

Malachi 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

Analysis

The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar—the Hebrew phrase עָרֵב וְעָנֵה (er v'oneh) is cryptic, literally 'one who rouses and one who answers,' possibly meaning teacher and student, or perhaps a merism for every man regardless of status. The LXX renders it 'until he be brought low,' suggesting complete destruction. The point is comprehensive judgment: covenant-breakers will be excommunicated from **the tabernacles of Jacob**—expelled from the covenant community.

And him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts—this devastating phrase reveals that religious activity provides no protection from covenant judgment. Even the man who brings sacrifices to the temple will be cut off if he violates marriage covenant. This echoes 1:10-14 where God rejects polluted offerings; here He rejects the offerer himself. Ritual cannot substitute for righteousness—a principle Jesus would later emphasize (Matthew 5:23-24).

Historical Context

Post-exilic Judaism emphasized temple worship and sacrifice as markers of restored covenant relationship. Malachi shatters any notion that liturgical correctness excuses ethical treachery. The threatened 'cutting off' recalls the covenant curses of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28—expulsion from the land and

community. For returned exiles who'd already experienced Babylonian exile, this warning carried terrifying weight.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What modern religious activities do people trust in while living in covenant-breaking relationships?
2. How does God's rejection of worship from the treacherous challenge the separation of 'spiritual' and 'moral' life?
3. Why is excommunication from the covenant community a more serious consequence than individual divine displeasure?

Interlinear Text

עַד רְאֵשׁ נֶהָרֶת יְהִי הַלְּאֵשׁ רַאשׁ רְאֵשׁ תַּעֲשֵׂה נֶהָרֶת
will cut off The LORD the man that doeth this the master
H3772 H3068 H376 H834 H6213 H5782

מִתְּבָנֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְמִתְּבָנֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּיַד מְאֹדֵל
and the scholar out of the tabernacles of Jacob and him that offereth an offering
H6030 H168 H3290 H5066 H4503

לְיִהְיוֹת אֶבֶן־תְּמִימָה
The LORD of hosts
H3068 H6635

