

Malachi 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. God specifies the defective sacrifices: **the blind** (עֵירָבָה, ivver), **the lame** (פָּסָה, pisseah), and **sick** (חֲלֵה, holeh) animals—all explicitly forbidden by Torah (Leviticus 22:20-24, Deuteronomy 15:21). The rhetorical question **is it not evil?** (הֲאֵין רָעָה, ha'ein ra) emphasizes the obvious wickedness. **רָעָה** (ra) means evil, bad, wicked—not merely inappropriate but morally wrong.

God's devastating comparison follows: **offer it now unto thy governor** (הַקְרִיבֵהוּ נָא לְפָתַחַת, hakrivehu na lefehatekha). **פָּתַחַת** (pehah, governor) refers to the Persian governor ruling Judah. Would the priests dare offer such defective gifts to their earthly ruler? **Will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?** (הַיְרַצֵּב אָוֶן, hayirtzeh o hayissa fanekha). Obviously not—human governors demand respect; how much more the King of heaven?

This argument exposes the priests' hypocrisy: they gave human authorities what they withheld from God. They feared man more than God, valued human approval above divine favor. This reversal of priorities characterizes all false worship—using God while serving self.

Historical Context

Persian governors controlled Judah during the post-exilic period. The priests, as intermediaries between Jewish community and Persian authority, understood protocol for approaching rulers. No one would insult a governor with defective gifts—doing so risked punishment. Yet these same priests insulted the sovereign LORD with blind, lame, and sick animals. Their hypocrisy revealed distorted priorities: they feared earthly consequences but not divine judgment. Jesus confronted similar hypocrisy in religious leaders who tithed herbs while neglecting justice and mercy (Matthew 23:23), who honored God with lips while hearts remained far from Him (Matthew 15:8).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does comparing our worship to what we'd offer human authorities expose our true priorities?
2. In what areas might we fear man's disapproval more than God's, showing more respect to earthly powers than to our heavenly King?
3. What does it reveal about our theology when we give God less than our best while reserving excellence for other pursuits?

Interlinear Text

וְכִי בְּעֵד אֵין לִזְבֵּחַ תְּגַוֵּשׁ וְשָׁוֹר יְכִי
H3588 **And if ye offer** H5066 **the blind** H5787 **for sacrifice** H2076 H369 **is it not evil** H7451 H3588

וְאֵין וְחַלְהַ פְּטַח תְּגַוֵּשׁ וְשָׁוֹר
And if ye offer the lame and sick H369 is it not evil H7451 offer H4994
H5066 H6455 H2470 H7126

לְפָתַח בָּנָה בְּיַרְאָב אֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
it now unto thy governor will he be pleased H176 with thee or accept thy person
H6346 H7521 H5375 H6440

צָבָאות: יְהִי הָאָמָר
saith the LORD of hosts
H559 H3068 H6635

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 15:21 (Sacrifice): And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.

Jeremiah 14:10 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.

Hosea 8:13 (Sacrifice): They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the LORD accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

Psalms 20:3 (Sacrifice): Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.

Job 42:8 (Sacrifice): Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my

servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

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