

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 וְרֵי אֶ** “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, (~~300D~~ 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 ⁴⁹³³Jeremiah 49:33 ²⁵¹³⁷Jeremiah 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 “~~33010~~ 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 ^{<300>}John 4:20,21,23 ^{<5018>}1 Timothy 2:8) comparable to incense for its fervency, fragrancy, and gratefulness, (^{<19102>}Psalm 141:2 ^{<6183>}Revelation 8:3,4):

and a pure offering; meaning either the Gentiles themselves, their souls and bodies, (^{<2661>}Isaiah 66:20 ^{<6517>}Psalm 51:17 ^{<6121>}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, (^{<3006>}Malachi 1:6) and pollute, (^{<3007>}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”, (^{<3007>}Malachi 1:7) as Kimchi observes; (see Gill on “^{<3007>}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, (^{<25719>}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 “³⁰¹⁰⁸Malachi 1:8”) and if the first word is rendered “stolen”, as it may, this offering was an abomination to the Lord, (²⁶¹⁰⁸Isaiah 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, (³⁰¹⁰⁸Malachi 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, (¹⁸²¹⁸Leviticus 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.