

Malachi 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.

Analysis

Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. God specifies the priests' contempt: offering **polluted bread** (לְחֵם מְגַאֵּל, lehem mego'al) on His altar. **לְחֵם** (lehem, bread) refers to sacrificial offerings; **מְגַאֵּל** (mego'al, polluted/defiled) indicates ritual uncleanness. The priests brought defiled sacrifices—animals unsuitable for God's altar according to Torah (Leviticus 22:17-25, Deuteronomy 15:21).

Again the priests respond with feigned innocence: **Wherein have we polluted thee?** (בָּמְהִיא גְּאַלְנוּךָ, bameh ge'alnukha). God's answer reveals their attitude: **In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible** (בְּאַמְרָכֶם שְׁלַחֲן יְהָוָה נִבְזֵה הוּא), be'emarkhem shulhan Yahweh nivzeh hu). **שְׁלַחֲן** (shulhan, table) refers to the altar where sacrifices were offered (Ezekiel 41:22, 44:16). **נִבְזֵה** (nivzeh, contemptible) means despised, worthless, insignificant.

The priests' actions revealed their hearts—by offering defective animals, they communicated that God's altar deserved no better. They treated sacred worship as contemptible routine rather than holy privilege.

Historical Context

The Levitical system required unblemished animals for sacrifice (Leviticus 1:3, 10, 3:1, 6, 4:3, 23, 28). This wasn't arbitrary but taught important theology: sin demands costly atonement, God deserves our best, and sacrifices foreshadowed the perfect Lamb of God (John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:19). Post-exilic priests violated these requirements, offering blind, lame, and sick animals (v. 8). Economic hardship may have tempted them to keep healthy animals for profit while giving God defective ones. But their actions revealed theological corruption—they no longer believed worship mattered or that God deserved excellence.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do our actions in worship reveal whether we truly value God's 'table' or find it contemptible?
2. What 'defective offerings' might we bring to God—half-hearted service, distracted worship, grudging obedience?
3. How does Christ as the perfect sacrifice expose and remedy our tendency toward contemptuous worship?

Interlinear Text

בְּאָמָרְכָּךְ מָ	גָּאַלְנָה וְבָ	לְחַם	מִזְבֵּחַ	עַל	מִגְיָשׁ יְמָ	Ye offer	H5921	upon mine altar	H4196	bread	H3899	Wherein have we polluted	H1351	and ye say	H559					
H5066																				
בְּמַה הַ	גָּאַלְנָה וְבָ	בְּאָמָרְכָּךְ מָ	יְהִי הַ	שְׁלָמָה	וְ	בְּאָמָרְכָּךְ מָ	וְ	תְּבִזֵּה הַ	תְּבִזֵּה הַ	וְ	וְ	Wherein have we polluted	H1351	and ye say	H559	The table of the LORD	H7979	and ye say	H3068	
H4100																				
is contemptible	H1931	H959																		

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 1:12 (References Lord): But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

1 Corinthians 10:21 (References Lord): Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

Malachi 1:8 (Sacrifice): And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.