
MALACHI 1: 1 An oracle: the LORD's word to Israel by Malachi.

This chapter begins with showing the great and free favor which God had manifested to the Israelites, above what he had done to the Edomites, who are threatened with farther marks of the Divine displeasure; alluding, perhaps, to the calamities which they suffered from Judas Maccabeus and John Hyrcanus, (see 1 Maccabees 5:65, and Joseph Antiq. 13:9), Mal 1:1-5. God then reproaches his people, and especially their priests, for their ungrateful returns to his distinguished goodness, Mal 1:6. They are particularly charged with sacrificing the refuse of beasts, Mal 1:7-9, for which God threatens to reject them, Mal 1:10, and choose other nations who will show more reverence to his name and worship, Mal 1:11-14.

Verse 1

The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi - This prophet is undoubtedly the last of the Jewish prophets. He lived after Zechariah and Haggai; for we find that the temple, which was begun in their time, was standing complete in his. See Mal 3:10. Some have thought that he was contemporary with Nehemiah; indeed, several have supposed that Malachi, is no other than Ezra under the feigned name of angel of the Lord, or my angel. John the Baptist was the link that connected Malachi with Christ. According to Abp. Usher he flourished b.c. 416, but the authorized version, which we have followed in the margin, states this event to have happened nineteen years later. Both the Hebrew language and poetry had declined in his days.

Israel - Here means the Jewish people in general.

MALACHI 1: 2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. Yet you say, "How have you loved us?" "Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother?" says the LORD, "Yet I loved Jacob;

Verse 2

Was not Esau Jacob's brother? - Have I not shown a greater partiality to the Israelites than I have to the Edomites?

I loved Jacob - My love to Jacob has been proved by giving him greater privileges and a better inheritance than what I have given to Esau.

MALACHI 1: 3 but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness."

Verse 3

And I hated Esau - I have shown him less love; Gen 29:30, Gen 29:31. I comparatively hated him by giving him an inferior lot. And now, I have not only laid waste the dwelling-place of the Edomites, by the incursions of their enemies; but (Mal 1:4) they shall remain the perpetual monuments of my

vengeance. On the subject of loving Jacob and hating Esau, see the notes on Genesis 27 (note), and Rom 9:13 (note). Let it be remembered,

1. That there is not a word spoken here concerning the eternal state of either Jacob or Esau.
2. That what is spoken concerns merely their earthly possessions. And,
3. That it does not concern the two brothers at all, but the posterity of each.

MALACHI 1: 4 Whereas Edom says, "We are beaten down, but we will return and build the waste places"; thus says the LORD of Armies, "They shall build, but I will throw down; and men will call them 'The Wicked Land,' even the people against whom the LORD shows wrath forever."

Verse 4

They shall build, but I will throw down - We have already seen enough of the wickedness of the Edomites to justify the utmost severity of Divine justice against them. The pulling down predicted here was by Judas Maccabeus; see 1 Maccabees 5:65; and by John Hyrcanus; see Joseph Antiq., lib. 13 c. 9. s. 1.

They shall call them, The border of wickedness - A wicked land. Among this people scarcely any trace of good could ever be noted.

MALACHI 1: 5 Your eyes will see, and you will say, "The LORD is great—even beyond the border of Israel!"

Verse 5

Your eyes - Ye Israelites shall see, in your succeeding generations, that: -

The Lord will be magnified - By his kindness in Israel, and his judgments beyond.

MALACHI 1: 6 "A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, then where is my honour? And if I am a master, where is the respect due me? Says the LORD of Armies to you, priests, who despise my name. You say, 'How have we despised your name?'

Verse 6

A son honoreth his father - I am your Father - where, then, is my honor? Where your filial obedience?

If I be a master, where is my fear? - The respect due to me.

MALACHI 1: 7 You offer polluted bread on my altar. You say, 'How have we polluted you?' In that you say, 'The LORD's table is contemptible.'

Verse 7

Ye offer polluted bread - The priests, probably to ingratiate themselves with the people, took the refuse beasts, etc., and offered them to God; and thus the sacrificial ordinances were rendered contemptible.

MALACHI 1: 8 When you offer the blind for sacrifice, isn't that evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, isn't that evil? Present it now to your governor! Will he be pleased with you? Or will he accept your person?" says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 8

Offer it now unto thy governor - תַּפְּחַת pechath, a word signifying a lieutenant, or viceroy, among the Chaldeans, Syrians, and Persians; for neither at this time, nor ever after, was there a king in Israel.

MALACHI 1: 9 "Now, please entreat the favour of God, that he may be gracious to us. With this, will he accept any of you?" says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 9

Beseech God - There were evident marks of God's displeasure in the land, and it was occasioned by these pollutions through the priests. And now he exhorts them to pray to God that they may be pardoned: for, if this practice be persisted in, God will not accept any offering made by them.

MALACHI 1: 10 "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you," says the LORD of Armies, "neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

Verse 10

Who is - among you - From this we learn that there was not one sincere or honest priest among them. They were selfish and worldly; and so basely so, that not one of them would even kindle a fire on the hearth of the altar unless he were paid for it.

MALACHI 1: 11 For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the nations," says the LORD of Armies.

 Verse 11

From the rising of the sun - The total abolition of the Mosaic sacrifices, and the establishment of a spiritual worship over the whole earth, is here foretold. The incense of praise, and the pure offering of the Lamb without spot, and through him a holy, loving heart, shall be presented everywhere among the Gentiles; and the Jews and their mock offerings shall be rejected.

MALACHI 1: 12 "But you profane it, in that you say, 'The LORD's table is polluted, and its fruit, even its food, is contemptible.'

 Verse 12

Ye have profaned it - Ye have desecrated God's worship; is it any wonder that God should cast you off, and follow you with his judgments?

MALACHI 1: 13 You say also, 'Behold, what a weariness it is!' and you have sniffed at it", says the LORD of Armies; "and you have brought that which was taken by violence, the lame, and the sick; thus you bring the offering. Should I accept this at your hand?" says the LORD.

 Verse 13

Ye have snuffed at it - A metaphor taken from cattle which do not like their fodder. They blow strongly through their nose upon it; and after this neither they nor any other cattle will eat it.

Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick - There had never been such abominations in the Divine worship before. What was of no worth in itself, and what could not be used by its owner, was brought to God's altar, and offered for sacrifice! Was not the punishment of these wretches less than their crimes?

MALACHI 1: 14 "But the deceiver is cursed, who has in his flock a male, and vows, and sacrifices to the Lord a defective thing; for I am a great King," says the LORD of Armies, "and my name is awesome among the nations."

 Verse 14

Cursed be the deceiver - Those who act thus, as they cannot elude God's notice, so neither shall they escape his curse.

And voweth, and sacrificeth - a corrupt thing - The history of Ananias and Sapphira, Act 5:1, etc., is a complete comment on this. It was high time to break up this corrupt service; and after this time God does not appear to have paid any regard to it, for he sent them no other prophet.