

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is called “Sepher Malachi”, the Book of Malachi; in the Vulgate Latin version, “the Prophecy of Malachi”; in the Syriac and Arabic versions, “the Prophecy of the Prophet Malachi”; According to Lactantius^{f1}, Zechariah was the last of the prophets; but the more commonly received opinion, and the truest, is, that Malachi was the last; hence Aben Ezra calls him **מַיָּאֲבֹנֵה פְּוֵס**, “the end of the prophets”; and by Kimchi he is said to be, **מִבְּצֵר וְרֵאשִׁית אֲחֵרִים** “the last of them”; and sometimes, by the Rabbins, **מַיָּאֲבֹנֵה מִטְּוֵי**, “the seal of the prophets”^{f2}; by whom they are all sealed up, concluded, and finished. His name signifies “my angel”, as is commonly said; though Hillerus^{f3} makes it to signify “the angel of the Lord”; hence some have thought that he was not a man, but an angel; and so the Septuagint render **ἡ καὶ ἐν τῷ**, in the first verse (^{<300>}Malachi 1:1), “by the hand of his angel”; and others have thought that the book takes its name, not from the author of it, but from the mention that is made of the messenger or angel of the Lord, John the Baptist, in (^{<300>}Malachi 3:1) but the more prevailing opinion is, that Malachi is the name of a man, the writer of the book, about whom the Jews have been divided. Rab Nachman says Malachi was Mordecai; and that he was so called because he was second to the king. R. Joshua ben Korcha contradicts him, and affirms Malachi is Ezra; and to him agrees the Chaldee paraphrase on (^{<300>}Malachi 1:1) which says, that Malachi, his name is called Ezra the scribe; but, as Kimchi observes, Ezra is never called a prophet, as Malachi is, only a scribe; wherefore in the Talmud^{f4}, where this matter is debated, it is concluded thus; but the wise men say, Malachi is his name; that is, it is the proper name of a man; there was a man of this name, that wrote this prophecy; not Mordecai, nor Ezra, nor Zerubbabel, nor Nehemiah, as some have thought; but Malachi: and if the accounts of Epiphanius^{f5} and Isidore^{f6} are to be credited, this prophet was born at Sapho, in the tribe of Zebulun; and had his name from his beautiful form, and unblemished life; and that he died very young, and was buried in his own field. The time of his prophesying is not agreed on: the Jews commonly make him contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah; they say^{f7} that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all of them prophesied in the second year of Darius; and Ganz, their chronologer^{f8}, places the death of these prophets together in one year; but he seems to be later than they: Haggai

prophesied before the building of the temple; Zechariah about the time of it; and Malachi after it, when the temple was rebuilt, and the worship of God restored and settled; and when both priests and people were become very corrupt and degenerate, of which he complains; so that it is possible that he might live a century after the other prophets, and about four centuries before the coming of Christ, during which time prophecy ceased; though some think he lived not long before the times of Christ, which is not probable. Bishop Usher^{f9} makes him contemporary with Nehemiah, and places him in the year 416 B.C.; and Mr. Whiston^{f10} in the year 400 B.C.; Mr. Bedford^{f11} in the year 424 B.C.: however, this book has been always accounted authentic, and a part of the canon of the Scripture; and is confirmed by the passages cited out of it, and the references made unto it, in the New Testament, (~~<0110>~~ Matthew 11:10 ~~<1002>~~ Mark 1:2 ~~<8901>~~ Romans 9:1) (~~<0172>~~ Matthew 17:12 ~~<1091>~~ Mark 9:11,12 ~~<0117>~~ Luke 1:17). The general design of it is to reprove the Jews for their ingratitude to the Lord, their neglect and contempt of his worship, and breach of his laws; and to raise in the minds of the truly godly an expectation of the Messiah, and his forerunner, John the Baptist.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 1

In this chapter the Lord declares his love to the people of Israel, and proves it; and complains that the honour due unto him was not given him; which he demonstrates by various instances. The inscription is in (~~300C~~ Malachi 1:1) showing the name and nature of the prophecy; the author of it; the people to whom it was sent; and the name of the person by whom. In (~~300C~~ Malachi 1:2) the Lord affirms his love to the people of Israel, which they called in question; and proves it to be real, special, and distinguishing, by the instance of Jacob and Esau, two brothers; yet one, their ancestor, was loved, and the other hated; which latter is proved by the desolations made in his country, and by the fruitless attempts made to repair and rebuild; which was so clear a proof of the Lord's indignation against him, that the Israelites could not but see it, and would be obliged to confess it, to the glory of God, (~~300B~~ Malachi 1:3-5) hence he passes on to observe the honour and fear that were due to him as a Father and master, which were not shown him; but, instead thereof, he was despised, and even by the priests themselves, with which they are charged, (~~300B~~ Malachi 1:6) and which being objected to by them, is proved by offering polluted bread on his altar; and by polluting him, in saying his table was contemptible; and by sacrificing the blind, the lame, and the sick, unto him; things which would be justly resented, if offered to a temporal prince and governor, (~~300C~~ Malachi 1:7,8) wherefore they are called upon by the prophet to pray to the Lord for grace and mercy for the people, seeing it was by their means (the priests) that these things were done; though it was questionable whether the Lord would have any regard to them, (~~300B~~ Malachi 1:9) their sins being so dreadfully aggravated; and particularly, inasmuch as they did not serve in the temple, not so much as shut a door, or kindle a fire on the altar, for nothing, without being paid for it; hence the Lord declares he had no pleasure in them, nor would he accept their offerings; but would call the Gentiles by his grace, among whom his name would be great from one end of the earth to the other; and incense and pure offerings would be offered by them to him, (~~300B~~ Malachi 1:10,11) and then he renews the charge against them, that they had profaned his name, by saying that his table, and

the fruit thereof, were polluted, and his meat contemptible; by expressing a weariness in his worship, and a contempt of it; and by bringing the torn, the lame, and sick, as an offering to him, (³⁰¹²Malachi 1:12,13) upon which such sacrificers are declared deceivers, and pronounced accursed, which they might assure themselves was and would be their case; since he was a great King, and his name dreadful among the Heathen, (³⁰¹⁴Malachi 1:14).

Ver. 1. *The burden of the word of the Lord*, etc.] By which is meant the prophecy of this book, so called, not because heavy, burdensome, and distressing, either for the prophet to carry, or the people to bear; for some part of it, which respects Christ, and his forerunner, was matter of joy to the people of God; but because it was a message sent by the Lord, and carried by the prophet to the people; (see Gill on “³⁰⁰¹Zechariah 9:1”) (See Gill on “³⁰⁰¹Zechariah 12:1”) and this was not the word of man, but of God, a part of Scripture, by divine inspiration. The Syriac version is, “the vision of the words of the Lord”: and the Arabic version, “the revelation of the word of the Lord”; and the Septuagint version, “the assumption of the word of the Lord”; it was what was revealed, made known, and delivered by the Lord to the prophet, and taken up by him, and carried to Israel, which was the general name of all the twelve tribes, when under one prince; but when the kingdom was divided, in Rehoboam’s time, it was peculiar to the ten tribes, as Judah was to the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah; but after the return of these two from the Babylonish captivity, in which they were joined by some of the other tribes, it was given unto them as here:

by Malachi; or, “by the hand of Malachi”^{f12}; he was the instrument the Lord made use of; the person whom he sent, and by whom he delivered the following prophecy.

Ver. 2. *I have loved you, saith the Lord*, etc.] Which appeared of old, by choosing them, above all people upon the face of the earth, to be his special and peculiar people; by bestowing peculiar favours and blessings upon them, both temporal and spiritual; by continuing them a people, through a variety of changes and revolutions; and by lately bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, restoring their land unto them, and the pure worship of God among them:

Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? the Targum renders it, “and if ye should say”; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech; which intimates, that though they might not have expressed themselves in so many words, yet they

seemed disposed to say so; they thought it, if they said it not; and therefore, to prevent such an objection, as well as to show their ingratitude, it is put in this form; and an instance of his love is demanded, which is very surprising, when they had so many; and shows great stupidity and unthankfulness. Abarbinel renders the words, “wherefore hast thou loved us?” that is, is there not a reason to be given for loving us? which he supposes was the love of Abraham to God; and therefore his love to them was not free, but by way of reward to Abraham’s love; and consequently they were not so much obliged to him for it: to which is replied,

[was] not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the Lord; Jacob and Esau were brethren; they had one and the same father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah, and equally descended from Abraham; so that if one was loved for the sake of Abraham, as suggested, according to Abarbinel’s sense, the other had an equal claim to it; they lay in the same womb together; they were twins; and if any could be thought to have the advantage by birth, Esau had it, being born first: but before they were born, and before they had done good or evil, what is afterwards said of them was in the heart of God towards them; which shows that the love of God to his people is free, sovereign, and distinguishing, (^{<1253>}Genesis 25:23 ^{<8911>}Romans 9:11-13):

yet I loved Jacob; personally considered; not only by giving him the temporal birthright and blessing, and the advantages arising from thence; but by choosing him to everlasting life, bestowing his grace upon him, revealing Christ unto him, and making him a partaker of eternal happiness; and also his posterity, as appears by the above instances mentioned; and likewise mystically considered, for all the elect, redeemed, and called, go by the name of Jacob and Israel in Scripture frequently; for what is here said of Jacob is true of all the individuals of God’s people; for which purpose the apostle refers to this passage in (^{<8913>}Romans 9:13), to prove the sovereignty and distinction of the love of God in their election and salvation: and this is indeed a clear proof that the love of God to his people is entirely free from all motives and conditions in them, being before they had done either good or evil; and therefore did not arise from any goodness in them, nor from their love to him nor from any good works done by them: the choice of persons to everlasting life, the fruit of this love, is denied to be of works, and is ascribed to grace; it passed before any were wrought; and what are done by the best of men are the effects of it; and the persons chosen or passed by were in an equal state when both were done; which appears by this instance: and by which also it is manifest that the

love of God to men is distinguishing; it is not alike to all men; there is a peculiar favour he bears to own people; which is evident by the choice of some, and not others; by the redemption of them out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; by the effectual calling of them out of the world; by the application of the blessings of grace unto them; and by bestowing eternal life on them: and it may be further observed, that the objects of God's love have not always the knowledge of it; indeed they have no knowledge of it before conversion, which is the open time of love; and after conversion they have not always distinct and appropriating views of it; only when God is pleased to come and manifest it unto them.

Ver. 3. *And I hated Esau*, etc.] Or, “rejected” him, as the Targum; did not love him as Jacob: this was a negative, not positive hatred; it is true of him, personally considered; not only by taking away the birthright and blessing from him, which he despised; but by denying him his special grace, leaving him in his sins, and to his lusts, so that he became a profane person; shared not in the grace of God here, and had no part in the eternal inheritance with the saints in light; and likewise it is true of his posterity, as the following instances show:

and laid his mountains and his heritage waste; which, according to Grotius, was done by Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the captivity of the Jews, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, (^{<BIB>}Jeremiah 49:7-22) but this was done by the Nabatheans^{f13}: Mount Seir was the famous mountain that Esau dwelt in, (^{<BIB>}Genesis 36:8) there might be more in his country; or this might have many tops, and therefore called “mountains”; and to this account of the waste and desolate state of this country agrees what is at present related of it, by a late traveller^{f14} in those parts:

“if (says he) we leave Palestine and Egypt behind us, and pursue our physical observations into the land of Edom, we shall be presented with a variety of prospects, quite different from those we have lately met with in the land of Canaan, or in the field of Zoan; for we cannot here be entertained with pastures clothed with flocks, or with valleys standing thick with corn, or with brooks of water, or fountains, or depths that spring out of valleys and hills, (^{<BIB>}Deuteronomy 8:7) here is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or pomegranates, (^{<BIB>}Numbers 20:5) but the whole is an “evil place”, a lonesome desolate wilderness; no otherwise diversified than by plains covered with sand, and by mountains

made up of naked rocks and precipices, (^{300B}Malachi 1:3) neither is this country ever (unless sometimes at the equinoxes) refreshed with rain; but the few hardy vegetables it produces are stunted by a perpetual drought; and the nourishment which the dews contribute to them in the night, is sufficiently impaired by the powerful heat of the sun in the day:”

Though this country seems to have been originally more fruitful, and better cultivated, as may be concluded from (⁰²⁷³Genesis 27:39 ⁰⁴⁰⁷Numbers 20:17) but is become so through the judgments of God upon it:

for the dragons of the wilderness; so called to distinguish them from sea dragons, or the dragon fish; such as whales and crocodiles, which are sometimes expressed by the same word here used, (⁰⁰⁰²Genesis 1:21 ^{293B}Ezekiel 29:3) and these land dragons are no other than serpents of an enormous size. In the Indies they used to be distinguished into three sorts; such as were found in the mountains; such as were bred in caves, or in the flat country; and such as were found in fens and marshes. The first is the largest of all, and are covered with scales as resplendent as polished gold; these have a kind of beard hanging from their lower jaw; their eyebrows large, and very exactly arched; their aspect the most frightful that can be imagined; and their cry loud and shrill; their crest of a bright yellow; and a protuberance on their heads of the colour of a burning coal. Those of the flat country differ from the former in nothing but having their scales of a silver colour, and in their frequenting rivers, to which the former never come. Those that live in marshes and fens are of a dark colour, approaching to a black, move slowly, have no crest, or any rising on their heads^{f15}; these creatures commonly inhabit desert places. So Diodorus Siculus^{f16}, speaking of Ethiopia, says, it is reported that various kinds of serpents, and of an incredible size, are seen near the desert, had in places inhabited by wild beasts; and Aelianus^{f17} describes the dragon as dwelling in woods, and living on poisonous herbs; and preferring a desolate place to cities, and the habitations of men; and when in Scripture it is predicted of countries and cities that they shall become desolate, it is usually observed, that they shall be the dwelling places of dragons, as in (²³³²Isaiah 13:22 ³⁴¹²Jeremiah 10:22 ^{49:33} ²⁵³⁷Jeremiah 51:37) so here it is foretold that it should be the case of Edom, as it has been, and still continues to be, as appears from the above traveller^{f18}; who, passing through some part of this country, says of it,

“vipers, especially in the wilderness of Sin, which might be very properly called “the inheritance of dragons”, were very dangerous and troublesome; not only our camels, but the Arabs who attended them, running every moment the risk of being bitten;”

so that, according to the prediction, it is now a place for such creatures. A learned Jew^{f19} is of opinion, that not serpents, but jackals, are here meant, which are a sort of wild howling beasts, that live abroad in desolate places; (see Gill on “~~33008~~ Micah 1:8”) but whether they be the one, or the other, it makes for the same purpose, to denote what a desert place Edom would become; since it should be inhabited by such creatures to dwell in, which denotes the utter desolation made. So the Targum renders it, “into the wasteness of the desert”; or into a waste desert, where none but such sort of animals inhabit. The Septuagint and Syriac versions render it, “into the houses”, or “cottages, of the desert”: and now, though this was the case of Judea, that it was left desolate, yet it was but for a while; at the end of seventy years the Jews returned to their own land, and dwelt in it; but so did not the Edomites, as appears by the following words; which shows the regard God had to the posterity of Jacob, and not to the posterity of Esau.

Ver. 4. *Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished,* etc.] Or the Idumeans, as the Targum; the posterity of Esau, who acknowledge themselves greatly reduced by the desolations made in their country, cities, towns, and houses, being plundered of all their valuable things. Kimchi interprets it, if the congregation of Edom should say, though we are become poor and low, and our land is laid waste:

but we will return; being now become rich, as the Targum adds; that is, as Jarchi explains it, with the spoils of Jerusalem:

and build the desolate places: as Israel did, as Kimchi observes, when they returned from their captivity; and so the Edomites hoped to do the same:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; they attempted to build again their cities and towns, but could not succeed, God was against them:

and they shall call them; or, “they shall be called”^{f20}; this shall be the name they, shall go by among men, by way of proverb and reproach:

The border of wickedness; a wicked kingdom and nation, from one end to the other; this shall be said of them, as the reason of their utter and perpetual desolation:

and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever; not for seventy years only, as against the Jews, (^{<3012>}Zechariah 1:12), but forever; and these are now no more a people; they are utterly extinct; their name and nation are lost; there is not the least appearance of them; when the Jews, though they are scattered about in the world, yet they are still a people, and distinct from all others.

Ver. 5. *And your eyes shall see*, etc.] The destruction of the Edomites, and their fruitless attempts to rebuild their desolate places; and the difference between them and the Israelites, who were returned to their own land, and inherited it, when they could not; and the love of God to the one, and his hatred of the other:

and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel; Aben Ezra interprets it, ye that dwelt in the border of Israel shall say, the Lord shall be magnified, or let him be magnified; let greatness and glory be ascribed to him for what he has done: or, as Kimchi, give him praise and greatness because you are dwelling in your border, and their border is desolate; and your border is called the border of Israel, but theirs the border of wickedness; and so the Targum,

“let the glory of the Lord be multiplied, because he hath enlarged the border of Israel;”

and, according to Jarchi, the sense is, he shall show his greatness from our border, to make it known that we are his people: all show and own that God had loved them more than others, and therefore they ought to have honoured and obeyed him, in which they were deficient, and so ungrateful.

Ver. 6. *A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master*, etc.] Or, “will honour”, or “should honour”; it is their duty to do so, both according to the laws of God and man; and so the Targum,

“lo concerning a son it is said (or commanded) that he should honour his father; and of a servant, that he should fear (or show reverence) before his master;”

(see ^{<1212>}Exodus 20:12 ^{<1015>}Ephesians 6:5):

if then I [be] a Father; as he was the Father of his divine and eternal Son; the Father of spirits, angels, and the souls of men; the Father of all men by creation; and the Father of all mercies to them in providence, as he was to Israel; and, besides, was their Father by national adoption, as he was not to other people; and to many of them stood in this relation by special adopting grace:

where [is] mine honour? there is an honour due to God on account of this relation; which should be shown by loving him, trusting in him, calling upon him, imitating and obeying him, and by making use of what he has given for his glory; he is to be honoured in heart and life, by words and actions, and with our substance. This question suggests, that he had not the honour given him, which belonged unto him:

and if I [be] a master; the word is in the plural number, and may be understood of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; though the first Person seems rather designed, who stands in this relation to Christ, as Mediator; to the angels, his ministering spirits; to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all the saints; and indeed to all men, and particularly to the Israelites; as appeared by the special laws and commands he enjoined them, and by his special government, protection, and care of them:

where [is] my fear? fear and reverence are due to the Lord from his people, considered in such a relation to them; not a slavish fear of wrath and punishment; but a godly filial fear, which is influenced by the goodness of God, and appears in a carefulness not to offend him, and by the performance of all religious worship, both private and public; and in this not only natural men, but professors of religion, and even God's own people, are wanting; yea, those that should set examples to others, as men in public office, and of a public character, as follows:

saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name; for what is before said is not only said to the people in general; but to the priests in particular, who ought to have honoured and feared the Lord; and yet they despised his name, or made it contemptible; by not paying that regard to his authority, as a Father and master, they ought; by neglecting his worship, and not taking that care of offerings and sacrifices as became them:

and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? as if they were entirely innocent and guiltless.

Ver. 7. *Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar*, etc.] Which some understand of the shewbread, mention being afterwards made of a “table”, as Jerom; who observes that it was made of wheat, which the priests themselves sowed, reaped, ground, and baked, and so could take what they would out of it: as for their sowing it, it does not seem likely that they should be employed in such service, whatever may be said for their reaping; since the sheaf of the first fruits was reaped by persons deputed from the sanhedrim^{f21}; though of the reaping of that for the shewbread, I find no mention made; but as for grinding, sifting, kneading, and making it into loaves, and baking it, and taking it out of the oven, and putting it upon the table of shewbread, all this was the work of the priests^{f22}; and those of the house of Garmu^{f23} were appointed over that work: now, this bread might be said to be polluted, when they set upon the table such as was not made of fine wheat flour, and had not pure frankincense put upon or by each row, as the law required, (~~Q45~~Leviticus 24:5,7) nor is it any material objection to this sense, that it is an altar, and not a table, on which this bread was offered; since, as the altar is called a table, (~~Q42~~Ezekiel 41:22), as this is in a following clause, the table may be called an altar; though it may be observed, that the shewbread is never said to be offered, but to be set, or put upon the table: indeed the burning of the frankincense set by it is called an offering made by fire unto the Lord, (~~Q47~~Leviticus 24:7) wherefore others interpret this of the daily meat offering, which went along with the daily sacrifice of the lambs, and part of which was burnt on the altar, (~~Q44~~Exodus 29:40-42) or rather this designs sacrifice in general, sometimes called “bread”, (~~Q11~~Leviticus 3:11,16 21:6) and so the Targum here,

“ye offer upon my altar an abominable offering;”

such as had blemishes in them, were blind or lame, as after mentioned; and had not the requisites of a sacrifice in them; or were offered not in a right manner, or by bad men, and with a wicked mind:

and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? thy bread offering or altar; as if their offerings were pure, and they themselves, and their consciences pure from sin. The answer is,

In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible; either the shewbread table, which yet was covered with gold, and all the vessels of it made of gold; or the altar, as in (~~Q42~~Ezekiel 41:22) their actions spoke so loud, and declared that the table or altar of the Lord was a contemptible thing, since

they cared not what was offered upon it: or the reason why it was had in contempt, as some think, was because there was not that holiness in the second temple as in the first: or, as Abarbinel and Kimchi say, because of the fat and the blood which were offered on the altar, which they esteemed contemptible things; not observing the end for which the Lord commanded them to be offered.

Ver. 8. *And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil?* etc.]

Certainly it is, according to the law in (^(R22)Leviticus 22:22) or, as Kimchi interprets it, when they bring to you a lamb that is blind for sacrifice to offer it up, ye say, this is not evil; but it is good to offer it up, because the table is contemptible. The sense is, that, however evil this may be in itself, according to them it was good enough to be offered up upon the altar; which proves that they despised the name of the Lord, offered polluted bread or sacrifice on his altar, and had his table in contempt:

and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? verily it is, by the law of God, which forbids the offering of such things, (^(R21)Leviticus 22:21,22) (^(R5)Deuteronomy 15:21) this was always observed, in all sacrifices under the law, that they were perfect, and without any blemish, whether of the flock, or of the herd; and this was strictly observed, even by the Heathens themselves: so Achilles, in Homer^{f24}, speaks of the perfect lambs and goats they offered in sacrifice; and particularly they were not to be lame, or to halt; such were reckoned choice and excellent sacrifices, which were larger and better fed than others; and which were not lame, nor diseased, nor sickly; for things future could not be known, they say, but from a sound victim^{f25}; for they pretended to have knowledge of them, by the entrails of the sacrifices. So Pliny^{f26} observes, that this is to be remarked, that calves brought to the altar on men's shoulders are not to be sacrificed; nor are the gods appeased by one that halts; in short, it is said^{f27}, whatever is not perfect and sound is not to be offered to them; and, besides these here mentioned in the text, there were many others, which the Jews especially observed, which rendered creatures unfit for sacrifice. Maimonides^{f28} reckons up no less than fifty blemishes, by reason of which the priests under the law might not offer a creature for sacrifice: no doubt but the laws of Moses concerning this matter had a respect to the pure, perfect, and spotless sacrifice of Christ, which the legal ones were typical of; and teach us this lesson, that, without a complete sacrifice, no atonement or satisfaction for sin could be made: or, it is not evil in your eyes, as Aben Ezra glosses it; which is the same as before:

offer it now unto thy governor; to Zerubbabel, who was governor of Judea at this time, (^{<3000>}Haggai 1:1) for they had no king. The meaning is, offer a lamb or any other creature that is blind, sick, and lame; make a present of it to him that had the government of them; make trial this way, and see how acceptable it would be to him:

will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts; will he thank thee for it, or have any respect to thee on account of it? but, on the contrary, will he not resent it as an affront to him? and if so it would be with an earthly prince, how can it be thought that to offer the blind, lame, and sick, should be acceptable to the King of kings, and Lord of lords?

Ver. 9. *And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us*, etc.] These are the words of the prophet to the priests; and are spoken either seriously, exhorting them to that part of their office which lay in interceding for the people that God would be gracious to them, and forgive their sins; and the rather, inasmuch as they had been the means of their sin, and accessory to it, who ought to have reprov'd them for bringing such offerings, and should have refused to offer them for them; or otherwise, if they did not do this, they could not expect that God would accept their persons, and their offerings: or else ironically, now you have offered such sacrifices to the Lord, as the blind, the lame, and sick, go and intercede for the people; pray that their sins may be forgiven them, and that the curse may be removed from them, and see how you will succeed:

this hath been by your means; that such sacrifices were offered up; they indulg'd the people in such practices, and encouraged them; the fault was theirs; or this curse, as Kimchi explains it, from (^{<3014>}Malachi 1:14):

will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts; can you ever imagine that God will have any respect to your persons or prayers, when you have acted so vile a part, and been the cause of so much sin and evil? no, he will not, as is asserted in the following verse (^{<3010>}Malachi 1:10).

Ver. 10. *Who [is there] even among you that would shut the doors [for nought]? etc.*] Either of the temple, as the Targum and Jarchi; for at each of the gates of the temple there were porters appointed in David's time, (^{<1300>}1 Chronicles 26:1-19) and who were paid for their service: or of the court, as Kimchi; the court of the priests where the offerings were brought. The words "for nought" are not, in the original text, at the end of this

clause, but at the end of the next; and are by some referred to both; and by others restrained to the latter; and who give this as the sense of the words, “who is there”, or “would there were any among you?”^{f29} any good man that would shut the doors of the temple, that so a man might not bring an abominable offering; intimating, that the priests or Levites however, who were porters, ought to shut the doors against such persons; and this way go Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel; to which the Chaldee paraphrase inclines; which is,

“who is there among you that will shut the door of the house of my sanctuary, that ye may not offer on mine altar an abominable sacrifice?”

but the same writers, out of an ancient book called Torath Cohanim, observe a sense that agrees with ours,

“a man says to his friend, shut this door for me, he desires nothing for it; light me this candle, he asks no reward for it; but as for you, who is there among you that will shut my doors for nought? or kindle a fire on mine altar for nought? and how much less will ye do freely those things which used to be done for reward? therefore I have no pleasure in you.”

There were four and twenty porters to open and shut the doors of the mountain of the house, or the temple, and the court of women in the daytime; six on the east side; four on the north; four on the south; at Asuppim two and two, four in all; four on the west, and two at Parbar^{f30}: here they attended in the daytime, to keep the place pure and peaceable; and there seems to have been one over all the rest, whose business was to see that the doors at evening were shut by them: in the Misnah^{f31} we are told that Ben Geber was appointed over the shutting of the gates, i.e. of the temple; and at night there were four and twenty guards also that kept watch; the priests kept guard in three places; in the room “abtines”, in the room “nitsots”, and in the fire room; and one and twenty Levites; five at the five gates of the mountain of the house, or the compass of the temple; four at the four corners within; five at the five gates of the court; and four at its four corners without; one at the chamber “Corban”; one at the chamber over against the vail; and another behind the most holy place; and there was one that was called the man of the mountain of the house, who every night went through every ward with torches burning before him; and he had power to beat those he found asleep in their watch, and to burn

their garments^{f32}, to which the allusion is, (~~<6665>~~ Revelation 16:15), and these guards, as Bartenora^{f33} observes, were not on account of thieves and robbers, but for the honour of the house; and these, neither the one by day, nor the other by night, did their work for nought, but had a maintenance allowed them for it:

neither do ye kindle fire upon mine altar for nought: and this was done every morning, for though, as one of the Jewish writers says^{f34}, fire came down, from heaven, it was ordered that they should bring of common fire; and there were three piles or rows of fire made every day upon the altar; the first was a large one, on which they offered the daily sacrifice, with the rest of the offerings; the second was on the side of it, a little one, from whence they took fire in the censer to burn incense every day; the third had no other use for it but to confirm the command concerning fire; as it is said, “the fire shall ever be burning”, (~~<6663>~~ Leviticus 6:13)^{f35} and this fire was kindled to burn the sacrifices, the daily sacrifice, and other burnt offerings, for which they were paid out of the tithes, and other oblations; (see ~~<6663>~~ 1 Corinthians 9:13) this was an aggravation of their negligence and carelessness about what offerings were brought and sacrificed; seeing they were so well taken care of, and such a sufficient maintenance provided for them; so that they did not the least piece of service in the temple but they were fully rewarded for it; even not so much as to shut a door, or kindle a fire; and therefore it is no wonder their conduct should be resented, as follows:

I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts; neither in your persons, nor in your offerings:

neither will I accept an offering at your hand: the “minchah” or meat offering, any meat offering, particularly that which was offered morning and evening with the daily sacrifice, (~~<6294>~~ Exodus 29:40,41) and it is sometimes used particularly for the evening meat offering, (~~<2165>~~ 2 Kings 16:15) or rather, “a wheat” or “bread offering”; since this offering was made of fine flour, with oil poured upon it, and frankincense put upon that, (~~<6661>~~ Leviticus 2:1) hence mention is made of “incense” in the next verse (~~<3011>~~ Malachi 1:11); and it was either baked in an oven, or fried in a pan; and either way, when it was brought to the priest, it was burnt on the altar, and was an offering by fire to the Lord, and of a sweet savour to him, when rightly performed; and was a figure of the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God; and this passage respects Gospel times,

as appears from the following verse (³⁰¹¹Malachi 1:11), when Christ's sacrifice would be offered up, and so the oblation or meat offering made to cease, (²⁰²⁷Daniel 9:27) hence God would not accept of it any more; or else because not rightly offered, as it was not when any leaven was mixed with it, or that and honey were burnt with it; signifying it should be offered with sincerity, and without hypocrisy, and other carnal lusts; and indeed no legal sacrifices were acceptable to God but such as were offered up in the faith of Christ, and with a view to his sacrifice, without trusting to, and depending upon, the outward offering, as hypocrites and carnal persons did: wherefore to this is opposed a pure "minchah" or meat offering in the next verse (³⁰¹¹Malachi 1:11); which designs spiritual sacrifices, such as are now offered up under the Gospel dispensation; when offering and sacrifice of a ceremonial kind God desires not; he will have no more offered up; he takes no pleasure in them; they are not acceptable to him, being superseded by the sacrifice of his Son, they were types of; (see ³⁰¹⁶Psalms 40:6 ³⁰¹⁵Hebrews 10:5,6) and agreeably to which passages the words may be understood, as expressing the Lord's rejection of legal sacrifices in general among the Jews, which he would have no longer continued than till the Messiah came; by whose sufferings and death the daily sacrifice was caused to cease, (²⁰²⁷Daniel 9:27 ³⁰⁰⁴Hosea 3:4) when sacrifices of another kind should be offered up in the Gentile world, through every part of it, as in the following verse (³⁰¹¹Malachi 1:11).

Ver. 11. *For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same*, etc.] From east to west, which is all habitable; not so north and south, as Kimchi observes, the extremes of which are not habitable. Abarbinel thinks that *m* in *j r zmm* is causal; and that the sense is, because of the motion of the sun in rising and setting, the Gentiles acknowledge God to be the first mover and cause of all things; and who, though they worship the host of heaven, yet ultimately direct their worship to the supreme Being, the Cause of causes; and supposes this to be a reproof of the priests, who might have learnt better even of the very Heathens; but the former is to the true sense, which declares the large extent of true spiritual worship in the Gentile world:

my name [shall be] great among the Gentiles; through the preaching of the Gospel, attended with the spirit and power of God to the conversion of many; whereby he himself is made known, and the perfections of his nature, and his several names, and particularly that of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus; who, as such, is called upon, and greatness and glory

are ascribed unto him for the gift of his Son, and the mission of him into the world, to be the Saviour of Gentiles as well as of Jews:

and in every place incense [shall be] offered unto my name; some Jewish writers understand this of Israelites, the disciples of the wise men, studying in the law, and putting up their evening prayers to God, in every place where they live among the Gentiles; which are as acceptable to God as if they offered incense, and a pure offering; this way goes Jarchi, to which agrees the Targum; and this sense is given in the Talmud^{f36}, and other writings of theirs; but Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, interpret it of the Gentiles, though in different ways, and foreign from the sense of the text; which is, that not in Jerusalem the worship of God should be as formerly, but in all places in the Gentile world, and where particularly prayer should be made to God; (see ^{<3000>}John 4:20,21,23 ^{<3000>}1 Timothy 2:8) comparable to incense for its fervency, fragrancy, and gratefulness, (^{<3000>}Psalm 141:2 ^{<3000>}Revelation 8:3,4):

and a pure offering; meaning either the Gentiles themselves, their souls and bodies, (^{<2600>}Isaiah 66:20 ^{<3000>}Psalm 51:17 ^{<3000>}Romans 12:1) or their sacrifices of praise, good works, and alms deeds (He 13:15,16) which, though imperfect, and not free from sin, may be said to be “pure”, proceeding from a pure heart, sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and offered in a pure and spiritual manner, and through the pure incense of Christ’s mediation:

for my name [shall be] great among; the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts; which is repeated for the certainty of it.

Ver. 12. *But ye have profaned it,* etc.] That is, the name of the Lord, which they are said to despise, (^{<3000>}Malachi 1:6) and pollute, (^{<3000>}Malachi 1:7) and is a reason why they and their offerings were rejected: and that they profaned the name of the Lord appears by this,

in that ye say, The table of the Lord [is] polluted: the same with “contemptible”, (^{<3000>}Malachi 1:7) as Kimchi observes; (see Gill on “^{<3000>}Malachi 1:7”):

and the fruit thereof, [even] his meat is contemptible; the word for fruit^{f37} sometimes is used for speech, the fruit of the lips, (^{<2570>}Isaiah 57:19) and taken in this sense here, as it is by some, may be understood either of the word of God, which commanded such and such sacrifices to be offered up upon the altar, and was despised, so Abarbinel: or the word of the priests,

who were continually saying that what was offered up on the altar was contemptible, even the food which they ate of; so Jarchi and Kimchi. “Fruit” and “meat” seem to signify one and the same thing, and design the fruit and meat of the altar; either that which belonged to the Lord, the fat and the blood, which were offered to him, and were reckoned contemptible; or that which fell to the share of the priests, which they thought mean and worthless. Cocceius interprets this of Christ the Branch of the Lord, and fruit of the earth, (^{230D}Isaiah 4:2) whose meat it was to do the will of him that sent him, and was despised and rejected by the Jews; and which was the reason of God’s casting them off, and taking in the Gentiles.

Ver. 13. *Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness [is it]?* etc.] These are either the words of the priests, saying what a wearisome and fatiguing business the temple service was to them, for which they thought they were poorly paid; such as slaying the sacrifices; removing the ashes from the altar; putting the wood in order; kindling the fire, and laying the sacrifice on it: or of the people that brought the sacrifice, who, when they brought a lamb upon their shoulders, and laid it down, said, how weary are we with bringing it, suggesting it was so fat and fleshy; so Kimchi and Abarbinel, to which sense the Targum seems to agree; which paraphrases it,

“but if ye say, lo, what we have brought is from our labour;”

and so the Syriac version, “and ye say, this is from our labour”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “and ye say, lo, from labour”; and the Septuagint version, “and ye say, these are from affliction”; meaning that what they brought was with great toil and labour, out of great poverty, misery, and affliction:

and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; or, “blown it”^{f38}; filled it with wind, that it might seem fat and fleshy, when it was poor and lean; so Abarbinel and Abendana: or ye have puffed, and panted, and blown, as persons weary with bringing such a heavy lamb, when it was so poor and light, that, if it was blown at, it would fall to the ground; so R. Joseph Kimchi: or ye have puffed at it, thrown it upon the ground by way of contempt; so David Kimchi: or, “ye have grieved him”^{f39}; the owner of the lamb, from whom they stole it; which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech; taking the word rendered “torn”, in the next clause, for that which was “stolen”. Jarchi says this is one of the eighteen words corrected

by the scribes; and that instead of *wtwa*, “it”, it should be read *ytwa*, “me”: and the whole rendered, “and ye have grieved me”; the Lord, by bringing such sacrifices, and complaining of weariness, and by their hypocrisy and deceitfulness. Cocceius renders the words, “ye have made him to expire”; meaning the Messiah, whom the Jews put to death:

and ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; (see Gill on “^{3010B}Malachi 1:8”) and if the first word is rendered “stolen”, as it may, this offering was an abomination to the Lord, (^{2610B}Isaiah 61:8):

thus ye brought an offering; such an one as it was: or a “minchah”, a meat offering, along with these abominable ones:

should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord; which, when offered to a civil governor, would not be acceptable, (^{3010B}Malachi 1:8) and when contrary to the express law of God.

Ver. 14. *But cursed be the deceiver*, etc.] A cunning, crafty, subtle man, who thinks and contrives, speaks and acts, in a very artful and deceiving manner; though some derive the word from *l ky*, “to be able”; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “who is able”; to bring a proper offering, a perfect lamb, as it follows:

which hath in his flock a male; without spot and blemish, as the law requires:

and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; that was a female, or had blemishes in it; for the law required what was perfect and without a blemish for a vow; what was superfluous or deficient in its parts might do for a freewill offering, but not for a vow, (^{1821B}Leviticus 22:18-20,23) wherefore such a man must be accursed, and such conduct must be highly resented by the Lord; had he it not in his power to do better, it might be excusable; but then it would be better not to have vowed at all; but to vow a sacrifice to the Lord, and deal deceitfully with him, when he could have brought an offering agreeable to his vow, and to the law, this is aggravated wickedness:

for I [am] a great King, saith the Lord of hosts; the King of the whole world, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and therefore to be honoured and revered suitable to his dignity and greatness:

and my name [is] dreadful among the heathen; because of his judgments executed among them; or rather because of his Gospel preached unto them; for this may be considered as a prophecy of what would be when the Gospel should be spread in the Gentile world; and therefore if they, when he was made known to them, would fear and reverence him; then the Israelites, to whom he had given such instances and proofs of his love, ought to have shown a greater regard unto him.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 2

This chapter contains a reproof both of priests and people for their sins. It begins with the priests, (^{301E}Malachi 2:1) and threatens, in case they attend not to glorify the name of the Lord, they and their blessings should be cursed, their seed corrupted, dung spread upon them, and they took away with it, (^{301E}Malachi 2:2,3) and the end of this commandment being sent them, of giving glory to the name of God, was that the covenant might appear to be with Levi, or him that was typified by him, (^{301E}Malachi 2:4) of which covenant some account is given, with the reason why the blessings of it were given to him, with whom it was, (^{301E}Malachi 2:5) who is described by the true doctrine he preached; by the purity of his lips; by the peaceableness and righteousness of his walk and conversation; and by his usefulness and success in turning many from sin, (^{301E}Malachi 2:6) and it being part of the priest's office to preserve true knowledge, and communicate it, it is the duty of the people to seek to him for it; since he is the messenger of the Lord, (^{301E}Malachi 2:7) but as for the priests of those times the prophet respects, they were apostates from the way of the Lord; made others to stumble at the law, and corrupted the covenant; and therefore became contemptible, base, and mean, in the sight of the people, (^{301E}Malachi 2:8,9) who are next reprov'd for their marrying with those of other nations, idolatrous persons; and using polygamy and divorces, which were a profanation of the covenant of their fathers; a piece of perfidy and treachery among themselves; an abomination to the Lord; a profanation of his holiness; and led to idolatry, (^{301E}Malachi 2:10,11) wherefore they are threatened to be cut off from the tabernacles of Jacob, and their sacrifices to be rejected; insomuch that the altar is represented as covered with weeping and tears, because disregarded, (^{301E}Malachi 2:12,13). The reason of which was, because marrying more wives than one, and these strange women, was dealing treacherously with their lawful wives; was contrary to the first creation of man, and the end of it; and therefore such practices ought to be avoided; and the rather, since putting away was hateful to the Lord, (^{301E}Malachi 2:14-16) and the chapter is concluded with a charge against them, that they wearied the Lord with their wicked words;

affirming that the Lord took delight in the men that did evil; and that there were no judgment, truth, nor righteousness, in him, (^{<3127>}Malachi 2:17).

Ver. 1. *And now, O ye priests,* etc.] That despised and profaned the name of the Lord; that suffered such corrupt and illegal sacrifices to be brought and offered up:

this commandment [is] for you: of giving glory to the name of God; of taking care of his worship; of teaching the people knowledge, and directing them in the way in which they should walk; as follows:

Ver. 2. *If ye will not hear,* etc.] The commandment enjoined them; or the Gospel preached to them by Christ, and his apostles:

and if ye will not lay [it] to heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts; which they had despised and profaned before; if they did not take care of his worship and service, and honour the Messiah sent unto them, in whom the name of the Lord was:

I will even send a curse upon you; both upon priests and people; those that bring the bad offerings, and those that receive them, as Kimchi; though Abarbinel restrains it to the priests:

and I will curse your blessings, either with which the priests blessed the people; or with which both they and the people were blessed; namely, their temporal blessings, such as their corn, and wine, and oil: and what wicked men have of this world, they have it with a curse, and not a blessing, as the righteous have; and therefore a little which they have, is better than much enjoyed by the wicked, (^{<3576>}Psalm 37:16):

yea, I have cursed them already; that is, from the time they began to despise his name, and not give him the glory due unto him, as Kimchi and Abarbinel explain it:

because ye do not lay [it] to heart; to glorify God.

Ver. 3. *Behold, I will corrupt your seed,* etc.] Or, “the seed for you”,^{f40}; that is, for your sake, as Kimchi and Ben Melech explain it; meaning the seed they cast into the earth, which the Lord threatens to corrupt and destroy; so that it should not spring up again, and bring forth any increase: or, “rebuke”^{f41} it, as the word sometimes signifies; and so the Targum,

“behold, I will rebuke you in the increase, the fruit (son) of the seed.”

The sense is the same; corrupting the seed being a rebuke to them; and rebuking the seed being a corruption of that, or hindering it from growing up. It is a threatening of a sore famine that should be in the Jewish nation; and which Cocceius thinks was that which happened in the days of Claudius Caesar, (^{<4112>}Acts 11:28,29). The Septuagint version renders it, “behold, I separate to you the shoulder”; the Arabic version, “the right hand”, or arm; and the Vulgate Latin is, “behold, I will cast forth to you the arm”; the right shoulder of the sacrifice, which was given to the priests, and here threatened to be cast to them with indignation, (^{<0172>}Leviticus 7:32,34 ^{<1581B>}Deuteronomy 18:3) but the former sense is best:

and spread dung upon your faces, [even] the dung of your solemn feasts; that is, the dung of their beasts which were slain for sacrifice at their solemn feasts: so this word **gj** is used for a beast offered for sacrifice at a festival, (^{<1487>}Psalms 118:27). The sense is, that their sacrifices and solemn feasts were so far from being acceptable to God, that he would reject both them and their persons, and would cast the very dung of the creatures brought for sacrifice into their faces, and spread it over them: a phrase expressive of the utmost contempt of them, and of exposing them to the greatest shame and confusion for their sins. So the Targum,

“I will make manifest the shame of your sins upon your faces; and will cause to cease the magnificence of your feasts.”

The Septuagint render it, the ventricle, or “maw”; which was given to the priests, (^{<1581B>}Deuteronomy 18:3) and in which the dung was contained:

and [one] shall take you away with it; with the dung spread upon them; they looking like a heap of dung, being covered with it, and had in no more account than that: or “to it”^{f42}; that is, as Jarchi explains it, to the dung of the beasts of your sacrifices they shall carry you; or you shall be carried to it, that ye may be rejected and despised as that. Kimchi’s note is

“the iniquity (you are guilty of) shall carry you to this contempt; measure for measure; you have despised me, and ye shall be despised:”

or “with him”, or “to himself”^{f43}; meaning he, or it that shall take them away; either the wind or dung; or the enemy, as Aben Ezra interprets it; by

whom the Romans may be designed, who took them away out of their own land, and carried them captive. According to the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, this is to be understood of God, who render the words, “I will take you together”, or “with it”.

Ver. 4. *And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you,* etc.] (See Gill on “~~3011~~Malachi 2:1”):

that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts; not that the ceremonial law might be confirmed and established, on which the Levitical priesthood was founded; for it was the will of God that that should be abolished, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it; but that the covenant of grace made with Christ, the antitype of Levi, with whom the true Urim and Thummim are, (~~4638~~Deuteronomy 33:8), who has a more excellent ministry and priesthood than his, might take place, be made manifest, and be exhibited under the Gospel dispensation; of which, and of the person with whom it is, an account is given in the following verses.

Ver. 5. *My covenant was with him of life and peace,* etc.] Not with Aaron, nor with Phinehas; nor is it to be understood of a covenant, promising temporal life and outward prosperity to either of them; Aaron living a hundred and twenty three years, (~~4639~~Numbers 33:39) and Phinehas, according to some Jewish writers, above three hundred years, which they gather from (~~4728~~Judges 20:28) but of the covenant made with Christ from everlasting, called “a covenant of life”, because it was made with Christ the Word of life, who was with the Father from all eternity, and in time was made manifest in the flesh; and was made in behalf of persons ordained to eternal life, and in which that was promised and given to them in him; and in which it was agreed that he should become man, and lay down his life as such, that they might enjoy it: and it is called a “covenant of peace”, because the scheme of peace and reconciliation was drawn in it, and agreed unto; Christ was appointed in it to be the Peacemaker; and in consequence of which he was sent to procure peace, and he has made it by the blood of his cross: and this covenant may be said to have been and to be “with him”; because it was made with him from all eternity, as the head and representative of his people, and he had all the blessings and promises of it put into his hands; and it stands fast with him, and will do so for evermore.

And I gave them to him; namely, the blessings of life and peace; eternal life is the gift of God; and not only the promise of it, but that itself, was given to Christ in covenant for his people, and a power to give it to as many as

the Father gave to him, (^{<3204>}Psalm 21:4) (^{<5001>}2 Timothy 1:1 ^{<6162>}1 John 5:12 ^{<6172>}John 17:2) he gave him also peace to make, put this work of peacemaking into his hand; and he allows it to be made by him, and that it is rightly effected; and from his blood and righteousness peace springs to his people; and they enjoy peace in him and through him, yea, all prosperity and happiness:

[for] the fear wherewith he feared me; because of his obedience to the precept and penalty of the law; because of his righteousness, and sufferings, and death, by means of which life and peace came to his people, and in which he showed great fear and reverence of God, (^{<8007>}Hebrews 5:7) the word “for” is not in the original text, and may be left out in a version, or supplied with “and”; and the sense be, besides the blessings of life and peace, I also gave him the fear with which he feared me; which must be understood of the grace of fear bestowed on him as man: so the Septuagint version, “I gave unto him in fear to fear me”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “and I gave him fear, and he feared me”: and the Arabic version, “I gave him fear, that he might fear me”: the Targum is,

“I gave him the perfect doctrine of the law, or the doctrine of the perfect law ((see ^{<5025>}James 1:25)) that he might fear before me.”

And was afraid before my name; frightened, and put into consternation, as he was when in the garden, and he began to be heavy and sore amazed, (^{<4143>}Mark 14:33) or he was broken and bruised, as Kimchi interprets the word here used, because of the name of the Lord, to satisfy his justice, fulfil his law, and glorify all his perfections.

Ver. 6. *The law of truth was in his mouth*, etc.] The Gospel, the word and doctrine of truth; which comes from the God of truth; is concerning Christ the truth and men are guided into it by the Spirit of truth; it contains most glorious truths, and nothing but truth: and this was in the mouth of Christ, being put there by his Father, who gave him what he should say, and what he should speak; and which was preached by him in the most faithful manner, and so as it never was by any other, for which he was abundantly qualified:

and iniquity was not found in his lips; there was none in his nature; nor in his heart; nor in his life; nor in his lips; none could be found there by men nor devils: there was no falsehood in his doctrines; no deceit in his promises; no dissimulation in his expressions of love to men; nothing vain,

light, frothy, and unprofitable, dropped from him in common conversation; no reviling in return to his enemies; nor any impatient expressions or murmurings at the time of his sufferings and death, (~~4122~~ 1 Peter 2:22,23):

he walked with me in peace and equity: he walked with God, he had communion with him; though he was sometimes left alone, he was not alone, God was with him; he was conformable to his will, and walked according to it, in obedience to his law, moral and ceremonial, and in the discharge of all religious duties: he walked with God “in peace”, without quarrelling with any of his dispensations towards him; he did nothing to break the peace that subsisted between them, but always did the things which pleased his father, and had peace in what he did; and he walked with him in “equity”, or righteousness, fulfilling his righteous law, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness:

and did turn many away from iniquity; doctrinal and practical; which is to be understood, not of a bare reformation only in principle and practice, but of true real conversion; of which there were many instances under the ministry of his forerunner John the Baptist, and under his own ministry when in person on earth; and under the ministry of his apostles, attended with his Spirit and power, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world.

Ver. 7. *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge*, etc.] Or “shall keep knowledge”, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; or “do keep knowledge”, as the Arabic version; and so the Syriac version, “for the lips of the priest drop knowledge”; all this is true of Christ our great High Priest; for as it was predicted of him, that his lips should keep knowledge, so they have kept it, and do keep it; not concealing it, but preserving it, and communicating it freely and openly; as he did to his disciples and followers when here on earth, and by them to others; and still does by his Spirit, giving to men the knowledge of themselves and state; the knowledge of himself, and the way of salvation by him, and of the truths of the Gospel:

and they should seek the law at his mouth; not the law of Moses, but the doctrine of grace, and any wholesome instruction and advice; which he is greatly qualified to give, being the wonderful Counsellor: it may be rendered, “they shall seek”, or “do seek”; and which has been fulfilled, especially in the Gentiles, and in the isles that waited for his law or doctrine, (~~23110~~ Isaiah 11:10 42:4):

for he [is] the messenger of the Lord of hosts; or “angel”^{f44}; he is the Angel of God’s presence, and of the covenant, (^{236B}Isaiah 63:9) (^{300B}Malachi 3:1) which name he has from being sent, for he came not of himself, but his Father sent him; he was sent as a priest to atone for the sins of his people, and to be their Saviour; and as a prophet, to instruct and teach them; and therefore they should seek to him for knowledge, and attend his word and ordinances, and implore his spirit and grace.

Ver. 8. *But ye are departed out of the way*, etc.] Of truth and righteousness, of life and peace, of eternal salvation and happiness, pointed to by Christ and his forerunner, and by his apostles and ministers that followed him, and which was clearly showed in the preaching of the Gospel: this was the character of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, in Christ’s time, to which the prophet seems to have respect; who not only failed in their observance of legal sacrifices, complained of in the former chapter (^{300B}Malachi 1:1-14), but left that way of atonement and salvation they directed to, and led others out of the way with them:

ye have caused many to stumble at the law; at the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; which was the stumbling stone they fell at, seeking for righteousness, and directing others to seek for it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, (^{402B}Romans 9:32,33):

ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts: that which was foreshadowed by the Levitical priesthood and covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, dispensed under the Gospel dispensation by the ministry of the word and ordinances; which they rejected, despised, and set at nought, and as much as in them lay endeavoured to make void, by not attending to these things, nor suffering others, but doing all they could to bring them into disuse, contempt, and disgrace.

Ver. 9. *Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base*, etc.] When their city and temple were destroyed by the Romans, and they were carried captive by them, and became a taunt and a proverb in all places where they came:

before all the people; the nations of the world, among whom they were scattered:

according as ye have not kept my ways; neither those which the law directed to, either moral or ceremonial; nor what the Gospel directed to,

the ordinances and institutions of Christ, particularly baptism, which the Jews rejected against themselves, (^{<4073>}Luke 7:30):

but have been partial in the law; in the observance of it, attending to the lesser, and taking no notice of the weightier matters of it, as the Jews are charged by Christ, (^{<4233>}Matthew 23:23) and in the interpretation of it, restraining its sense only to outward actions, for which they are reprov'd, (^{<4088>}Matthew 5:1-48) or “received faces”, or “accepted persons in the law”^{f45}; in matters of the law they were concerned in, they had respect to the persons of men, by giving the sense of it, and pronouncing judgment, in favour of some, to the prejudice of others, wrongly.

Ver. 10. *Have we not all one father?* etc.] Whether this is understood of Adam the first man, of whose blood all nations of the earth are made, and who in the same sense is the father of all living, as Eve was the mother of all living; or of Abraham the father of the Jewish people, of whom, as their father, they used to glory; or of Jacob, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, whom the Jews used to call our father Jacob; or of God, who is the Father of all men by creation, and of the Jews by national adoption of them; and who may the rather be thought to be meant, since it follows,

hath not one God created us? either as men, or formed us as a body politic; which may serve to explain what is meant by their having one father: whichever is the sense of these words, the argument from hence is strong; that there ought to be no partiality used in the law, or any respect had to persons, in that the rich and the poor have all one Father and one Creator; (see ^{<5011>}James 2:1-8):

why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother; by perverting justice, having respect to persons, favouring one to the prejudice of another, as it follows:

by profaning the covenant of your fathers? the covenant made with them at Sinai, as Jarchi explains it; the law that was then enjoined them, particularly such as forbid respect of persons, (^{<4095>}Leviticus 19:15 ^{<5169>}Deuteronomy 16:19) some think, as Aben Ezra, that a new section here begins, and that the prophet proceeds to a new reproof, and for another sin these people were guilty of, in marrying wives of another nation, contrary to the law in (^{<4245>}Exodus 34:15) which was dealing treacherously with one another, and profaning the covenant of their fathers.

Ver. 11. *Judah hath dealt treacherously*, etc.] Not only every man against his brother, by being partial in the law; or against the women of their nation, by marrying others; or against their wives, by putting them away; but against Christ the Son of God by betraying and delivering him up into the hands of the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified:

and an abomination is committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem; which was the taking of the true Messiah with wicked hands, condemning him and putting him to death, even the shameful and accursed death of the cross; which was done in the land of Israel, and in and near the city of Jerusalem:

for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved; Christ, who is the Lord's Holy One, holiness itself, the most holy, and holiness to the Lord for his people; and who is his dear Son, the Son of his love, whom he loved from everlasting, continued to love in time amidst all his meanness, sorrows, and sufferings, and will love for evermore; him the Jews profaned by blaspheming him, falsely accusing him, and condemning him; by spitting upon him, buffeting, scourging, and crucifying him: some interpret this "holiness" of the soul of Judah, which was holy before the Lord, and loved, as the Targum; so Jarchi of Judah himself, or Israel, who was holiness to the Lord; and others of the holy place, the sanctuary, and all holy things belonging thereto; and others of the holy state of marriage, since it follows:

and hath married the daughter of a strange god; which the Targum paraphrases thus,

“and they were pleased to take to them wives, the daughters of the people;”

the Gentiles, such as Moabites, Ammonites, and the like: and this sense is followed by most interpreters, though the phrase seems rather to be expressive of idolatry; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions interpret it of their being intent upon, and serving, strange gods; and as the Jews rejected the Son of God, and his word, ordinances, and worship, they had not the true God, nor did they worship him, but became guilty of idolatry; and besides, as they rejected the King Messiah from being their King, so they declared they had no king but Caesar, an idolatrous emperor, and joined with the idolatrous Gentiles in putting Christ to death, (^{<B12>}John 19:12,15 ^{<40E>}Acts 4:27).

Ver. 12. *The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this*, etc.] That is guilty of such treachery, wickedness, and idolatry: or “to the man that doeth this”^{f46}; all that belong to him, his children and substance: it denotes the utter destruction, not of a single man and his family only, but of the whole Jewish nation and its polity, civil and ecclesiastical, as follows:

the master and the scholar out of the tabernacles of Jacob; the Targum paraphrases it,

“the son, and son’s son, out of the cities of Jacob;”

agreeable to which is Kimchi’s note,

“it is as if it was said, there shall not be left in his house one alive; that there shall not be in his house one that answers him, that calls by name.”

In the Hebrew text it is, “him that is awake, and him that answers”^{f47}; which the Talmudists^{f48} explain, the former of the wise men or masters, and the latter of the disciples of the wise men; to which sense our version agrees: but by “him that waketh or watcheth”, according to Cocceius, is meant the civil magistrate, who watches for the good of the commonwealth, and so may design the elders and rulers of the people; and by him that “answereth”, the prophet, who returns answers when he is consulted in things belonging to the law of God, and such were the scribes and lawyers.

And him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts; the priests, that offered sacrifice for the people; so that hereby is threatened an entire destruction, both of the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, that there should be no prince, prophet, and priest among them; all should be removed out of the tents of Jacob, or cities of Israel; (see ^{<300>}Hosea 3:4).

Ver. 13. *And this have ye done again*, etc.] Or “in the second”^{f49} place; to their rejection and ill treatment of Christ they added their hypocritical prayers and tears, as follows:

covering the altar of the Lord with tears and weeping, and with crying out; for the Messiah they vainly expect, pretending great humiliation for their sins: though some, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra, make the first evil to be their offering illegal sacrifices on the altar, complained of in the former chapter (^{<300>}Malachi 1:1-14); and this second, their marrying strange wives, on

account of which their lawful wives came into the house of God, and wept over the altar before the Lord, complaining of the injury that was done them:

insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand; which expresses an utter rejection and abrogation of legal sacrifices; and which some make to be the reason of their covering the altar with tears and weeping: or the altar is represented as weeping, because sacrifice is no more offered upon it; (see ^{<2027>}Daniel 9:27 ^{<2028>}Hosea 3:4).

Ver. 14. *Yet ye say, Wherefore?* etc.] What is the meaning of the women covering the altar with tears? as if they knew not what was the reason of it, when they were so notoriously guilty of breach of covenant with them; which is an instance of their impudence, as Abarbinel observes: or, “if ye say, wherefore?” as the Targum and Kimchi interpret the words; should you say, what is the reason why the Lord will not regard nor receive our offerings? the answer is ready,

Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth: when espoused together in their youthful days, the Lord was present at that solemn contract, and saw the obligations they were laid under to each other, and he was called upon by both parties to be a witness of the same; and at the present time he was a witness how agreeably the wives of the Israelites had behaved towards their husbands, and how treacherously they had acted towards them; he saw and knew, that, whatever pretensions they made, they did not love them, nor behave as they should towards them; and therefore had just cause of complaint against them, and must be a witness for the one, and against the other: this sin of hating and divorcing their wives, or of marrying others besides them, which prevailed much in our Lord’s time, is particularly mentioned, though they were guilty of many other sins, as a reason of the Lord’s not accepting their offerings: the aggravations of it are, that they had broken a contract God was witness to, and dealt injuriously with wives they had espoused in the days of their youth; (see ^{<2027>}Proverbs 2:17 5:18):

against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; by divorce or polygamy: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “whom thou hast despised”: and the Septuagint and Arabic versions, “whom thou hast left”; divorced and took others, which arose from hatred and contempt of their former: other aggravations follow:

yet [is] she thy companion; or, “and she is”, or “though she is thy companion”^{f50}: has been so in time past, and ought to be so still, and so accounted: the wife is a part of a man’s self, is one flesh with him; a partaker of what he has; a partner with him in prosperity and adversity; a companion in life, civil and religious, and ought to remain so till death part them; for, whom God has put together, let no man put asunder:

and the wife of thy covenant; wherefore either to divorce her, or marry another, was a breach of covenant; for by “covenant” is not meant the covenant of God made with the people of Israel, in which they both were; but the covenant of marriage made between them, and which was broken by such practices.

Ver. 15. *And did not he make one?* etc.] That is, did not God make one man, and out of his rib one woman? did he not make man, male and female? did he not make one pair, one couple, only Adam and Eve, whom he joined together in marriage? or rather, did he not make one woman only, and brought her to Adam to be his wife? which shows that his intention and will were, that one man should have but one wife at a time; the contrary to which was the then present practice of the Jews:

Yet had he the residue of the spirit; it was not for want of power that he made but one woman of Adam’s rib, and breathed into her the breath of life, or infused into her a human soul or spirit; he could have made many women at the same time; and as the Father of spirits, having the residue of them with him, or a power left to make as many as he pleased, he could have imparted spirits unto them, and given Adam more wives than one:

And wherefore one? what is the reason why he made but one woman, when he could have made ten thousand, or as many as he pleased? the answer is,

That he might seek a godly seed; or “a seed of God”^{f51}; a noble excellent seed; a legitimate offspring, born in true and lawful wedlock; (see ~~4074~~ 1 Corinthians 7:14) a seed suitable to the dignity of human nature, made after the image of God, and not like that of brute beasts, promiscuous and uncertain:

Therefore take heed to your spirit; to your affections, that they do not go after other women, and be led thereby to take them in marriage, and to despise and divorce the lawful wife, as it follows:

and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth; by marrying another, or divorcing her: these words are differently rendered and interpreted by some; but the sense given seems to be the true one, and most agreeable to the scope of the place. Some render the first clause, “hath not one made?”^{f52} that is, did not the one God, who is the only living and true God, make one man or one woman? and then the sense is the same as before; or did not that one God make, constitute, and appoint, that the woman should be the man’s companion, and the wife of his covenant, as in the latter part of the preceding verse (~~3023~~ Malachi 2:13)? or, “did not one do?”^{f53} that is, so as we have done, take another wife besides the wife of his youth? and so they are the words of the people to the prophets, justifying their practice by example; by the example of Abraham, whom some of the Jewish writers think is intended by the “one”, as in (~~2510~~ Isaiah 51:2 ~~4504~~ Ezekiel 33:24). The Targum is,

“was not one Abraham alone, from whom the world was created?”

or propagated. Kimchi gives it as his own sense, in these words;

“Abraham, who was one, and the father of all that follow him in his faith, did not do as ye have done; for he did not follow his lust, nor even marry Sarah, but so that he might cause the seed of God to remain;”

yet he mentions it as his father’s sense, that they are the words of the people to the prophet, expressed in a way of interrogation, saying, did not our father Abraham, who was one, do as we have done? who left his wife, and married Hagar his maid, though he had the residue or excellency of the spirit, and was a prophet; to whom the prophet replies, and what did that one seek? a godly seed; which is, as if it was said, when he married Hagar, it was to seek a seed, because he had no seed of Sarah his wife. A seed was promised him, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; he sought not to gratify his lust, but to obtain this seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made, as the apostle argues, (~~4816~~ Galatians 3:16) “he saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ”; called here the “godly seed”, or the “seed God”^{f54}, as some choose to render the words; that is, that seed which is God, who is a divine Person, God and man in one person; or which is of God, of his immediate production, without the help of a man; which the Jews call the seed that comes from another place, and which they use as a periphrasis of the

Messiah. So on those words in (⁰¹⁰²⁵Genesis 4:25), “she called his name Seth, for God hath appointed me another seed”,

“says R. Tanchuma, in the name of R. Samuel, she has respect to that seed which comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah^{f55}.”

And the same Rabbi elsewhere^{f56} observes, on those words in (⁰¹¹⁹²Genesis 19:32), “that we may preserve seed of our father”,

“it is not written, that we may preserve a son of our father, but that we may preserve seed of our father; that seed which is he that comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah.”

Now as Abraham had the promise of a son, and his wife was barren, he took the method he did that he might have one, the son of the promise, a type of the Messiah, and from whom he should spring; and this is sufficient to justify him in it: besides, he did not deal treacherously with Sarah his wife, for it was with her good will and by her authority he did this thing; but do you take heed to your spirit, that no one of you deal treacherously with the wife of his youth, to leave her, and marry the daughter of a strange God: and much the same sense Jarchi takes notice of as the Agadah, or the interpretation of their ancient Rabbins. Some render the words, “and not one does this”; that is, deals treacherously with the wife of his youth, that has the residue of the spirit, or the least spark of the Spirit of God in him; and how should anyone do it, seeking a godly seed? therefore take heed to your spirit, etc.; so Deuteronomy Dieu. But according to others the sense is,

“there is not one of you that does according to the law, whose spirit remains with him that is not mixed with the daughter of a strange god;”

which is Aben Ezra’s note. But according to Abarbinel the sense is, not one only has done this, committed this evil, in marrying more and strange women; not some only, and the rest have the spirit with them, and keep it pure from this sin; so that a godly seed cannot be procreated from you; therefore take heed to your spirit.

Ver. 16. *For the Lord the God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away,* etc.] The divorcing of wives; for though this was suffered because of the

hardness of their hearts, it was not approved of by the Lord; nor was it from the beginning; and it was disagreeable, and even hateful to him, (~~408~~ Matthew 19:8) in the margin of some Bibles the words are rendered, “if he hate her, put her away”; and so the Targum,

“but if thou hatest her, put her away;”

to which agree the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Arabic versions; and this sense made mention of in both Talmuds, and is thought to be agreeable to the law in (~~424~~ Deuteronomy 24:3) though the law there speaks of a fact that might be, and not of what ought to be; wherefore the former sense is best; and this other seems to have been at first calculated to favour the practice of the Jews, who put away their wives through hatred to them. The Jews were very much inclined to divorce their wives upon very trivial occasions; if they did not dress their food well, were not of good behaviour, or not so modest as became the daughters of Israel; if they did not find favour with their husbands; and, especially, if they had entertained a hatred of them: so says R. Judah^{f57},

“if he hate her, let him put her away:”

but this is by some of them restrained to a second wife; for of the first they say,

“it is not proper to be hasty to put away a first wife; but a second, if he hates her, let him put her away^{f58},”

and R. Eleazer says^{f59}, whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears for him, referring to the words in (~~323~~ Malachi 2:13) and divorces of this kind they only reckon lawful among the Israelites, and found it upon this passage; for so they make God to speak after this manner^{f60},

“in Israel I have granted divorces; among the nations of the world I have not granted divorces. R. Chananiah, in the name of R. Phinehas, observes, that in every other section it is written, “the Lord of hosts”; but here it is written, “the God of Israel”, to teach thee that the holy blessed God does not put his name to divorces (or allow them) but in Israel only. R. Chayah Rabba says, the Gentiles have no divorces.”

But some of them have better understanding of these words, and more truly give the sense of them thus, as R. Jochanan does, who interprets them,

“the putting away of the wife is hateful^{f61};”

it is so to God, and ought not to be done by men but in case of adultery, as our Lord has taught, (^{<4163>}Matthew 5:32 19:9) and which was the doctrine of the school of Shammai in Christ’s time, who taught,

“that no man should divorce his wife, unless he found in her filthiness;”

i.e. that she was guilty of adultery; though this Maimonides restrains to the first wife, as before: but the house of Hillell, who lived in the same time, was of a different mind, and taught that

“if she burnt his food;”

either over dressed or over salted it, according to (^{<6241>}Deuteronomy 24:1). R. Akiba says, if he found another more beautiful than her, according to (^{<6241>}Deuteronomy 24:1), he might divorce her^{f62}; of the form of a divorce, (see Gill on “^{<4163>}Matthew 5:31”). Those interpreters among Christians that go this way do not look upon this as an approbation of divorce, on account of hatred; but that so to do is better than to retain them with hatred of them, seeing it was connived at, or than to take other wives with them.

For [one] covereth violence with his garment, or “on his garment”,

saith the Lord of hosts; as he that puts away his wife does her an open injury, which though he may cover, pretending the law, which connives at divorces; yet the violence done to his wife is as manifest as the garment upon his back: though those who think the former words are an instruction to put away wives, when hated, consider this as a reason why they should do so; because, by retaining them, and yet hating them, and taking other wives to them, is doing them a real injury, whatever cover or pretence may be used; because, if dismissed, they might be loved by, and married to, other men. Aben Ezra seems to have hit the sense of these words, when he makes this to be the object of God’s hatred, as well as the former; his note is,

“the Lord hateth him that putteth away his wife that is pure, and he hates him that covereth; or God sees his violence which is done in secret.”

Mr. Pocock proposes a conjecture, which is very ingenious and probable, that as the words will bear the construction Aben Ezra gives, that God hates putting away, and hates that one should put violence upon or over his garment; by “garment” he thinks may be meant a man’s lawful wife, which is as a garment to him; and by “violence” a second wife, or other wives, taken to the injury, hurt, and vexation of the former; and the covering, or superinducing violence over the garment, is marrying an unlawful wife, over or with, or above his lawful one: and the sense is, that as God hates divorce, so he hates polygamy:

therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously; (see Gill on “³⁰²⁵Malachi 2:15”).

Ver. 17. *Ye have wearied the Lord with your words,* etc.] As well as with their actions; (see ^{2383b}Isaiah 43:24) this is said after the manner of men, they saying those things which were displeasing and provoking to him, and which he could not bear to hear; or otherwise weariness properly cannot be attributed to God:

Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? as if they were clear and innocent; or, as the Targum, “if ye should say”; though they might not express themselves in words in such an impudent manner; yet should they say so in their hearts, or supposing they should utter such words with their lips, out of the abundance of their evil hearts, the answer is ready:

When ye say, Every one that doeth evil [is] good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; which they concluded from the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous; so murmuring at, and complaining of, the providence of God; he acting as if he delighted in wicked men, and as if they that did evil were the most grateful and acceptable to him:

or, if this was not the case,

Where [is] the God of judgment? why does he not arise and show himself to be a God that judgeth the earth, by taking vengeance on the wicked, and granting prosperity to his people? Deuteronomy Dieu takes these last words to be the words of the prophet, and thinks that **wa** is a particle of

exclamation, and should be rendered “O”; and that the prophet expresses his wonder at the patience and longsuffering of God in bearing such impiety and blasphemy as before delivered. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, “where is the God of righteousness?” either God the Father, who is righteous in all his ways, and faithful in the fulfilment of all his promises; or, Christ the Lord our righteousness, who was to come, and is come into this world for judgment, as well as to bring in an everlasting righteousness. This may be considered as a scoff of wicked men at the long delay of the Messiah’s coming, when they expected outward prosperity and happiness; just as the scoffers in the last day will mock at the promise of his second coming, (~~600~~ 2 Peter 3:3,4) and so the words, with which the next chapter begins (~~300~~ Malachi 3:1), are an answer to these.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 3

This chapter begins with a prophecy of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; and of the coming of Christ, and the effects and consequences of it, with respect both to the righteous and the wicked; and it contains accusations and charges of sin against the Jews, intermixed with exhortations to repentance. John the Baptist is promised to be sent, and is described by his office as a messenger, and by his work, to prepare the way of the Lord; and the Messiah is prophesied of, who is described by his characters; with respect to himself, the Lord and Messenger of the covenant; with respect to the truly godly among the Jews, as the object of their desire and delight; whose coming is spoken of as a certain thing, and which would be sudden; and the place is mentioned he should come into, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:1) and this his coming is represented as terrible to the wicked, and as trying and purifying to the righteous, expressed by the various similes of a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap; and the end answered by it, their offering a righteous offering to the Lord, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:2-4) but with respect to the wicked, he declares he should be a swift witness against them, whose characters are particularly given, and this assured from his immutability; the consequence of which to the saints is good, being their security from destruction, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:5,6) and next a charge is commenced against the wicked Jews, as that in general they had for a long time revolted from the Lord, and were guilty of sins of omission and commission, and are therefore exhorted to return to the Lord, with a promise that he will return to them, and yet they refuse, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:7) and, in particular, that they were guilty of sacrilege, and so accounted, even the whole nation, in withholding tithes and sacrifices, which they are exhorted to bring in; to which they are encouraged with promises of blessings of prosperity and protection, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:8-12) and that they had spoken impudent and blasphemous words against the Lord; which, though excepted to, is proved by producing their own words, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:13-15) and by the contrary behaviour of those that feared the Lord, who were taken notice of by him, and were dear unto him, (^{<3URB>}Malachi 3:16,17) wherefore it is suggested, that the time would come when there would be a

manifest difference made between the one and the other, (^{<3018>}Malachi 3:18).

Ver. 1. *Behold, I will send my messenger*, etc.] These are the words of Christ, in answer to the question put in the last verse of the preceding chapter (^{<3017>}Malachi 2:17), “Where [is] the God of judgment?” intimating that he would quickly appear, and previous to his coming send his messenger or angel; not the angel of death to destroy the wicked, as Jarchi thinks; nor an angel from heaven, as Kimchi; nor Messiah the son of Joseph; as Aben Ezra; nor the Prophet Malachi himself, as Abarbinel; but the same that is called Elijah the prophet, (^{<3015>}Malachi 4:5) and is no other than John the Baptist, as is clear from (^{<4010>}Matthew 11:10 ^{<4002>}Mark 1:2) called a “messenger” or “angel”, not by nature, but by office; and Christ’s messenger, because sent by him and on his errand; and which shows the power and authority of Christ in sending forth ministers; his superior excellency to John, and his existence before him, or he could not be sent by him, and so before his incarnation; for John was sent by him before he was in the flesh, and consequently this is a proof of the proper deity of Christ: and the word “behold” is prefixed to this, in order to raise the attention of those that put the above question, and all others; as well as to show that the message John was sent upon was of the greatest moment and importance; as that the Messiah was just ready to appear, his kingdom was at hand, and the Jews ought to believe in him; though it also respects the coming of the Messiah, spoken of in the latter part of the text:

and he shall prepare the way before me; by declaring to the Jews that he was born, and was in the midst of them; by pointing him out unto them; by preaching the doctrine of repentance, and exhorting them to believe in him; and by administering the ordinance of baptism in general to all proper subjects, and in particular to Christ, by which he was made manifest to Israel; (see Gill on “^{<4002>}Mark 1:2”) the allusion is to kings and great men sending persons before them when on a journey, to give notice of their coming, and provide for them:

and the Lord, whom ye seek; this is the person himself speaking, the Son of God, and promised Messiah, the Lord of all men, and particularly of his church and people, in right of marriage, by virtue of redemption, and by being their Head and King; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of him, and even Abarbinel^{f63} himself; the Messiah that had been so long spoken of and so much expected, and whom the Jews sought after, either in a

scoffing manner, expressed in the above question, or rather seriously; some as a temporal deliverer, to free them from the Roman yoke, and bring them into a state of liberty, prosperity, and grandeur; and others as a spiritual Saviour, to deliver from sin, law, hell, and death, and save them with an everlasting salvation:

shall suddenly come to his temple; meaning not his human nature, nor his church, sometimes so called; but the material temple at Jerusalem, the second temple, called “his”, because devoted to his service and worship, which proves him to be God, and because of his frequency in it; here he was brought and presented by his parents at the proper time, for the purification of his mother; here he was at twelve years of age disputing with the doctors; and here Simeon, Anna, and others, were waiting for him, (⁽⁴¹²⁾Luke 2:22,25,27,38,46) and we often read of his being here, and of his using his authority in it as the Lord and proprietor of it; and of the Hosannas given him here, (⁽⁴¹²⁾Matthew 21:12-15,23) the manner in which he should come, “suddenly”, may refer to the manifestation of it, quickly after John the Baptist had prepared his way by his doctrine and baptism:

even the messenger of the covenant; not of the covenant of works with Adam, of which there was no mediator and messenger; nor of the covenant of circumcision, at which, according to the Jews, Elias presides; nor of the covenant at Sinai, of which Moses was the mediator; but of the covenant of grace, of which Christ is not only the Surety and Mediator; but, as here, “the Messenger”; because it is revealed, made known, and exhibited in a more glorious manner by him under the Gospel dispensation, through the ministration of the word and ordinances. Deuteronomy Dieu observes, that the word in the Ethiopic language signifies a prince as well as a messenger, and so may be rendered, “the Prince of the covenant”, which is a way of speaking used in (⁽²¹¹²⁾Daniel 11:22):

whom ye delight in; either carnally, as they pleased themselves with the thoughts of a temporal prince, and of great honour and grandeur under him; and as they would have done, had he submitted to have been made a king by them in this sense; or rather spiritually, and so is to be understood of such who had a spiritual knowledge of him, and joy in him; who rejoiced and delighted in the contemplation of his person, offices, righteousness, and salvation:

he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts; this expresses the certainty of his coming, being said by himself, who is the Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies

in heaven and in earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. This passage is, in some Jewish writers^{f64}, interpreted of the world to come, or times of the Messiah.

Ver. 2. *But who may abide the day of his coming?* etc.] When he should be manifest in Israel, and come preaching the Gospel of the kingdom; who could bear the doctrines delivered by him, concerning his deity and equality with God the Father; concerning his character and mission as the Messiah, and his kingdom not being a temporal, but a spiritual one; concerning his giving his flesh for the life of the world, and eating that by faith; concerning distinguishing and efficacious grace; and all such that so severely struck at the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their self-righteous principles; and especially since for judgment he came, that they might not see? nor could they bear the light of this glorious Sun of righteousness; and he came not to send peace and outward prosperity to the Jews, but a sword and division, (^{<408>}John 9:39 ^{<408>}Matthew 10:34 ^{<425>}Luke 12:51) very few indeed could bear his ministry, or the light of that day, it being so directly contrary to their principles and practices:

and who shall stand when he appeareth? in his kingdom and glory, to take vengeance on the Jews for their rejection of him and his Gospel; for this coming and appearance of his include all the time between his manifestation in the flesh and the destruction of Jerusalem; and so all those sorrows and distresses which went before it, or attended it, and were such as had never been from the creation of the world; and unless those times had been shortened, no flesh could have been saved; (see ^{<418>}Matthew 24:3-22 ^{<423>}Luke 21:36):

for he [is] like a refiner's fire; partly by the ministry of the word, compared to fire, (^{<423>}Jeremiah 23:29) separating pure doctrines from ones of dross; and partly by his fiery dispensations and judgments on the wicked Jews, when he distinguished and saved his own people from that untoward generation, and destroyed them:

and like fuller's soap; or "fuller's herb", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, and Jarchi interprets it: and so R. Jonah^{f65} interprets it of an herb which fullers use: and in the Misna^{f66} this is one of the seven things used to take out spots, namely, "borith", the word here used; and which Maimonides^{f67} says is a plant known by the name of "algasul" and "gazul" in the Arabic language: it signifies something by which filth is washed away; and so Bartenora^{f68} says it is a plant which

purifies and cleanses; and Jerom^{f69} relates that this herb grows in Palestine, in moist and green places, and has the same virtue as nitre to take away filth; agreeably to which some other versions render it “fuller’s weed”, or “soap weed”^{f70}. The Syriac version is,

“as sulphur that makes white;”

and fullers, with the Romans, were wont to make use of that along with chalk to take out spots; and so Pliny^{f71} speaks of a kind of sulphur which fullers make use of. A metaphor signifying the same thing as before, the removing of spotted doctrines or spotted persons, the one by the preaching of the Gospel, the other by awful judgments, as spots in garments are removed by the fuller’s herb or soap.

Ver. 3. *And he shall sit [as] a refiner, and purifier of silver,* etc.] Kimchi interprets this, as he does the latter part of the preceding verse (^{<3HB>}Malachi 3:2), of the day, and not of the Lord, which he compares to a judge that sits and separates the guilty from the innocent; (see ^{<HB>}1 Corinthians 3:13) but it is to be understood of the Lord himself, and expresses his diligence in sitting and separating good men and principles from bad ones, just as silver is purified and refined from dross. Maimonides^{f72} understands the passage of the Messiah; for he says,

“in the days of the King Messiah, when his kingdom is restored, and all Israel shall be gathered to him, all will have their genealogies set right by his mouth, through the Holy Spirit that rests upon him, as it is said, “he shall sit a refiner and purifier”:

as a refiner sits and observes his metal while it is melting, and waits the proper time to pour it out and separate the dross from it; so Christ is here represented as sitting, while his people are purifying and refining by the various ways and means he makes use of: it denotes the continued care of Christ over them; his eye is upon them, that nothing be lost but their dross and corruption; and his patience in waiting to be gracious to them, and do them good; and his diligent attention to the proper season of doing it; designing by all that he does, not their hurt and damage, but their real good, for he saves them, though it be by fire; and indeed every trial and affliction is for the purifying of their souls, and the brightening of their graces, and increasing their spiritual experience, light, and knowledge.

And he shall purify the sons of Levi; the priests, either literally understood, some of these were converted from their evil principles and practices, and

became obedient to the doctrines of the Gospel, (~~4017~~Acts 6:7) or figuratively, the apostles of Christ and ministers of the Gospel, who were made clean by him; or rather all the people of God, who are made priests as well as kings, and are a royal priesthood, and are purified by Christ, both by his blood, and the imputation of his righteousness, by which they become without spot and blemish, and as white as snow; and by the Spirit in sanctification, he sprinkling clean water upon them, and purifying their hearts by faith in the blood of Jesus; and also by afflictive dispensations of Providence sanctified unto them. Mention is made of the priests and Levites, because these were so very corrupt in the times of Christ, and as appears from the preceding chapters.

And purge them as gold and silver; are purged in the fire from their dross: this shows of what worth and value, and in what esteem the Lord's people are to him; he reckons of them as gold and silver, and as his peculiar treasure: and it suggests, that before conversion they are joined unto and mixed with wicked men, comparable to dross; and that they have in them the dross, corruption, and impurity of sin; which is original and natural to them, and inherent in them, and which can only be removed by the grace of God and blood of Christ.

That they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; themselves, their bodies and souls; the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and alms deeds; to the offering up of which in righteousness, in sincerity and truth, in an upright way, it is necessary that a person should be purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the grace of his Spirit.

Ver. 4. *Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord*, etc.] Or "sweet"¹⁷³; grateful and well pleasing to him, as all spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God through Christ, being offered up in the faith of his atoning sacrifice and righteousness, without which it is impossible to please God:

as in the days of old, and as in former years: under the first temple, and when the tabernacle was set up by Moses, and in the times of the patriarchs; and even before the flood, and as early as Abel, who offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, (~~3104~~Hebrews 11:4-6).

Ver. 5. *And I will come near to you to judgment*, etc.] And so will manifestly appear to be the God of judgment they asked after, (~~3107~~Malachi 2:17) this is not to be understood of Christ's coming to judgment at the

last day, but of his coming to judge and punish the wicked Jews at the time of Jerusalem's destruction; for the same is here meant, who is spoken of in the third person before, and who will not be afar off; there will be no need to inquire after him, when he will come he will be near enough, and too near for them:

and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers; not only a judge, but a witness; so that there will be no delay of judgment, or protracting or evading it, for want of witnesses of facts alleged; for the Judge himself, who is Christ, will be witness of them, he being the omniscient God, before whom all things are manifest. The Targum is,

“my Word shall be among you for a swift witness.”

Mention is made of “sorcerers”, because there were many that used the magic art, enchantments, and sorceries, in the age of Christ and his apostles, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, even many of their doctors and members of the sanhedrim; (see Gill on “~~4029~~Isaiah 8:19”):

and against the adulterers; with whom that age also abounded; hence our Lord calls it an adulterous generation, (~~4029~~Matthew 12:39 ~~4008~~John 8:3-9 ~~4022~~Romans 2:22):

and against false swearers; who were guilty of perjury, and of vain oaths; who swore by the creatures, and not by the Lord, and to things not true; (see ~~4053~~Matthew 5:33-37):

and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless; defrauding of servants of their wages, devouring widows' houses, and distressing the fatherless, were sins the Jews were addicted to in those times, as appears from (~~3027~~James 1:27 5:4) who wrote to the twelve tribes; and from what our Lord charges them with, (~~4234~~Matthew 23:14):

and that turn aside the stranger [from his right]; and so Kimchi supplies it,

“that turn aside the judgment of the stranger;”

that do not do him justice in civil things; yea, persecuted those that became proselytes to the Christian religion:

and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts; which was the root and cause of all their sins; irreverence of Christ, disbelief of him, and contempt of his Gospel.

Ver. 6. *For I [am] the Lord,* etc.] Or Jehovah; a name peculiar to the most High, and so a proof of the deity of Christ, who here speaks; and is expressive of his being; of his self-existence; of his purity and simplicity; of his immensity and infinity; and of his eternity and sovereignty:

I change not; being the same today, yesterday, and forever; he changed not in his divine nature and personality by becoming man; he took that into union with him he had not before, but remained the same he ever was; nor did he change in his threatenings of destruction to the Jews, which came upon them according to his word; nor in his promises of his Spirit, and presence, and protection to his people; nor will he ever change in his love and affections to them; nor in the efficacy of his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness; wherefore, as this is introduced to assure the truth and certainty of what is said before, concerning his being a swift witness against the wicked, so also for the comfort of the saints, as follows. The Targum is,

“for I the Lord have not changed my covenant.”

Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed; such who were Israelites indeed, true believers in Christ; these were not consumed when the wicked Jews were, but were directed to leave the city before its destruction, and go to another place, as they did, whereby they were preserved; and so it was, that not one Christian perished in it; (see Gill on ⁴¹¹³Matthew 24:13”) and so it is owing to the unchangeable love, grace, and power of Christ, that none of his perish internally or eternally, but have everlasting life.

Ver. 7. *Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances,* etc.] Here begins an enumeration of the sins of the Jews, which were the cause of their ruin; and here is first a general charge of apostasy from the statutes and ordinances of the law, which they made void by the traditions of the fathers; and therefore this word is used as referring to this evil, as well as to express their early, long, and continued departure from the ways of God; which as it was an aggravation of their sin, that they should have so long ago forsook the ordinances of God,

and have not kept [them], but transgressed them by observing the traditions of men, (^{<418B>}Matthew 15:3) so it is an instance of the patience and forbearance of God, that they were not as yet consumed; and of his grace and goodness, that he should address them as follows:

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts; this message was carried to them by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and by Christ himself, who both preached the doctrine of repentance to this people, (^{<418D>}Matthew 3:2 4:17). The Targum is,

“return to my worship, and I will look in my word to do well unto you, saith the Lord of hosts;”

and such who returned, and believed in Christ, and submitted to his ordinances, it was well with them.

But ye said, Wherein shall we return? what have we to turn from, or repent of? what evils have we done, or can be charged on us? what need have we of repentance or conversion, or of such an exhortation to it? do not we keep the law, and all the rituals of it? this is the true language of the Pharisees in Christ’s time, who, touching the righteousness of the law, were blameless in their own esteem, and were the ninety and nine just persons that needed not repentance, (^{<418E>}Luke 15:7).

Ver. 8. *Will a man rob God?* etc.] Or “the gods”; the false gods, the idols of the Gentiles; the Heathens will not do that, accounting sacrilege a great sin, and yet this the Jews were guilty of: or “the judges”^{f74}, as the Targum; civil magistrates; will any dare to defraud them of their due? (see ^{<300B>}Malachi 1:8).

Yet ye have robbed me; keeping back from the priests and Levites, his ministers, what was due to them; and which, being no other than a spoiling or robbing of them, might be interpreted a robbing of God:

But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? as not being conscious of any such evil; or, however, impudently standing in it, that they were not guilty: to which is returned the answer,

In tithes and offerings; that is, they robbed God in not giving the tithes, and not offering sacrifices, according as the law required: but it may be objected, that the Jews in Christ’s time did pay tithes, even of all things; yea, of more than the law required, (^{<4173>}Matthew 23:23 ^{<4182>}Luke 18:12) to

which it may be replied, that though they gave tithes, yet it was h[r̂y[b, “with an evil eye”, as Aben Ezra says; grudgingly, and not cheerfully, and with an evil intention; not to show their gratitude to God, and their acknowledgment of him as their Lord, from whom they had their all, but in order to merit at his hands; besides, our Lord suggests that they did not give to God the things that were God’s, (^{<4021>}Matthew 22:21) and the apostle charges them with being guilty of sacrilege, (^{<4022>}Romans 2:22) and, moreover, the priests might not give it to the Levites, as they ought; and which is what they are charged with in (^{<4630>}Nehemiah 13:10) and Grotius says that they were guilty of this before the destruction by Vespasian, as appears by Josephus.

Ver. 9. *Ye [are] cursed with a curse*, etc.] Or “with penury”, as the Vulgate Latin version; which, though not a proper rendering of the word, is the meaning of the curse they were cursed with; rain was withheld from them for their sins, and the earth did not bring forth its usual increase; wherefore there was want of food in all their land; their blessings were cursed, as in (^{<3902>}Malachi 2:2) for the following reason,

for ye have robbed me; because of this their iniquity, in not bringing their offerings to the Lord, and the tithes to the priests and Levites, their land was stricken with barrenness, and God gave them cleanness of teeth, and want of bread in all places: or, “but ye have robbed me”¹⁷⁵; notwithstanding they were thus chastised of the Lord, yet were not reformed, but went on in withholding from God and the priests, what belonged to them:

[even] this whole nation; the sin was become general, and therefore a general judgment was inflicted on them: Grotius thinks, that the people seeing the priests withhold the tithes from the Levites, they refused to pay them to them, and so the sin became universal. Kimchi observes, that in other sins charged upon the nation, the people were not all alike guilty, but in this which respected the tithes and offerings they were.

Ver. 10. *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse*, etc.] Or “treasury”¹⁷⁶; for there were places in the temple where the tithe was put, and from thence distributed to the priests and Levites, for the support of their families, as they wanted. There were the tithe or tenth part of all eatable things paid to the Levites, and out of this another tithe was paid by the Levites to the priests; and there was another tithe, which some years the owners ate themselves at Jerusalem, and in others gave them to the poor;

and these were called the first tithe, the tithe out of the tithe, the second tithe, and the poor's tithe; though they are commonly reduced to three, and are called first, and second, and third, as they are by Maimonides; who says^{f77},

“after they have separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, as it is said “thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed”, etc. (^{<6142>}Deuteronomy 14:22,23) and in the third year, and in the sixth, they separate the poor's tithe, instead of the second tithe.”

So Tobit says; Tobit 1:7

“the first tithe I gave to the Levites, who stand before the Lord to minister to him, and to bless in his name the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the second tithe I sold (as he might, according to the law in (^{<6143>}Deuteronomy 14:24-26)), and took the money, and went up to Jerusalem, and bought with it what I pleased; and the third tithe I gave to the repair of the temple;”

so Fagius reads: but according to Munster's edition it is, the second and third tithes I gave to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; (see ^{<6142>}Deuteronomy 26:12,13). It appears from hence that the sin of the people was, that they did not bring in “all” their tithes; they kept back a part of them: wherefore they are called upon to bring in the whole, and which they did in Nehemiah's time; (see ^{<6108>}Nehemiah 10:38 13:11,13) where mention is made of the treasuries for the tithe, which were certain chambers adjoining to the temple; and besides those that were built by Solomon, there were other chambers prepared by Hezekiah in his times, when the tithes were brought in, in such plenty, that there was not room enough for them, (^{<4811>}2 Chronicles 31:11,12) and besides those in the second temple, that were in the court of the priests, there were others in the court of the people, as L'Empereur thinks^{f78}, where what the others could not contain might be put; and into which court the priests might come; and there were also receptacles underground, as well as upper rooms, where much might be laid up; add to all this, that Dr. Lightfoot^{f79} suggests, that these tithes were treasured up in the chambers by the gates of the temple, and were at least a part of the treasuries of the house of God, which the porters at the gates had the care of, (^{<1305>}1 Chronicles 9:26 26:20) and particularly that the house of Asuppim, at which were four

porters, was a large piece of building, containing divers rooms for the treasuring up things for the use of the temple; in the Apocrypha:

“And are resolved to spend the firstfruits of the the tenths of wine and oil, which they had sanctified, and reserved for the priests that serve in Jerusalem before the face of our God; the which things it is not lawful for any of the people so much as to touch with their hands.” Judith 11:13

that there may be food in mine house; in the temple, for the sustenance of the priests and Levites: so the Targum,

“the prophet said, bring all the tithes into the treasury, that there may be food for them that minister in the house of my sanctuary:”

and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts; by bringing in all their tithes; when they would find, by making this experiment or trial, that the curse would be removed from them, and blessings be largely and liberally bestowed upon them by him, who is the Lord of hosts, and so able to perform any promise he makes; and here one is implied, and is as follows:

if I will not open you the windows of heaven; which had been shut and stopped up, and let down no rain upon their land, which brought a scarcity of provisions among them; but now, upon a change in their conduct it is suggested that these windows or floodgates should be opened, and rain let down plentifully upon them, which only could be done by the Lord himself; for the key of rain is one of the three keys, the Jews say^{f80}, which God has reserved for himself, and never puts into the hands of a minister:

and pour you out a blessing: give abundance of rain to make the earth fruitful, and bring forth its increase in great plenty, which is a blessing; and not destroy the earth, and the fruits of it, as in the times of Noah, when the windows of heaven were opened, and a curse was poured out upon the earth:

that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]; and so Kimchi says his father interpreted this clause, that there would not be a sufficiency of vessels^{f81} and storehouses. Some render the words, as Junius, “so that ye shall not be sufficient”; either to gather in the increase, or to consume it. The Targum is,

“until ye say it is enough;”

and so the Syriac version. The phrase, which is very concise in the original text, and may be literally rendered, “unto not enough”^{f82}, denotes great abundance and fulness of good things, so that there should be enough and to spare; and yet, as Gussetius observes, not enough to answer and express the abundance of mercy and goodness in the heart of God.

Ver. 11. *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes*, etc.] Or “eater”^{f83}; the locust or caterpillar, or any such devouring creature, that eats up the herbage, corn, and fruits of trees; every such creature is under the restraint of Providence; and by a nod, a rebuke, they are easily prevented doing the mischief they otherwise would; these are the Lord’s great army, which he can send and call off as he pleases, (~~2000~~ Joel 1:4 2:25):

and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; as he has done, by eating all green things, as the locust, caterpillar, and canker worm do, grass, corn, and trees:

neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field; which some understand of the devourer or locust, that that should not cause the vine to be abortive, or cast its fruit before its time, or bereave it of it; but it seems best to interpret it of the vine itself not casting its fruit, as an untimely birth, by blighting and blasting winds:

saith the Lord of hosts; who holds the winds in his fists, and will not suffer them when he pleases, any more than the locusts, to hurt the trees of the earth, (~~600~~ Revelation 7:1,3 9:4).

Ver. 12. *And all nations shall call you blessed*, etc.] When they shall see the land freed from the devouring locust, and other hurtful creatures; the former and the latter rains given in their season, and the earth yielding a large increase:

for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts; or a desirable^{f84} one; not only pleasant to themselves, being fruitful, but wished for by others, by their neighbouring nations, who, seeing their prosperity, could not but desire to dwell with them; or delightsome to the Lord of hosts: thus Jarchi interprets it, the land that I delight in; and so Aben Ezra; to which agrees the Targum,

“and all nations shall praise you, because you dwell in the land of the house of my Shechinah or majesty, and do my will in it;”

and the Syriac version renders it, “the land of my delight”: (see ^{<2604>}Isaiah 62:4).

Ver. 13. *Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord,* etc.]

Hard and strong; they bore very hardly upon him, were exceeding impudent and insolent; murmuring at his providence; arraigning his justice and goodness; and despising his word, worship, and ordinances. Aben Ezra says, this is a prophecy concerning the time to come, that is, the times of the Messiah; and so it describes the Jews in his times.

Yet ye say, what have we spoken [so much] against thee? or “what have we spoken against thee?” as if they were not guilty in any respect, and as if nothing could be proved against them; and as though the Lord did not know what they had said in their hearts, seeing they had not spoken it with their mouths: though the supplement of our translators, “so much”, is confirmed by the Targum, which is,

“and if ye say, how (or in what) have we multiplied speech before thee?”

and so Kimchi observes, that the form in which the Hebrew word is denotes much and frequent speaking: and Abarbinel agrees with him, though he rather thinks it has this sense, “what are we spoken of to thee?” what calumny is this? what accusation do they bring against us to thee? what is it that is reported we say against thee? thus wiping their mouths, as if they were innocent and harmless.

Ver. 14. *Ye have said, it [is] vain to serve God,* etc.] This they said in their hearts, if not with their lips, that it was a vain thing for a man to serve God; he got nothing by it; he had no reward for it; it fared no better with him than the wicked; nay, the wicked fared better than he; and therefore who would be a worshipper of God? (see ^{<8215>}Job 21:15). Abarbinel understands this also with respect to God, who is worshipped; to whom worship, say these men, is no ways profitable, nor does he regard it; (see ^{<8807>}Job 35:7) and therefore it is in vain to serve him, since neither he, nor we, are the better for it:

and what profit [is it] that we have kept his ordinance; or “his observation”^{f85}; that is, have observed that which he commanded to be observed; this respects not any single and particular ordinance, but every ordinance of God: the Sadducees of those times seem designed, who

denied the resurrection of the dead, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and so might well conclude it in vain to serve God:

and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? or “in black”^{f86}; which is the habit of mourners; (see ^{f88b}Psalm 38:6) with an humble spirit, as Jarchi interprets it; or with humiliation (or contrition) of spirit, as the Targum, which paraphrases the whole verse thus,

“ye have said, he gains nothing who worships before the Lord; and what mammon (or riches) do we gain because we have kept the observation of his word, and because we have walked in contrition of spirit before the Lord of hosts?”

Aben Ezra and Abarbinel seem to understand this last clause of their being afflicted and suffering for the sake of religion, and which they endured in vain, seeing they were not respected and rewarded for it; but the other sense is best, which represents them as sincere penitents, and humble worshippers of God in their own account, and yet were not taken notice of by him: it seems to describe the Pharisees, who disfigured their faces, and affected down looks and sorrowful countenances^{f87}.

Ver. 15. *And now we call the proud happy*, etc.] Or “therefore now”^{f88}; since this is the case, that the worshippers of God are not regarded, and there is nothing got by serving him; they that are proud and haughty, that neither fear God nor regard men, are the happy persons; even presumptuous sinners, as the word^{f89} signifies, that stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty; these enjoy all worldly happiness, while they that serve the Lord are mourning in sackcloth, and are in the utmost distress. The Targum explains it of the ungodly, and as it is explained in the following clause:

yea, they that work wickedness are set up: or “built up”^{f90}; or “seeing, because”, or “for they that work”^{f91}, etc.; they are increased with children, by which their houses or families are built up; they are in a well settled and established condition; they abound in riches and honours; they are set in high places, and are in great esteem among men, even such who make it their constant business to commit sin:

yea, [they that] tempt God; or “yea, they tempt God”^{f92}; by their wicked words and actions, and try whether he will cause his judgments to fall upon them, which he has threatened to such sinners; (see ^{f93}Isaiah 5:18,19):

are even delivered; or, “and are delivered”^{f93}; from the punishment threatened; they escape it, and go on with impunity; from which observations these persons reasoned that there was no God of judgment, or that judged in the earth; that there was no providence concerned about human affairs; and that there was nothing in religion; and these were the hard and stout words which they spoke against the Lord.

Ver. 16. *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another*, etc.] Abarbinel thinks this is a continuation of the speech of the wicked; observing, that while they that work wickedness were set up, and they that tempted God escaped punishment, they that were religious, and feared God, “were destroyed one with another”, particularly by the plague; so he would have the word **wrbdn** rendered, which we translate, “spake often one to another”; in which sense he observes that root is used in (^{<3134>}Hosea 13:14 ^{<3148>}Psalms 47:3 ^{<2108>}2 Kings 11:1) but rather this is opposed unto what they said, by such, who, at the time referred to (which seems to be between the time of Christ’s coming, spoken of in the beginning of the chapter (^{<3108>}Malachi 3:1-6), and the destruction of Jerusalem after mentioned), feared the Lord, and served him; embraced the Messiah, and professed his name; for the fear of God takes in the whole of religious worship, both internal and external; and describes such, not that have a dread of the majesty of God, and of his judgments and wrath, or distrust his power, providence, grace, and goodness; but who have a filial and holy fear of God, a fiducial and fearless one, a reverential affection for him, and are true and sincere worshippers of him: these “spake often one to another”; of the unbelief, impiety, and profaneness of men, with great concern and lamentation; and of the great and good things they were led into the knowledge of; the everlasting love of the Father in the choice of them, and covenant with them in Christ; of redemption by the Son; of the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; and of the various truths of the everlasting Gospel; and of the gracious experiences they were indulged with; and all this they said for the glory of God’s grace, and for the comforting and strengthening, and edifying, of each other’s souls: it follows,

and the Lord hearkened, and heard [it]; what they said one to another: this is spoken after the manner of men, and does not so much regard the omniscience of God, who hearkens and hears everything that is said by wicked men, as by good men; as his special regard unto, peculiar notice he

takes of, and the approbation he has of his people, and of their words and actions, and even of their thoughts, as is afterwards intimated:

and a book of remembrance was written before him; in allusion to kings that keep registers, records, annals, and chronicles, as memorials of matters of moment and importance: (see ^{<15015>}Ezra 4:15) (^{<17023>}Esther 2:23 6:1): otherwise there is no forgetfulness in God; he bears in his own eternal mind a remembrance of the persons, thoughts, words, and actions of his people, and which he will disclose and make mention of another day; even our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God over all, and who will let the churches and world know that he is the searcher of hearts, and trier of the reins of the children of men:

for them that feared the Lord, as before,

and that thought upon his name; either the name of the Father; not any particular name of his, by which he is known, but him himself; for, as Kimchi observes, his name is himself, and he himself is his name; and especially as he is in Christ, and proclaimed in him; and this is expressive of faith in him, love to him, and reverence of him: or the name of Christ; and not any particular name of his, unless it be Jesus the Saviour: but rather his person as the Son of God; his office as Mediator; and his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: and it is not a bare thinking of him that is here intended, but such a thought of him as is accompanied with esteem and value for him, because of the dignity of his person, and the riches of his grace. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “and that reverence his name”; and the Syriac version, “that praise his name”; and the Targum is, that think of the glory of his name.

Ver. 17. *And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] That is, such as fear the Lord, and think of him, hereby they are known to be his; and hereafter, in the time referred to, it will be manifest that they are his: they are Christ’s already by his Father’s gift of them to him; by his own purchase; by the conquests of his grace; and by the voluntary surrender of themselves: but, in the last day, they will be claimed and owned by Christ before his Father and his holy angels; and they will be known to be his, by themselves and others; and there will be no doubt about it, or questioning of it:

in that day when I make up my jewels; Christ has some, who are his jewels, or peculiar treasure, as the word^{f94} here used signifies; who are loved with

an everlasting love; chosen in him; redeemed by him; justified by his righteousness; have the graces of his Spirit in them: and will be glorified: they are a peculiar people, separate from all others, and preferred unto them; for whom Christ has the strongest affection, and takes special care of: and there is a time when he will make them up; the number of them is already complete in eternal election; and there was a gathering of them together in Christ at his death; at every conversion there is an addition to them, as his regenerated and sanctified ones; and at death they are received into heaven, into his presence and bosom; and at the last day there will be a collection of them all together. The words may be rendered, even “my jewels in the day that I shall make”^{f95}; or “the day I shall make peculiar”: distinct from all others; meaning either the famous Gospel day, made by him the sun of righteousness, in which so many of his jewels are picked up, and brought in; or the day of Jerusalem’s destruction, when Christ took care of his jewels, and by the preservation of them showed that they were his, even all that believed in him; so that not one perished that believed in him, when he took vengeance on his enemies, that disbelieved and rejected him. Kimchi refers this to the day of judgment.

And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him; this is a favour not granted to the apostate angels; nor to the old world; nor to the Jewish nation; nor even to the Son of God; but is vouchsafed to his special people: the lives of these are spared, until they are called by grace; and though they are sometimes afflicted and chastised, it is very gently, and in love; their services are accepted, and the imperfections in them overlooked; their sins are pardoned, and they will find mercy at the great day of account; they are used in the most tender manner, not only as a son, an own son, but as an obedient one, for whom the greatest regard is had, and affection shown.

Ver. 18. *Then shall ye return,* etc.] Either the wicked, who will be “converted”^{f96}, as some render the word, and will have a different view of things, and change their minds and language; or they that feared the Lord, who at the time before spoken of will have a new turn of thought, and another and clear discerning of persons and things, and better judge of the dispensations of Providence: some that refer this to the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment, understand it, as Abarbinel does, of the returning of souls to their bodies, when indeed the difference between persons after described will be very discernible; but it seems to refer to the time of Christ’s first coming, and Jerusalem’s destruction:

and discern between the righteous and the wicked; the difference between such who are really and truly righteous, who are here meant, even such who believe in Christ, and are justified by his righteousness; and those that are wicked, as all by nature are: though sometimes this character designs the more profane and abandoned, and even professors of religion; the difference between these is not always easily discerned; as for the righteous, they are not known and discerned by the world; and by reason of afflictions, temptations, and sins, they are apt to judge wrong of themselves; and sometimes are so left to fall into sin, that they look like others: and there are wicked men under the appearance of righteous men, as were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; but by the destruction that came upon them, and the preservation of such as believed in Christ, it was discernible who were wicked, and who were righteous; indeed, at the last day, this difference will be more visible; in the bodies of the righteous, which will be raised glorious, when those of the wicked will not; in their souls, having on the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and perfectly holy; and in their situation, being set at Christ's right hand, and the wicked at his left; and by the characters that will be given of them by the Judge, and the different sentences passed and executed on them:

between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not; that is, between such persons that serve the Lord, and him only, privately and publicly, in righteousness and true holiness, in spirit and in truth, with faith and fervency, with reverence and fear, heartily and willingly, seeking his glory, without any dependence on their services; and those that are ungodly, or only outwardly serve the Lord, for sinister ends, and with selfish views, and according to their own inventions, and the traditions of men, and not the will of God, as the Scribes and Pharisees; between whom, and Christ's sincere disciples and followers, the awful day, described in the next chapter (~~3001~~ Malachi 4:1-6), will make a manifest difference.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 4

This chapter contains an account of the destruction of the wicked Jews, and the happiness of the righteous by the coming of the Messiah; an exhortation to regard the law of Moses; and a description of John the Baptist and his work. The day of Christ's coming, reaching to Jerusalem's destruction, is compared to a burning oven; the wicked Jews to stubble, whose ruin would be utter and complete, (³⁰⁰¹Malachi 4:1) the appearance of Christ is signified by the arising of him, the sun of righteousness; the manner, with healing in his wings; the effects of which are, going forth in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, and spiritual growth and triumph over their enemies, in which will lie the happiness of them that fear God, (³⁰⁰²Malachi 4:2,3) who are put in mind of the law of Moses on Horeb, (³⁰⁰⁴Malachi 4:4) the sending of John the Baptist under the name of Elijah, before the coming of Christ is prophesied of, (³⁰⁰⁵Malachi 4:5) and his work pointed out, with the end of it, (³⁰⁰⁶Malachi 4:6).

Ver. 1. *For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven,* etc.] Not the day of judgment, as Kimchi and other interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, think; but the day of Christ's coming in his kingdom and power, to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, which burned like an oven, both figuratively and literally; when the wrath of God, which is compared to fire, came upon that people to the uttermost; and when their city and temple were burnt about their ears, and they were surrounded with fire, as if they had been in a burning oven: and this being so terrible, as can hardly be conceived and expressed, the word "behold" is prefixed to it, not only to excite attention, but horror and terror at so dreadful a calamity; which though future, when the prophet wrote, was certain:

and all the proud; yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; the proud Pharisees, that boasted of their own righteousness, trusted in themselves, and despised others; all workers of iniquity, in private or in public; all rejecters of Christ, contemners of his Gospel and ordinances, and persecutors of his people; as well as such who were guilty of the most flagitious crimes, as sedition, robbery, murder, etc. of which there were

notorious instances during the siege of Jerusalem; these were all like stubble before devouring fire, weak and easily destroyed:

and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts: which is repeated, to show the certainty of it, and to apply it to the persons before described:

that it shall leave them neither root nor branch: which signifies an entire and complete destruction; the city and temple so utterly destroyed, that not one stone shall be left on another; both magistrates and subjects shall perish, priests and people, so that there shall be no form of government, civil nor ecclesiastical; tribes and families lost, they and their posterity: and so the Targum,

“which shall not leave them son and nephew:”

and, indeed, the numbers cut off were so many, and the destruction so general, that it may be wondered at that any remained: it is a proverbial expression, setting forth the greatness of the calamity; (see ⁴¹⁸⁰Matthew 3:10,12).

Ver. 2. *But unto you that fear my name,* etc.] The few that were of this character among that wicked nation; (see Gill on “³⁰⁸⁶Malachi 3:16”):

shall the Sun of righteousness arise; not the Holy Ghost, who enlightens sinners, convinces of righteousness, and gives joy, peace, and comfort to the saints, but Christ: and thus it is interpreted of him by the ancient Jews, in one of their Midrashes or expositions^{f97}; they say, Moses says not they shall be for ever pledged, that is, the clothes of a neighbour, but until the sun comes, until the Messiah comes, as it is said, “unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise”, etc.; and Philo the Jew^{f98} not only observes, that God, figuratively speaking, is the sun; but the divine “Logos” or Word of God, the image of the heavenly Being, is called the sun; who, coming to our earthly system, helps the kindred and followers of virtue, and affords ample refuge and salvation to them; referring, as it seems; to this passage: indeed, they generally interpret it of the sun, literally taken, which they suppose, at the end of the world, will have different effects on good and bad men; they say^{f99},

“in the world to come, God will bring the sun out of its sheath, and burn the wicked; they will be judged by it, and the righteous will be healed by it:”

for the proof of the former, they produce the words in the first verse of this chapter, “behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven”; and of the latter these words, “but unto you that fear my name etc.”; and a very ridiculous notion they have, that Abraham their father had a precious stone or pearl hanging about his neck, and every sick person that saw it was healed by it immediately; and, when he departed out of the world, God took it, and fixed it to the orb of the sun; hence the proverb, the sun rises, and sickness decreases^{f100}; and as it is elsewhere quoted^{f101}, this passage is added to confirm it, as it is said, “to you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings”: unless this fable should be intended to mean, as Abarbanel^{f102} interprets it, that Abraham, while he lived, clearly proved the unity of God and his perfections; and that, after his death, the same truth was taught by the wonderful motion of the sun: but, be this as it will, those are undoubtedly in the right who understand these words figuratively of the Messiah; who is compared to the “sun”, because, as the sun is a luminous body, the light of the whole world, so is Christ of the world of men, and of the world of saints; particularly of the Gentiles, often called the world; and of the New Jerusalem church state, and of the world to come: and as the sun is the fountain of light, so is Christ the fountain of natural and moral light, as well as of the light of grace, and of the light of glory: as the sun communicates light to all the celestial bodies, so Christ to the moon, the church; to the stars, the ministers of the word; to the morning stars, the angels: as the sun dispels the darkness of the night, and makes the day, so Christ dispelled the darkness of the ceremonial law, and made the Gospel day; and he dispels the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, and makes the day of grace; and will dispel the darkness of imperfection, and will make the day of glory; as the sun is a pure, clear, and lucid body, so is Christ, without the least spot of sin; and so are his people, as they are clothed with his righteousness: as the sun is a glorious body, so is Christ both his natures, divine and human; in his office as Mediator; and will be in his second coming: as the sun is superior to all the celestial bodies, so is Christ to angels and saints: as the sun is but one, so there is but one Son of God; one Mediator between God and man; one Saviour and Redeemer; one Lord and Head of the church: its properties and effects are many; it lays things open and manifest, which before were hid; communicates heat as well as light; make the earth fruitful; is very exhilarating; has its risings and settings, and of great duration: so Christ declares the mind and will of his Father, the hidden mysteries of grace; lays open the thoughts of men’s hearts in conversion;

and will at the last day bring to light the hidden things of darkness: he warms the hearts of his people with his love, and causes them to burn within them, while they hear his Gospel, and he makes them fervent in spirit while they serve the Lord; he fills them with the fruits of righteousness, and with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; but he is not always seen, is sometimes under a cloud, and withdraws himself; yet his name is as the sun before the Lord, and will abide for ever. He is called “the sun of righteousness”, because of the glory of his essential righteousness as God; and because of the purity and perfection of his righteousness as man, which appeared in all his actions, and in the administration of all his offices; and because of the display of the righteousness of God in him, in his sufferings and death, in atonement, pardon, and justification by him; and because he is the author and bringer in of righteousness to his people, the glory of which outshines all others, is pure and spotless like the sun, and is everlasting; those who have it are said to be clothed with the sun, and on such he shines in his beams of divine love, grace, and mercy, which righteousness sometimes signifies; and his rays of grace transform men into righteousness and true holiness. The “arising” of this sun may denote the appearance of Christ in our nature; under the former dispensation this sun was not risen, it was then night with the world; John the Baptist was the morning star, the forerunner of it: Christ the sun is now risen; the dayspring from on high hath visited mankind, and has spread its light and heat, its benign influences, by the ministration of the Gospel, the grace of God, which has appeared and shone out, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world: it may be accommodated to his spiritual appearance: this sun is sometimes under a cloud, or seems to be set, which occasions trouble, and is for wise ends, but will and does arise again to them that fear the Lord. The manner is,

with healing in his wings; by which are meant its rays and beams, which are to the sun as wings to a bird, by which it swiftly spreads its light and heat; so we read of the wings of the morning, (~~139~~ Psalm 139:9). Christ came as a physician, to heal the diseases of men; he healed the bodily diseases of the Jews, and he heals the soul diseases of his people, their sins; which healing he has procured by his blood and stripes: pardon of sin by the blood of Christ is meant by healing, which is universal, infallible, and free, (~~103~~ Psalm 103:3 ~~33~~ Isaiah 33:24 53:5 ~~14~~ Hosea 14:4) it may denote all that preservation, protection, prosperity, and happiness, inward and outward, which they that feared the Lord enjoyed through Christ, when the

unbelieving Jews were destroyed; and which is further expressed by what follows:

and ye shall go forth; not out of the world, or out of their graves, as some think; but either out of Jerusalem, as the Christians did a little before its destruction, being warned so to do ^{f103}, whereby they were preserved from that calamity; or it intends a going forth with liberty in the exercise of grace and duty, in the exercise of faith on Christ, love to him, hope in him, repentance, humility, self-denial, etc.; and in a cheerful obedience to his will; or else walking on in his ways; having health and strength, with great pleasure and comfort; and, as Aben Ezra says, by the light of this sun.

And grow up as calves of the stall; such as are fat, being put up there for that purpose; (see ^{<3104>}Amos 6:4 ^{<0223>}1 Samuel 28:24). Bochart ^{f104} has proved, from many passages out of the Talmud ^{f105}, that the word which the Targum here makes use of, and answers to that in the Hebrew text, which is rendered “stall”, signifies a yoke or collar, with which oxen or heifers were bound together, while they were threshing or treading out of corn; so that the calves or heifers here referred to were such as were not put up in a stall, but were yoked together, and employed in treading out the corn; now as there was a law that such should not be muzzled while they were thus employed, but might eat of the corn on the floor freely and plentifully, (^{<0204>}Deuteronomy 25:4) these usually grew fat, and so were the choicest and most desirable, to which the allusion may be here, and in (^{<2421>}Jeremiah 46:21) (^{<3104>}Amos 6:4) and are a fit emblem of saints joined together in holy fellowship, walking together in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; where they get spiritual food for their souls, and are in thriving circumstances; where they meet with the corn of heaven, with that corn which makes the young men cheerful, and that bread which nourishes up to everlasting life. The apostle alludes to the custom of oxen yoked together, either in ploughing, or in treading out the corn, when he says, speaking of church fellowship and communion in the ordinances of the Gospel, “be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers”, (^{<0214>}2 Corinthians 6:14) for this hinders spiritual edification, as well as the promotion of the glory of God; but where they are equally yoked, and go hand in hand together in the work and ways of the Lord, they grow and flourish; they are comfortable in their souls, and lively in the exercise of grace; and they are the most thriving Christians, generally speaking, who are in church communion, and most constantly attend the means of grace, and keep closest to the word and ordinances: for the metaphor here used is designed to express a

spiritual increase in all grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and a growing up into him in all things, through the use of means, the word and ordinances; whereby saints become fat and flourishing, being fed with the milk of the word, and the breasts of ordinances, and having fellowship with one another; and, above all, this spiritual growth is owing to the dews of the grace of God, the shining of the Sun of righteousness, and the comfortable gales of the south wind of the Spirit of God, which cause the spices to flow out. The Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render it, “ye shall leap” or “skip as calves loosed from bonds”; as such creatures well fed do when at liberty; and may denote the spiritual joy of the saints upon their being healed, or because of their secure, safe, and prosperous estate: and so the word is explained in the Talmud^{f106}, they shall delight themselves in it; and where the Rabbins interpret this and the preceding verse (^{300E}Malachi 4:1) of the natural sun in the firmament, which will be the hell^{f107} in the world to come, and which will burn the wicked, and heal the righteous.

Ver. 3. *And ye shall tread down the wicked*, etc.] As grapes in the winepress, as Christ did before them, (^{230D}Isaiah 63:2,3) and they by virtue of him; who makes them more than conquerors through himself, over all their enemies, spiritual and temporal:

for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet; this refers to the burning of them, (^{300E}Malachi 4:1) and may be literally understood of their being burnt with the city and temple; when afterwards, as Grotius observes, the city of Jerusalem being in some measure rebuilt, and called Aelia, there was a Christian church in it, governed by bishops, who were converted Jews; and so might be literally said to trample upon the ashes of the wicked, who had persecuted them in times past, they being upon the very spot where these men were destroyed by fire:

in the day that I shall do [this], saith the Lord of hosts: or “in the day which I make”^{f108}; that is, by the rising of the sun of righteousness, the Gospel day. The Talmud^{f109} interprets this verse of the bodies of the wicked in hell, which after twelve months will be consumed, and the wind will scatter them under the soles of the feet of the righteous.

Ver. 4. *Remember ye the law of Moses my servant*, etc.] Who was faithful as such in the house of God, in delivering the law to the children of Israel, which was given him; and who are called upon to remember it, its precepts and its penalties, which they were apt to forget: and particularly this

exhortation is given now, because no other prophet after Malachi would be sent unto them, this is what they should have and use as their rule and directory; and because that Christ, now prophesied of, would be the end of this law; and this, and the prophets, were to be until the days of John the Baptist, spoken of in the next verse (^{<3015>}Malachi 4:5); and the rather, because in this period of time, between Malachi and the coming of Christ, the traditions of the elders were invented and obtained, which greatly set aside the law, and made it of no effect:

which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel; for though the law came by Moses, and is therefore called his, yet God was the author and efficient cause of it; Moses was only a servant and minister; and this was given in Horeb, the same with Sinai: these are names of one and the same mountain, at least of the parts of it; one part of it was called Horeb, from its being a dry desert and desolate place; and the other Sinai, from its bushes and brambles. So Jerom^{f110} says,

“Horeb, the mountain of God, is in the land of Midian, by Mount Sinai, above Arabia in the wilderness, to which are joined the mountain and wilderness of the Saracens, called Pharan; but to me it seems the same mountain is called by two names, sometimes Sinai, and sometimes Horeb;”

(see ^{<2318>}Exodus 31:18 32:1,2 33:6). Agreeably to which Josephus^{f111} calls Horeb, where Moses fed his flock, and saw the vision of the burning bush, Mount Sinai; and says, it was the highest of the mountains in those parts, very convenient for pasture, and abounded with excellent herbage. Some say^{f112} the eastern part of it was called Sinai, and the western part Horeb; it is very likely they joined together at the bottom of the mountain, and were the two tops of it. This being mentioned shows, that the law, strictly taken, and not the prophets, is here designed, for no other was commanded, ordered, or delivered in Horeb; and that was for all the children of Israel in successive ages, until the coming of the Messiah, and for them only, as to the ministration of it by Moses.

[With] the statutes and judgments; the laws ceremonial and judicial, which were given to Moses, at the same time the law of the decalogue was, to be observed by the children of Israel, and which were shadows of things to come; namely, those of them that were of a ceremonial nature, and therefore to be remembered and attended to as leading to Christ, and the things of the Gospel.

Ver. 5. *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet,* etc.] Not the Tishbite, as the Septuagint version wrongly inserts instead of prophet; not Elijah in person, who lived in the times of Ahab; but John the Baptist, who was to come in the power and spirit of Elijah, (^{<4017>}Luke 1:17) between whom there was a great likeness in their temper and disposition; in their manner of clothing, and austere way of living; in their courage and integrity in reproving vice; and in their zeal and usefulness in the cause of God and true religion; and in their famous piety and holiness of life; and in being both prophets; (see ^{<4011>}Matthew 11:11 14:5) and that he is intended is clear from (^{<40170>}Matthew 17:10-13 ^{<4092>}Mark 9:12,13). It is a notion of the Jews, as Kimchi and others, that the very Elijah, the same that lived in the days of Ahab, shall come in person before the coming of their Messiah they vainly expect, and often speak of difficult things to be left till Elijah comes and solves them; but for such a notion there is no foundation, either in this text or elsewhere. And as groundless is that of some of the ancient Christian fathers, and of the Papists, as Lyra and others, that Elijah with Enoch will come before the day of judgment, and restore the church of God ruined by antichrist, which they suppose is meant in the next clause.

Before the coming of the great and, dreadful day of the Lord; that is, before the coming of Christ the son of David, as the Jews^{f113} themselves own; and which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ to judgment, though that is sometimes called the great day, and will be dreadful to Christless sinners; but of the first coming of Christ, reaching to the destruction of Jerusalem: John the Baptist, his forerunner, the Elijah here spoken of, came proclaiming wrath and terror to impenitent sinners; Christ foretold and denounced ruin and destruction to the Jewish nation, city, and temple; and the time of Jerusalem's destruction was a dreadful day indeed, such a time of affliction as had not been from the creation, (^{<4020>}Matthew 24:21) and the Talmud interprets^{f114} this of the sorrows of the Messiah, or which shall be in the days of the Messiah.

Ver. 6. *And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,* etc.] Or “with” the children, as Kimchi; and Ben Melech observes, that I [is put for μ [, and so in the next clause:

and the heart of the children to their fathers; or “with” their fathers; that is, both fathers and children: the meaning is, that John the Baptist should be an instrument of converting many of the Jews, both fathers and children, and bringing them to the knowledge and faith of the true Messiah; and

reconcile them together who were divided by the schools of Hillell and Shammai, and by the sects of the Sadducees and Pharisees, and bring them to be of one mind, judgment, and faith, and to have a hearty love to one another, and the Lord Christ; (see ^{<1018>}Matthew 3:5,6 (see Gill on “^{<1017>}Luke 1:17”). The Talmudists^{f115} interpret this of composing differences, and making peace.

Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse; the land of Judea; which, because the greater part of the inhabitants of it were not converted to the Lord, did not believe in the Messiah, but rejected him, notwithstanding the preaching and testimony of John the Baptist, and the ministry and miracles of Christ, it was smitten with a curse, was made desolate, and destroyed by the Roman emperors, Vespasian and Adrian, as instruments doing what God here threatened he would do; for not the whole earth is intended, as the Targum and Abarbinel suggest; but only that land, and the people of it, are intended, to whom the law of Moses was given; and to whom Elias, or John the Baptist, was to be sent; and to whom he was sent, and did come; and by whom he was rejected, and also the Messiah he pointed at; for which that country was smitten with a curse, and remains under it to this day.

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 --Deuteronomy vera Sapientia, l. 4. c. 5. p. 279.
- ft2 --Nizzachon, p. 200. apud Hottinger. Thes. Phil. p. 489.
- ft3 --Onomastic. Sacr. p. 147, 359, 541.
- ft4 --T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 15. 1.
- ft5 --Deuteronomy Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 22.
- ft6 --Deuteronomy Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 51.
- ft7 --T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 15. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 55.
- ft8 --Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 18. 1.
- ft9 --Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3589.
- ft10 --Chronological Tables, cent. 12.
- ft11 --Scripture Chronology, p. 725.
- ft12 --**dyb** “in manu”, V. L. Cocceius; “per manum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
- ft13 --See Prideaux’s Connexion, par. 2. B. 3. p. 199.
- ft14 --Dr. Shaw’s Travels, p. 438. Ed. 2.
- ft15 --Harris’s Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. p. 474.
- ft16 --Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 169.
- ft17 --Deuteronomy Animal. l. 6. c. 63.
- ft18 --Dr. Shaw Travels, p. 448. Ed. 2.
- ft19 --Tanchum apud Pocock in loc.
- ft20 --**Mhl warqw** “et vocabuntur”, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Grotius.
- ft21 --Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3.

- ft22 --Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 5. sect. 6.
- ft23 --Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.
- ft24 --Iliad. I. 1. 66.
- ft25 --Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. 1. 3. c. 12.
- ft26 --Nat. Hist. 1. 8. c. 45.
- ft27 --Scholia in Aristoph. Acharn. Act 3. Scen. 3. p. 409.
- ft28 --Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1. etc.
- ft29 --**Mkb Mg ym** “utinam vestrum aliquis”, Gataker, Drusius.
- ft30 --Kimchi in 1 Chron. xxvi. 1.
- ft31 --Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.
- ft32 --Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.
- ft33 --In Misn. ib.
- ft34 --Baal Hatturim in Lev. vi. 13.
- ft35 --Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 2. sect. 4.
- ft36 --T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 110. 1. Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.
- ft37 --**wbyn** “et verbum ejus”, Pagninus, Munster; “sermo ejus, [vel] eorum”, Vatablus; so Ben Melech.
- ft38 --**wtwa Mtxphw** “et efflastis illam”, Montanus; “anheli isto estis”, Tigurine version; “exsufflare possetis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, “difflatis”, Drusius; “sufflavistis illud”, Burkius.
- ft39 --“Et contristastis illum”; so some in Vatablus.
- ft40 --**Mkl** “propter vos”, Munster, Drusius.
- ft41 --**rḡ** “increpabo”, Tigurine version; “increpo”, Drusius, Cocceius; “increpans”, Burkius.
- ft42 --**wyl a, εις το αυτο**, Sept.; “ad istud”, so some in Vatablus, Deuteronomy Dieu.

- ft43 --“Ad se”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version: Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Calvin, Burkius.
- ft44 --**Kal m αγγελος**, Sept; “angelus”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Burkius.
- ft45 --**hrwtb Mynp Myavwnw** “et accepistis faciem in lege”, Pagninus; “assumentes facies”, Montanus; “suscipitis faciem”, Piscator; “accipitis faciem”, Cocceius; “et ferentes faciem in lege”, Burkius.
- ft46 --**vyal** “viro”, Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius, Deuteronomy Dieu; “filius et qui fecerit istud”, Piscator.
- ft47 --**hnere** “vigilantem et respondentem”, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Grotius; “vigilantem et responsantem”, Junius & Tremellius; “vigilem et respondentem”, Burkius.
- ft48 --T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 82. 1.
- ft49 --**tynv** “secundo”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius, Burkius.
- ft50 --**Ktrbx ayhw** “et ipsa est socia tua”, Montanus, Drusius, Burkius; “quum sit socia tua”, Pagninus, Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft51 --**Myhl a ez** “semen Dei”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkius.
- ft52 --**hvædx a l w** “nonne unus fecit?” V. L. Menochius, Tirinus.
- ft53 --“Et ne unus fecit?” Pagninus, Montanus; “et unus ille (Abramus) ita egit?” Grotius; “annon unus hoc fecit?” Tigurine version; so Joseph Kimchi.
- ft54 --**Myhl a ez** “semen Deus”, Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. 1. 8. c. 2. p. 550.
- ft55 --Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 4. Midrash Ruth, fol. 36. 1.
- ft56 --Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 4.
- ft57 --T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 2.
- ft58 --Maimon. Hilchot Gerushin, c. 10, 21, 22.

- ft59 --T. Bab. Gittin, ib.
- ft60 --T. Hieros. Kiddushin, c. 1. fol. 58. 3.
- ft61 --T. Bab. Gittin, ut supra.
- ft62 --Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10.
- ft63 --Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 76. 4.
- ft64 --Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 219. 4.
- ft65 --Apud Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. **rrb**.
- ft66 --Niddah. c. 9. sect. 6.
- ft67 --In Misn. ib.
- ft68 --In ib.
- ft69 --Comment. in Jer. ii. 22.
- ft70 --**Mybkm tyrbk** “ut lanaria fullonum”, Drusius; “radicula, [vel] saponaria”, Vatablus.
- ft71 --Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 15.
- ft72 --Hilchot Melachim, c. 12. sect. 3.
- ft73 --**hbre** “dulcescet”, Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; “dulce”, Piscator.
- ft74 --**Myhl a** “deos, vel iudices”, Calvin, Drusius, Grotius.
- ft75 --**Mybq Mta ytaw** “et tamen diripitis me”, Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft76 --**rwah tyb l a** “thesaurum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “[vel] in domum thesauri”, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius.
- ft77 --Hilchot Maaser Sheni, c. 1. sect. 1.
- ft78 --Not. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 6. No. 14.
- ft79 --Prospect of the Temple, c. 5. p. 1058. c. 19. p. 1097.
- ft80 --T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 2. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 113. 1.

- ft81 --**yd yl b de** “adeo ut non sint vobis sufficientia vasa”, Pagninus, Vatablus. So Burkius.
- ft82 --Eousque ut nunquam sit satis, nempe a parte datoris, Gussetius. So Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft83 --**l kab** “comedentem”, Drusius, Cocceius; “eum qui comedit”, Burkius.
- ft84 --**px ba** “terra desiderabilis”, V. L. Pagninus, Drusius; “terra beneplaciti”, Montanus, Vatablus, Burkius; “oblectationis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft85 --**wtrmvm** “observationem ejus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; “observantiam ejus”, Cocceius.
- ft86 --**tynrdq** “atrate”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Stockius, p. 926; “pullati”, Tigurine version; “atrati”, Cocceius.
- ft87 --The word is used by Josephus ben Gorion for sincere walking, l. 6. c. 20. p. 612. Vid. Not. Breithaupt. in ib.; it is interpreted “humbly” by R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 102. 2.
- ft88 --**htw** “ergo nunc”, V. L.; “igitur”, Cocceius; “adeoque”, Burkius.
- ft89 --**Mydz** “arrogantes”, V. L.; “feroces”, Cocceius.
- ft90 --**wnbn** “aedificati sunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius; “aedificantur”, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft91 --**Mg** “siquidem”, V. L.; “nam”, Piscator, Noldius.
- ft92 --**wnxb Mg** “etiam probaverunt”, Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius.
- ft93 --**wj l myw** “et evaserunt”, Pagninus, Montanus; “et effugerunt”, Cocceius.
- ft94 --**hl gō** “peculium”, Munster, Pagninus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Calvin, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft95 --**hvejna rva Mwył** “illa die quam facio”, so some in Vatablus; “in diem quem ego facio peculium”, Cocceius, Burkius.

- ft96 --**Mt****bv****w** “et convertemini”, Cocceius, Gussetius, so Pagninus, Montanus; “conversi”, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft97 --Shemot Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 134. 2.
- ft98 --Deuteronomy Somniis, p. 578.
- ft99 --T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 8. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2.
- ft100 --T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2.
- ft101 --Apud Yalkut in loc.
- ft102 --Comment. in Mal. i. 11.
- ft103 --Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.
- ft104 --Hieroic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 31. col. 303.
- ft105 --T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 53. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 30. 1. Pesachim, fol. 26. 1. Eruvin, fol. 17. 2.
- ft106 --T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1. Nedarim, fol. 8. 2.
- ft107 --A notion they elsewhere frequently inculcate, and is not improbable; and which has been of late advanced and defended by a very learned man of our own country, Mr. Tobias Swinden, in a Treatise called “An Inquirer into the Nature and Place of Hell.”
- ft108 --**hve****na rva Mwyb** “eo die, quem ego facio”, Cocceius.
- ft109 --T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1.
- ft110 --Deuteronomy locis Hebr. fol. 92. E.
- ft111 --Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12.
- ft112 --Vid. Adrichomii Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 122. Well’s Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2. p. 118.
- ft113 --T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 43. 2. & Gloss. in ib.
- ft114 --T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 118. 1.
- ft115 --Massachet Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.