desires Christ.

The Christ we desire has enacted the new covenant and He, as its surety, is now executing it. Through this covenant God has been allotted to us as our legal portion in Christ, who is the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings. Apart from Him, we have darkness and unrighteousness, but with Him everything is light and righteousness.

The Ultimate Restoration

When we have such a Christ, we not only have revival—we have restoration. The millennial kingdom will be a time of restoration. This restoration will consummate in the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem as the center. That will be the ultimate, the consummate, restoration accomplished by the resurrected Christ.