
Malachi

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INTRODUCTION

Other than his name, Malachi, which means “my messenger,” there is no information extant about the author. And even his name is considered by some scholars to be nothing more than an appellation or designation, not a personal name. Other scholars, though, deem “Malachi” to be an abbreviated form of “Malachiah,” and thus a personal name.

The date of the book is circa 435 BC to 400 BC. This date is reasonably surmised from the following historical framework: Under the ministries of Zechariah and Haggai the rebuilding of the second temple was achieved in 516 BC; from 516 to 323 BC the Jews and Israel passed through a ‘golden age,’ a time of great national prosperity, except for a twenty year span from 420 to 400 BC. And this time of abundance was predicated upon a relationship with Jehovah Elohim. Apostasy gained ascendancy in 420 BC, and Malachi’s ministry was the antidote. And the thrust of the book of Malachi is ‘how to deliver a nation from spiritual apostasy.’

This apostate period, 420 to 400 BC, was provoked and intensified by the priesthood of the nation of Judah; for the priest were unbelievers (agnostics). And as a result of their unbelief the priests were not teaching the written word of God. And except for the book of Malachi and Nehemiah, they had the entire Old Testament Canon in written form.

According to Nehemiah 5:14, Nehemiah himself returned to Persian Babylon in the year 433 BC. Upon his departure, the incipient apostasy began to accelerate. This apostasy and its quickening are the subjects of the book of Malachi.

Nehemiah 13:6 states that Nehemiah again returned to Jerusalem; however, the date of his return is unknown. It is presupposed that his return coincided with the ministry of Malachi. Thus the political governor of Judah between 420 to 400 BC was Nehemiah, and the spiritual guide

was Malachi. Admittedly, this is a presupposition; however, precise determination is difficult. The last dated prophecy of Zechariah is found in Zechariah 7:1, which says, “In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the Lord came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of Kislev.” Here, the date is 518 BC. And it is acknowledged that Zechariah was still ministering in 516 BC, and apparently, as late as 475 BC (some sustain Zechariah’s ministry through 445 BC). This will be discussed in more detail later.

It should be noted that the common denominator between the ministry of Zechariah and the ministry of Malachi is this: Both brought the people back to God.

OUTLINE

- A. God’s Love for His People (1:1-5).
 - 1. Disbelieved by the Priests (1:1-3).
 - 2. Demonstrated by Jehovah (1:4,5).
- B. Israel’s Sins against God (1:6-2:17).
 - 1. The disbelief of the priests (1:6-2:9).
 - 2. The apostasy of the people (2:10-17).
- C. God’s Warning of Judgment (3:1-4:6).
 - 1. God will send a messenger (3:1-6).
 - 2. The people have robbed God (3:7-15).
 - 3. God’s grace to the faithful remnant (3:16-18).
 - 4. Judgment from Justice (4:1-4).
 - 5. Elijah (4:5,6).¹

THEME

The theme of the book of Malachi is the direct correlation between spiritual decline and the decline of nations. And “depend upon God” is Malachi’s announcement; for only God can sustain nations and, as will be demonstrated, God destroys nations for apostasy. And the spiritual decline depicted by Malachi will be paralleled in 70 AD by the Jews of the *Diaspora generation*.

¹Unger, Merrill F. *Unger’s Survey of the Bible*; page 234. Outline originally compiled by M. Unger; revised by R.E. Radic.

Principium: Individual believers within a nation can make or break that nation. Thus, the concept of 'patriotism' includes spiritual growth.

Malachi Chapter One

Malachi 1:1

An oracle: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi."

The Hebrew word for "oracle" is MASA', and refers to a "burden." And not just any burden, but a burden that smashes down and crushes; "figuratively, a judgment which lies heavy on a people."² Robert Thieme asserts that this term is the "strongest Hebrew word for divine judgment; and refers to the 'sin unto death' for believers or 'destruction' for national entities." Thus, since Malachi is the last prophet to Israel until John the Baptist, this is a warning or "burden" from God that must last the Jews for 400 years. And that "burden" or "judgment" is this: depend upon God, learn God's Word, grow spiritually, or face judgment from God.

So verse one reads: "The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel (Judah) by the hand of Malachi (my messenger)."

Malachi 1:2

"I have loved you,' says the Lord. But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' the Lord says. 'Yet I have loved Jacob.'"

Verse two begins the conversation between God and the apostate priests. And the dialogue revolves around the Hebrew word for 'love,' *bhaxA*, AHAB, which is "used of the unspeakable love and tender mercies of God in covenant with his people."³ The verb is used twice in the Qal perfect, then once in the Qal imperfect participle. In the Qal perfect the verb depicts the principle, doctrine and integrity of God's love, i.e., that God so loved all of mankind that He provided the Cross and salvation for all. Whereas the Qal imperfect participle depicts the real, factual entrance into God's love by means of acceptance of the Cross and salvation. Respectively, they would be translated "I have loved," and "I keep on loving."

²Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 59.

³Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 260.

And Malachi uses as his illustration of the principle of God's love, Esau; and as the factual experience of God's love, Jacob. Esau was an unbeliever; Jacob was a believer. The priests of Malachi's day are the same as Esau, they are unbelievers. Born into the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, they have inherited the priesthood; but they are agnostics. And when God states, "I have loved you," this is a declaration of the principle of love, and a provocation for the priests to accept this love and believe in Christ. And the validity of the verb is in God Himself; for the verb testifies that a relationship can exist between God and mankind. And that God has made provision for this association in the Cross, and this provision has as its mainstay the 'love' of God.

So Esau is the illustration of the unbeliever; God loved the unbeliever, Christ died for him, but Esau rejected Christ and His love. Thus, there is no relationship with Esau because Esau will not allow it -- even though God earnestly desired it. And the priests, as the correspondents to Esau ask, "In what way have you loved us?" They do not see the Cross and the love that made it possible. And they also do not see that God loved both Esau and Jacob, but Esau rejected God's love. This is brought out in they reply, "Was not Esau a brother to Jacob?" In other words, did not Esau have the same opportunity to believe in Christ, did they not come from the same believing father, Isaac? And did not Christ die on the Cross for the sins of both? Then did not God love them both when He planned the Cross? The answer to all these questions is an absolute and certain 'yes!'

God's Love

According to I John 4:8,16, God is never-ending, unchanging love. "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him." And God's love is greater than man's love. For God's love requires no response or reciprocation, no reassurance, no proofs. God's love goes on without a beginning, without an end, without an object, without stimulation of any type. For God loves Himself, God loves all believers in Christ because they have the righteousness of Christ, and God loves all unbelievers because His love comes from Himself and is not from the value or demerit of the unbelievers. "But God

demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

And the love of God for Himself flows through Christ on the Cross and God the Holy Spirit to us as believers in Christ, according to John 17:24, I John 4:10, and Romans 5:5.

"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." "This is love: not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Since sinful mankind can never meet the standards of God's perfect love, we would never have a hope of gaining His love. However, God Himself, motivated by His love that does not see the value or merit of the object of His love, decided to provide a way for mankind to obtain His love: the Cross. And because of the Cross God can, at the moment of salvation, give the perfect righteousness of Christ to each believer, thus making association with His perfect love possible. And since God loves His own perfect righteousness with a perfect love, the believer, after salvation, enjoys the perfect love of God. It is in this manner that God has used His perfect Justice and Righteousness to provide mankind with His perfect love.⁴

Malachi 1:3

"But Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

The word for "hate" is the Hebrew term SANEE. And just as the perfect of AHAB indicated the *principium* of love, so SANEE indicates the idea of 'hate,' not the reality. The reality of not accepting the love of God as found in the Cross of Christ is found in the phrase "I have turned his mountains into wasteland." In other words, the Justice of God must protect the perfect Righteousness and perfect Love of God; if the way of entry, which is Christ, into the love of God is rejected, then the Justice of God has no alternative -- judgment must be administered.

⁴Thieme, Robert. *The Trinity*; page 9,10. This presentation of God's Love was originally compiled by Robert Thieme; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

The phrase "his mountains" refers to Esau's progeny and heritage, the Edomites and the mountains of Edom. And both were eventually totally destroyed.

The Edomites

The Edomites are the descendants of Edom, i.e., Esau, according to Genesis 36:1-19. And according to Numbers 20:14-21, the Israelites were refused permission to pass inviolate through Edom. This was an instance of religious aversion probably exacerbated by Satan himself.

Saul ben-Kish, anointed first king of Israel, fought against the Edomites, I Samuel 14:47; "for Yahweh so hated the Amalekites (descendants of Esau) that He commanded Saul to have no pity on them -- not even the women and children -- but to blot out the name of Amalek entirely."⁵

And according to I Kings 11:15,16, King David defeated the Edomites; however, Hadad, one of the royal princes, escaped to Egypt and later became an enemy of Solomon's. Indeed, by David's command, Joab ben-Zeruiah, remained in Edom six months -- "until he had cut off every male organ (ZAKR) in Edom."⁶ Then, in 875 BC, the Edomites allied with Moab and Ammon to attack Judah, II Chronicles 20:22, in the Valley of Berachah. Later, Jehoram had problems with the Edomites until, finally, Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt, took Sela, the capital, and executed another 10,000 by pushing them from the top of the rock (II Kings 14:7, II Chronicles 25:11,12)

Subsequent to this, the Edomites became the vassals of the Assyrians, but attempted revolutions in 711 and 701 BC. And the Edomites allied themselves with Nebuchadnezzar when he destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC, according to Psalm 137:7, which says, "Remember, O Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. 'Tear it down,' they cried, 'tear it down to its foundations!'"

Nebuchadnezzar ceded portions of Judah to the Edomites after the fall of Jerusalem. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah in Jeremiah 49; and explains why Jeremiah had been exhorting the Jews to destroy the Edomites. Lamentations 4:21,

⁵Josephus, Flavius. *Antiquitates Judaearum*.

⁶Edwardes, Allen. *Erotica Judaica*; page 73.

Amos 1:11,12, and Obadiah 8-10, all prophecy the destruction of Edom by God.

The Nabataeans were the first of God's whips against the Edomites; for the Nabataeans pushed the Edomites back up into a small parcel of land next to Judah. Then John Hyrcanus I, king-heierach of Judea, 134-104 BC, subjugated Edom in fulfillment of the above prophecies, "that Jacob shall lay Esau by the heel." Hyrcanus "permitted the Idumeans to remain in their country as free men if they would circumcise their genitals and observe Jewish law."⁷

God's final whip against the Edomites was Rome. For the Romans used 20,000 of the Idumeans as allies in the siege of Jerusalem, 70AD. But afterwards, the Romans annihilated the Idumeans, stating simply that they were a lawless and despicable race.

In verses 3 and 4 of Malachi chapter 1, Malachi compares the priests to Esau and his descendants the Edomites. This was an insult of unimaginable contempt -- the ultimate slur. For the Edomites were uncircumcised. And as uncircumcised heathens the Amalekites had "made themselves particularly hateful by cutting off 'the circumcised members of the Israelites'" (both prisoners and corpses), tossing them into the air and shouting with obscene curses to Yahweh: 'This is what you like, so take what you have chosen.' This tradition is deduced from Deuteronomy 25:18, alluding to Amalek's harassment of the Hebrews at Rephidim during the Exodus."⁸

In other words, Malachi is equating the circumcised Levitical Priests of his day with the uncircumcised Edomites. The Edomites were unbelievers who hated Yahweh and the Jews, and who tried to destroy the Jews at every opportunity. The priests were also unbelievers who hated Yahweh, and who were trying to destroy their own country from within. Who is more to be reviled? The enemy who attempts to kill you, or traitorous compatriots who attempt to kill you?

Malachi 1:4

"Edom may say, 'Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins.' But this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'They may build,

but I will demolish. They will be called The Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the Lord.'"

The concept of verse four is found in the action of the verbs: *RASHASH*, *SHUB*, *CHARAS*.

RASHASH means "to defeat," and in the context refers to the presumptuously arrogant thoughts of the Edomites after God has defeated them, namely, "we have been defeated in principle only." In fact and in action, they think *SHUB*, which means "to return again," "we will return, we are all-powerful and cannot be kept down." And the truth of *SHUB* from God's viewpoint is that they will never believe in Him, in His power, in His righteousness; thus He must permanently destroy them. Their arrogance is such that they cannot learn from Divine Discipline, they believe in their hearts that, if there is a God, they are more powerful than He. Consequently, God's reality, the reality of absolute truth is found in the Qal imperfect of the verb, *CHARAS*, which means "to thrown down or destroy utterly." God will decimate them, and as He does so the Edomites will acknowledge only their own pomposity. For this reason, they will be called "a territory of wickedness," "a people against whom the Lord has indignation forever."

Malachi 1:5

"You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the Lord --even beyond the borders of Israel!'"

Not only will the priests and the people of Judah see the destruction of Edom, but they will see something else: the warning omen of Divine Discipline to Judah herself. The "eyes" are the eyes of the Jewish religious leaders of the future, i.e., in 30 AD. And the warning sign that they will see refers to the gift of tongues in the year 30 AD. This sign is also mentioned in Isaiah 28:11, which says, "Very well then, with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to his people."

Gentile languages will be used to warn the Jews of coming chastisement in 30 AD. And the result of this warning sign? "They will say, 'Great is the Lord!'" So the atheistic priests in Malachi's day, and the atheistic and apostate priests and religious leaders in 30 AD, will both come to the same conclusion: Great is the Lord!

The narrative of the gift of tongues is found in Acts 2:1ff. Because the Jews failed to evangelize

⁷Edwardes, Allen. *Ibid*; page 147.

⁸*Ibid*; page 56.

the Gentiles, God sent the Gentiles' languages to evangelize the Jews. And note, that the gift of tongues involved the articulation of a legitimate foreign language that the speaker did not know, not the speaking of gibberish that was incomprehensible. The demonstration of this is found in Acts 2:5-11, "Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans (the Galileans were uneducated and uni-lingual)? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!'"

Thus the gift of tongues had a specific purpose, which was the warning and evangelizing of the Jews. The gift was extant from the Day of Pentecost in 30 AD, up till the fall of Jerusalem in August of 70 AD. Indeed, all in all the Jews, as a nation, were the recipients of Seven Signs from God.

Seven Omens To The Jews From God

1. The gift of tongues, which was prophesied in Isaiah 28:11, and Malachi 1:5.
2. The Virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, prophesied in Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."
3. The betrayal of our Lord by Judas Iscariot, prophesied in Zechariah 11:12,13: "I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.' So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, 'Throw it to the potter' -- the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter."
4. The two deaths (spiritual and physical) of Christ on the Cross, prophesied in Isaiah 53:9: "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his

mouth." And note, that if physical death was the atoning agent, then our Lord would have had to die at least once for each human being ever to live, i.e., billions of times.

5. The resurrection of our Lord, prophesied in Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10: "See my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted." "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand."
6. Forty years of miraculous evangelism through the gift of tongues, recorded in the Book of Acts.
7. The prophecy of the assault of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, prophesied by our Lord during His Incarnation, circa 29 AD, in Luke 21:20: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near." And in Luke 21:20, the word "desolation" is a specific reference to Divine Discipline from God. Luke 21:22 makes a reference to the prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem as given in Leviticus 26:27ff.

Luke 21:22 reads, "For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written." Where was it written? In Leviticus 26:27-45.⁹

Malachi 1:6

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?' says the Lord Almighty. 'It is you, O priests, who despise my name. But you ask, 'How have we despised your name?'"

In verse six, the prophet Malachi introduces the idea of relationship and output or production to the unbelieving priests of his day. The two relationships are found in the phrases "father and son," and "master and respect," "a son regularly honors a father, a slave his lord." Therefore, Malachi is declaring to the unsaved priests that prior to representing God to man, they must have a relationship with God as believers, as in the father-son analogy. Then, and only then, can they

⁹ Thieme, Robert. *Seven Signs*; originally compiled by Robert Thieme; from notes on *Malachi*, 1968; altered and appended by R. E. Radic.

generate results or fruit for God, as in the slave-lord analogy. And these unsaved priests have no love for God and no respect (reverence) for God because they have no relationship with God.

And God asks, "Where is my honor" as to a father from a son? There is none because these priests are unbelievers and thus are not 'sons.' And then God asks, "If I be Lord(s), where is my reverence (worship)" as to a master from a slave? There is none because to worship these priests would have to be believers. There exists neither 'honor' or 'worship' because these priests "despise God's name." And the word for 'despise' means "to do that which implies contempt; to treat contemptuously and proudly."¹⁰

And Robert Thieme states that *BAZA* "implies thinking then doing; they despise God in their minds before they commit despicable acts."¹¹ Additionally, the verb *BAZA* is presented by Malachi in the Qal active participle, which means that these priests 'constantly despise God.' They never stop despising God.

And then the priests ask, "In what one way do we despise you?" And the question is posed in the Qal perfect, which means that they deny constantly despising God, and more, they impudently ask Him to name just one past act of hatred. The arrogance of this statement is monumental. And God answers in verse 7.

The term utilized by Malachi for the priests, , *COHEN*, recommends itself to further explanation:

The Levitical Priesthood

According to Numbers 16:5 the Levitical priests were commissioned by God, separated unto God, and were allowed to approach God. "Then he said to Korah and all his followers: 'In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him.'"

The Levitical priesthood began with the tribe of Levi and proceeded through the sons of the family of Aaron, according to Numbers 18:1,8 and Exodus 28:1, which says, "Have Aaron you brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and

Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests." However, physical blemishes disqualified any male descendant of Aaron, according to Leviticus 21:17-23, from which 21:17 is presented: "The Lord said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come non of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God.'"

The duties of the Levitical priesthood included: the teaching of the Law, Leviticus 10:11; offering the sacrifices, Leviticus chapter 9; maintaining the Tabernacle and the Temple, Numbers 18:3; officiating in the Holy Place, Exodus 30:7-10; inspecting ceremonially unclean persons, Leviticus chapters 13 and 14; they adjudicated disputes, Deuteronomy 17:8-13; they functioned as tax collectors, Numbers 18:21,26; Hebrews 7:5.

Sustenance of the priesthood occurred through the following vehicles: prescribed portions of the sacrificial offerings, Numbers 18:8-14; one habitual tithe from which tithe a tenth part was assigned to the priests, Numbers 18:21-24, cf. Lev. 27:30-33, cf. Numbers 18:26-28; along with thirteen assigned cities, Joshua 21:13-19, which provided a special tithe every third year, Deuteronomy 14:27-29; 26:12; the redemption money for the firstborn in Israel, Leviticus chapter 27; an assigned portion of the spoils of war, Numbers 31:25-27; along with the shewbread, Leviticus 24:5-9.

And so that the priests would not be overworked, they were assigned assistants who were called the Levites, II Chronicles 29:34. The Levites were selected by God to aid in the sacrificial offerings and in the administration of holy things, according to Numbers 3:5ff., 8:14-19. The Levites also preserved and transmitted the written Law, Lev. 10:11; Deut. 17:18; 33:10; Nehemiah 8:9, Ezekiel 44:23. They attended the priests, Numbers 18:4; the Levites also were responsible for assembling, dismantling, and transporting the Tabernacle, Numbers chapter 4; 10:17,21. And they also taught the Torah (the word) and administered justice, Deut. 33:10a.

Levitical priests served for 25 years, from age 25 to age 50, according to Numbers 8:24,25.

Other than the family of Aaron, there were three other family lines in the tribe of Levi (Numbers chapter 4): the *kohathites*, who maintained the furniture, vessels and veil of the Tabernacle; the *gershonites*, who maintained the coverings, hangings and doors of the Tabernacle; the

¹⁰ Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 119.

¹¹ Thieme, Robert. Paraphrase of Robert Thieme's words; notes on *Malachi*, 1968.

merarites, who maintained the supports, including the planks bars and cords, of the Tabernacle.

Initially, God had selected the entire nation of Israel to be his priests, according to Exodus 19:5,6; however, after the nation proved to be inadequate as priests, Exodus 32:7-10, the Levites who supported Moses in Exodus chapters 26-28 were selected as God's priests, Numbers 3:5-9.

The apparel of the high priest is cited in Exodus chapter 28. Both the priests and the high priest, except for ceremonial events, dressed as other Jews. At ceremonial events, however, the high priest wore white linen shorts, a white linen coat that came to the hips, a ceremonial belt colored in correspondence to the curtains of the Tabernacle -- white, blue, scarlet, and purple; he also wore a turban-like cap with a golden crown, upon which was inscribed: 'holy to Jehovah.'

Additionally, the high priest wore an ephod of blue, beautifully embroidered in the colors cited above; also a breast-plate of gold and cloth, with the urim and the thummim on the shoulders, and twelve stones, each stone representing one of the twelve tribes; each stone was engraved with their names and fastened with a golden clasp.

The sanctification of the high priest and the priests is found in Exodus chapter 29. And the principal duty of the high priest was to officiate on the Day of Atonement, according to Leviticus chapter 16. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest, caparisoned in his ceremonial garments, 'drew near to God;' he entered the Tabernacle (or later the Temple), and sprinkled over the top of the mercy seat the blood of the bullock of the sin offering for himself, Leviticus 16:6,14.

After he came forth from the Holy of Holies, he again entered and sprinkled the blood of the goat of the sin offering for the people. Both times he emerged from the Holy of Holies after sprinkling the blood had hamartiological (sin) ramifications: pardon for his personal sins, and pardon for the sins of the people; and in each instance the pardon was based solely upon the 'blood of the sin offering,' which represented Christ on the Cross, Leviticus 16:30.

According to I Chronicles chapter 15, 16:4-6, 37-43, David rearranged the Levitical priesthood into 24 courses (orders); he assigned 16 courses to Eleazar, and 8 courses to Ithamar. This rearrangement was chartered because of a population explosion in David's reign.

According to Numbers 20:28, the office of the high priest was transmitted upon death to the oldest living son of the high priest: "Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain." And according to Numbers 25:10-13, God made a covenant with Phinehas, the eldest son of Eleazar, which guaranteed a lasting priesthood with the Aaronic line.

The line switched during Saul ben-Kish's reign; Eli, a descendant of Ithamar, assumed the office of high-priest, however, he functioned only *de facto* and not *de jure* (legally). In fact, his descendants were removed from the priesthood because of Eli's failure to censure his sons, I Samuel 2:23-25; 3:13. Solomon restored the Aaronic line to the high-priesthood; he replaced Abiathar, Eli's descendant, with Zadok, from the line of Eleazar, I Kings 2:26,27,35.

During the ministry of the prophet Jeremiah, Seraiah was the high-priest; he was taken prisoner and executed by Nebuzar-adan, II Kings 25:18-21. Seraiah's son, Josedech, was not allowed to function as high-priest. Instead, he lived and died as a prisoner in Babylon, Haggai 1:1,14. Josedech's son, Joshua, functioned as the high-priest during the ministry of Zechariah, Zech. 3:1.

The high-priests that followed Joshua were: Joiakim, Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua, who was the high-priest in the epoch of Alexander the Great. Tradition holds that Jaddua met the advancing armies of Alexander with the scroll of the book of Daniel, whereupon he read Alexander those passages in Daniel referring to Alexander. Alexander was impressed and, tradition maintains, favorably disposed toward the Jews from then on.

Jaddua's successors were: Onias I, Simon the Just; Onias II/Eleazar, and Alcimus. The latter two, Onias II and Alcimus, were notorious for their malfunction; indeed, Onias II was also known as Menelaus.

Then, according to I Chronicles 9:10; 24:7; Nehemiah 11:10, the high-priestly line passed over to the Asmonaeon family, the course of Joarib. It stayed in the Asmonaeon family until Herod the Great decimated the Asmonaeon family, and his brother-in-law, Herod, executed the final Asmonaeon high-priest, Aristobulus, in 35 BC.

At length, the two high priests associated with the death of our Lord were Caiaphas and Annas.¹²

Malachi 1:7

“You placed defiled food on my altar. But you ask, ‘How have we defiled you?’ ‘By saying that the Lord’s table is contemptible.”

The phrase “defiled food” is *LECHERM MEGO’AL*, which is “polluted bread,” and is a specific reference to the shewbread. In other words, the unsaved priests of Malachi’s day are using leavened bread. And to God, this is an abhorrence; why? Because the bread is analogous to the Person of Christ in the Christology of the Tabernacle/Temple, and leaven corresponds to sin, just as the oven in which the bread was cooked corresponds to the Cross. So the priests, by placing leavened bread on the altar, are saying that Christ was imperfect, and a sinner as He hung on the Cross. In other words, the priests are saying Christ was just another man, just another criminal who was to be crucified by the Romans. This is blasphemy!

And in verse 8 of Malachi 1, the priests are also guilty of sacrificing blind, lame and diseased animals. The animals are flawed. And in the Christology of the Temple the animals are analogous to the Work of Christ on the Cross; thus the priests are stating that the Work of Christ was not efficacious, that it did not provide salvation. Again, this is blasphemy!

And these two execrations demand the presentation of ‘leaven’ as it relates to the Person of Christ, and ‘redemption’ as it relates to the Work of Christ.

Leaven

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament leaven is a “type of evil teachings, evil doctrines and evil practices. It is always to be put away and cast out as an unclean thing. The gospel is never called leaven. Nothing good is ever compared to leaven. Nothing good is ever said about leaven. In every place it is mentioned, leaven is defiling and is to be put away. (See Ex. 12:15; Lev. 2:11; I Cor. 5:6; Matt. 13:33).”¹³

¹² Thieme, Robert. *Levitical Offerings*; pages 103-104. This categorization was originally compiled by Robert Thieme, altered and appended by R. E. Radic.

¹³ Wilson, Walter Lewis. *Wilson’s Dictionary of Bible Types*; page 286.

In Scripture, leaven denotes any substance used to induce fermentation in either meals, dough or liquids. “For fermentation is the result of the divine curse upon the material universe because of sin.”¹⁴ And Genesis 19:3 is the first use of the term ‘unleavened;’ “But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.” Here, Lot is serving unleavened bread to his angelic visitors.

And Exodus 12:8, 15-20, first utilizes the term in connection with a feast day -- Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In these verses leaven is presented as being totally rejected and symbolic of evil; whereas unleavened bread is a pattern or type of Christ and symbolic of his sinless perfection.

In Matthew 13:33, leaven portrays religious apostasy during the Tribulation. “He told them still another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.’ “ The woman is the apostate church, the meal is the Word of God, the leaven is evil and apostate teachings concerning the Word of God. In other words, the woman mixes false doctrines with true doctrines and thus poisons those who eat it.”¹⁵

In Matthew 16:6, leaven represents the sophistry (false arguments) of the Sadducees, which sophistry resulted in apostasy. “‘Be careful,’ Jesus said to them. ‘Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’” And the leaven of the Pharisees was the evil of legalism and ritualism (Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1). Note that the Sadducees refused to accept any doctrine that could not be validated by reason, i.e., they claimed the right of private interpretation of the Torah. This rationalistic approach resulted in the following heresies: the denial of the resurrection and recompense in hell for unbelievers, since the Sadducees claimed that the soul expired with the body; the denial of angelic beings; and the acceptance of fatalism.

Mark 8:15 alludes to the leaven of Herod, which is the sin of lust for power. “‘Be careful,’ Jesus warned them. ‘Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.’”

¹⁴ Wuest, Kenneth S. *Mark in the Greek New Testament*; page 162.

¹⁵ Wilson, Walter Lewis. *Ibid.*

While the leaven of the Corinthians refers to the sin of antinomianism (Christian sect that held that faith ruled out the need for morality), sexual lewdness (fornication, homosexuality, incest, etc.), and phallic apostasy, I Corinthians 5:1,2,6,7. "Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast -- as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." (I Cor. 5:6,7).

In contrast to the Corinthians, the leaven of the Galatians relates to the sin of legalism (gaining salvation through good works), and in this particular instance designates salvation by means of circumcision, Galatians 5:9, "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."¹⁶

The animal sacrifices upon the altar¹⁷ represented the efficacious Work of Christ on the Cross, essentially the Redemptive Work of Christ. Thus, the doctrine of Redemption should now be disclosed.

Redemption

Redemption is "the ransom or deliverance of sinners from the bondage of sin and the penalties of God's violated holiness and righteousness." In law, redemption is "the repurchase of the right to re-enter upon an estate on performance of the terms or conditions on which it was conveyed; the right of redeeming and re-entering into possession." Thus, put simply, redemption is the saving work of Christ on the Cross.

The Greek term for redemption is compounded from the preposition *ANTI* and the substantive *LUTRON*, *ANTILUTRON*, which is defined as 'a ransom,' or 'the substitution of money for a slaver or prisoner.' Ephesians 1:7 says, "In him we have

¹⁶ Thieme, Robert. *Ibid.* First catalogued by Robert Thieme; altered and appended by R. E. Radic.

¹⁷Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 193-194. In this remarkable exposition, Rev. Girdlestone discloses the following pertinent information concerning the Hebrew term for an altar, *mizbeach*. "According to Levitical usage, it would be the appointed place on which the blood of slain beasts was to be sprinkled and their fat burnt. In a short but interesting essay on the Jewish altar by David Mill, it is noticed that the Rabbinical writers used to regard it not only as God's table (see Mal. 1. 7), but also as a symbol of mediation; accordingly, it was regarded as a centre for mediation, peace-making, expiation, and sanctification. Whatever was burnt upon the altar was considered to be consumed by God, a guarantee that the offerer was accepted by Him." It will be seen that this explication assumes first a relationship with God, and second a relationship based upon Redemption.

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."

And our Lord Jesus Christ was and remains the only adequate Redeemer by reason of the virgin birth, according to Matthew 1:23, I Timothy 3:16, and Hebrews 1:3; and by reason of the impeccability (sinless perfection) of His humanity, according to Isaiah 53:9, John 8:46, 19:4, II Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15, 7:26-28. In other words, our Lord was the only one 'good enough' and 'wealthy enough' to pay the ransom; He was the only member of the human race to be without sin.

According to Luke 22:42, Christ, by His own choice, elected to redeem mankind on the Cross. "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." Thus, our Lord, by His own choice, subordinated Himself to the Plan of God the Father, Romans 5:19 and Philippians 2:8, the latter of which reads, "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross!"

In the Old Testament, the blood of the animal sacrifices symbolized the future redemptive work of Christ on the Cross, according to Job 19:25-26, and Hebrews 9:22: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God." "In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

The Blood of Christ, then, is the spiritual death of our Lord on the Cross; and this spiritual death or blood is the ransom money or purchase price of Redemption. I Peter 1:18,19, tell us that the "silver and gold" by which the ransom was paid was the Blood of Christ: "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

And according to Psalm 34:22, it is the soul of the believer that is redeemed by the Blood of Christ: "The Lord redeems his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned." And according to Galatians 3:13, the Blood of Christ removes the curse (the damning judgment) of the Mosaic Law: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by

becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" (Deut. 21:23)

Thus, Christ is the Mediator, the middle-man, the go-between, between mankind and God. He, Christ, provides the ransom, according to I Timothy 1:5,6, and Hebrews 9:14,15: "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."

Finally, then, Redemption provides the following privileges:

the forgiveness of sins, the foundation for justification, the foundation for sanctification, the foundation for eternal heirship of believers, the foundation for Christ's victory over the evil wiles and powers of Satan, the foundation for the resurrection of the body of the believer for all eternity. References: Isa. 44:22; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:15; Romans 3:24; Eph. 5:25-27; Heb. 2:14,15; Col. 2:14; Romans 8:23; and Eph. 4:30.¹⁸

Malachi 1:8

"When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the Lord Almighty."

Malachi uses the term *PACHAH*, now Pasha, for "governor." And the term refers to "a satrap, governor, deputy, viceroy (of a province), an officer under the ancient Chaldean and Persian monarchs. Used also of the governor of Judea under the Persians."¹⁹ Here, then, God confronts the unsaved priests of Malachi's day with a caustic call: "Try offering such sacrifices (diseased and lame animals) to your Pasha (the Persian governor of Judea)!" Would the Pasha accept them? No! Of course not! And the word used for "accept" is *NASA'*, and means "to lift up," and the "expression arises from an Eastern custom of prostrating themselves in making a request, which being granted, the prince orders the suppliant to rise, *i.e.* to lift up his face."²⁰ However, if the

Eastern prince was not pleased with the request or the suppliant, he cut off the suppliants ears. This, naturally, diminished improper petitions and inferior gifts.

In effect, then, God is stating that the priests would not dare to make such shoddy sacrifices even to their human rulers, yet to Him, to the God of the Universe, the One who sets up and tears down human rules, they offer substandard sacrifices. Since they have rejected Christ, they do not care. And why were the priests substituting imperfect animals for healthy, blemish free animals? To make money. The priests were reserving the healthy animals for sale to the local butchers, and using the diseased, worthless animals on the altar. "Covetousness was the root-sin that was leading them daily farther astray. The priests would not so much as shut the temple doors save for wages, or kindle the altar-fire except for gain. True love for Himself was lacking, and their holy office had been prostituted to a mere worldly profession, and use as a means of enrichment."²¹

Malachi 1:9

"Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?" -- says the Lord Almighty."

In essence, verses nine and ten present the priests with a challenge: either believe in Christ, verse 9, or shut the temple doors for good, verse 10. And in presenting this challenge, Malachi, as he quotes God Himself, uses the most beautiful *irony* or *EIRONEIA*, which adds much greater force to the words than appears on the surface. And *irony* in the Scriptures is heavy with contempt.

The *irony* is carried in the juxtaposition of two different correlations: 1) "pray that God...says God; and 2) "will lift up his face...and accept you (let you lift up your face to him)." The word for "pray" is *CHALAH*, and means 'to touch the face,' or 'to smooth the countenance;' and to touch the face of God implies a very intimate relationship, and thus means 'believe in God.' And the one who says this to the priests *is* God. The threat is unmistakable, yet the gracious love and patience are overwhelming.

And if they will believe, then God will graciously lift up his face to them, *i.e.*, look benignly upon

¹⁸Thieme, Robert. *Levitical Offerings*; page 110-111. This categorization of Redemption was originally compiled by Robert Thieme; altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

¹⁹Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 198.

²⁰Wilson, William. *Ibid*; page 4.

²¹Ironside, H.A. *Notes on the Minor Prophets*; page 439.

them, and will allow them to lift up their faces, i.e., rise in His presence or look with favor upon them once more. And how is this possible? Only through the Person and Work of the Christ, whose Blood paid for their sins. So they have been perverting the teaching analogies of the sacrifices of the very Person to whom they are indebted.

Moreover, verse nine presents two different Hebrew words for "God:" *EL*, and *YAHWEH*. And this provides a reasonable occasion to examine the names of God in Scripture.

The Non-Lyrical Names of God In Scripture

ELOHIM is god, as the Sovereign Creator; God in relation to his creatures.

EL is God in His Omnipotence, with special emphasis on His power to fulfill His desired ends.

ELOAH is God the *HAAH*, the Living One, with emphasis on His deserving both worship and awe.

ADONAI is God as Lord of the earth, the king, the ruler. This term does not include His Holy People, except generally, and thus differentiates it from *YAHWEH*.

YAHWEH is God as the Eternal God, the God "who is, and was, and is to come." This term identifies the Living God in covenant relation to His Holy People.

SHADDAI is God as God of all blessings, the "many-breasted God," in the sense of providing all the various types of blessings and gifts to His creatures, with special emphasis on His unlimited assets.²²

Malachi 1:10

"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands."

In verse 10 Malachi presents the negative aspect of the Lord's challenge to the priests: if you will not believe in Christ, then close the doors of the Temple; for the Temple is meaningless if Christ and His efficacious sacrifice are not taught to the people. In other words, if there is no reality to the rituals, then the rituals are pointless.

²²Bullinger, E.W. *The Book of Job*; this compilation of the non-lyrical names of God is based upon the presentation of E.W. Bullinger; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

The Hebrew term translated "pleasure" is *CHAPHETS*, and the implication of the word is that "pleasure" or "delight" is found, or not found in verse 10, in certain persons. Immediately, then, the question arises: What attribute in mankind "pleases" God? The answer is located in two other Hebrew words in verse 10: *hcr*, *RATSAH*, rendered "accept" in verse 10. *RATSAH* means "to be well pleased, and is applied to the Divine regard for the offerer who comes before God in the appointed way. He must be sheltered by atonement, and must thus have the germ at least of a Divine life working in him if he would be regarded by God with pleasure."²³ In other words, to be 'acceptable' to God, the individual must be a believer in Christ. In this manner, and this manner alone, does the individual obtain the Perfect Righteousness of God. And God's Perfect Righteousness in mankind is that attribute which gives "pleasure" to God. [cf. Leviticus 1:4]

Finally, the third link in the nexus of Hebrew words in verse 10 is *MINCHAH*, which is the term for "offering." The *MINCHAH* offering depicted the Old Testament believer's relationship to God based upon the acceptability and sufficiency of the real sacrifice -- the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The burning of the flour, oil and incense represented the sacrificer's belief and salvation by means of faith in Christ. The 'meal' depicts faith in the Christ to come. In other words, the smell ("an aroma pleasing") of the rising smoke from the *MINCHAH* satisfies the Holiness of God, and the "rest of the *MINCHAH* offering" (cf. Leviticus 2:3) provides nourishment for the priests, and this provision indicates a relationship with God. A relationship based upon belief in Christ.

So that which 'pleases' God is an impeccable offering: Christ. And the flour or meal represents Christ's perfect humanity, the oil represents God the Holy Spirit empowering Christ in his humanity, and the incense represents the acceptability of Christ as the real sacrifice. No other would do.

The following verses from the book of Leviticus integrate the links of the lexical nexus: Leviticus 1:4, 2:2,3, which read, "He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him." "And take it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest shall

²³Girdlestone, Robert B. *Ibid*; page 139-140.

take a handful of the fine flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn it as a memorial portion on the altar, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the Lord by fire."

Malachi 1:11

"My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord Almighty.

Here, in verse 11, the spiritual decay and apostasy of Malachi's day is compared with the magnificence of the Millennium. For according to Ezekiel chapters 40 through 47, during the Millennium the priests will present spotlessly clean offerings as memorials to the Person and Work of Christ Jesus.

The Hebrew term for "my name" is *SHEM*, and functions as a technical title for Jesus Christ as the manifest member of the Godhead; He is the pre-eminent, distinctive, and apparent God. And the title carries with it the idea that all 'memorial offerings' are a signal that He was, is, and will ever be, the true original sacrifice -- the only entrance into the Grace and Plan of salvation. So in the Millennium, every time that the Levitical priests offer a memorial sacrifice, the sacrifice is applied to the memory and remembrance of a Person, Christ Jesus, in the world.

And this Person, Christ Jesus, as the portal to salvation, is precisely what is *not* being communicated by the priests in Malachi's day.

GOI, is the term used for "nations;" and "the plural is used especially of nations other than Israel, foreign nations."²⁴ And the implication is that during the Millennium even the Gentile nations will recognize and acknowledge Christ as the Lamb of God, whereas during Malachi's day those designated as God's "holy people," the Jews, deny His very existence.

And the phrase "from the rising to the setting of the sun" sustains two connotations: 1) each day or twenty-four hour period; 2) a subtle reference to the rise and fall of any great nation throughout the passage of history. Specifically, in Israel's case,

²⁴Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 285.

after this final warning from God, in this final book of the Old Testament, in the year 70 AD, God will disperse the Jews for their unbelief.

The next phrase, "in every place incense and pure offerings," is very interesting; for the Hebrew term for incense is *KATHAR*, "which properly means *to turn into smoke or vapour*, is used of the burning of the memorial portion of the *MINCHAH*, of the '*OLAH*, and of the fat of the *ZEVACH*, all of which were intended as offerings for God's good pleasure, and not for sin."²⁵ Here, then, is the burning of the memorial portion of the gift, bloodless and voluntary offerings. These offerings were sacrificed daily and were composed of fine flour, which was roasted and unground, oil, frankincense and salt. None of these offerings contained yeast/leaven or honey. Why? The leaven represented sin and the honey or sweetener represented merit in mankind; and neither was acceptable: there was no sin in Christ, and the merits of mankind could not provide salvation. The impeccability of the gift is portrayed in the 'fine flour;' the 'oil' in the fine flour portrays the Person of Christ indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit; and the frankincense depicts the "satisfying effect Christ's perfect humanity had on the Father."²⁶

These offerings were brought to the priest by the offerer, who took his/her handful and gave it to the priest. Then the priest burnt the memorial offering on the brazen altar. And according to Leviticus 6:16-18, the balance of the offering went to the priest. Symbolically, these offerings represent Christ "offering Himself without spot or blemish, being made sin and judged for us."²⁷ Likewise, redemption and propitiation are depicted in the work of Christ on the Cross through these offerings.

The specific offerings cited here in verse 11 of Malachi are described in Leviticus 2:4-7, which say, "If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of fine flour: cakes made without yeast and mixed with oil, or wafers made without yeast and spread with oil. If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of fine flour mixed with oil, and without yeast.

²⁵Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 193.

²⁶Thieme, Robert. *Levitical Offerings*; page 33. Privately published.

²⁷*Ibid.* page 109.

Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, it is to be made of fine flour and oil." Thus we see the same offering presented in three forms: oven, griddle and pan. And these will now be discussed:

The Oven Offering

The term used here is *TANNUR*, and is specifically "a fire oven." This type of oven enclosed the baked items within and was heated by means of a flame below. In other words, the bread was inside the oven and could not be seen. This concealment symbolized the work of Christ on the Cross from God the Father's perspective. For as Christ hung on the Cross, Golgotha was concealed in a penumbral darkness and the fire, that is the judgment, was exercised and God the Father was satisfied with the offering of Perfect Christ.

The Griddle Offering

The term for "pan" or "griddle" refers to a flat iron plate that was placed over a flame. And the meal was cooked or fried on top of it, and was visible to mankind. For this reason, its very visibility, this offering contained no incense because it is blasphemous to suggest that mankind needs to be propitiated or satisfied with the work and Person of Christ on the Cross. Mankind is the condemned, not Christ.

This "griddle offering," then, portrayed the work of Christ on the Cross as viewed by mankind. Our Lord's sufferings up to and on the Cross brought many to salvation. These members of the human race were from Missouri, the Show Me State. They needed to see His vicissitudes and sufferings to believe on Him.

It is important to note the difference in the way the "oil" was used between the 'oven offering' and the 'griddle offering.' In the 'oven offering' the "oil was mixed with the flour," and in the 'griddle offering' the "oil was poured on" the flour. Why the distinction? Because "mixing with oil" represents the Holy Spirit empowering the Incarnate Christ, and "pouring with oil" represents the *anointment* or *appointment* of Christ as the Messiah, which means "The Anointed One."

This *appointment* as the Messiah is cited in Psalm 2:7, which says, "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'" And the "crumbling" of the 'griddle offering' with the "oil poured on it" depicts Christ fulfilling his *appointment* by His

work on the Cross. This fulfillment is brought out in Matthew 26:26, which says, "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'"

The Pan Offering

The term utilized for "pan" is *MARCHESHETH*, which is "a vessel for baking or frying."²⁸ This type of vessel was half open and half closed, and is used to present the Cross from both of the previous perspectives, God's and mankind's. Simply put, this is Christ hanging on the Cross, providing salvation for mankind as it was planned by God.

Again, the portion burnt on the altar stands for the judgment of sins, and the portion eaten by the priest stands for faith in the work of Christ.

Malachi 1:12

"But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.'"

The word for profane is *CHALAL*, and it means "to defile." In other words, Malachi quotes God as saying the priests, by being unbelievers and ministering in the Temple, have defiled the Temple of God. And as will be brought out in chapter 2, the presence of unbelievers in the Temple of God is comparable to the presence of "offal" or excrement on the altar.

The priests cast spiritual excrement, then, on the altar by their presence and by saying of "the Lord's table," which is the shewbread, i.e., bread without leaven, "it is polluted" or more properly, "it is common," *GA'EL*. In other words, the priests call the shewbread common because it has no leaven and tastes plain. It has no savor. In effect, then, the priests are saying sin is commendatory and human works have merit before God; Christ died for nothing.

And the "it" that they profane or cast excrement at is the name of Jesus Christ.

BAZAH, is the word used for "contemptible." And it is the memorial offering that they hold in contempt. The priests despise the work of Christ as unnecessary. For in their monumental arrogance, they believe that their personal attributes and abilities are sufficient to provide salvation for themselves. These apostate

²⁸Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 179.

unbelieving priests hold that they can earn salvation.

Malachi 1:13

“And you say, ‘What a burden!’ and you sniff at it contemptuously,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?’ says the Lord.”

The priests say, “what a weariness,” i.e., “how boring to stand here and perform these meaningless sacrifices.” They were bored by their functions and, as unbelievers, gave no thought to what the sacrifices represented or the utter beauty of God’s grace. They “sniff at it contemptuously” means they disdain²⁹ the sacrifices. The picture, then, is this: the priests would blow away the smoke from the incense as they burn the offerings. The smoke gets in their eyes and they think, ‘what a burden.’ Whereas God, when He sniffs at the smoke from the sacrifices, is metaphorically propitiated, for the incense represents the future sacrifice of Christ on the Cross; and this is pleasing to God. So what is pleasing to God is a burden to the priests, for they have no comprehension.

And will God accept blemished offerings? In other words, will God accept these priests on their own merits? The answer is an emphatic, No! For only perfection, i.e., Christ Jesus, is acceptable.

The Five Offerings

The five offerings that the priests of Malachi’s day held in disdain are:

The Burnt Offering: this offering is described in Leviticus 1:2-17, and Leviticus 6:8-13, and portrays Christ’s work on the Cross, stressing redemption and propitiation.

The Meal Offering: this offering is described in Leviticus 2:1-16 and 6:14-18, depicts the impeccability of the Person of Christ.

The Peace Offering: this offering is described in Leviticus 3:1-17, and 7:11-20. This offering limns the concept of reconciliation and the willingness of Christ to hang on the Cross and bear the sins of the world.

The Sin Offering: this offering is found in Leviticus 4:2-35 and 7:25-30. This offering depicts the

²⁹Thieme, Robert. *Exegesis of Malachi*; from his exposition of verse 13; 1968.

suffering of Christ outside the city, I Peter 2:24 and Hebrews 13:11-13, and portrays “cleansing from all unrighteousness,” i.e., the unknown sins of the congregation.

The Trespass Offering: this offering is described in Leviticus 5 - 6:7 and 7:1-7, and portrays “cleansing from all trespasses,” that is, the known sins of the congregation.³⁰

Malachi 1:14

“Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and my name is to be feared among the nations.”

The word for “cursed” is ‘ARUR, and refers to the effects of a curse, which in this particular case led to the eventual obliteration of the Aaronic line, and the *Diaspora* in 70 AD. The exegetical discussion of chapter 2 will detail the obliteration of the Levitical priesthood.

And the word “cheat” is a “deceiver,” those priests who are defrauding God by sacrificing diseased animals and selling the healthy animals for monetary gain. For “I am a great king, says the Lord Almighty;” here, Yahweh, the Lord of the armies, uses an *anthropopathism* to describe Himself to the priests. By using this figure, God condescends to the arrogance of the priests, that is, He points to His true humanity as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, a real person who will return at the Second Advent in all His glory. In other words, He also is a man, a king, a ruler, just like the Judean Pasha of 420 BC, and as such, He is to be feared and revered.³¹

And His name, i.e., the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is JARE, “feared” among the “nations.” In other words, even the Gentiles, who had no covenant with God, and who did not offer sacrifices, feared God in the days of Malachi. While the priests disclaimed the sacrifices and did not fear God. The priests are pictured as worse than heathens.

³⁰Thieme, Robert. *Levitical Offerings*; page 108-109. Privately published, 1973. The above delineation of the five offerings is based upon Robert Thieme’s scholarship; altered, revised and appended by R.E. Radic.

³¹The Jews called this anthropopathism *Derech Benai Adam*, i.e., *Mdx ynEbi jr,d,, the way of the sons of man*. And the Greeks called it *syncatabasis*. The Romans called it *condescensio*.

In Malachi chapter 2, verses 1-9 pronounce the crimination of the Priests, while verses 10 through 17 pronounce the crimination of the People. To fully comprehend the extent of the indictment, Israel as a unique nation is presented.

Within the Dispensation of Israel, or the Age of Israel, Israel was unique in its covenant with Yahweh. This dispensation may be divided into three parts: the Patriarchs, the Law, and the Tribulation. During this dispensation the Jews were a "holy nation" unto God, that is, they were the custodians of the Word of God and its dissemination. Indeed, the very word 'Hebrew' is defined as "missionary" or "one who crossed over the river to witness." For Abraham crossed the Euphrates River to witness to the Canaanites when he was a Chaldean, a Gentile.

The covenant between God and Israel made Israel a "holy nation" before God. Robert Thieme designates this as a "client nation to God, His specially protected representative on earth (Ex. 19:5-6; Hosea 4:6)."³² In other words, the Jews were to evangelize other nations throughout the world. And not only the entire book of Jonah, but Deuteronomy 4:6-8 sustain this idea: "Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?"

Israel is also unique in the sense that it is the archetype for the concept of nationalism. Under this concept, the Israelites had freedom, privacy, and property. The national entity existed to protect these entitlements. And included in the idea of property are the notions of free enterprise and industry. Indeed, Codices I and III of the Mosaic Law were the first explicit documents to assert freedom, privacy and property as they related to the absolute truth, God and His Plan. These Codices provided specific applications to freedom, privacy, property, business, industry, farming, marriage, civil law, governmental function, etc.

³²Thieme, Robert. *The Divine Outline of History*; page 35. Privately published, 1989.

Malachi Chapter Two

Malachi 2:1

"And now this admonition is for you, O priests."

The term for "admonition" is the Pual future of *TSAWAH*, and is more properly a threat of discipline than an admonition. And it refers back to "cursed" in Malachi 1:14. Thus, God is providing a warning before He administers punishment, and this is ever God's way. And the term for "priests" is *COHEN*, and it is interesting to note that in Job 12:19 the term is translated "princes." And this word, prince, implies a relationship with royalty. This is precisely what the priests of Malachi's day do not have: they are unbelievers and have no relationship with Christ, the royal One, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Malachi 2:2

"If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name,' says the Lord Almighty, 'I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me.'"

Verse 2 begins with the hypothetical particle which suggests that 'maybe they will and maybe they will not' listen to God's warning and God's word; the particle allows the free-will of the priests total predominance. The Hebrew *SUM*, means "to set, to apply the heart to an object;"³³ and the "heart" is the soul. So the priests are to place God's word in their souls as spiritual information.

The term for "curse" is 'ARUR, and is referred to as the 'ARUR FORMULA; for first the act of cursing takes place, then the curse is described in the text. "In this case, the curse formula is the most severe means of separating the community from the evildoer. It is significant that the only ones who pronounce such a curse in the OT are God, the king, those in positions of authority, or the whole assembly of the people. This sort of curse is always conditional, and thus takes effect only when the situation it is intended to prevent exists."³⁴ Thus, by their arrogance and self-sufficiency the priests, in effect, 'curse' themselves.

³³Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 383.

³⁴Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*; vol. i., page 409,410.

The verse states that God will send the 'curse' upon them; thus God Himself will administer and apportion the curse to the Levitical priests. Furthermore, the verse adds that God will curse their "blessings." The term for "blessings" is *BARUKH*, and the 'blessings' of the Levitical priests were many and varied, but the two in view here are:

1. The blessing to the tribe of Levi and the line of Aaron to be priests, i.e., "to approach God."
2. The blessing of speaking the blessings, or doctrines, of God to the people. However, "it is necessary that the person uttering the blessing be in fellowship with God, seek it, or be worthy of it. Therefore, the blessing (like the curse) is revocable, and can be changed into a curse."³⁵

And the final sentence in verse 2 asserts that the curse is in effect and will take place. Why? "Because you have not set your heart to honor me." This pronouncement echoes that made in Deuteronomy 28:45, which states, "All these curses will come upon you. They will pursue you and overtake you Until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the Lord your God and observe the commands and decrees he gave you."

Malachi 2:3

"Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it."

Verse 3 is the description of the curse just stated in verse 2. The curse is said to be upon the "descendants" of the priesthood. The Hebrew term for "rebuke" is *GA'AR*, "to rebuke." And Mal. 2:3 is acknowledged as a *crux interpretum*, which is a passage that is difficult to interpret. However, comparing Deuteronomy 28:20, I Samuel 2:31, and Malachi 2:3, clarifies the matter. Yahweh is cursing the descendants of the Levitical priests with eradication. And both Robert Thieme and A. Caquot sustain this translation.³⁶ In other words, the Levitical priesthood, specifically, is at risk in this particular instance. And the fulfillment of this prophetic statement in Malachi 2:3

arrived in Jerusalem in 70 AD, approximately 500 years after it was documented.

The Eradication of the Levitical Priesthood

Recall that the Levitical priesthood was restricted to the tribe of Levi, the line of Aaron. Thus Aaron and his progeny comprised the Levitical priesthood. In Malachi 2:3, God states that one of the components of the 'curse' to the priests will be the eradication of their genealogical rolls. In other words, the Rabbinical system of present day Judaism is apostate in the sense that it is not traditional, nor is it founded on an accepted register of ancestry, i.e., it is not from the tribe of Levi, the line of Aaron.

The Jews observe the feasts, but they do not satisfy the rituals of the feasts. Why? Because satisfaction depends upon the function of a Levitical priest. And because of the destruction of the records in the Temple in 70 AD, they cannot dogmatically assert who is and who is not from the tribe of Levi, the line of Aaron. Thus, the Levitical priesthood was "confused" and replaced by the Rabbinical system.³⁷ The priests have "offal" or dung on their faces. And God has "spread" it there by corrupting their "seed."

And the term for "offal" or dung is "excrement, dung", so called as being separated and thrown off; dung of sacrifices."³⁸ The connection is obvious; God has 'thrown off' the unbelieving priests just as the priests threw off the excrement of the sacrifices. Just as the excrement of the Old Testament sacrifices was carried outside the camp and disposed of, so the priests, in 70 AD, would be carried outside of the nation of Israel and disposed of. Quite plainly, God is saying this: 'You unbelieving priests are as spiritual as dung. Therefore I will dispose of you as I would dung.'

The disposal of the feces of the sacrifices is cited in the following passages: Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 8:17; 16:27; Number 19:5; and Leviticus 4:11, 12, which says, "But the hide of the bull and all its flesh, as well as the head and legs, the inner parts and offal -- that is, all the rest of the bull -- he must be taken outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, and burn it in a wood fire on the ash heap."

³⁵*Ibid*; vol. ii., page 303.

³⁶Robert Thieme so translates in his exegesis of *Malachi*, from notes, 1968. And A. Caquot agrees in vol. iii., page 49, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren.

³⁷Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, 1968. Revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

³⁸Wilson, William. *Word Studies in the Old Testament*; page 137.

And the 'one' "that will carry them (the priests) off with it (the dung)" was *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, Rome, in 70 AD. For Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, eldest son and general of the Emperor Vespasian, crushed the Jewish Revolt by capturing Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Malachi 2:4

"And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue,' says the Lord Almighty."

Verse 4 introduces the "covenant with Levi," and the concept of "covenant" demands our attention.

Levi

Levi, whose name means "joined or attached," was the third son of Jacob and his wife Leah. Levi and his older brother, Simeon, perfidiously butchered prince Hamor, his son Shechem, and the Hivites, who were a Canaanite people, for the rape of their sister Dinah.

And for this act, Levi did not inherit the land. Instead, Levi was cursed by Jacob as Jacob lay dying, according to Genesis 49:7, which states, "Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel."

The operative word in Genesis 49:7 is *PUTS*, which means "to scatter what was before united."³⁹ In other words, the tribe of Levi would be "scattered" throughout Israel and would not occupy a tract of land as the other tribes.

However, the grace of God is dynamic, i.e., grace never languishes and becomes static, nor is grace rigid; in fact grace pursues and desires to bless an object. And thus "cursing was turned to blessing"⁴⁰ by God for the tribe of Levi. For the Levites remained faithful to God and to Moses during the iconoclastic apostasy of Exodus 32:25-29, of which verse 26 says, "So he (Moses) stood at the entrance to the camp and said, 'Whoever is for the Lord, come to me.' And all the Levites rallied to him." This faithfulness to the Lord resulted in the tribe of Levi becoming the priestly tribe.

The word for priest is *COHEN*, which eventually became the surname of the tribe of Aaron. And the term was bestowed with the sense of "one who

attends upon God, to administer in things pertaining to the service of God."⁴¹

Numbers 25:10-13 relates the faithfulness of Phinehas, a priest, with whom God renewed His covenant, and Phinehas became high priest. And Numbers 3:5-13, 8:14-19 and Deuteronomy 33:8-11 relate the provisions of the covenant or contract with the tribe of Levi.⁴²

In summary, the covenant depended upon the following four clauses:

1. The priesthood was limited to the tribe of Levi, the family of Aaron (the Cohens). This clause speaks of 'mediation,' and will be covered in detail later on.
2. The priests must be physically perfect, i.e., no physical blemishes or deformities. This speaks of the Impeccability of Christ, the Great High Priest.
3. The priests must be 'faithful' to God, and this implies belief in Christ Jesus for salvation. This clause speaks of reconciliation.
4. The priests must fulfill the functions of the priesthood: sacrificial functions, teaching functions, judicial functions, etc. This clause speaks of 'shadow Christology,' which is the teaching of Christ to come through the sacrifices.

It is apparent that the priests of Malachi's day were in 'breach of contract.' For they had broken the third clause, i.e., they were not believers in Christ, nor were they faithful to God.

Contracts

In law, a contract is a formal agreement that creates an obligation on both parties of the contract, and binds both parties to the contract. Contracts are generally of two types: by specialty or simple. A special contract or contract by specialty only has validity based upon the formal execution of the contract. In other words, the contract is not valid unless all the conditions of the contract are executed and fulfilled. And, generally, the specialty contract takes the form of a covenant. It is interesting to note that contracts by specialty do not enjoin consideration for the exchanged promise. In other words, equal consideration is not

⁴¹Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 327.

⁴²Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; 1968. The above exposition on the 'Contract with Levi' was first and originally compiled by Robert Thieme; appended, altered and revised by R.E. Radic.

³⁹Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 371.

⁴⁰Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, 1968.

necessary in this type of contract. Consideration is given after the execution of the contract. And in context, in Malachi, the consideration would be salvation after the execution of the contract, i.e., faith in Christ. And taking the analogy one step further, it may be noted that Christ Himself had a specialty contract with God the Father, and that consideration, i.e., the salvation of mankind, was not accomplished until the actual execution of the contract took place, i.e., spiritual death on the Cross.

Once the contract has been breached, litigation may take place for specific performance, which is the right of one party (in this instance, God) to have the other party (the priests) execute the contract according to the explicit conditions of the contract. And if the contract is not fulfilled exactly, breach exists, and suit for a temporary or permanent injunction may take place.

It is apparent, then, that the priests of Malachi's day had broken the contract, they had failed to provide specific performance. And God is seeking a temporary injunction against them for lack of specific performance.

The delimitation of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron speaks of 'mediation.' This concept deserves detailed discussion.

Mediation

The concept of 'mediation' is related in Job 9:2,32,33, which say, "Most surely do I know that this is so; but how can mortal man be just with God? For He is not a man like me, that I should say, 'Let us together, come, and plead!' Oh! that there were an Arbiter with us, One who could put His hand upon us both!"⁴³ Thus, in this passage Job is seeking someone who is equal to both man and God to act as his mediator.

In theology, mediation results in the reconciliation of God and mankind. A mediator intercedes between two parties that are at variance and reconciles them. And a mediator equally represents both parties in the variance. I Timothy 2:5,6 state that mediation between God and mankind depends upon the redemptive work of Christ: "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men -- the

testimony given in its proper time." It may be deduced from this passage, then, that Christ is equal to both parties in the variance, God and mankind; thus, Christ is the God-Man.

Galatians 3:19,20 assert the consanguinity (connection) of the Mosaic Law and mediation. And the connection is this: the Mosaic Law could not provide salvation, i.e., the law did not save, it only condemned. So without the Mediator, there could be no salvation. Thus, mediation *had* to occur. "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one."

Hebrews 9:15 confirms the identity of the Mediator, "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."

Hebrews 12:24 relates the blood of the animal sacrifices (the Levitical offerings) to the Mediator. The blood of the animals depicted in shadow form the real blood of the real sacrifice that was to take place: Christ upon the Cross. "To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."

In other words, the "sprinkled blood" of the spiritual death of Christ "speaks a better word," i.e., provides real salvation. Whereas the blood of Abel's animal sacrifices couldn't save anybody from anything -- they only taught of Christ to come.

Finally, Hebrews 8:6 compares the shadow theology of the animal sacrifices with the real sacrifice of Christ on the Cross: "But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises."⁴⁴

The Etymology of 'Covenant'

The Hebrew term for 'covenant' is *BERITH*. And the term appears to be related to the Akkadian *BIRITU*, "to clasp," "to fetter." "This is supported by the Akkadian and Hittite terms for treaty: Akk.

⁴³Bullinger, E.W. *The Book of Job*; page 84,87. The above translation from Job 9 is by E.W. Bullinger.

⁴⁴Thieme, Robert. *Doctrine of Mediatorship*; originally compiled by Robert Thieme; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic. From notes on *Hebrews*, by Robert Thieme, 1975.

RIKSU, Hitt. ISHIUL, both meaning 'bond.' The concept of a *binding* settlement also stands behind Ara. 'aqd, Lat. *vinculum fidei*, 'bond of faith,' *contractus*, 'contract,' and is likewise reflected in German *Bund*. The original meaning of the Heb. *BERITH* is not 'agreement or settlement between two parties,' as is commonly argued. *BERITH* implies first and foremost the notion of 'imposition,' 'liability,' or 'obligation.'"⁴⁵

And the most significant passage in the New Testament relating to the concept of 'covenant' is Hebrews 9:16 and 17. "The real point which the passage brings out is that the victim represents the makers of the covenant, i.e. the contracting parties, and they could only be united representatively in the victim by means of its death. So in the death of Christ man and God are made one. It is a covenant, not a last will and testament, which is in the writer's mind."⁴⁶

Hebrews 9:16 and 17

"In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living."

Immediate summary: the blood of the Old Testament, the animal sacrifices, teaches of the blood of the New Testament, the Blood of Christ. But without the actual, real, and literal spiritual death of Christ on the Cross, none of this blood does anybody any good.

Verses 16 and 17 of Hebrews state that the blood of the animal sacrifices illustrated that physical death could not save mankind. Only the Blood of Christ, i.e., His spiritual death, was efficacious. Thus the Blood of Christ fulfills the shadow blood of the Levitical offerings. The covenant with Levi was based on the future spiritual death of Christ on the Cross -- and this was part of the function of the priesthood of the Levites, to teach through the blood of the animal sacrifices that the covenant was not in effect, nor fulfilled, until the real sacrifice took place. And in Malachi's day, the priesthood had failed to do this, and not only this, they had also failed to believe in Christ themselves.

Robert Thieme translates verse 17 of Hebrews 9 as follows: "For a covenant is valid upon deaths

⁴⁵Botterweck, Ringgren, Editors. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*; vol. ii. page 254, 255.

⁴⁶Girdlestone, Robert. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 214.

because it is not ever valid as long as the one having made the covenant lives." In other words, the specific performance that must take place before *any* of the covenants of the Old Testament or New Testament are valid, or before any of the *promises* concerning the covenants are valid, is that reconciliation between God and mankind must take place. And this only happens through the deaths, physical and spiritual, of Christ on the Cross.

E.W. Bullinger translates Hebrews 9:16-18 as follows: "For where a covenant *is*, here must also of necessity be the death of him (or that) which makes [*the sacrifice*]. For a covenant is of force over dead [*victims* or *sacrifices*]; otherwise it is never held to be of force while he who is the appointed [*sacrifice*] is alive. Whereupon neither the first [*covenant*] was dedicated without blood," etc.

In other words, the covenant is no good while the sacrifice still lives. So salvation is no good and cannot take place until Christ dies spiritually on the Cross. If Christ did not go to the Cross, then none of the covenants, none of God's promises to mankind, none of God's Words are in effect. And that means that there is no salvation -- unless Christ goes to the Cross. This means that all the saved Old Testament believers would have had their salvation recalled from the factory, if the real blood of Christ did not replace the shadow blood of the animal sacrifices.

And also note that the word for "testator" in Heb. 9:16,17 is masculine in gender; but that its antecedent is feminine; yet the masculine is used throughout the verse for the one who provides the covenant. Why? Because the sacrifice is Christ Himself. Thus, the Greek word for sacrifice is feminine, *HE THUSIA*; the Hebrew word for sacrifice is *ZAVACH*, and it is masculine; and the Greek word for 'covenant-maker' is *HO DIATHEMENOS*, which again is masculine; thus the masculine gender is used because *HO DIATHEMENOS* agrees with the Hebrew *thought*, rather than with the Greek *word*. And all this points to Christ as being the only *real* sacrifice. There *are no* covenants without Christ on the Cross.⁴⁷

Thus, in verse 4, God is warning the priests of Malachi's day that they have breached the contract. If the covenant is to continue, the priests must change their minds about Christ.

⁴⁷Bullinger, E.W. *Figures Of Speech Used in the Bible*; page 533.

Malachi 2:5

“My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name.”

The Hebrew term for life is properly an adjective meaning “living, having vital energy; life.” And the term for “peace” is *SHALOM*, and here refers to “a sacrifice offered to God,” i.e., that sacrifice that provides reconciliation. The previous term for “life” refers to eternal life, i.e., that which is gained through salvation faith in Christ. Thus, reconciliation provides eternal life.

Here, then, God is reminding the priests that the contract with Levi specified reconciliation and salvation. And the priests have breached these conditions of the contract. They do not believe that Christ is the efficacious sacrifice, nor do they have eternal life.

And the the last clause in verse 5, which reads, “this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name,” could perhaps be better translated as follows: “this covenant called for faith (salvation through belief in Christ) and he (Levi) worshiped me (God) and had respect for my name (the coming Christ, the Messiah, the manifest One, the Living God).” In other words, knowledge of God led Levi to the point where he respected and loved God, the visible Christ to come. But Levi’s starting point was faith in God, i.e., belief in Christ. And the priests of Malachi’s day have no faith in God, no fear of God, no respect for God, and certainly no love for God; they are just mechanical men going through mechanical motions as they perform the animal sacrifices. Their conduct stinks of secularity and infidelity.

Malachi 2:6

“True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.”

In verse 6, Malachi compares Levi with the priests of Malachi’s day. Levi spoke “true instruction,” that is, by offering unblemished animal sacrifices, Levi instructed the Jews in the shadow Christology of the Old Testament. And ‘truth was in his mouth’ and “nothing false” on “his lips;” these two phrases delineate the following concept: words are the expression of thoughts, and

thoughts originate in the soul. Thus, Levi thought the *absolute truth* of God’s Word and imparted it with his lips.

“Peace” *SHALOM*, again refers to the concept of reconciliation. In other words, Levi was reconciled to God by faith in Christ. He believed what he was teaching through the sacrifices. Levi had fulfilled the contract with God in every way. He had true fellowship with God. And the term “uprightness” *MISHOR*, declares that because Levi had been reconciled to God, he had also satisfied the Righteousness of God, by means of faith in the Lamb of God, and thus was ‘justified’ in God’s eyes.

The Hebrew term for “sin” is *AWON*, and here, in context, refers to ‘apostasy and its concomitant divine discipline.’ Thus, by teaching faithfully the shadow Christology of the sacrifices and the Tabernacle, Levi prevented spiritual apostasy, civil lawlessness, and national and personal divine discipline⁴⁸ to the Israelites of his day. Therefore, the term designates ‘sin and punishment’ as an inseparable unit, that which von Rad defines as “a synthetic view of life.”⁴⁹

Malachi 2:7

“For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction -- because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty.”

Verse 7 presents a *maxim*: the lips cannot speak what the soul does not know. Thus, the priesthood was to know, to preserve, and to impart God’s Word to the Jews. And the phrase “seek instruction” denotes that the “truth must be available.”⁵⁰ And if the priesthood does not make it available as the “messengers” of God, then God will make it available through another “messenger,” His messenger, Malachi. Here, God is mocking His messengers, the Levitical priesthood, by His use of the term *MALAK*. Thus, if the Jews of Malachi’s day sought the truth, they would have to seek it at the ‘lips of Malachi,’ since the ‘*MALACH*’ spoke only deceit.

⁴⁸This designation, ‘divine discipline,’ borrowed from the theology of Robert Thieme.

⁴⁹Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. ii., page 651.

⁵⁰Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, 1968.

Malachi 2:8

“But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

By way of contrast, the priests of Malachi’s day have *SUR*, “turned away, departed” from the “way,” *DEREK*, which is used metaphorically herein, and refers to ‘the way to eternal life and fellowship with God in time.’ And this way is through reconciliation to the Justice of God, which is through the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. For Genesis 3:24 declares that the “way to the tree of life” was closed after the fall of man. But there is a ‘new way,’ a ‘new tree of life,’ that is, the Tree upon which Christ hung for the sins of the world. And this ‘way’ was to be taught by the Levitical priests, graphically so, as they sacrificed the animal offerings. The priests have failed in their function as communicators of ‘the way.’

This functional failure of the priesthood has led “many” to “stumble,” which is the hiphil of *KASHAL*, and refers to ‘enfeebling the spiritual life to the point of apostasy.’ In other words, the apostate teaching of the priests has led the Jews to spiritual apostasy, civil lawlessness, idol worship; and, moreover, has led to the destruction of personal freedom within Judah, and the destruction of the institution of marriage and the concept of family.⁵¹

The priests have “violated,” *SHACHAT*, “destroyed or corrupted” the covenant that God made with Levi. And according to Robert Thieme, the term *SHACHAT* refers “to something false that spreads,”⁵² which refers to spiritual apostasy and, here, may be hinting at “religious legalism.”⁵³ Thus, the unbelieving apostasy of the priests has led to the corruption of the entire ethical, civil, and legal codes of the people and nation of Judah, circa 420 BC. And the pecuniary corruption of the priesthood has led to a system of religious legalism, and religious favoritism based upon personal wealth, personal favors, and social status -- that conspiracy of self “which confuses status

with salvation, erudition with spirituality, sex with love, fun with pleasure.”⁵⁴

Truth

“True instruction” implies truth. Thus, the subject of ‘truth’ will now be discussed.

A *sylogism* is a logical method of reasoning in which two premises are declared and a logical conclusion is extracted from them. One such syllogism speaks voluminously concerning the concept of truth, and the concept of God:

Major premise: Absolute Truth comes from God.

Minor premise: Something cannot come from nothing.

Conclusion: Both absolute Truth and God exist.

Or, as Aristotle put it: “To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false; while to say of what is that it is, and what is not that it is not, is true.”⁵⁵

Truth, then, exists in two forms: relative truth and absolute truth. And mankind, without any revelation from an outside source, in this instance, God, has no sure way of knowing whether any belief about the world is absolutely true or not. Thus, the finite mind can only know truth in a limited and relative sense without revelatory enlightenment. Indeed, apart from theological revelation, no creature has any procedure or thought process, other than the fallibility of relativism, for arriving at any part of God’s total knowledge, which knowledge theologians have defined as omniscience. Therefore, the known is defined by the knower.

“But when all is said, the Teacher of teachers is Jesus. His words alone always proclaim eternal principles. Truth is axiomatic, if it is fundamental. Jesus dared to say that he was the Truth. No other man can say that and tell the truth. The significant thing is that men recognize that this claim is true. His kingdom, as he said to Pilate, is that of truth. This is his realm.”⁵⁶

The above statements by A.T. Robertson are true, but how does one, epistemologically, know that they are the Truth, if one recognizes that one’s faculties are finite and, therefore, flawed? The

⁵¹Redditt, Paul L. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*.

⁵²Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, 1968.

⁵³*Ibid*.

⁵⁴Paraphrase of Malcolm Muggeridge; source unknown; from notes.

⁵⁵Plato. *Dialogues*.

⁵⁶Robertson, A.T. *Keywords in the Teaching of Jesus*; page 11.

statements achieve the status of Truth only when they are revealed to the finite mind by an outside agency. Otherwise they are merely true, and not the Truth.

This is where the Christian doctrine of the ministry of the Holy Spirit enters the scene. For God the Holy Spirit, an outside agency, reveals what is true to the souls of mankind and convinces the soul that the information imparted is the Truth. But this in turn, brings us back to the original question: Is the ministry of the Holy Spirit true? Or the Truth? And how does one recognize the true from the Truth, even where it concerns the Holy Spirit, with limited faculties?

As can be seen, the maze surrounding the arrival at the Truth is endless, and questions mount upon questions. And the only conclusion that can be generally acknowledged is that the philosophical systems devised by mankind, empiricism and rationalism, are deficient. Thus, rather than pursuing the question itself, that is, how to detect the true from the Truth, perhaps the system of perception should be altered. And this is where the concept of faith enters the scene. For faith is the third element of perception.

Faith is reliance upon a system of perception outside the perceiving agent, i.e., "firm persuasion, the conviction which is based upon hearing, not upon sight, or knowledge; a firmly relying confidence in what we hear from God in His Word."⁵⁷

Dr. Bullinger's definition is a remarkable statement. For it is the presentation of a third system of perception outside of "hearing, sight or knowledge." In other words, outside of rationalism (knowledge) or empiricism (sight or what is observable). It is *non-rational* and *non-empirical*, it is instead based upon "hearing." It is a system of being *informed* or *educated* by means of hearing. Thus, by means of hearing sagacity and decision take place; in other words, the Truth as revealed by an outside agency may be distinguished from what is simply true, and upon this demarcation a decision as to true or Truth might be made. And this is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit: to present spiritual information that is discernible, and axiomatic. Then, upon this revelatory foundation, judgment, that which we define as 'a decision,' may be made. And thus

relative truth and absolute Truth may be separated and distinguished.

And Truth and 'hearing' demand the examination of Faith and Conviction.

Faith

Faith is defined by Robert Thieme, "as a system of perception which accepts an established criterion as the basis of reality."⁵⁸ And this criterion is external to the abilities of mankind, and thus faith is a system of perception that does not depend upon the rational or empirical capabilities of the individual. Thus faith is equivalent to reliance upon the Person and truthfulness of God. The reliance, then, is retained in the object of faith. God receives the reliance, mankind does the relying.

And Ephesians 2:8,9 state that faith is the only system of perception using the same operating system as Grace. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works (human ability or thought), so that no one can boast." [Parenthetical insertion added by way of explanation.]

And faith as a system of perception is attainable by all members of mankind. This is why faith is the means of obtaining salvation. For, if Christ died for all, then all must be able to perceive the Truth.⁵⁹

The subject of faith revolves around Habbakuk 2:4, which says, "The just shall live by faith." And Habbakuk 2:4 is quoted three times in the New Testament, and in each instance the emphasis changes:

Romans 1:17: "The just shall live by means of *faith*."

Galatians 3:11: "The *just* shall live by means of faith."

Hebrews 10:38: "The just shall *live* by means of faith."

In Hebrews 11:1, faith is defined as "The foundation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." And faith is obtained how? According to Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word of God." Thus, to quote E.W. Bullinger, "If we have heard

⁵⁷Bullinger, E.W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*; page 271.

⁵⁸Thieme, Robert. *Basics*; from notes, undated.

⁵⁹Thieme, Robert. *Principles of Faith*; first compiled by Robert Thieme; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

nothing, there can be nothing to believe. There is neither place nor room for faith. We may think it, or imagine it, or hope for it; but we cannot possibly *believe* it, because we have not *heard* anything about it. Our hopes and thoughts and imaginations are all vain, being without any 'foundation.'"⁶⁰

And the methodology by which "hearing" becomes "faith" is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. This ministry will now be examined.

Conviction

Conviction, in a Christian sense, is the work of God the Holy Spirit prior to the salvation of any member of mankind. Through conviction, God the Holy Spirit functions as a human spirit for unsaved mankind. And as He functions as a human spirit for the spiritually dead, God the Holy Spirit imparts the Truth to the individual. And I Corinthians 2:11 and 14 declare the necessity of this function. For the unsaved, wanting a human spirit, cannot understand spiritual information. "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

And the first reference to conviction by means of the Holy Spirit is in Genesis 6:3, which says, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

I John 5:6,9, assert that God the Holy Spirit functions as a human spirit for unsaved mankind, "This is the one who came by water and blood -- Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the Truth. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his son." And in John 16:8, the Apostle John first affirmed the conviction of the Spirit: "When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."⁶¹

⁶⁰Bullinger, E.W. *Great Cloud of Witnesses*; page 6.

⁶¹Thieme, Robert. *Doctrine of the Convicting Ministry of God the Holy Spirit*; taken from *Hebrews*, from notes, undated. This

The above dissertation elucidates the sin of the priests of Malachi's day, i.e., unbelief, which is the only "unpardonable sin."

The Unpardonable Sin

The "unpardonable sin" is delineated by the Apostle John in John 3:18, which says, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." And here, then, is the "unpardonable sin," and it involves free-will. The unpardonable sin is failure to believe in Christ.

The following verses, Jeremiah 23:13, John 7:17 and Acts 17:27, dogmatically assert that all mankind attains "God-consciousness;"⁶² at this juncture, all mankind must decide upon an epistemological course: pursue the Truth or not. And those who do not attain this state, "God-consciousness," are saved because of their very inculpability. "If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own." [John 7:17]

The unpardonable sin, then, is declining to consider the Truth as it is imparted by God the Holy Spirit functioning as the human spirit to an individual. And Hebrews 10:29 states this truth quite clearly: "How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"

This verse concerns the Jews, as an illustration, but is necessarily germane to Gentiles. By rejecting Christ's sacrifice, and its impartation as Truth, "there remained for them no other, 'no more sacrifice for sins.' Their own sacrifices had all been done away by His one sacrifice; and, despising that, no other sacrifice was left for them."⁶³ It must be noted that Dr. Bullinger then goes on to state that this "must not be applied to the Members of the Body of Christ to-day."⁶⁴ This interpretation cannot be sustained as well-founded, i.e., as operational to one group and not another. For John 16:9 lucidly declares, without

doctrine was originally compiled by Robert Thieme; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

⁶²Terminology borrowed from the theology of Robert Thieme.

⁶³Bullinger, E.W. *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*; page 182.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

equivocation, that failure to believe in Christ is a sin: "In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me." Indeed, II Thessalonians 2:10, states that unbelief is the cause of "perishing." "And in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved."

And according to I Corinthians 1:18, unbelievers consider the gospel of Christ to be preposterous: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Moreover, those guilty of the "unpardonable sin," in due time, will be judged, according to Hebrews 10:30, which says, "For we know him who said, 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' and again, 'The Lord will judge his people.'"

Finally, the "unpardonable sin" is also called: "resisting the Spirit," in Acts 7:51; "the deliberate sin," in Hebrews 10:26; "insulting the Spirit of grace," in Hebrews 10:29, and "blasphemy against the Spirit," in Hebrews 12:31.⁶⁵

Thus, the priests of Malachi's day have failed in their *function* as Levitical priests, and they have renounced the *function* of God the Holy Spirit in conviction.

Malachi 2:9 "'So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."

The Hebrew term for "despise" is BAZAH; and the word for "humiliated" is SHAPAL, and it refers to "God's threat or promise to bring low and abase those who are haughty and proud."⁶⁶ And this concept, the power of God to abase the arrogant, is stated by Jehovah in His second address in Job 40:11, "Send far and wide thy overflowing wrath: and on each proud one look, and bring him low."⁶⁷

And Malachi's use of BAZAH, here, directs the priests back to Malachi 1:6, where God first accused the priests of constantly despising Him. They have despised God; now God will 'cause' the

people to despise the priests; and more, God will 'bring them low,' or debase them.

And why will God bring them low and cause the people to despise them? Because they have not followed "my ways," i.e., they have not believed in Christ, nor have they taught the people concerning Christ and salvation. And the phrase "have shown partiality" is from the Hebrew NASA', which herein has two definite connotations: the first is the fact that the priests have "lifted up their faces as an indication of favor,"⁶⁸ that is, partiality; and the second connotation is that NASA' also means "the taking away, forgiveness, or pardon of sin, iniquity, and transgression. Sin can be forgiven and forgotten, because it is taken up and carried away."⁶⁹ In other words, the priests should have been teaching the forgiveness of sins, or salvation, because of the future work of Christ on the Cross; they should have been teaching concerning the real sacrifice, the Lamb of God. Instead the priests were playing favorites, and indulging the personal whims of the people; and all for pay, of course.

The priests, then, were not teaching God's word; rather they were being suborned by wealth and money. Thus, they became the 'hired help' of anyone with money. In other words, they were religious prostitutes, and people exploit prostitutes, but they do not respect or honor them. And the Jews of Malachi's day had no respect for the priests. So the chain is sequential: the priests had no respect for God and His word, the people had no respect for the priests, and the priests respected money, while the people exploited the avarice of the priests.

Malachi 2:10

"Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?"

Regarding the first phrase, "have we not all one Father," a great deal of controversy exists. The debate revolves around the term "Father." To whom does this refer? To Abraham as the progenitor of the Jewish race, or to God the Father? The great scholars align themselves on both sides: Paul Redditt and Robert Thieme maintain that God the Father is cited; H.A.

⁶⁵Thieme, Robert. *The Unpardonable Sin*; from notes on *Hebrews*. This categorization was originally compiled by Robert Thieme; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

⁶⁶Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; volume ii, page 950.

⁶⁷Bullinger, E.W. *The Book of Job*; translation by Bullinger, page 196.

⁶⁸Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Ibid.*; page 600,601.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

Ironside and E.W. Bullinger assert that Abraham is cited.

First, it should be noted that whichever analysis is supported, the underlying idea is that of relationship. And this 'associative aspect' seems to support the 'God the Father of all believers' reading. As does the previous relational "father-son" depiction in Malachi 1:6. However, the converse is true if the adjective of totality, "all," refers to both believers and unbelievers. With this reading, then, Father would be rendered "Abraham." The decisive factor, then, would appear to be the rendering of "all."

The author, with reservations, prefers to read "all" as "all the descendants of Abraham," who it is to be noted, was spiritually regenerate and thus represents 'true Israel.' And this latter endorsement is brought out in the masculine, singular adjective 'ECHAD, which refers to "one, unique Father," which could only be Abraham, the regenerate progenitor of the Jewish race. Therefore, the author supports the following reading: "Have we (believers residing in Judah) not all one Father (a relationship with one God, as did Abraham, who was regenerate)?"⁷⁰

"Did not one God create us?" Again, the adjective 'echad defines the unique Person of the Godhead: Jesus Christ, God the Son. The component in the Hebrew is EL ECHAD, "the unique God." This, then, is God the Son; for John 1:3 says, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." And Colossians 1:16 says, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

And the word "create," BARA', introduces a remarkable concept, that of sustenance from the point of creation, or birth into the world, up till the point of salvation. For the word bara' means "to put in a new or happier condition. The effectuation of something new, rare, and wonderful. The act of reconstituting something already in existence."⁷¹ Thus, "create," here in verse 10, refers to the regeneration of salvation. And to attain the point of salvation, God must provide, by means of grace, the necessary subsistence to go from 'coming into the world' to

'salvation.'⁷² And other than 'grace,' how does God provide for this livelihood? Through the freedom wrought by the 'divine institutions,' which institutions are delineated in the Law, in Codices I, II and III. And these Codices were not being taught to the Jews of Malachi's day by the priests.

As a result, the Jews of Judah have "profaned," the piel of CHALAL "stained the covenant;" that is, the Jews have broken the first commandment and, forsaking the 'unique God,' have entered the idolatry of the phallic cult. Furthermore, they have not only begun worshipping idols, they are "hypocrites," or "deal treacherously" with each other.

In other words, they are deceiving themselves religiously, they are deceiving their own wives, they are deceiving the concept of family and love, and they are destroying, through self-deception, the social machinery necessary to maintain freedom. Judah, circa 420-400 BC, was a nation of hypocrites; the inhabitants were "false, doctrinaire, artificial, shrill, shallow, uncertain, eclectic, jejune and insincere."⁷³

Malachi 2:11

"Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god."

Ostensibly, verse 11 is another crux interpretum. For "scholars have held two basic opinions about this verse: the offence was either idolatry or divorce."⁷⁴ However, the author discerns no room for interpretative ambivalence as the lexical evidence is clear.

The first lexical clue is "has broken faith," which, in the Hebrew, is once again BAGAD. And the word is defined as "hypocritical dealers towards God, the ungodly, wicked."⁷⁵ So Judah has "broken faith" with God, primarily, and with the concept of marriage as a consequence, secondarily.

The next lexical clue is found in TA'AB which is "an abomination; abominable deed or practice;

⁷²Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

⁷³Paraphrase from Jack Vance, from notes, source unknown.

⁷⁴Redditt, Paul. *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*; page 171.

⁷⁵Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 451.

⁷⁰That this reading is tenuous, is admitted.

⁷¹Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 101.

chiefly in things connected with idolatry.”⁷⁶ Here, then, is idolatry, which is unfaithfulness to God. And the third lexical clue is *wd,qo*, *qodesh*, “a place consecrated,” i.e., the sanctuary of the Temple. By examining these three traces, and then analyzing the utilization of the words “foreign god,” which is EL NEKAR, we conclude that Judah has abandoned God, the *el echad*, “the one, unique God.” For EL NEKAR is “used of a ‘foreign god’ (Deut. 32:12; Ps 81:9; Mal 2:11 et al.)”⁷⁷ Thus, inaccuracy and uncertainty are avoided; the verse refers to spiritual adultery against God and, as will be seen, physical adultery as a consequence.

Idolatry and the Phallic Cult

Scripture recounts the idolatry of the ancient world: Ezekiel 16:36; Leviticus 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 12:31 and Leviticus 20:14-21, being some of the more prominent passages. In the ancient world, idolatry included human sacrifice, demonism, homosexuality, lesbianism, and incest. However, old-fashioned orgies and sexual promiscuity were the foundation of the phallic cults. Indeed, “the phallic cult permeated ancient religions and cultures. The phallus was symbolic of fertility, a vital economic concern in agrarian societies.”⁷⁸

“The regular cult of the gods took place partly in the open, partly in regular temples. In the former case the Old Testament speaks of worship ‘on high places and under every green tree’. This alludes in part to the fact that trees and groves were regarded as holy and came to mark cultic places -- in areas such as Palestine and large parts of Syria which were poor in trees this was natural, since places where trees grew were bound to acquire a reputation for having a special life force. In part it points to the cult places which were to be found on hills and mountains, so called ‘high-places’ (*bama*). On these cultic high places there was either a stone pillar (*masseba*), which was a symbol for the male divinity -- in most cases no doubt Baal -- or a wooden pole (*‘ashera*) which was thought of as representing the female divinity, and finally also an altar for the offering of the sacrifices.

“A special problem concerns human, or rather child, sacrifice. The Old Testament tells repeatedly

of how the Israelites at times of apostasy ‘made their children go through fire’ to Moloch following a Canaanite example. For a long time the word Moloch was taken to be a disparaging distortion of the divine title Melek, ‘king’, and it was assumed that the reference was to child sacrifice to a god with this epithet. This was then connected with a piece of information in Diodorus Siculus, according to which in Carthage there was a statue of a god made of bronze on the outstretched hands of which children were placed, so that they fell into a fire which burned behind or under the statue of the god.”⁷⁹

And the priests of the phallic cults performed their functions naked. And this exposure was prevalent throughout the ancient cults. Additionally, eunuchs and hierodules (temple prostitutes) were part and parcel of the cultic religions.

The Jews of this ancient period were constantly tempted by Baal, whose name means ‘lord’ or ‘owner.’ One of the prominent local Baals was Belphegor or Balfagor or Baal-Peor (‘lord of opening’), who is described as the Moabite god of licentiousness who was in times past, one of the angelic beings described in Scripture as ‘principalities.’ And the manifestation of Baal-Peor is sometimes that of a young woman. Both Rufinus and Jerome equate Belphegor and Priapus; they cite Numbers 25:1-3. And De Plancy in his *Dictionnaire Infernal* asserts that Belphegor was Satan’s demonic minister to France. Moreover, Milton, in his *Paradise Lost* VI, 447, declares that Belphegor and Nisroc are synonymous. And in *Eros and Evil*, Masters equates Belphegor as the Hindu *Rutrem*, whose icon is a standing phallus.⁸⁰

Other ancient religious systems with strong associations to the phallic cult were Ashtoreth of Sidon, Milcom of Ammon, Chemosh of Moab, and Molech of Edom. And Scripture reports that phallic icons were commonly erected by the apostate in Israel: Saul set up one at Carmel, Absalom erected one on the outskirts of Jerusalem, and the term *yadd*, for a stone phallus, is found in Isaiah 57:8, where the phrase “YADD CHAZZIT” means “you see a phallus.”⁸¹

In the New International Version, Isaiah 57:8 reads, “Behind your doors and your doorposts

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, page 3.

⁷⁷Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; volume ii, page 1368.

⁷⁸Thieme, Robert. *Satan and Demonism*; page 40.

⁷⁹Ringgren, Helmer. *Religions of the Ancient Near East*; page 159-162.

⁸⁰Davidson, Gustav. *A Dictionary of Angels*; page 74.

⁸¹Edwardes, Allen. *Erotica Judaica*; page 61-62.

you have put your pagan symbols. Forsaking me, you uncovered your bed, you climbed into it and opened it wide; you made a pact with those whose beds you love, and you looked on their nakedness."

Child-sacrifice was more widespread in ancient Palestine than many scholars like to admit. For the Moabite King Mesha sacrificed his son to Chemosh, II Kings 3:26-27; the Ammonites, who according to Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2ff, sacrificed their children to Molech; the Aramaeans of the Sepharvaim, who also sacrificed their children to Molech; and King Ahaz in II Kings 16:3, Manasseh in II Kings 21:6, and Saul ben Kish's intent to sacrifice Jonathan in I Samuel 14:43-46.⁸²

This sort of pagan religious function, at once disgusting and suggestive, cannot be imagined in today's modern world. Yet the irony is, that though the icons are different and the rituals do not involve fire and human sacrifice, it is still extant. For "God's supremacy over Baal is constantly affirmed. However, man's preoccupation from then and until this day is rather with sex and technology, than with devotion to the almighty God of history, who is also the covenant God."⁸³

The present and modern world, the 'aesthetic age,' seeks satisfaction through the senses, physical beauty, erotic excitement, through success and celebrity in any of its guises.⁸⁴ The new idol is 'fame,' not greatness, but simple 'celebrity.' These new icons, celebrity, sex and technology, have become modern man's graven image, before which he readily genuflects himself, and whose embrace he receives as the new covenant. Indeed, the old idols have come to life.

Malachi 2:12

"As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord cut him off from the tents of Jacob -- even though he brings offerings to the Lord Almighty."

This verse presents corrigenda ('things which are to be corrected,' L.), or 'a problem reading.' The dilemma revolves around two words, literally

rendered "being called and answering,"⁸⁵ or "being aroused and answering." The question is this: to what do they refer? The answer is discovered in the Hebrew of Nehemiah 13:23,27, which read, "Moreover in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab." "Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?" And at first glance, these two verses in Nehemiah appear to be discussing marriage with foreigners. However, the term utilized for "marry" is YASHAB, which means "to cohabit."⁸⁶ Thus, the term refers to "coition," or sexual intercourse between those who are not legally married, i.e., fornication.

The passage in Nehemiah 13, then, is a "call"⁸⁷ or 'invitation to fornication' within the phallic cult, circa 420-400 BC. And "the ones answering the call" are the Jewish males of Malachi's day who are ensconced in the phallic cult. These males, according to the final phrase in Mal. 2:12, are at the same time still bringing sacrifices to the Temple. In other words, they are 'double-dipping,' i.e., they are participating in the phallic cult and fornicating with 'foreign women,' while at the same time they are maintaining a facade of worshipping Jehovah Elohim by bringing animal sacrifices to the Temple. In fact, these men are camouflaging their idolatrous fornications by sacrificing at the altar in the Temple.

And these men will, according to Malachi, "be cut off by the Lord." And the Hebrew word for "cut off" is KARAT, and this term means "to strike, to smite; to punish with death." This, then, is the "sin unto death"⁸⁸ portrayed by the Apostle John in I John 5:16, which reads, "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that." And in Revelation 3:16, the same Apostle describes the 'sin unto death' very picturesque language: "So, because you are lukewarm -- neither hot nor cold -- I am about to spit you out of my mouth." The 'sin unto death,'

⁸²Graves, Robert and Patai, Raphael. *Hebrew Myths*; page 175.

⁸³Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; volume i, page 120.

⁸⁴Paraphrase of Malcolm Muggeridge; from notes, undated, source unknown.

⁸⁵Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

⁸⁶Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 269

⁸⁷Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

therefore, is God's *ultima ratio*⁸⁹ ('final argument') toward the apostate believer, and toward the apostate unbeliever. Both forms of apostasy are removed by God, the only difference lies in the final destination: heaven or hell.

A revised translation of Malachi 2:12, accordingly, is offered: "As for the man who does this (engages in idolatry), the one who answers the call to fornication, the Lord will cut him off ('sin unto death') from the tents of Jacob (from the homes of the living) -- even though he also brings offerings to the Lord Almighty."

Malachi 2:13

"Another thing you do: You flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands."

Four Hebrew words tell the story in verse 13:

1. *hSAKA*, which is "to flood or cover;" however, the term more precisely means "man covers sin, either when he cloaks and extenuates it, or when he buries it in oblivion."⁹⁰ Thus, these Jewish idolaters are attempting to 'cover up' their cuckolding of God.
2. *qnaxA*, which is rendered "wail or groan," but is in this instance the 'loud, phony groaning' of those attempting to mislead. Again, these idolaters believe they can deceive God, their countrymen, and wives with false repentance.
3. *SHANAH*, "to do a second time, in second rank;" translated "another thing you do" in the New International Version. And the NIV rendering is acceptable as long as it is understood that this 'doing,' or sacrificing at the Temple altar is insignificant and subordinate to their first love: fornication and idol worship.
4. *BAKAH*, which is "to weep;" and is defined as "the sorrow of a penitent" by Wilson.⁹¹ Hence, the bogus weeping of the hypocrite as he attempts to dupe the omniscient God of the universe.

⁸⁹Louis the 14th, King of France, utilized this Latin phrase on his artillery cannon: *ultima ratio regum*: 'the final argument of kings,' which is 'war.'

⁹⁰William, Wilson. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 100.

⁹¹Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 477.

Here, then, is the picture: the idolaters return from their fornications and idol worship, go to the Temple, weep and groan dramatically, offer their sacrifices, and leave confident that they have deluded God, and that He has forgiven them. And then, that very same evening they hurry back to embrace and copulate with the hierodules (the Baalim priestesses, the prostitutes).

Malachi 2:14

"You ask, 'Why?' It is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant."

In verse 14, the idolatrous males of Judah ask the Eternal, Omniscient God 'why' He is not fooled by their 'double-dipping?' Why He does not accept their hypocritical offerings and their false tears as they feign repentance? Answer: because He has called Himself as a "witness," which in the hiphil stem means "to testify, to bear witness, hence to call as a witness."⁹² In other words, God Himself has testified that they are liars, hypocrites, and adulterers; and not only to their human wives but, more importantly, to Him.

And the question that the idolaters ask is presented as an *ellipsis*, which is a grammatical figure of speech where words are omitted, and the omission is to be furnished by repeating words from the preceding clause. Such an omission emphasizes the interrogative 'why,' in this instance, and not the omission. Which means that the idolaters are not only totally arrogant and hypocritical, but also totally befuddled by the fact that God has not been hoodwinked by their lies. These apostate idolaters have no comprehension of God, His Essence, or grace.

The Hebrew term for "wife" is *ISHAH*, and it appears twice in verse 14, and both times refers to a legal wife, which is brought out in the latter usage: "the wife of your marriage covenant." And the term for "covenant" is *תַּיִרְב*, which is a direct reference to the law of marriage as defined by God in the Decalogue. And the marriage covenant was designed, by God, to be a perpetual covenant.

The term in the Hebrew for "youth" is *NA'AR*, and refers to a young person of about 20 or 21 years of age. In contrast, though, to these bona fide terms

⁹²Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; 486.

of love and fidelity, the Hebrew word *CHABERET*, is a *hapax legomenon* (used only in this passage). The word means “consort,” within which “the root idea of the term ‘to bind’ also appears, especially in the concept ‘charm.’ Only in Deut. 18:11 does this term appear in a verbal form to express the idea of charming, i.e. casting a spell or tying up a person by magic. The act of charming is set forth as an idolatrous act and diametrically opposed to receiving revelation from God through his appointed prophets (Deut. 18:15).”⁹³

Most scholars assert that “consort” and “wife” are synonymous terms in verse 14. However, at risk of embarrassment, based upon the above definitions of the words themselves, and the semantical, syntactical and grammatical arrangement of the passage under consideration, the author disagrees, and submits that “consort” refers to those hierodules (priestess/whores), or Baalim, of the phallic cult. The “consorts,” then, are those females with whom the men of Judah have been committing physical adultery, and the “wives” are their legal, wedded wives.

Perhaps the verse should read: “Yet you ask, ‘Why?’ Because Yahweh has borne witness between you and between the wife of your youth, whom you have betrayed sexually: her, your legal wife (covenant-wife), and she your consort (prostitute).”

Malachi 2:15

“Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.”

“The first half of v. 15 is extremely choppy. Most translators also assume that the opening phrase should be treated as a question, implicitly or explicitly reading a *he* interrogative for the opening *waw*.”⁹⁴ These words, then, of Dr. Redditt define the complexities surrounding the Hebrew of Malachi 2:15. An attempt will now be made to wade through these complexities.

First, it should be noted that the verse insinuates Genesis 2:24, which reads, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to

his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Next, it is necessary, under the context of Malachi chapter 2, and under the idolatrous situation being delineated, to render the word for “spirit,” *RUACH*, as “breath.” And this rendering is sustained by the lexical evidence: “the basic idea of *RUACH* (Gr. *PNEUMA*) is ‘air in motion,’ from air which cannot come between a crocodile’s scales (Job 41:16 [H 8]) to the blast of a storm (Isa 25:4; Hab 1:11 ASV, RSV). In living beings the *RUACH* is their breath, whether of animals (Gen. 7:15; Ps 104:25,29), men (Isa 42:5; Ezk 37:5), or both (Gen. 7:22-23).”⁹⁵

The next phrase to be understood is “in flesh and spirit they are his.” Dr. Beth Glazier McDonald interprets this phrase as referring to sexual strength or ability. And she is on the right track. The precise rendering is exposed by Robert Thieme: “Did not he (God) make them (Adam and Eve) one [breath], yet he (God) had the residue of breath (God could have created a harem for Adam). And why only one (woman)? So that he (Adam) might develop a godly seed (children raised in the context of the family); therefore, guard the breath (the woman-wife) of your life and do not deal treacherously with her.”⁹⁶

To speak quite plainly, this is the only tenable and lucid treatment of the passage. Every other venture demands an overabundance of guesswork and interpolation.

This translation is supported by The Darby Bible (1884) and The Webster Bible (1833), the latter of which reads, “And did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And why one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.”⁹⁷

Thus, as the Levitical priests would lose track of their lineage in Malachi 2:3 (“I will rebuke your descendants [seed]), the children of one husband and one wife would know their lineage, and their parents, i.e., *the concept of family*. In other words, the idolaters of Malachi’s day were not just being unfaithful to God and unfaithful to their wives -- they were also destroying the concept of *family*, by

⁹³Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; volume i, page 598.

⁹⁴Redditt, Paul. *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*; page 172.

⁹⁵Harris, Archer, Waltke, Editors. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; volume ii, page 836.

⁹⁶Theime, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

⁹⁷Taken from *BibleWorks CD 95*, by Hermeneutika; donated to the author by Hermeneutika.

means of which they were impoverishing their nation's social machinery.

Moreover, Matthew 22:24-25 describe children, and thus the concept of family, as "seed." "'Teacher,' they said, 'Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and have children for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brothers.'"

The husband and wife are described as "one breath" because just as the air you breathe conforms to the ventilation system (lungs), and subsequently fulfills the physical demands for oxygen, so also the husband or wife fulfills the soul and body (in sex) of the counterpart. So the husband and wife, in effect, "breathe each other," and thus complete and fulfill each other. And fornicating with the Baalim prostitutes constitutes holding one's breath -- with fainting to follow. Interestingly enough, the phrase "residue/remnant of breath" implies that God, being omnipotent, could have and would have supplied Adam with more than one wife, if it was necessary and to Adam's benefit. But He did not.⁹⁸

The inevitable product of all this deceit is related in Malachi 2:16. The result of apostasy toward God, the result of idolatry, the result of sexual dissoluteness, the result of the betrayal of marriage fidelity and the familial concept is "strife and discord." Finally, then, marriages are subverted by unlawful divorce.

Malachi 2:16

"I hate divorce,' says the Lord God of Israel, 'and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,' says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith."

The Hebrew term for "divorce" is *SHALACH*, and is defined as "a sending away."⁹⁹ And it is a double-entendre, for the husbands of Malachi's day were divorcing their wives without sufficient reason, and the Lord is about to divorce Judah with sufficient reason.

The term "violence" is *CHAMAS*, and herein should be construed to mean 'a violation or

hatred.' Indeed, because of hatred for God they hated their wives, and thus they perverted the Law, which in this passage is referred to as "his garment," which is *LEBUSH*, or, more properly, "clothing."¹⁰⁰ And in verse 16 the term is utilized metaphorically. The apostate idolaters wrap themselves in the protective covering of the Law, like clothing; however, inside they are full of hatred for everything, including God and themselves. Yet in their arrogance, they abuse the Law to write certificates of divorce for their wives. For remember, that under the Law only the man could write a certificate of divorce. The husbands would assert that their wives were 'unclean.' Thus they wrapped themselves in the righteousness of the Law to fulfill their sexual whims.

H.A. Ironside eloquently describes this distortion of the law as "hidden violence. Divorces were granted on most trifling and absurd pretences, and meantime all their lawlessness was covered with a cloak of extreme punctiliousness in outward religious observances."¹⁰¹

And Zephaniah 1:8-9 state, "On the day of the Lord's sacrifice I will punish the princes and the king's sons and all those clad in foreign clothes. On that day I will punish all who avoid stepping on the threshold, who fill the temple of their gods with violence and deceit."

Finally, rather than covering themselves in the Law, in false righteousness, and acting deceitfully, they should "guard," *SHAMAR*, in the niphal stem, "their breath (the woman that completes them or fits them both soulishly and sexually)." And the implication is that by "guarding their wives," they will be guarding their own souls and happiness.

Malachi 2:17

"You have wearied the Lord with your words. 'How have we wearied him?' you ask. By saying, 'All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them' or 'Where is the God of justice?'"

The idolaters have "wearied" God, and the term in the Hebrew is *YAGA'*, and it is in the hiphil stem; the word means, "to toil, especially with painful effort; it seems to imply dislike or disgust."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹Ironside, H.A. *Notes on the Minor Prophets*; page 448,449.

¹⁰²Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 477.

⁹⁸Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

⁹⁹Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*.

And it is indubitably an example of an anthropopathism, for God does not wear down, nor does he hate or dislike; however, “disgust” defines the divine policy¹⁰³ in terms that anyone can understand. And Robert Thieme defines the word as “bored,” that is, they have begun to “bore” God.¹⁰⁴

They ask, “how?” They are arrogant and do not realize that the situation is harrowing, to say the least. For God no longer regards them; indeed, they have surpassed any normal standard of arrogance and are incoherent, for they find their question engaging, intellectual, and suggestive of some deeper wisdom, as ‘Let us reason with God; He will see that we are correct.’

God replies, that they believe that “all who do evil are pleasing in the eyes of the Lord.” Here, then, is evidence that the idolaters believe that the sacrifice of trivial animals absolves them of responsibility for their actions. In other words, the idolaters have deluded even themselves, to the point that they believe untruth to be truth; this is pure sophistry and irrationality. The effect, then, is that through sophistry “the sceptics are accusing God of calling evil good.”¹⁰⁵ The prophet Isaiah bespoke their fate when he said, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.” [Isa. 5:20]

In addition, their pomposity exceeds all frontiers, for they ask, “Where is the God of justice?” And the question is hollow, for it looks as though there is no justice. They have confounded gracious restraint with justice. The word for “justice” is *MISHPATH*, and the term denotes justice as the counterpart of God’s righteousness. The two attributes cannot be separated. And the term “signifies the due administration of judgment.”¹⁰⁶ God will, then, as His perfect righteousness directs, impose judgment at the appropriate moment; until that moment, though, grace and mercy permit human free will the extravagances of conceit.

It is absorbing to note that Robert Thieme assigns the first sophistry, where evil is called good, to the Jewish males; and the second sophistry is assigned

to the wives of the sophists. For the wives perceive no justice, and thus seek to administer judgment for themselves through revenge.¹⁰⁷ Thus, both parties are guilty of deprecating and minimizing God.

The Misapplication of Divorce

Malachi 2:16 engenders the exposition of this subject. For the verse states that ‘the Lord hates divorce’ or ‘putting away.’ Throughout their history the Jewish males had been guilty of abusing this concept. And Malachi 2:16 is alluding to Deuteronomy 24:1, which says, “If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house.” And this verse in Deuteronomy appears to be in direct disagreement with Deut. 22:22, which stated that adultery was a criminal act and was punishable by death: “If a man is found sleeping with another man’s wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel.”

The contradiction, however, lies with mankind and not with God. This was the Law as spoken by God, i.e., adultery was considered to be a criminal act and the punishment was death. Nevertheless, verse 1 of Deut. 24 *seems* to mitigate the sin of adultery to a civil action. Why the alleged disparity? The answer is found in Matthew 5:27,31 and 32. In these passages our Lord was commenting on the Law, marriage, adultery, and the abuse of divorce. These verses will now be examined.

Matthew 5:27, *You have heard, that it has been said by those of old time, You will not commit adultery.* Here, our Lord is not quoting the Law, or its amendment by Moses, but its disfigurement by those who abused it, called herein “those of old time,” i.e., those of Malachi’s day. These reprobates distorted this verse to pertain only to the act of adultery, and that only with a married woman. In other words, according to the distortion, if a married man copulated with an unmarried female, this was not adultery. In fact, there existed, six hundred and thirteen ‘precepts’ or distortions of this one particular law.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³This term has been borrowed from Robert Thieme.

¹⁰⁴Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

¹⁰⁵Redditt, Paul. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*; page 175.

¹⁰⁶Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 101.

¹⁰⁷Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes, undated.

¹⁰⁸Lightfoot, John. *A Commentary on the New Testament From the Talmud and Hebraica*.

And our Lord continued with his quote of the distortion in verse 31: "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'" This distortion stated that if a man divorced his wife for any of the 613 precepts associated with the Law, it was not a legal divorce unless it was accompanied by a certificate. And it is a direct reference to Deut. 24:1 and the myriad distortions that accompanied it.

Then, in verse 32 of Matthew 5, our Lord clarifies this distortion and rescinds it as it existed in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. In other words, our Lord says that these distortions are not valid. And the revocation of these abuses is introduced by the particle *de*, used here intensively, which "whispers a silent objection"¹⁰⁹ to these distortions. And it is more than silent, it is intensive; thus, the particle should be rendered "but in fact."

Matthew 5:32 reads, "But (in fact) I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a woman so divorced commits adultery." Thus, our Lord is stating clearly that these distortions are unacceptable and do not allow for legitimate divorce, nor for re-marriage.

Now how does one reconcile Deut. 20:20-24, where it is stated that adultery is a criminal act and punishable by death, and Deut. 24:1, which appears to mitigate criminality to a civil action? Answer: Deut. 24:1-4 was, *in its original form*, a mitigation of the Law as amended by Moses because of "the hardness their hearts." And this latter phrase is a quote from our Lord in Matt. 19:8, which reads, "Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.'" In other words, Moses amended the Law to allow for civil divorce because the men were so amoral and vile, that "lusting after other women, and loathing their own wives,"¹¹⁰ they would falsely accuse their wives of adultery, thus misusing the Law to have their wives executed according to that Law.

Moses' amendment, however, pertained only to adultery. And this was to prevent contrived murders.

¹⁰⁹Lightfoot, John. *A Commentary on the New Testament From the Talmud and Hebraica*; volume ii, page 119.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*; page 120.

But they distorted even this mitigation which provided protection to the wives. The pertinent phrase in Deut. 24:1 is 'ERWAH DABHAR, which should be translated "filthy nakedness,"¹¹¹ specifically, adultery. However, this phrase was also distorted and was translated "something of shame." This mistranslation, then, opened wide the door to divorce for any reason, including: a fly in one's tea, for hate, for over-salting or over-cooking food, for debilitating illness, and for a prettier woman. Indeed, the phrase in Malachi 2:16, "I hate divorce, says the Lord God of Israel," was interpreted by one Talmudist (R. Judah) to read: "If he hate her, let him put her away." Which then led to the further perversion of R. Solomon: "It is commanded to put away one's wife, if she obtain not favour in the eyes of her husband."¹¹²

Thus, Moses' amendment, which was designed to prevent 'planned murders' utilizing a perversion of the Law, was itself perverted, and became nothing more than a divorce artifice. Thus Deut. 24:1-4 is a delineation of this divorce subterfuge, and the fact that the woman, as the innocent party, had the privilege of re-marriage.

Chapter three of Malachi provides the answer to the question posed by the people: "Where is the God of justice?"

Malachi Chapter Three

Malachi 3:1

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty."

Malachi 3:1 again broaches the concept of 'dual fulfillment' of prophecy. The 'near fulfillment' in this verse refers to the writer of the book, Malachi, whom God has sent to admonish the priests and people of Judah, circa 420 BC. The 'far fulfillment' refers to John the Baptist, the messenger, or MALAKI, of the first advent of Christ.

The Greek term for "messenger" is AGGELOS, which is defined as "messenger, one who is sent in order to announce, teach, or perform

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²*Ibid.*; page 122. The above dissertation on the Misapplication of Divorce is based upon the scholarship of John Lightfoot and Robert Thieme.

anything.”¹¹³ And the *distant* reference, as noted, is to John the Baptist. And in Malachi 3:1, Malachi is quoting Isa. 40:3, and this same quote is repeated in Matthew 3:3, which says, “This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

And in Matthew 11:10, Matthew quotes Malachi 3:1: “This is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’”

Luke 1:76 repeats the quote: “And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him.”

And again, in Luke 3:4: “As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: ‘A voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

Luke 7:26-27 is also a quote of Malachi 3:1: “But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’”

Mark 1:2-3 declares: “It is written in Isaiah the prophet: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way’ -- ‘a voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” Mark, it should be noted, quotes first Malachi 3:1, then Isa. 40:3.

And in John 1:23, the prophecy meets the prophet: “John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, ‘I am the voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

In the above verses, then, the Baptist’s coming was “predicted as the herald of the King, Messiah, but in such a way as to make it plain that Messiah Himself was identified with Jehovah; for the word is, ‘He shall prepare the way before Me.’”¹¹⁴

And recall that the Greek word for “messenger” is *AGGELOS*, or “angel;” thus, John was the *AGGELOS* of Christ, but Christ is the “messenger” or *AGGELOS* of the Covenant. And all three of the messengers, Malachi, John the Baptist, and the Messenger of the Covenant, i.e., Christ, are

alluded to in Exodus 23:20-21: “See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him.” And the last five words in Exodus, “my Name is in him,” declare, openly, that Jesus Christ, the Messenger of the Covenant, is, was, and always will be God.

Moreover, from Malachi 3:1 surfaces a yet more distant or far fulfillment, i.e., the return of our Lord, the Covenant Messenger, at the Second Advent. For it is here that He will fulfill all the covenants, including the division of the Land according to the Abrahamic Covenant. And Ezekiel 48:11 makes reference to the apostate priests of Malachi’s day, as they are compared and contrasted with the faithful priests, the Zadokites. “This will be for the consecrated priests, the Zadokites, who were faithful in serving me and did not go astray as the Levites did when the Israelites went astray.”

The word for “prepare” in Malachi 3:1 is *PANAH*, in the piel, which is intensive, and means “to clear, empty, prepare.”¹¹⁵ Thus, John the Baptist shall prepare the way before Christ. And John’s preparation for the Lord was intensive in that it was no longer foretelling the *HABBA*, the One Coming, which was necessarily future; John stated boldly, ‘He is here.’

“Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple;” this clause refers to our Lord as he entered the Temple, circa 30 AD. John 2:13-25 narrates this “sudden” entrance, *MOxtP*. “When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, ‘Get out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!’ His disciples remembered that it is written: ‘Zeal for your house will consume me.’ Then the Jews demanded of him, ‘What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?’ Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ The Jews replied, ‘It has taken forty-

¹¹³Bullinger, E.W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*; page 52.

¹¹⁴Ironside, H.A. *Notes on the Minor Prophets*; page 451.

¹¹⁵Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 323.

six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days? But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man."

And as has already been noted, the phrase "messenger of the Covenant" is Christ at the first advent, and is so defined in Exodus 24:8, and Zech. 9:11, both of which passages designate the blood of the sacrifices as the blood of the covenant. And the blood of Christ is called the blood of the new covenant in Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, and Hebrews 13:20. Matthew 26:28 reads, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

And remember, if the blood of Christ had not been poured out, *not one covenant would have been valid.*

Finally, the phrase "whom you desire" should be examined. The term in the Hebrew is *CHAPHETS*, and it is the Qal active participle, masculine plural. And the phrase is literally, "him whom delightings."

The word is defined as "to bend, to bend towards; and *metaph.* applied to the will, it implies entire and full inclination towards an object or person: it may carry with itself the notion of delight and affection."¹¹⁶ And the term was used in Mal. 1:10 to denote "pleasure." And this idea of pleasure is present in Mal. 3:1; but there is more than simple pleasure, as the relative refers back to the "messenger of the covenant." Thus, this is Christ as He gives pleasure to the Justice of God. For, remember, that Mal. 3:1 is beginning the answer to: "Where is the God of Justice?"

Thus, the term refers to "him (in) whom pricelessnesses" reside. In other words, "the darling" of God, i.e., our Lord Jesus Christ. For He is the only sacrifice that is acceptable to the Justice of God. Thus, the Justice of God is still existing, and is not lost.

Malachi 3:1 (expanded translation): "Behold me (God), the one sending my messenger; and he

(John the Baptist, Christ) will make clear the way before me (Christ, the Purpose of God); and suddenly the Lord will come into his temple, the Lord whom you are seeking (they asked him for a sign in Matthew), the one who is the messenger of the covenant, the one who is priceless(nesses). Behold, he has come, said Yahweh of the armies."

In 420 BC, the Jews of Judah returned to God, and judgment from the Justice of God was averted. In 30 AD, the Jews did not return to God, and the *Diaspora* occurred; justice from God was not averted.

The answer, then, to "Where is the Justice of God?" is found in the sacrifices which point to the true sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Justice was satisfied at the Cross by Christ. Thus, Malachi is saying, "Believe in Christ and avoid judgment; believe not, and justice will surely come."

Zadok

Zadok, whose name means "just," or "righteous," was the son of Ahitub, and high priest, along with Abiathar, during David's reign. For a switch from the legitimate line of the high priest, the line of Eleazar, had taken place during the reign of Saul ben Kish (King Saul). And according to I Chronicles 24:3, Zadok was of the line of Eleazar, the son of Aaron.

I Chronicles 12:28 relates that Zadok remained faithful to God, and thus to David at Hebron, after Saul ben Kish's suicide. And from this point onward, Zadok and 22 Levitical priests (called Zadokites), and 900 Levites (also called Zadokites), remained steadfastly allegiant to David. And after the revolt of Absalom against his father, David, Zadok and all the Zadokites, took the Ark of the Covenant and the Ephod and the Urim and Thummim, and accompanied David. Also accompanying David was Hushai the Archite. At this point, David instructed the Zadokites and Zadok to return to Jerusalem. David also instructed Hushai to return and feign allegiance to Absalom. Through Zadok, Hushai was to communicate with his real lord, David.

Later, subsequent to the death of Absalom and David's return to Jerusalem, at the moment that Adonijah plotted to become king, Zadok remained faithful to David, and anointed Solomon as the next king (I Kings 1). For his devotion, Solomon restored the line of Eleazar to the office of high priest, removing Abiathar, who had elected to

¹¹⁶Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 115.

support Adonijah. Thus, Zadok became the sole high priest.

The Blood of Christ

The word used for "blood" in Hebrew is *DAM*. Of the 306 times that the term is utilized in the Old Testament, 103 refer to the animal sacrifices, while 203 refer to death and violent injury. Thus, it is clear that the concept of "blood" is vital to an elucidation of the "blood of Christ." The blood of the Old Testament sacrifices, then, pointed toward the work of Christ on the Cross. This Old Testament usage, therefore, was didactic, i.e., used to teach of what was to come.

The process was as follows: the priest would tie the sacrifice to the four horns of the brazen altar. Then the priest would place one hand on the sacrifice and one on the penitent; at this point the penitent would confess his sins, thus metaphorically transferring the sins to the animal. The priest would then slit the throat of the animal, subsequently bleeding to death through the carotid. Perforce, the death was violent in the extreme. Remember, the purpose was teaching.

In the same manner, our Lord's death on the Cross was violent. However, our Lord's death was spiritual, not physical. Thus, the blood of the animal did not save anyone, nor did it expiate any sins.

And on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies (the Most Holy Place) and sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the Mercy Seat. This demonstrated, metaphorically, the acceptability, or the "preciousnesses" of Christ (Mal. 3:1) on the Cross.

Thus, Christ was the real Lamb, the real sacrifice on the altar, the Cross.

And just as the brazen altar was outside the gate of the Tabernacle, so also our Lord's sacrifice occurred outside the city of Jerusalem on Golgotha. For Hebrews 13:12 says, "Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the gate to make the people holy through his blood."

Thus, metaphorically, the "blood of Christ" applies to His spiritual death on the Cross. This was the instrumentality of salvation. And Christ died spiritually on the Cross so that believers might be "born again," or spiritually quickened.

The "blood of Christ," which was metaphorically used in the Old Testament by the blood of the

animal, but which now has actually occurred, is presently again used metaphorically at the Communion Table. The blood of the animal looked forward in the Old Testament, i.e., it was a commemoration of that which was to take place. Now, however, the cup and the bread look back, commemoratively, to that which has taken place. Thus, the Communion Table is to the Church Age believer, what the brazen altar/animal sacrifice was to the Old Testament believer.

This concept is demonstrated in Matthew 26:26-28, which say, "And while they were eating, Jesus took bread, and having blessed it, He broke it and gave to His disciples, and He said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And then He took the cup and gave thanks, and He handed it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant (messenger of the covenant, as per Mal. 3:1) which is shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

Here, then, the bread is used in place of the Lamb. And it symbolizes the acceptability, the perfect person of Christ on the Cross. And the cup symbolizes the sins of mankind. Metaphorically, then, Christ drank of this cup while on the Cross. And this is the salvation work of Christ on the Cross, that is, His spiritual death. Thus, the Church looks back and commemorates this "so great salvation."¹¹⁷

A.T. Robertson's words on John the Baptist and Christ more than adequately sum up this exposition of Malachi 3:1: "But the most significant thing about John is the promise that he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. It is a promise of the revival of prophecy. It had been some four hundred years since the voice of prophecy ceased with Malachi. And now a real prophet was to come again. Thus equipped he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. It was a day of backsliding. This prophecy also came true."¹¹⁸

The Name of God in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God or Jehovah has many names, and often the student of the Word may have difficulty understanding or distinguishing

¹¹⁷This dissertation on the Blood of Christ is based on the scholarship of Robert Thieme. This categorization was first compiled by Robert Thieme; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

¹¹⁸Robertson, A.T. *John the Loyal*; page 10.

these different names. Many of the prominent names will now be examined.

Jehovah, which is JHWH (called the Tetragrammaton), or YAHWEH, in the Hebrew, is the appellation of each member of the Trinity. And the term Jehovah designates an intimate relationship with God; additionally, since the term is in the singular, it refers to one specific member of the Trinity. Whereas, the term ELOHIM, which is plural, is a reference to two or more members of the Trinity when used. And the term Elohim designates the essence, or quiddity (attributes) of God.

JHWH is the ineffable name of God to the Jews. Thus, it is never to be uttered or pronounced. Therefore, the Jews substitute the noun *ADONAI* rather than utter the Tetragrammaton, JHWH. And sporadically, the term Jehovah Elohim occurs in Scripture; here, the Jews substitute Adonai Elohim.

JHWH is a combination of Hebrew consonants and vowels that is not pronounced as printed. It is a symbol or abbreviation for God's name, JHWH, and it is also pronounced *ADONAI*. This form exists because the term JHWH never stands in the Hebrew with its own vowels, i.e., it is unpointed. JHWH is from the verb HAJAH, which means "to be." God, then, is the "self-existing One," or the "I am that I am."

It is concluded, then, that JHWH refers to each distinct member of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And Elohim refers to the essence of all three members of the Trinity.

Examples of this use of JHWH are:

God the Father is called Jehovah in Isa. 64:8. God the Son is called Jehovah in Isa. 45:21, and God the Holy Spirit is called Jehovah in Isa. 11:2. However, prevalently the term refers to God the Son, Jesus Christ, because He is the revealed God, i.e., the member of the Trinity that is seen.

In a similar manner, each member of the Trinity is called Elohim in Scripture: God the Father is called Elohim in I Chronicles 29:10, God the Son is called Elohim in Isa. 45:21, and God the Holy Spirit is called Elohim in Exodus 31:3. Thus, it is evident that all three members of the Trinity are indeed God. They all have one essence, yet three Persons.

It should be noted that Deut. 6:4 refers to Jesus Christ as the unique member of the Trinity, for he is the God-Man. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our

Elohim is the one (same) Jehovah." And the term for "one" or "same" is the numerical Echad, which is used intensively as a pronominal. The clause, then, defines Jesus Christ as the God of Israel. The One with Whom and through Whom Israel has a relationship.

The Metaphorical or Expressive Names of God

First, it should be noted that the idea in back of all these names or titles is "care." And "caring" is an expression of love.

JHWH JIRE, found in Gen. 23:13,14 and Psalm 23. JIRE is the Qal imperfect of RA'AH, which means "to see." Thus, in this name is the concept of seeing needs and providing for them. He is the great Provider.

JHWH SHALOM, found in Judges 6:24, and Psalm 23. SHALOM is "peace" or "prosperity." Thus, here is the concept of blessings and tranquillity. He is the great prosperity; He is the only true contentment and reconciliation.

JHWH ROPHECHA, found in Exodus 15:26 and Psalm 23. ROPHECHA is the Qal active participle of RAPHAH, which is "gracious healing." Here, God is the One who provides for the healing of sin. He is the great healer.

JHWH TZIDKENU, found in Jer. 23:6, Jer. 23:16, and Psalm 23. TZIDKENU is defined as "righteousness" or "justice." This title is a reference to the justice provided by the righteous One, and is a eschatological reference to Christ reigning in the Millennium. He is the great and righteous One, and all the saints share His righteousness.

JHWH SHAMMAH, found in Ezekiel 48:35 and Psalm 23. "Jehovah is there;" a title of Christ during the Millennium, and a title for Him who is always there. He is the One "who is there for me."

JHWH NISSI, found in Exodus 17:15 and Psalm 23. A NES is a Jewish battle flag. "Jehovah my banner." He is the One "who fights for me, while I feast." It was under this name of God that Moses was able to say, "Stand and watch the deliverance of the Lord."

JHWH MEKADDESCHEM, found in Psalm 23 and Exodus 31:13. The One who "sanctifies" or "sets apart." He is the One who sets the saints aside as exceptional to Him. He is the sanctifier.

JHWH ROHI, Psalm 23:1. ROHI is the Qal active participle of RA'AH, "to see." Thus He is the One

who keeps on “seeing” and shepherding me. Again, He is the great Provider.

Specific References to Christ

COMA, found in Haggai 2:7: “The desire of all nations shall come.” This is Jesus Christ as the Messiah, “the desired One.” And it is referred to in the prophecy of Balaam, where the Lord said by means of Balaam in Numbers 24:17, “There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.” Here is the hope of salvation.

BO, found in Psalm 96:13, “the coming One.” “For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth.” Here, then, is our Lord at the Second Advent, “the One who is worthy to judge.”

NAIM, the “gracious One,” found in Psalm 45:2: “Grace is poured into your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.” This is Christ as the Victor at the Second Advent.

JHWH TSABA’OTH, from TSABA’, “God of the armies.” This is God the Son, or Jehovah, God of the hosts, as supreme leader of the heavenly armies; “¹¹⁹specifically, of angels and of the heavenly bodies.”

In extra-biblical literature Tsabaoth, or Ibraoth, is defined as one of seven angelic ‘presences.’ And the name in Gnostic and cabalistic literature represents the divinity; and the Ophites employed this term to define one of the “seven archons” that created the universe.¹²⁰

The Non-Lyrical Names of God

ELOHIM, God as the Creator, implementing His will, which comes from His essence. And it is interesting to note that in I Samuel 28:13, the term ELOHIM refers to what the witch of Endor assumed were ‘gods,’ i.e., spirits coming out of the earth.

EL, is God in His Omnipotence. This term often occurs in conjunction with SHADDAI, which is “almighty” or “the many-breasted one,” or “the All-bountiful One.” Thus, through His power He provides many, varied and all blessings to His saints.

ELOAH, is the God who is worthy of reverence, the only living God, in contrast with all icons.

¹¹⁹Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 222.

¹²⁰Davidson, Gustav. *A Dictionary of Angels*; page 251.

Here, then, is the perfect Justice and Righteousness of God, i.e., the Holiness of God.

ADONAI, is God as the sovereign Lord of the universe. For God is Sovereignty.

JEHOVAH, is God as the Eternal Living God. “Who is, and was, and is to come.” This is the “I am that I am” Who stands in relation with His people.¹²¹

JHWH RUACH, is God the Holy Spirit. In Zechariah 7:12 the term appears with the preposition BETH, and signifies immediate agency, OHURBi, BERUCHO, literally, “by his Spirit.” And the prophets referred to in Zech. 7:12 were the secondary agents, or the human agents of the Spirit. “Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which Jehovah of hosts had sent by his Spirit by the former prophets: therefore there came great wrath from Jehovah of hosts.”

The Mosaic Law

Since the book of Malachi makes constant reference to the “covenant” and the “Law,” the concept of the Mosaic Law will now be presented.

The Mosaic Law has three parts: the ordinances, the judgments and the decalogue. Each part is referred to as a codex. Codex number one is the decalogue, or the ten commandments. The ten commandments define morality, privacy, property, life, authority and the social machinery, which we call institutions, to maintain freedom within a nation. Additionally, the ten commandments define two types of associations: man with God, and man with man.

“Thou shall not” is a negative presentation of a positive necessity: morality. And morality is required by the Mosaic Law of all individuals, whether believer or unbeliever. Of believers, the Law enjoins virtue.

Codex number two is called the ordinances, and is found in Ex. 25:1-31:18. This is the spiritual code. Thus, the ordinances provide spiritual specifications for the Jews and Israel. Within the ordinances exists a systematic, albeit adumbrated,

¹²¹The above dissertation on the names of God is based upon the scholarship of E.W. Bullinger; *Job*, and *The Witness of the Stars*, and Robert Thieme; from Thieme’s *Doctrines of the Bible*; made available to the author through the gracious efforts of Rev. A. Chaney. And it should be noted that the above list is not comprehensive.

theology which elucidated salvation, the unique person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the essence of God as it applied to the Jews and mankind. The ordinances were taught both orally, as by Moses, and ritually, as through the Tabernacle and its accouterments, Exodus 25-27, the Holy Days, Lev. 23:10ff., and through the Levitical priests and the offerings.

Codex number three is the judgments, which was a specific civic and social blueprint. This blueprint included personal entitlements, the laws of ownership and property, marriage and divorce, defense procedures and policies, taxation, diet, health, sanitation, quarantine, criminal and civic laws, forensic procedures, penalties, and capital punishment, Exodus 21:1-23:9.

The judgments, or codex number three, sustained and vindicated the concept of free enterprise and the idea of profit. For without wealth, business cannot exist and the national entity as well as the individual suffer. The judgments also taught the concept of charity as a reflection of the spiritual life, and the judgments proscribed three concepts: revolution, violence and civil disobedience.

The Mosaic Law was provided specifically to Israel, according to Ex. 19:3; Lev. 26:46; Romans 3:19; 9:4. And Deut. 4:8 and Romans 2:12-14 make it clear that the Mosaic Law was not provided for the Gentiles. However, according to Romans 13:1-10, the judgments portion of the Law is still applicable to all of mankind. Furthermore, the Mosaic Law was not provided to the Church, according to Acts 15:5,24; Romans 6:14, and Galatians 2:19. Thus, the Church has no Levitical offerings, no Levitical priests, and worships on Sunday rather than Saturday.

The Mosaic Law was not the means of salvation, according to Gal. 3:21-26. The Law cannot provide justification, according to Acts 13:39 and Philippians 3:9. And Gal. 3:2 teaches the Church that keeping the Law does not result in the filling of the Spirit, in fact, the Law cannot provide the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Law, then, can only point to sin, define sin, and make mankind aware of sinful failings; it cannot save. The Law does, however, point to Christ.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, since He was a Jew by birth, had a relationship with the Law:

He fulfilled the Law in every aspect. He condemned those who deformed the Law, such as the Pharisees. And according to Romans 10:4,

Christ was the end of the Law because He fulfilled the Law.

What function, then, does the Law have in the present Church Age? The Law still characterizes sin, morality and freedom within the outlines of a social machinery. The Law still provides valuable insight into the proper functions of government, business, criminal law, health and hygiene. And the Law points to Christ as the fulfillment of all that the Tabernacle, the Priesthood and the offerings taught. Thus, the primary function of the Law at the present juncture is to characterize sin, and thus provide recognition of the need for salvation. And this usage of the Law is stated by the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 1:8-11, which reads: "We know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully. Know this fact, that the Law was never made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who murder their fathers and mothers, for murderers in general, for fornicators and homosexuals, for kidnappers and liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which gospel I have been entrusted."

II Corinthians 3:13-18 explains the "fading glory" of the Law. "We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away." Here, verse 13 explains that when Moses received the Law, the glory of the Law was initially reflected in his face. But as he descended the mountain, the glory faded, not because the Law was not just and perfect, for it was; but because all the Law could do was condemn as none could keep it. And so that the Jews could not see the glory of the Law fade, Moses covered his face with a cloth or veil. Thus, the Jews were unable to see that the glory of the Law would fail. It would fail to save, all it could do was condemn. But this is what the Jews had asked for. They said, 'Yes, we can keep the law.' Instead, they should have said we cannot, and thrown themselves upon the grace of God.

II Cor 3:14 relates that failure to believe in Christ is the handicap of the Law to the Jews, even in the Church Age. They still believe that the glory of the Law exists; and unbelief makes their minds "dull." The veil remains. The true glory is Christ, for he fulfilled the Law and was the only acceptable sacrifice.

II Cor. 3:15 and 16 relate that when an unbelieving Jew looks into the Word of God he sees no glory, for he is spiritually dead. But when a believer looks into the Word of God, he understands, and thus the Word becomes a mirror; if the believer sees the glory of Christ and executes the plan of God in his life, then Christ is reflected through the believer.

For remember, our Lord said in Matthew 5:17, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." Thus, the Law was just and good, but none could keep it except Christ. Thus, the glory that was the Law's, is dull compared to the glory of the one who fulfilled it. Romans 10:4 states, "For Christ is the end of the Law for the purpose of righteousness to every one who believes." In other words, the Law could only condemn those who could not keep it, and that was everyone; the Law could not provide righteousness, it could only point out unrighteousness (Gal. 3:10-14).

And according to Gal. 3:21, the Law cannot provide eternal life or sustain life, it can only condemn and demand death.

The fact that the Law is not presently applicable to the Church Age does not mean that 'lawlessness' now exists in the Church. For the Church is under a higher Law, the Law of Christ, who fulfilled the Law. And as the one who fulfilled the Law is higher than the Law, so the Church has a higher Law, I Cor. 9:20-21; Gal. 6:2. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Too, our Lord reiterated, while he was on the earth, many of the concepts found in the Law. Wherever He did so, that concept is now applicable to the Church; whereas if a concept was not reiterated, then it no longer applies to the Church. For example, the specific application of the Mosaic Law as it pertained to adultery, homosexuality, and the incorrigibility of teenagers was not reiterated by our Lord. Indeed, our Lord cleared up the matter of misapplication of divorce based upon distortion of the Mosaic Law. And Paul, in Romans 13, reiterated the concept of capital punishment for certain crimes.

Hebrews 7:19 says, "For the Law accomplished nothing, but on the other hand the bringing in of a better hope did, through which we draw near to God."

John 1:17 says, "The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Yet remember, that just because the Law does not generally apply to the Church, does not mean that the Law is to be removed from Scripture. The Law is an illustration, the Law instructs as to sin and the need for salvation, and the fading glory of the Law leads to the blinding glory of our Lord. Gal. 3:24-26 state this principle: "Therefore what is the purpose of the Law? It has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the tutor. For you are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus."¹²²

Malachi 3:2,3

"But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness."

The Hebrew word for "endure" is KUL and here Malachi uses the pilpel participle; the word means "to contain; to sustain or endure heavy judgments."¹²³ And Robert Thieme provides the interesting note that KUL means "to endure with happiness, i.e., to be in a difficult situation and enjoy it."¹²⁴ And the difficult situation is "the day of his coming," that is, specifically, the Second Advent of Christ. Thus, Malachi is asking, "Who will endure with happiness the Second Advent of our Lord?" Answer: only those who are believers in Christ, those who have obtained His righteousness through faith. At the Second Advent, those who are unbelievers will not endure His fury, nor will they be happy with the outcome of His judgment.

The word for "coming" is BO, the qal infinitive construct, which emphasizes the inevitability, the certainty, the finality of His coming. The infinitive provides no room for doubt; in other words,

¹²²This dissertation on the Mosaic Law is based upon the scholarship of Robert Thieme, H.A. Ironsides, Alfred Edersheim, and I.M. Haldeman. *Doctrine of the Mosaic Law* originally compiled by Robert Thieme; taken from "Doctrines of the Bible," which was graciously donated to the author by Rev. A. Chaney; revised, altered and appended by R.E. Radic.

¹²³Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 2.

¹²⁴Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes.

Malachi is stating that He in fact, indeed, surely, certainly -- is coming. This coming is referred to in Psalm 96:13, "For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with His truth." And in Zech. 12:10 the "coming one" is designated as NEKKAR, i.e., "the pierced," which means that the "coming one," the judge, is Him who was pierced. "And I will pour out on the house of David (Judah) and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."

And in the next breath Malachi asks, "Who will stand acquitted when He appears?" The word for appears is RA'AH, which means "form, appearance, to see." Who will stand not guilty when God Himself is seen at the Second Advent? None but the justified, those who have believed in Him.

"For He will be like the refiner's fire or the fuller's soap." This is a beautiful simile which describes the Baptism of Fire at the Second Advent of our Lord. The fire of the smelter heats the ore and causes the dross, the unbelievers, to rise to the top. The dross is then skimmed off and discarded. And that which is left is the pure ore; this portion is saved and kept. Thus the dross represents the unbelievers, and the purified ore represents the believers. And the dross is cast into the Lake of Fire. Likewise, the fuller, the one who prepared and cleaned cloth in the ancient world, cleansed the cloth with lye soap, washing the dirt away. Here the dirt is analogous to the unbelievers, and the clean cloth is the believers. And once again the unbelievers final end is the Lake of Fire, and the believers end is to enter the Millennium.

Then Malachi utilizes an *anthropopathism* as he describes our Lord 'seated' as a smelter or purifier. Here our Lord is pictured as seated on His throne of judgment as He 'proves and tries' the sons of Levi, the Levitical priests; that is, our Lord separates the believing priests from the unbelieving priests. And Ezekiel 22:17-22 describes this purifying process: "Then the word of the Lord came to me: 'Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross (slag) to me; all of them are the copper, tin, iron and lead left inside a furnace. They are but the dross of silver (atonement).

Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: 'Because you have all become dross, I will gather you into Jerusalem. As men gather silver, copper, iron, lead and tin into a furnace to melt it with a fiery blast, so will I gather you in my anger and my wrath and put you inside the city and melt you. I will gather you and I will blow on you with my fiery wrath, and you will be melted inside her. As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted inside her, and you will know that I the Lord have poured out my wrath upon you.'"

For the unbelieving apostate Levitical priests of Malachi's day presumed that their natural ancestry and status as members of the Tribe of Levi were sufficient for deliverance. Remember, the Levites had human talents, education, and physical comeliness; indeed, physical beauty was a prerequisite for the priesthood. They were rhetoricians, vocalists, and musicians of expertise; all the tangible advantages were theirs.

In their arrogance, they assumed that they were sufficient unto themselves. They had been beguiled and betrayed by their own 'perfections.' For the enjoyment of beauty is magnified in the presence of others; and they theorized that God, too, must admire their attractiveness. What marvelous effrontery; it can almost be admired. In reality, before the God of the universe, they were frail, vulnerable, egregious, boorish, and unacceptable. Ceremonial cleansing was insufficient; for Proverbs 20:9 states, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"

After the refining process, after proving and trying them, "then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness." Ezekiel 48:11 says, "This will be for the consecrated priests, the Zadokites, who were faithful in serving me and did not go astray as the Levites did when the Israelites went astray."

The word for "righteousness" is from TSADAK, which is "righteousness attained through faith."¹²⁵ And the term appears "to be in some measure legal or forensic rather than moral or psychological."¹²⁶ This, then, is righteousness which is credited to the believer by means of faith.

¹²⁵ Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 158.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

Just as in Genesis 15:6, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him (for) righteousness."

Moreover, the concept of dual fulfillment of prophecy is in view here in Malachi 3:3. In Malachi's day, through the ministry of Malachi, the priests would return to their proper function. And this function is depicted commemoratively during the Millennium (Ezekiel 40-48). Thus, the apostate priests of Malachi's day would eventually accept atonement through faith.

Regarding the future commemorative function of the priests during the Millennium, H.A. Ironside has written eloquently, "that in the days when the kingdom is established over all the earth, sacrifices and offerings will be reinstated in Jerusalem and the land of Judah, though only as commemorative of the one great sacrifice of the cross; thus sustaining to millennial saints the same relationship that the Lord's Supper now occupies among Christians."¹²⁷

Malachi 3:4

"And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in the days gone by, as in former years." Here is corroboration of the dual fulfillment concept already discussed in the last pronouncement of Malachi 3:3.

The word for "offerings" in verse 4 is *MINCHAH*, which is a bloodless offering, a gift-offering, which emphasizes the sufficiency (propitiation) of the Person of Christ, i.e., the perfection of the offering. And the term is in stark contrast with the term for "offer" in Mal. 3:3, which is *wgn*, *nagash*, and applies to the presentation of the offerings, the approach. And the approach to God is based, as discussed, upon credited righteousness. And such righteousness is procured only by faith in the perfect offering, the *minchah*.

Salvation in the Old Testament

The model of salvation in the Old Testament is found in Genesis 15:6 (*vide supra*), in which, by means of faith in God, righteousness was "reckoned to Abraham." And the term for "God" in Genesis 15:6 is JHWH (the tetragrammaton), and in context the term refers to Jehovah Jesus Christ. Additionally, it should be comprehended that "Jehovah" indicates a "relationship," which relationship is intimate and personal.

The Apostle Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 in Galatians 3:6 and Romans 4:3. Indeed, Paul comments on Old Testament salvation in Romans 4:1-7, and again in Romans 9:30-34, which reads, "What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the 'stumbling stone.' As it is written: [Isa. 8:14; 28:16] 'See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'"

The gospel as promulgated in the Old Testament is stated by the Apostle Paul in I Cor. 15:3: "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." The weighty word in this verse is "Scriptures," for it designates the Old Testament Canon. And the Old Testament Canon prophesied the Messiah's death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session in Isa. 53, and Lev. 1:3, which reads, "If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord." Here, of course, is the prophesy of the death of our Lord on the Cross.

The gospel of the Old Testament necessarily looked forward to the Cross with certain expectation. For this reason it was depicted in 'shadow' or 'silhouette' configuration in the Levitical Offerings, the structure of the Tabernacle, the furniture of the Tabernacle, the Levitical Priesthood, and the Feasts. And this conclusion is presented in Hebrews 10:1, which states, "The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming -- not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship." Thus, one more time, the law could not save; only the "reality," i.e., the efficacious sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, could actually save.

Finally, according to Galatians 2:16, Old Testament believers were saved by faith in Christ as He was revealed through the Offerings, the Tabernacle, the Priesthood, and the Feast Days. "Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith

¹²⁷ Ironside, H.A. *Notes on the Minor Prophets*; page 452.

in Christ Jesus (just as in Old Testament times) and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."¹²⁸

Thus, it is resolved that salvation in the Old Testament was also by faith in Jehovah Jesus Christ. However, the unveiling of Christ was unlike that of the present Church Age because Christ was not yet crucified.

Malachi 3:5-6

"So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty."

First, it is important to note that the 'evils' listed in verse 5 and 6 do not compose a list of sins for which apostates will be cast into the Lake of Fire. These are not 'unforgivable sins,' nor is this list in any way comprehensive. Rather, the list is one of 'social sins' that characterize the apostates of Jewish society in Malachi's day. Too, it is necessary to remember that verses 5 and 6 are still answering the question posed in Mal. 2:17, "Where is the God of justice?"

And in verse 5, God states that He will administer justice, not only to the apostates of Malachi's time, but also to those apostates extant at the Second Advent of the future. In the latter case, the sins listed are incompatible with the perfect social environment of the Millennium; they will not be allowed to exist. And the word for judgment is MISHPAT, which justice "is primarily an attribute of God, all true MISHPAT finding its source in God himself and therefore carrying with it *his demand*. God, who is the Lord, can demand and He does demand."¹²⁹ Thus, all "justice" stems from, and has its foundation in, who and what God is. God does not *have* or *merely administer* justice, God *is* justice. Therefore, the question as propounded in Mal. 2:17, "Where is the God of justice?" is another display of the raffish heedlessness and blasphemy of the apostates. They have ignored a crucial factor in the situation: the judgment of God remains the

definitive verdict of His justice, i.e., that which He is, justice itself.

The word for "testify" is 'UD, which means "to call as a witness."¹³⁰ Here, then, is the God who is justice, calling Himself as a witness. In other words, there is no refutation and no appeal.

Before the list of apostate 'social sins' is examined, it is indispensable to notice that which they 'do not': they do "not fear God." And the word for "fear" is xry, yr', which means "reverence not merely standing in awe of God but also obeying his commandments."¹³¹ And Robert Thieme defines the word as "occupation with Christ."¹³² In other words, the term designates spiritual apostasy, an apostasy which is the direct result of failure to reverence God and His word. And the product of this apostasy? The list of 'social sins' about to be examined. Thus, failure to know and understand God's word results not only in personal apostasy and personal sin, but also in civil degeneration.

The sorcerers, that is, "those who seek to delude and pervert the mind" through demonism. The adulterers; and the term refers not only to physical fornication by a married man with a woman other than his legal wife, but to spiritual adultery, i.e., spiritual fornication with false gods or idols. fbw, which means "to seven," i.e., to swear an oath on the perfect name of God. And these apostates were guilty of doing this deliberately and falsely. This was a "¹³³distortion of common law." qwf, those who are "oppressors" of "widows and orphans," i.e., the helpless in any society. And the word connotes treatment "with violence and injustice; it seems to include both senses of oppression and fraud."¹³⁴ rg, which means "sojourner," and referred to foreigners who did not have the usual entitlements of citizens of a nation.

These foreigners were being dispossessed of civil rights by the apostates. And this was particularly reprehensible on the part of the Jews, as Israel was not to oppress the *ger*, the foreigners, because they themselves had been oppressed, as in Egypt, and

¹²⁸ Thieme, Robert. This dissertation of *Salvation in the Old Testament* was originally compiled by Robert Thieme; altered, revised, and appended by R.E. Radic.

¹²⁹ Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; vol. ii, page 949.

¹³⁰ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 486.

¹³¹ Redditt, Paul. *Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*; page 168.

¹³² Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 296.

as an ethnic group knew the anguish of the oppressed soul. Indeed, Israel was commanded to love the *ger* (Leviticus 19:34). Additionally, and primarily, Israel was to evangelize these foreigners, not subject them to injustice and persecution.

And these words were spoken by “the Lord Almighty,” *Jehovah Tsaba’oth*, the Lord or Yahweh of hosts. “This title is often used in the minor prophets, and with especial reference to God’s majesty, sometimes also with reference to His care for Israel.”¹³⁵ For Psalm 46:7 states, “The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah.” Thus, this use of the name of God links Israel intimately and specially with *their* God, the God that favored them. But for God to be their God, they must believe in Him, and if they believe in Him, they will desire to know His word and keep His commandments.

The Concept of Selah

In Psalm 46:7, *vide supra*, the term “selah” occurs. This term deserves further discussion. It is a musical designation, and is used 73 times in the Psalms. And its only other usage, outside of the Psalms, is in Habakkuk 3:3,9,13. The precise provenance of the word is hidden; however, it is presumed to mean “silence, pause.”¹³⁶ And according to Wilson, it was used to direct the choir to be silent or pause, while the orchestra played an interlude or opus. Furthermore, Wilson reports that Gesenius ascribed imperativity to the word. Thus, in essence, it may be a musical tag whose sole function is to command a pause.

Robert Thieme defines the word as “the demarcation of grace. The choir rests (from effort), and the orchestra plays on,”¹³⁷ that is, God’s grace continues. And Martin Luther states that the selah instructs us “to pause and carefully reflect on the words of the Psalm, for they require a peaceful and meditative soul, which can apprehend and receive what the Holy Spirit there cogitates and propounds.”¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Girdlestone, Robert B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*; page 40.

¹³⁶ Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 379.

¹³⁷ Robert Thieme. *David*; from notes.

¹³⁸ Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 379.

Malachi 3:7

“Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty. ‘But you ask: ‘How are we to return?’”

The “time of your forefathers” is a direct reference to the Jews that were restored to Jerusalem in the year 516 BC. These Israelites returned to God, their God and, in the analogy preceding, their spiritual wife, subsequent to the Babylonian captivity of 586 BC. And “ever since” that generation, the Jews of 516 BC, subsequent generations had lapsed from a consciousness of God.

The indictment is that they have “turned away,” *SUR*, which means “to turn away from God, to depart, i.e. to fall away from his worship, to apostatize; to depart from the law or the divine precepts.”¹³⁹ Thus, the unbelievers have turned away from the gospel as it was presented in the Old Testament, i.e., the offerings, the Tabernacle or Temple, and the priesthood; and the believers have turned away from comprehending God’s Word, specifically, “my decrees.” And the Hebrew term for “decrees” is *CHAQAQ*, “the statutes,” which is a direct reference to the ‘ordinances’ or Codex II, the spiritual code, of the Law. And this Codex had “not been kept”, *SHAMAR*.

“Return to me, and I will return to you” is the next clause, and the primary term herein is *SHUB*, which means “to return.” And in its first use, as concerns the return of the people to God, the verb is in the *qal* imperative. This is a command from God. Thus, the unbelievers should listen to the gospel and accept it; the believers should confess their sins and re-discover God’s word and law.¹⁴⁰ The second instance of the verb is in the *qal* imperfect, which declares an incomplete action, i.e., God will *always* return to his people.¹⁴¹

And this is the lexical statement of God’s grace and God’s love; God will *never* not eagerly return to His own.

The interrogative, “How shall we return?” denotes not the arrogant self-sufficiency of Malachi 2:17.

¹³⁹ Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 458.

¹⁴⁰ Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*.

And this is important: the priests and the people are, in this question, beginning to realize that they have been in apostasy. Here, then, is the efficacy of Malachi's ministry to the Jews of 420 BC. For in their apostasy and spiritual ignorance they are asking, "How, in what way, can we demonstrate our return?" In other words, the question demands an example or illustration of what they can do to manifest their return.¹⁴²

And the answer, found in verse 8 of Malachi 3, commences with civil and social responsibility; i.e., they must start slowly, as they are spiritually immature through neglect, and work backwards from the sins described in verse 5. Thus, spiritual maturity does not eventuate instantaneously or in one single event. Spiritual maturity is a slow, gradual accretion.

And it is to be remembered that the upcoming subject of "tithing," used very specifically in verse 8 as to the maintenance of the priests, was an obligation or levy upon both believers and unbelievers in Israel.

Malachi 3:8

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings."

The word for "rob" is QABA, which means "to defraud." And the term describes not a criminal action, but a religious embezzlement. Yet, says God, "you have defrauded me." And the verb is in the qal active participle in this instance, which means that the people regularly have defrauded God.

And of what have they continually defrauded God? Of tithes and offerings. MA'ASER is the term for "tithes," and the word means "ten, to take the tenth part of anything, to tithe."¹⁴³ And here, the word refers specifically to the levy for the maintenance of the Levites, according to Lev. 27:3-33 and Numbers 18:21. Thus, the believers in Israel at this time were, because of apostasy, and the disdain they felt for the priests (Mal. 2:9), circumventing the levy; and the believers, because

¹⁴² Thieme, Robert; Lightfoot, John. Taken from the works of both theologians; and their conclusion is supported lexically and contextually.

¹⁴³ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 448.

they saw no need for the Levitical priesthood, were avoiding the levy.

Indeed, blessings as a result of an intimate relationship with God were the concomitant of the priesthood. For the Levites taught the word of God to the people; they were God's appointed instruments, along with the prophets, for doing so. If the priesthood did not exist, no relationship with God was possible, no knowledge of God was possible, and thus no blessings were possible.

Thus it is clear that there were two reasons for the misconduct of the priests: 1) their own spiritual apostasy and unbelief and, 2) the levy was not being paid; thus, the priests and the Levites (singers, musicians, etc.) were, literally, almost starving to death. And one method of supporting themselves was substituting diseased and sick animals for healthy ones, selling the healthy animals for funds to survive. For the priests and Levites, if they functioned properly, did not have the time to 'work for a living.' This was the reason for the tithe as pictured here.

The word for "offering" confirms that the financial and physical maintenance of the priests was being neglected. In the Hebrew, the term is TERUMA, which refers to "a term for sacrificial portions designated for the officiating priest (Lev. 10:14,15; Num. 6:20; Lev. 7:14). The portion of the accompanying cereal offering assigned to the officiating priest."¹⁴⁴ And the cereal or meal offering was a voluntary, bloodless (Lev. 2:1-16) offering given by believers to God as a memorial to His glory and grace. Thus, this offering was over and above the levied amount of 10 percent.

Neither the levy nor the offering were being given. Thus, both unbelievers and believers were guilty of "defrauding God."

The Principle of Malachi 3:8

Within present day Judaism, this passage has been taken to heart. For Judaic Rabbis are the highest paid members of any clergy. Starting salary for Rabbis is 62,000 dollars per year, in addition to housing, medical, health, etc. The Roman Catholic Church pays its priests 12,000 dollars per year. However, this in addition to housing, food, utilities, medical, health, retirement, life insurance, car and insurance, clothing, maid service, cook,

¹⁴⁴ Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.*

clerical expenses, etc. In other words, everything else is taken care of.

Within Protestant denominations, the financial maintenance of the clergy varies from the paltry to the magnificent. But whatever the amount, the 'Church' is commanded to provide for needs, necessities and maintenance of the clergy. And failure to do so results in the "execration" or curse of Malachi 3:9.

The application, then, is this: within religious circles, no matter what the denomination, the needs of the clergy are to be provided for, without exception, without mitigation. And not to do so is "to defraud God." For the Bible states that even the ox is not to be muzzled while he draws the mill. So even the ox is to be allowed to eat and drink as he works for the benefit of others. Indeed, in his epistles to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul tongue-lashes the Church at Corinth for its dereliction in this regard.

It is interesting to observe the impetus behind such direct command from God. Unfortunately, like the work of certain other professions, such as homemaker, the spiritual work of the clergy has no cash-generating capacity; that is, there is no method to quantify the 'production' of the clergy. And without a doubt, not only the blessings provided to individuals by God, but the blessings imparted to a national economy by God, exist. Yet, they too, defy being quantified.

According to the economic experts, this source of blessing is of no account. But without them (blessings from God) the nation is deprived of economic yield of any type, not to mention a stabilized and moral nation within which to conduct business. Nevertheless, though, this 'invisible labor' which results in direct blessings from God is considered to be zero in cash value. Therefore, the experts overseeing a country's economic development omit this factor. And the reasons lie in the spiritually ignorant data bases they use for such management, and in the clergy's invisibility.

Yet when national economic disaster becomes a reality, people turn to God for help; prayer is utilized nation-wide and departure from God, sanity, and spiritual principles are cited as explanations for the moral and economic decline of a nation.

In other words, cash-value is the measuring stick. But how does one measure morality, honest

business practices, and the spiritual impact of believers upon the bottom line of gross national product? One doesn't; there is no way to quantify these imperceptible conditions. So they are left out of the equation. And this is why God specifically commanded the support of the clergy. For without God, and knowledge of God, the loss in economic, civil and social domains would certainly be measurable, and quantifiable. Indeed, the very existence of a nation depends upon such unquantifiable data.

Malachi 3:9

"You are under a curse -- the whole nation of you -- because you are robbing me."

The Hebrew word for curse, here in verse 9, is *RARAH*, which means "to curse, mostly as to its effect."¹⁴⁵ And the initial effects of this curse have already been discussed in the list of 'social sins' of Mal. 3:6.

In the Hebrew, the phrase reads, "with the curse you are being curse." And the second use of 'RARAH, the niph'al participle, denotes a "maximum execration" which continues in action and intensity. This, then, is cursing directly from God Himself. And verse 9 is the formal charge from God that has resulted in this cursing: "because you are robbing me." To any right thinking person, direct cursing from God is ghastly to contemplate. For "the 'arur'-formula is the most powerful 'decree' expressed by an authority, and by means of it a man or a group that has committed a serious transgression against the community or against a legitimate authority (God, parents) is delivered over to misfortune."¹⁴⁶

Malachi 3:10

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.'"

Malachi 3:10 provides the answer, the example, to the "how they may return" question that the people posed in Mal. 3:7. "He calls upon them to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, in this way

¹⁴⁵ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*: page 105.

¹⁴⁶ Botterweck, Ringgren, Eds. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*; vol. i, page 411.

to acknowledge their stewardship under Him, and that needful provision may be made for those who served in the Temple, thus releasing them from attention to carnal things."¹⁴⁷

This, then, is a command from God. The tithe to support the priests is to be brought into the storehouse. And the plural designates that both believers and unbelievers are required to pay the levy.

The term for "food" is PERET which is defined as a "leaf, freshly plucked; provision."¹⁴⁸ And the word has come to mean "food" or, perhaps, "prosperity" in a conditional sense. Which means that the priests would again find themselves in conditions of physical sustenance. Moreover, this is an instance of *synecdoche*, which is a figure of speech in which a shift is made between two connected or associated ideas:¹⁴⁹ in this case, by paying the 10 percent levy, a part of the blessings they have received from God, the whole, the entirety of the blessings from God, are emphasized. In other words, the point is this: all blessings originate with God.

"In my house" refers to the second Temple which had been rebuilt circa 516 BC.

The next phrase, "test me," is one of extreme interest. The word means "examining to determine essential qualities, especially integrity."¹⁵⁰ And in almost every instance the term refers to God's examination of his people. "In the exceptions, it is God who is tested. It is evident that this is abnormal procedure. In Psalm 95:9 the people are reminded of the folly of testing God at Meribah. In Malachi, it is only because of the people's apathy that God calls them to test him."¹⁵¹

Thus, God requests that the Jews test or try His perfect essence and grace. And remember, God does not merely bestow grace, God *is* grace.

And on the surface this appears to be a dependent situation, that is, if the Jews obey God, He will bless them. However, such a conclusion is wrong. For the Jews have *already* disobeyed, yet God in

¹⁴⁷ Ironside, H.A. *Notes on the Minor Prophets*; page 453.

¹⁴⁸ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 246.

¹⁴⁹ Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; page 613.

¹⁵⁰ Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Ibid.*; vol. i, page 229.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

His grace provides them with another opportunity, and even suggests that *they* test Him. This is, in fact, grace not only demonstrated, but conferred where otherwise unwarranted. God, then, by His very offer to be tested, is conferring grace upon the Jews. He *is*, indeed, grace.

And in His grace, God promises more grace blessings than ever before, to a people who have neglected Him, and spurned His edicts. "And see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." Again, remember, this promise of extravagant prosperity is made to a people and priests that have even now proven themselves unworthy of anything but judgment.

Malachi 3:11,12

"I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,' says the Lord Almighty. 'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the Lord Almighty."

Here, then, God will stop the depravations of the "locusts," and the vines "will not cast their fruit," i.e., "be barren." And all the other nations of the world will RASHAH "pronounce Israel blessed or happy," for Israel (Judah) will be a land of delight, CHEPETS which means "that in which God finds delight."¹⁵² And God "delights" in obedience to His word, according to Isa. 56:4; God "delights" in those who have a knowledge of Him, according to Hosea 6:6; God "delights" in His "truth," according to Psalm 51:8; and according to Psalm 115:3 and 135:6, God "delights" in His own essence and sovereignty; and finally, God "delights" in His "mercy," which is His grace dispensed, in Hosea 6:6, which reads, "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."

In this word "delight," then, in Hosea 6:6, is the principle that God is gratified by recognition of Himself as the God of grace, not by empty rituals. And these empty rituals and what pleases God is the subject of the next section of Malachi 3.

Malachi 3:13

"You have said harsh things against me,' says the Lord. 'Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?' 'You have said, 'It is futile to serve

¹⁵² Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Ibid.*; vol. i, page 715.

God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty?"

The Hebrew word for "harsh" is CHAZAK, which is defined as "strong, insolent obstinate language."¹⁵³ In other words, the Jews of Malachi's generation have closed their minds to God and His word. And then the Jews ask, "Of what are we guilty?" "What have we said that was harsh?" And God repeats their words: "It is useless to serve God."

And the word for "futile" or "useless" is SHAWEH, which is "useless, emptiness, vanity, nothingness."¹⁵⁴ And the Hebrew for "serve" is ABAD, and is rendered "to serve another; to serve in a religious sense."¹⁵⁵ In other words, "it is useless for us to worship God."

For "what did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners?" They ask, "What do we profit?" "Implicit in the question was the assumption that religion ought to 'pay.' If God is just, he ought to take care of the people who worship him. The prophet laid the blame on the people and the priests for their moral and ritual failures; the people blamed God and concluded that he would not deliver."¹⁵⁶ Thus, the Jews seek tangible payment from God for worshipping Him. They are concerned only with 'things.' For they are pursuing happiness through 'things.' They have no true love for God; there is no "love-response"¹⁵⁷ to God.

And the term for "requirements" is MISHMERET, and the word refers to "an 'obligation' or 'service' to be performed."¹⁵⁸ And in context, the word designates the ritual sacrifices of Codex II.¹⁵⁹ In other words, the Jews of Malachi's generation have diligently completed and performed the sacrifices and rituals as prescribed by God. But that is all they have done. They have "skimmed off

¹⁵³ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 421.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; page 465.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*; page 382.

¹⁵⁶ Redditt, Paul. *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*; page 182.

¹⁵⁷ Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes.

¹⁵⁸ Harris, Archer, Waltke, Eds. *Ibid.*; vol. ii, page 940.

¹⁵⁹ Thieme, Robert. *Ibid.*

the ritual."¹⁶⁰ They perform the rituals because they believe that by doing so they will 'gain' tangible 'kick back' from God in the form of the 'things' they desire. No love for God exists, only ritual; they desire no relationship with God, no knowledge of God, only lucre or profit. Thus, the ritual is empty; and they claim that God is empty, that the profit is not forthcoming.

It is equivalent to a man or a woman having sexual intercourse with a partner they have no relationship with, or feelings for -- it is just copulation for the sake of sex; the profit is sexual excitement, the payoff is brief pleasure. Yet there is no intimacy, and no meaning to the sex. There is no love, and the act is only an act -- it is devoid of poignancy. It is empty; it is *nothing*.

"We have walked mournfully." They have worn sackcloth, wept, wailed, and professed to have confessed their sins and changed their ways. But it is a "facade."¹⁶¹ No shift has truly taken place within their souls. They perform the functions to impress God, and expect compensation in return. They are worse than prostitutes, they are merely 'whores.'

Malachi 3:15,16

"But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.' Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name."

Here, in context, the "arrogant" are those who have duped God of his levy. They have gained the 'things' that their accusers desire. They have retained their money, they have defrauded others, including widows and the poor; they have swindled others in business deals, and the result: "they have prospered." Or so it seems to those who observe them. "They have challenged God and escaped." In other words, they have "gotten away with it."

Verse 16 introduces a believing, faithful remnant and, perhaps, others who are beginning to see the truth of the situation. These are described as those who "fear God." The word for "fear" is *xreyA*,

¹⁶⁰ Thieme, Robert. *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

jare', which is defined as "reverence or worship."¹⁶²

And the term refers, in context, to those who "put God first; those that respond to God's love with a love-response of their own."¹⁶³ And as these 'lovers of God' speak to others of similar love-response, they have great rapport, concord and harmony. This, then, is the great compatibility and mutual appreciation of soul that exists between spiritually mature believers. And this appreciation exceeds common rapport, it is the discovery of an elegance of soul that clings and never dissipates. This, then, is the association or, perhaps, 'atmosphere,' that existed between David and Jonathan. And here is the true "douceur de vivre," the "sweetness of life," that can exist between two persons. For they have put God first, and thus may derive joy from each other.

And to these, God "listened and heard." And He recorded their name in His "book of remembrance;" this, then, is God's 'scrapbook.'¹⁶⁴ God "delights" in them. This is the book referred to in Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69:29; 87:6 and Daniel 12:1. Daniel 12:1c reads: "But at that time your people -- everyone whose name is found written in the book -- will be delivered."

Malachi 3:17

"They will be mine,' says the Lord Almighty, 'in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him."

These, then, who "fear" God will be His "special possessions." These will be His "own peculiar possession." They will be 'princes or lovers of God.' That which Adolf Deissmann has described in the Greek as *philos theou*, 'prince of God.' And in context, a 'prince or princess' is one who is royalty, one who is always welcome in the throneroom of God. And the phrase "in the day" refers to the Millennium and beyond, into Eternity.

They will be as the family of God. They will hold the same position in God's affections that His Son, "the one who served Him," holds.

¹⁶² Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 159.

¹⁶³ Theime, Robert. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

In conclusion, then, who does not desire to be a 'prince' or 'princess' of God? Who hopes against hope that his or her name would not be so inscribed in God's scrapbook?

A Few Loose Ends

The "special possessions" in Malachi 3:17, which are also called "jewels" in the King James Version, are those believers who have an intimate, personal, special relationship with God, i.e., they have understood and comprehended His love, with the result that they have a love-response to Him. And in context, the "special possessions" are the Old Testament saints at the Second Advent of our Lord. This concept of "specialness" is found in Exodus 19:5, Deut. 7:6, 14:2, 26:18. "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then our of all nations you will be my treasured possession." [Ex. 19:5]

Additionally, this passage, Mal. 3:17, directs attention to another aspect of "love." If the question is asked, "What is love?" Many will answer, "Sex, or caring, or forgiveness, or regard," etc., *ad infinitum*. But few would answer, "Conversation." Yet conversation is the foundation of a truly loving relationship. Not communication, for communication can include hate, bitterness, etc. But actual conversation is the concept in Mal. 3:17. If you love someone, you desire to speak to them. God speaks to mankind, and mankind has the privilege of speaking back to God. And remember, words have power; for words convey ideas, thoughts, notions, concepts. And ideas and concepts influence those who hear them, rightly or wrongly. Indeed, words which strike to the heart and soul are more powerful than any force known to mankind.

Just as Eve, in the garden, was swayed by the words of Satan, so mankind is swayed by the same words. And it is interesting to note that Satan did not use violence, coercion, or even dynamite to misdirect Eve. He used the simplest and most powerful of all the weapons at his disposal: words.

Malachi 3:18

"And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not."

Here, in verse 18, God states through Malachi that the Jews will see, at the Second Advent, "the distinction between the righteous and the wicked." The righteous are believers, and the wicked are

unbelievers. And the final destination of the righteous at the Second Advent is the millennium and then the eternal state; whereas the final destination of the wicked is the Lake of Fire.

Malachi Chapter Four

It should be noted that in the Hebrew Bible there is no chapter break after verse 18. In other words, there is no chapter 4. The verses continue from 3:19 to 24, rather than 4:1 through 4:6.

Malachi 4:1,2

“Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. ‘Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.’”

Verses 1 and 2 treat the subject of the Baptism of Fire. And the “day” referred to is the day of the Lord, which in context, encompasses the Second Advent, the Baptism of Fire, the Millennial state, the Great White Throne Judgment, and the destruction of the universe. It can be understood to include the Eternal State, however, this state is more properly contained in the phrase, “the day of God.”

And the two terms “arrogant” and “evildoer” refer to the self-sufficient unbelievers, and their sins and human righteousness, respectively. In other words, these “arrogant” unbelievers make sin and self-sufficiency from their sin natures. And they expect to stand upon their own merits at the judgment.

Matthew 3:10,11 and 12 provide an expanded view of this judgment of unbelievers. “The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” John the Baptist is speaking here. And the “root of the tree” is the unbeliever at the Second Advent; the “fire” is the Lake of Fire. And John baptized with water because of repentance, i.e., because of a

change of thinking regarding Christ; in other words, they believed on Christ. John ministered at the beginning of the Church Age, the First Advent of our Lord. The “fire,” then, refers to the Second Advent.

The “barn” is the final storage place for believers after the Second Advent, that is, the Millennium.

Thus, the “stubble” refers to unbelievers. And “not a root or a branch will be left to them.” This phrase reflects that used in Matt. 3:11, and is a reference to total destruction; no root (unbeliever) is left.

However, in verse 2, those who “revere” or fear God’s name, i.e., believers, “the sun of righteousness will rise.” “The sun of righteousness” is a title of our Lord Jesus Christ and is found in Jeremiah 23:5-6: “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.’”

And He will have “healing in his wings.” The term for “healing” means “to heal wounds by outward application, and binding or sewing.”¹⁶⁵ This, then, is the bringing together of two sides of an open, gaping wound. And this is a reference to salvation; for Christ reconciled mankind to God through the Cross. In the Hebrew, the term for “wings” is BANAPH, which is “a wing of a fowl; *metaph.* the wings of God, the defence and protection of his people.”¹⁶⁶ And this is a reference to the wings of the Cherubim embroidered overhead in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle; and the Shekinah glory, Christ Himself, resided therein. This, then, is JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, “the God that is there.” And the two Cherubim represented the perfect justice and the perfect righteousness of God which had to be satisfied, i.e., the Law (Virtue); while the Shekinah glory represented the Love of God finding a way to express itself and save those He loved: the coming of Christ and the Cross. Thus, believers will avoid the judgment because of the “healing,” “the security, the salvation, and deliverance”¹⁶⁷ found in Christ. And this “healing” is for the Jews, specifically. They wait

¹⁶⁵ Wilson, William. *Old Testament Word Studies*; page 210.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*; page 484.

¹⁶⁷ Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes.

for the “sun of righteousness,” while we, the Church, wait for “the Son of the Morning Star.”

And “the calves released from the stall” refers to the “special calves which were fat and sleek,”¹⁶⁸ which depict the great spiritual and tangible prosperity of the Jews when Christ returns to restore His people.

Malachi 4:3

“Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,” says the Lord Almighty.”

This verse, begins with the qal perfect second masculine plural of the verb *ASAS*, which is defined as “trampling, to tread down, to tread in pieces.”¹⁶⁹ And the term refers to trampling on grapes to obtain the juice for wine. And the “you” which is denoted by the second person plural is the Jews of Zechariah 14:1-4, i.e., those Jews who select to stand fast against the ‘King of the North’ at the end of the Tribulation, just before the Second Advent of our Lord. That this is a description of the armies of the King of the North as they descend upon the tribulational Jerusalem is found in the word “wicked,” which is *fwara*, *rasha*, and is rendered precise as “ungodly; the internal state of the wicked.”¹⁷⁰ And these ‘ungodly ones’ or “wicked ones” are the armies of the King of the North as described in Daniel 11:40-45 and Zechariah 12 and 14.

And verse 3, furthermore, describes these armies of the King of the North after our Lord returns: “ashes under the soles of your feet.” This is a picture of complete destruction by fire/judgment. And the Jews will trod upon the ashes of their former oppressors.

“When I do these things,” is the next phrase; and the verb *ASAH*, is the term for “do.” And according to Robert Thieme and William Wilson, *ASAH* means “to make something out of something,” or “to produce by labour.” Thus, this verb speaks of our Lord producing victory out of what was inevitable defeat.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 452.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; page 481.

Malachi 4:4,5

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.”

These two verses present the two heralds of the Second Advent of our Lord, Jesus the Christ. The two heralds are Moses and Elijah. And the Jews are to “remember,” *ZAKAR*, i.e., “remember that which they have forgotten,” the word of God as found in the Old Testament, specifically, the Pentateuch. And this presents an interesting analogy between the 400 years of the Egyptian Bondage and the 400 years from Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament, to the succeeding prophet, John the Baptist. In other words, for the 400 years of the bondage in Egypt the Jews had no prophet, only the word of God to sustain them. And that they had the word of God in written form is so stated in Genesis 15:13,18, and Genesis 50:24ff. Then came Moses, who was the first prophet for 400 years. And subsequent to Malachi, the Jews again had no prophet for 400 years. But they, too, had the word of God to sustain them. Then came John the Baptist, who was the first prophet for 400 years, and who was the herald of the First Advent of our Lord.

The Heralds

The heralds of the Second Advent will be Moses and Elijah. The herald of the First Advent was John the Baptist. Indeed, at both advents there were both angelic heralds and human heralds. At the First Advent the angelic heralds are discussed in Luke 2:1-15, and the human herald was John. At the Second Advent there will also be an angelic herald, i.e., the “mighty angel” of Revelation 10, and there will be two human heralds, Moses and Elijah, according to Matt. 16:1-23.

Both Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 4:5 anticipate the rejection of our Lord in His First Advent. Thus, heralds for the Second Advent will become necessary. Isa. 40:3 reads, “A voice of one calling: ‘In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.’” Thus, *if* our Lord had been accepted as the Christ in His First Advent, then Elijah and not John would have been the herald of the First Advent. But, of course, He was not accepted. And this supposition is reported in Matt. 11:11-14.

And remember, that John stated that he was not Elijah, and thus he was not the herald referred to in Mal. 4:5 and Isa. 40:3.

According to Luke 1:16 and 17, John the Baptist had the power of the Spirit, and so will Elijah and Moses. Acts 3:21 and 22 confirm that Moses will be one of the heralds of the Second Advent, and Matt. 17:11 confirms that Elijah will be the other. Enoch is dismissed as a candidate for heraldry because he was a Gentile.¹⁷¹

In Malachi 4:5, the “day of the Lord” is called both “great and dreadful.” In other words, to the believer that day is wonderful; to the unbeliever that day is horrible. For one, victory and blessing ensue, for the other, judgment and death ensue.

Malachi 4:6

“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

Here is conclusive evidence that the heraldic ministries of Moses and Elijah, during the Tribulation, result in a great revival. And the clause “the hearts of the fathers...to their fathers” refers to Matt. 10:35,36. However, in Malachi the order is reversed, i.e., because of the revival and salvation, the Jews of the Tribulation will not betray each other. Whereas, if the two heralds had not been sent, and the revival had not taken place, family members would have surely abandoned each other.

Cherem, or The Curse

The last word in the Old Testament is found in Malachi 4:6, and it is CHEREM. And CHEREM is defined as “a devoted thing; that which is separated or appointed to destruction.”¹⁷² Thus, the term carries a double sense, like the Latin *sacer*. And the New Testament Greek equivalent is found in I Cor. 16:22, which reads, “If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *anathema*.” The term, then, connotes an essential proscription that cannot be removed. A thing or person so cursed is devoted to destruction.

And all unbelievers are under this proscription at the Second Advent. “The word is used of the accursed (i.e. devoted) city and substance of Jericho in the sixth and seventh chapters of Joshua, and in the reference to Achan’s conduct in Josh. 22:20 and I Chron. 2:7. The idols and their silver and gold are also described as cursed (i.e. devoted) in Deut. 7:26,13,17. In Isa. 34:5 the Edomites are described as ‘the people of God’s curse,’ i.e. devoted to destruction by God; and this accounts for the use of the word in 2 Chron. 20:23. In Isa. 43:28 God says, ‘I have given Jacob [unbelieving Jews] to the curse,’ i.e. I have devoted the people to destruction. This was in consequence to their idolatry and rebellion.”¹⁷³

The exception in Jericho was Rahab the prostitute, and this was because she was a believer. Thus, the Cross and faith in Him who hung upon it, is the only formula for avoiding the *cherem* curse.

The Old Testament, then, ends with a curse; the New Testament ends with a blessing: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” (Rev. 22:21) Thus, the design of the revival of the two witnesses of the Tribulation is to escape *cherem*, the curse associated with unbelief. Moreover, those who reject Christ during the Tribulation are under two curses: the Baptism of Fire at the Judgment Seat (Second Advent Judgment Seat, not the Judgment Seat of Christ at the Rapture of the Church), and the Great White Throne Judgment at the conclusion of the Millennial State. These unbelievers, then, do not enjoy the perfect environment of the Millennium, nor do they enter the Eternal State.¹⁷⁴

“To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” So states Acts 10:43. “Through him alone can guilty men, who own their lost estate and trust His grace, be delivered from the ‘curse’.”¹⁷⁵

Amen.

¹⁷¹ This discussion of the two heralds and the 400 years is based upon the scholarship of Robert Thieme, *Malachi*; from notes.

¹⁷² Wilson, William. *Ibid.*; page 105.

¹⁷³ Girdlestone, Robert B. *Old Testament Synonyms*; page 279.

¹⁷⁴ Thieme, Robert. *Malachi*; from notes.

¹⁷⁵ Inrside, H.A. *Notes On The Minor Prophets*; page 463.