

THE LORD'S RETURN

Message 2

The Prophecy of the Lord's Coming in the Old Testament

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18; Dan. 2:28, 34-35, 44-45; Joel 1:4; Matt. 24:3, 14-15; 21:19; 24:32-34; Dan. 9:27; 2 Thes. 2:3-4, 7-8; Rev. 12:5-6; 14:1, 4; Matt. 24:40-41; Rev. 13:7; Dan. 7:25; 2 Tim. 3:1; Rev. 18:11-13; Mal. 3:1-3, 10; 4:2; Hag. 2:7; Luke 1:78; Acts 26:18; Prov. 4:18; Matt. 13:43

I. In order to be built up to be Christ's bride for His return, we need to see the vision of the divine history within human history, showing us "what will happen in the last days"—Dan. 2:28; Matt. 16:18; Gen. 2:22; cf. 11:4:

- A. In Daniel 2 the history of man is signified by a great human image, with the four sections of this image corresponding respectively to the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire; the armies of these empires were like locusts coming to devastate and consume Israel totally—vv. 34-35; Joel 1:4; cf. 2:25.
- B. During the church age (the age of the intrinsic history of the divine mystery within the outward, human history), Christ is building up the church to be His bride, and He will return with His overcoming bride as a smiting stone to crush the aggregate of human government and usher in the age of God's dominion over the entire earth—Gen. 2:22; Matt. 16:18; Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45; Rev. 17:14; 19:19; 11:15-17.

II. We must see the sign of Christ's coming and of the consummation of the age—Matt. 24:3, 14-15; Luke 21:28-36:

- A. The Lord prophesied that before Antichrist makes the covenant of seven years with the nation of Israel at the consummation of the present age, the nation of Israel would be restored—Matt. 21:19; 24:32-35; Dan. 9:27.
- B. Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, and his idol will be set up in the temple of God at the beginning of the great tribulation, which will last for three and a half years; this indicates that the temple must be rebuilt before the Lord comes back—v. 27; 2 Thes. 2:3-4.
- C. Before the great tribulation, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached to the whole inhabited earth and the overcomers will be raptured, leaving the majority of the believers, those who are not yet mature, on the earth to pass through the great tribulation—Rev. 12:5-6; 14:1, 4; Matt. 24:14-15, 40-41.
- D. The mystery of lawlessness is working today among the nations and in human society; this lawlessness will culminate in the man of lawlessness, Antichrist—2 Thes. 2:3-10:
 - 1. Antichrist will be the power of Satan, the embodiment of Satan; he will persecute and destroy the people of God—both the God-fearing Jews and the Christ believing Christians—Dan. 8:24; Rev. 12:17; 13:7.
 - 2. Antichrist will wear out the saints of the Most High—Dan. 7:25; 2 Tim. 3:1; cf. Mark 6:45-52.
 - 3. Satan and Antichrist want the souls of men to be the instruments for their activities in the last age—Rev. 18:11-13; 2 Tim. 3:5; cf. Zech. 12:1.

III. The book of Malachi reveals that we need to be purified and reconstituted with the healing Christ for His second coming—Mal. 3:1-3; 4:2:

- A. Malachi prophesied at the time of Nehemiah; at that time the priests and the remnant of God's people were in the darkness of self-deception, which is obsession—1:6-7; 1 John 1:8; Acts 9:1-2; John 16:2; cf. Phil. 3:3.

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- B. The healing Christ is the Messenger of God and the living message of God as a refiner's fire and as fullers' soap to purify and refine the degraded remnant of God's people—Mal. 3:1-3; Rev. 1:20; 2:1; Amos 3:7; cf. Luke 2:26; Heb. 11:7.
- C. The healing Christ is the Angel of the covenant—Mal. 3:1.
- D. The healing Christ is the Desire of all the nations—v. 1; Hag. 2:7.
- E. The healing Christ is the Sun of righteousness—Mal. 4:2; 3:1-3:
 - 1. In His first coming, Christ was the dawning Sun to the dark age; in His second coming, Christ will return as the Sun of righteousness in His kingdom—Luke 1:78; Mal. 4:2; cf. Matt. 17:1-8.
 - 2. As the Sun of righteousness, Christ is our enjoyment for our growth in life in the dispelling of darkness, and for our healing in life in the effacing of unrighteousness—John 1:4-5; 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:6; Acts 26:18.
 - 3. To be healed is to be saved, to be made whole; Christ will heal us, but we must give Him the freedom to use His wings to fly above us, around us, through us, and within us—Mal. 4:2; Prov. 4:18.
 - 4. The overcomers who are reconstituted with Christ as the Sun will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father—Matt. 13:43; Judg. 5:31.