

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Lesson 10, Chapter 3 Continued

We began Malachai chapter 3 last time, and it has proved necessary to unpack this nearly word for word, referring to the Hebrew texts, because the tendency of English Bible versions is not to translate, but more to interpret. That is, to translate means to convert the Hebrew words to their equivalent in a different language. To interpret means to take the words from a certain predetermined viewpoint and comment on their meanings in that context. It is to make a stylistic effort of representation on the work of the original author. As a result of our search for truth, as best as we can obtain it, we only were able to cover 2 verses in our last lesson: chapter 2:17 and chapter 3:1.

Looking to translation, and leaving the interpretation to others, matters a great deal when it comes to choosing which Bibles to study, and it means we have to be cautious so as not to perpetuate doctrines that are often most questionable. As we have looked at the opening of chapter 3, we recognize it as a prophecy concerning an undefined future time. To come to the point quickly, the first matter we are faced with is, to which advent of Messiah is this verse referring? That is, it is widely accepted that the early part of Malachai chapter 3 prophecy is speaking about Israel's Messiah. Yet, that word is not used. And, further, if we determine that, indeed, this *is* speaking about the Messiah, then is it speaking of His first advent, or His later return based on current Christian understanding? The issue is this solution was not in the minds or beliefs of Hebrews in the 5th century B.C.

The reality is that although most English versions do everything but add the word "messiah" in these verses, they make their interpretive words imply it so strongly that it is usually assumed it must be Messiah. But, when we look at the opening verses in Hebrew, not a hint of such a thing exists. Rather, the subject is always Yehoveh... The Father. It is His presence that is being discussed, and it most literally says so. So, am I saying that it *cannot* be referring to Yeshua? No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying that to properly study the Bible, we must begin by taking the words for what they say, and not what we think we'd like them to say, or for what they might have eventually revealed. We should not insert a conclusion for which, up to the time the

words were written in the chronology of the Bible, were nowhere present. By doing this, we are not being intellectually honest, and we are also **not** letting shine through what the Hebrews of those ancient eras thought ... which is critical to understanding what they meant by what they said.

To get our bearings, let's re-read all of Malachi chapter 3.

READ MALACHAI CHAPTER 3 all

Our first challenge is to try to identify not just the number of different people or characters that verse 1 is speaking about, but who they are. Generally speaking, Jewish scholars see 2 characters, while gentile scholars see 3 (although that conclusion is not universal). And, indeed, the Hebrew wording is very difficult, if not enigmatic. We just read this verse in the CJB, but I want to do as I did in our previous lesson and show it to you in the Young's Literal Translation. Note: we just discussed translation versus interpretation. The YLT does NOT attempt to interpret; or if it does, it has a very light hand. The English versions attempt to smooth out the admittedly difficult and sometimes awkward Hebrew, but that approach involves determining FIRST what the entire verse means to tell us, and then making the order of the words and the tense of the verbs match their conclusions. In other words, the words we find are predicated on interpreting **more** than translating, so that they lead a reader to a conclusion they intend (some Bible versions more than others).

YLT Malachi 3:1 ***Lo, I am sending My messenger, And he hath prepared a way before Me, And suddenly come in unto his temple Doth the Lord whom ye are seeking, Even the messenger of the covenant, Whom ye are desiring, Lo, he is coming, said Jehovah of Hosts.***

Very clearly, we see that since it is Yehoveh that is speaking, He is saying that He is sending HIS messenger to clear a way for HIM (not somebody else). And, just as clearly, the term "his temple" can only mean Yehoveh's Temple (there is no Israelite temple of somebody else). The one character that seems ambiguous is this "messenger (or angel) of the covenant". That was where we left things at the end of our previous lesson.

A major obstacle is this: no other author of any Bible book uses the term ***malak habberit*** (which translates to messenger, or angel, of the covenant). This is problematic, because when we hold each book of prophecy up against one another, we find that beginning with the chronologically first Prophet, each successive Prophet borrows thoughts and words from the previous. Malachai, as the final Prophet, has borrowed much from his predecessors, so many of his words and thoughts have already been spoken and pretty well defined in a few contexts, so we have a pretty decent understanding of their meaning. But, with “the messenger of the covenant” we have a new thought we have yet to encounter.

Is Malachai speaking of one covenant in particular, or of them all (as is pretty typical)? If he is speaking of one, then logic says it would be the latest one, and certainly the one that is causing such a vexation of the Jews in the Province of Yehud: the new covenant of Jeremiah. On the other hand, since so much of what is happening is God cursing Israel for violating the terms of the Covenant of Moses, might it be that covenant? The reality is that the “messenger of the covenant” identification is too vague to draw any conclusion. All that said, let’s see if any, some, or all of the fulfillment of this prophecy of Malachai has ever occurred. The Church says that it has, and I think (to a degree) they are correct.

CJB Matthew 11:7-10 ***⁷ As they were leaving, Yeshua began speaking about Yochanan to the crowds: "What did you go out to the desert to see? Reeds swaying in the breeze? ⁸ No? then what did you go out to see? Someone who was well dressed? Well-dressed people live in kings' palaces. ⁹ Nu, so why did you go out? To see a prophet! Yes! and I tell you he's much more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom the Tanakh says, 'See, I am sending out my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.'***

On the surface it would be hard to deny that Malachai 3:1 is not what Yeshua is quoting from. And, that He has identified Malachai’s “messenger sent ahead to prepare the way” as John the Baptist. And yet, did Yeshua at any recorded time in His ministry on earth “suddenly come into His temple”? No. That He visited the Temple grounds like any other Jew could do certainly occurred; but

He didn't enter into the Temple sanctuary as only a priest could do and that is a critical part of this prophecy. In fact, Malachai's prophecy seems to make the purpose for God's visitation to earth that of entering into His Temple in Jerusalem. Nowhere in the New Testament is Yeshua said to enter into the Temple sanctuary on his first or second coming. It is actually the Old Testament Book of Ezekiel that speaks of a future divine prince entering the Temple, with Christians believing this must be Jesus.

So, here's what I am asking you to consider: history shows that prophetic fulfillments happen and then happen again at a later date. Sometimes most of the elements of a prophecy are fulfilled in its 1st manifestation, but they are not *fully* fulfilled until a later manifestation when that same prophecy occurs again. I think this is case here. Yeshua, as God's agent, along with John the Baptist and the one who cleared the and who came in the spirit of Elijah, was the first, but incomplete, fulfillment of Malachai's prophecy. Yet, there is another fulfillment to come. It won't come until the End Times and Yeshua makes His return. If we are correct in assigning Yeshua to be that divine prince from Ezekiel who enters the Temple and sits on His father's throne, then we have an answer to the central person of the second fulfillment. As for the messenger that comes to prepare the way, that should also happen again (although not in exactly the same way), but this time it will probably be Elijah himself. Recall, that he never died but was translated alive into some unknown state of existence and place. Both Jews and Christians speculate that one of the End Times characters that appear when the Anti-Christ is in power will be Elijah. I think this has much merit in being so; but I'm not going to conclude that it couldn't be someone else that is being depicted. It's too vague.

Verse 2 of Malachai chapter 3 is:

CJB Malachi 3:2 *But who can endure the day when he comes? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like the soapmaker's lye*

There is a general consensus on how to translate this verse, so there is very minor variation among the Bible versions. Essentially, this verse acts as a rhetorical question. The question of "who can endure?" has an expected

response of “no one”. The “he” is clearly Yehoveh. But as we’re learning by means of the Hebrew Bible (as well as in the New Testament), by far the best way to characterize the divine Father and Son are as Client and Agent. The Father is the client; the Son is His agent. Agency presents the concept of someone who has power and authority, given to him by His superior. Generally speaking, the agent may act on the behalf of His superior to the point that He speaks fully for, and may bring about the will of, his superior, often without having to consult him because their wills are so much in union. There is an ancient Middle Eastern expression that says: When you have seen me, you have seen my father. That is, the agent bears the full authority of the father for the exclusive purpose of bringing about his father’s will, but never the will of the agent should it be different than the father’s. The ideal firstborn son of those ancient times would be so closely aligned in purpose and will to his father, that the son has (in practical terms) no will separate or distinct from that of his father. And not surprisingly, this is what Yeshua meant when He said:

CJB John 14:9 *Yeshua replied to him, "Have I been with you so long without your knowing me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

This concept of agency between father and son is also at the heart of the parable that Yeshua taught about the wicked tenants of a man’s farmland.

CJB Matthew 21:33-42 ³³ *"Now listen to another parable. There was a farmer who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower; then he rented it to tenants and left. ³⁴ When harvest-time came, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the crop. ³⁵ But the tenants seized his servants—this one they beat up, that one they killed, another they stoned. ³⁶ So he sent some other servants, more than the first group, and they did the same to them. ³⁷ Finally, he sent them his son, saying, 'My son they will respect.' ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance!'"*

³⁹ So they grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹ They answered him, "He will viciously destroy those vicious men and rent out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the crop when it's due." ⁴² Yeshua said to them, "Haven't you ever read in the Tanakh, 'The very rock which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone! This has come from Yehoveh and in our eyes it is amazing.

We are reading about the fundamental principle of agency. The landowner first sends servants as his agents to deal with his unruly tenants, but the wicked tenants assaulted a couple of them and killed a third. Thus, the father determined to send the ultimate agent, his son, whom the tenants were to recognize as bearing the authority of his father to the point that they were one in the same. They do recognize it, but kill the son anyway, which is symbolically the same as killing the father. They well understood that old Proverb that "if you've seen the son, you've seen the father".

Back to Malachai. It is not unreasonable to consider the possibility from our vantage point in history, that when Yehoveh is mentioned as coming to the Temple, that He could be represented in the spirit of agency by His Son, Yeshua. On the other hand, that is hardly necessary; it is only rigid Christian... doctrines that have made it so. God has been said to enter the Temple on a few occasions. Even so, when He does appear in a theophany, He manifests Himself by means of another agent called The Glory. Quite mysterious. Enough so, that we shouldn't assume an unbendable position on how, exactly, this looks and works. The Jews were certain that God would come to them; but, in what form? What might it look like? When He came in the form of Yeshua, they didn't recognize Him as such. Let's pray we don't fall into the same trap because Church doctrines demand that we adopt their answers for things that the Bible offers no concrete answers.

The "day" when He (God) comes is just a shortened form of the Day of Yehoveh. The day of judgment. A terrible day. Malachai is likened to a refiner's fire. Naturally, the refiner and soap maker are metaphors. The Hebrew word ***mesarep*** is meant to give us some illustration of both the purpose and the

method of purification by the refiner's fire that God will use to judge the world, including His own people. In fact, the purification as it is used here, is all about Israel; there's no real thought of including pagans in it. Israel has a large "dross" of wickedness among them. But, for purification to occur, the refiner has to completely melt down the precious metal so that the dross can be identified and separated from what is pure. All goes into the furnace, but only the pure metal survives. Isaiah explains what the smelting furnace of God is in reality and not metaphor.

CJB Isaiah 48:10 *"Look, I have refined you, but not [as severely] as silver; [rather] I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.*

So, unlike how silver is refined (under literally a super heating process using fire), Israel's equivalent will be affliction. Adversity. Tribulation. Hard times. Personal discomfort and danger. This is speaking of a communal affliction. That is, **all** of Israel will go through it as a nation of people. This will include all Believers.

CJB Matthew 24:1-13 *As Yeshua left the Temple and was going away, his talmidim came and called his attention to its buildings. ² But he answered them, "You see all these? Yes! I tell you, they will be totally destroyed- not a single stone will be left standing!" ³ When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the talmidim came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that you are coming, and that the 'olam hazeh is ending?" ⁴ Yeshua replied: "Watch out! Don't let anyone fool you! ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will lead many astray. ⁶ You will hear the noise of wars nearby and the news of wars far off; see to it that you don't become frightened. Such things must happen, but the end is yet to come. ⁷ For peoples will fight each other, nations will fight each other, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various parts of the world; ⁸ all this is but the beginning of the 'birth-pains.' ⁹ At that time you will be arrested and handed over to be punished and put to death, and all peoples will hate you because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will be trapped into betraying and hating each other, ¹¹ many false prophets will appear and fool*

many people; ¹² and many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from Torah. ¹³ But whoever holds out till the end will be delivered.

This is an End Times prophecy, and it deals with what Malachai was explaining. Terrible tribulation (affliction) for Israel and for Believers is coming. Why for gentile Believers as well? Because we are partners in Israel's covenants, having been grafted into them, and thus seen by God as members of the ideal Israel, which also goes by the name the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. These afflictions will not be escaped any more than when silver is refined does some of it escape the terrible heat of the furnace. Isaiah teaches us that this refining process that we will suffer will be through affliction, and here Yeshua reminds His listeners about it. He ends it with a warning that ought to frighten us: **only** whoever holds out till the end will be delivered. We won't, as God worshippers, be set aside and avoid refining, we will go through, and our true condition will be revealed. Those who endure this refining (the resultant purified metal) will be delivered and not destroyed. The dross, who are the wicked and the deceived that will have been culled out of the congregation according to God's standard of judgment, will not be delivered but they will be separated from the pure and destroyed. Please note: none of this is talking about pagans. This is not God dealing with the world; it is God dealing with those who claim Him.

Verse 3 is:

CJB Malachai 3:3 ³ He will sit, testing and purifying the silver; he will purify the sons of Levi, refining them like gold and silver, so that they can bring offerings to Yehoveh uprightly.

The first word of this verse is, in Hebrew, ***weyasab***. It means to crouch or stoop or to sit. It can extend to mean live or dwell. It is meant to work with the previous verse about refining silver. The silver smiths of the ancient times would sit, sort of bent over their smelting fire, to watch as the metal bubbled and the dross began to collect as a means of determining when the purification process was nearing its best and the dross and pure metal could be separated.

The person doing sitting over the molten metal is God... Yehoveh Tzva'ot, specifically.

It next says that God will purify the Priesthood (the sons of Levi) in the same way... through afflictions. What God is rooting out is the corrupted, and the corrupt, priests. While this no doubt includes priests that are dishonest in some way, it also means the corrupted way they serve... especially as it comes to sacrificial offerings. Earlier we read that sometimes the priests knowingly offered defective sacrifices. But they also were teaching the people their humanly devised doctrines... mixed with pagan religion... instead of teaching them God's Torah. In fact, in Hebraic language nuances that we won't get into, what is being said is that the refining is not a sudden or overnight event, but rather will be, and go on, UNTIL the priesthood can finally start bringing offerings to Yehoveh in the proper upright manner... which, by definition, includes sincerity and authenticity. Remember: this happens upon "The Day of the Lord". It's a further confirmation that this "day" is not meant as in a calendar day, or a Monday or a Tuesday, or as an event; but rather it is an era... a block of time... that Yehoveh's judgment plays out.

At this point in Malachai, the Priesthood... that is, the religious leadership... is what is being focused on, although they are not singled out. The general population of Israel (the Jews of Yehud) are included. Folks, our God is a God of patterns. His pattern is that FIRST and most strongly, He deals with the leadership of His people. In modern times, because the religious is separated from the civil leadership, then it is the religious or spiritual leadership that is the target. Are you a Pastor or an Elder or a Rabbi? Are you a Bible teacher? In fact, are you in any leadership position within ministry? Then this means you. There is no escaping it. Are YOU teaching truth or denominational doctrine? Are you emphasizing God's Word or your traditions and Church or Synagogue rules? How do we discern which is which? Over and over again, Yehoveh says to study, learn, teach and live the Torah and all of Holy Scripture. Yeshua taught exactly the same thing in the clearest possible words that I've quoted to you hundreds of times and will not stop until it becomes a reality in the lives of those who hear my words.

CJB Matthew 5:17-20 ***¹⁷ "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. ¹⁸ Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah- not until everything that must happen has happened. ¹⁹ So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!***

In Yeshua's day, the Torah teachers and the Pharisees were the Synagogue religious leadership. They are the exact equivalent of the Pastors, Rabbis, and Bible Teachers of the 21st century. Yeshua is telling the common people listening to Him, that it is up to them to seek out truth and that means seeking out the truth-tellers as opposed to the institutional religious leadership that was corrupted in their teachings. Yeshua was, Himself, a truth-teller and He was training up a group of truth-tellers that we call His Disciples. It should not surprise us that the corrupt institutional religious leadership called Yeshua and His Disciples blasphemers and heretics, and attempted to eliminate them. There is nothing new under the sun.

Back to Malachai chapter 3. Verse 4 is:

CJB Malachi 3:4 ***Then the offering of Y'hudah and Yerushalayim will be pleasing to Yehoveh, as it was in the days of old, as in years gone by.***

Verses 3 and 4 are one complete thought and never should have been separated into two. This phrasing of the combination of Yehud (NOT Judah as we'll always find it in our Bibles) along with Jerusalem is a way of expressing all who were present in the Holy Land. Only in the most hazily implied way can this be extended to the Diaspora Jews... the 95% of Jews who lived outside of the Holy Land. Yehoveh was calling for the Jews and the Priests to return to the earlier days when the altar sacrifices meant something, and therefore were efficacious. Recall, that earlier in Malachai, as of that time God decided NOT to

accept the sacrifices that were offered. Thus, even though lots and lots of sacrificing was continuing, they had no value and achieved no purpose. All that has followed verse 1 thus far shows that this prophecy is of a future time to Malachai. And, that there is no way that we can say that Messiah Yeshua fulfilled all of this at His first advent. The Priesthood was not fully refined, nor were the people, at that time. Even so, might we say that as we stand in history today that the process has begun and is ongoing even if not entirely noticeable? Yes, I think so, and it began at Yeshua's first advent.

CJB Acts 6:7 ***So the word of God continued to spread. The number of talmidim in Yerushalayim increased rapidly, and a large crowd of cohanim were becoming obedient to the faith.***

The refining was underway. Notice in this Acts passage that the number of Yeshua's disciples (the common folk) in Jerusalem was increasing, and a large number from the Priesthood were becoming obedient to the faith. Notice, more, what it was that was the crux of what was propelling the turnaround. It was the reinstatement of "the word of God", which later in this verse meant "becoming obedient to the faith". This is usually explained as meaning Yeshua's teachings and becoming obedient to the new faith that He created. That is simply not so. The "word of God" meant absolutely nothing else in that era than what we call the contents of the Old Testament. And, "the faith" meant the true Hebrew faith (as opposed to the Synagogue faith led by Pharisees, who mixed-in manmade doctrines). Yeshua's coming first and foremost created a reform movement among the Jewish people and led many among the religious leadership to go back to God's Word, to teach it and to practice it. We at Seed of Abraham Ministries Torah Class, as are many others today, calling for the same thing.

Malachai continues in verse 5 with:

CJB Malachi 3:5 ***"Then I will approach you for judgment; and I will be quick to witness against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers; against those who take advantage of wage-earners, widows and orphans; against those who rob the foreigner of his rights and don't fear me," says Yehoveh-Tzva'ot.***

The best way to approach verse 5, is to understand it as the answer to the accusation raised by the scoffers in verse 2:17: "Where is the God of justice?" Or maybe better in the overall context of Malachai, "Where is the God of judgment?" The first word of this verse is **weqarabti**. The "**we**" is a conjunction, and it can mean a few different things. Typically, it is translated as "then I will" or "I will draw near". This conjunction, however, is a very emphatic one and leans more towards "I absolutely will" or "I surely will". When we look closely at the Hebrew, we see a series of words that are used to describe a legal proceeding. Words like **mishpat** (justice, judgment, rendering a verdict), and **ed** (witness). What's important is that whenever something in the Bible takes the route of a legal proceeding, then it means it is about a covenant because the covenant is where laws and commands are laid down, the official proceeding to make a judgment is defined, and the consequences for the violations are enumerated.

So, in the legal procedure setting, then God is the witness and judge. He is the eyewitness because He has personally seen those who are violating His covenants and knows how these violations came about. "Where is the God of Judgment"? While His justice might seem to those Jews to be delayed, that is not the case. And it is certainly not the case that the chosen people will no longer stand before the great judge to answer for their lives. He will appear on the Day of Yehoveh. And during that block of time will begin to render His verdict as He states His case. We get a list of those He will witness against, based upon their particular sins. Sorcerers who practice witchcraft. Adulterers who divorce their Hebrew wives and then remarry foreign, pagan women. While this is so, adultery also applies to those Jews who mix pagan practices with the truth faith, or include some measure of calling upon gods other than Yehoveh. Perjurers; those who lie in court and show partiality. They cause the innocent to be judged guilty, or the guilty to be let off the hook. Along with that is the perjury of using God's name in a guarantee of making a vow, and then not following through with it. Next is the sin of those who take unfair advantage of Hebrew society's most vulnerable. They either underpay, cheat, or hold back a laborer's wages. Widows and orphans are to be treated with kindness and charity, not bullied and be left to starve or have nothing to keep them warm. After that is the treatment of non-Israelites... non-Jews who live

among the Jewish community. They rob them of their rights, exploit them, and treat them with disdain as if they don't matter. Note: these are NOT enemy foreigners. They are NOT societal disruptors. They just live among the Hebrews but, it was awfully easy to tell if someone was a Jew or not. The Hebrew word used is **ger**. A **ger** occupies a position sort of in the middle between a natural born Jew (an **ezrah**) and a foreigner who might be there but has no intent to be assimilated into the Jewish society and culture (a **nokri**). A **nokri** was an outsider. A **ger** was a gentile who at one time was an outsider, but is no longer.

And finally, this was an indictment against those who don't fear God. Earlier they were identified as the wicked or evil-doers. Again: NOT foreigners. Not **nokri**. But rather these were the **ezrah** and perhaps (to a degree) the **ger**. Israelites. Jews and those who wanted to be an integral part of Jewish society, and this always began with allegiance to the God of Israel. To not fear God, means to not show Him proper awe and reverence. They don't obey Him. They show no sincere allegiance to Him. These are the corrupt and the corrupted. They thumb their noses at the Law of Moses and in return expect blessings.

We have been studying the 4th burden (or oracle). It ends with verse 5. What we have, here, is that those Jews who were part of the returned community of Jews from Babylon (now probably the 3rd generation of the first returnees), who were living in the Persian province of Yehud, thought themselves as the righteous merely because they *were* part of the restoration community. Each thought that the lack they constantly suffered, and the continuing domination of the Persians they lived under, was the fault of someone else... to the point that some even felt that they were being righteous, but Yehoveh was not.

There was a mindset that perhaps God's covenant with Moses had been rescinded... at least in part. The wicked were thriving, but they, "the righteous", were not. Even more, the new covenant of Jeremiah seems to promise deliverance. The community would achieve prosperity. This had not happened so what else was the new covenant than a failed prophecy? And, where was God when they needed Him the most? It's not that they stopped believing that Yehoveh existed or was their God. It was that their behavior and

lifestyle were in crisis. What they forgot was that God's justice always begins with His own. The Torah couldn't be more explicit about this. Just because one was part of God's chosen people didn't buy them an exemption. Nothing about this changed after Yeshua came and went.

CJB 1 Peter 4:17 ***For the time has come for the judgment to begin. It begins with the household of God; and if it starts with us, what will the outcome be for those who are disobeying God's Good News?***

All throughout my life in the Church, I heard that it was the outsiders... the pagans... the unsaved... that had the most to fear. It was they that God was going to direct His wrath at. But, those who were part of the believing community could be held safe, no matter our behavior or deeds or lack of fruit. A simple prayer and declaration solved it all. Just existing as one who at one time or another asked Jesus into their heart was enough. Now, we are part of privileged few who get a universal exemption from trials, tribulation, and from God's judgment. None of this is biblical. None of this is the truth.

We all are expected to meet a God-defined standard. That standard is set down in the Law of Moses. Where we *are* fortunate, is that should we stumble and disobey God, we can repent and call on the name of Yeshua provided we are sincere. We can have our sins atoned for. This does not mean that we won't suffer God's discipline; but it does mean we won't be destroyed and perish for all eternity.

We'll stop here for today, and take up the 5th burden next time.