

Malachi 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

Analysis

Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. This verse depicts the result of God's refining work on the priesthood (v. 3). The Hebrew עֲרֵבָה (arevah, "be pleasant") means to be pleasing, sweet, or acceptable—worship that delights God's heart. The **offering of Judah and Jerusalem** refers to sacrifices from both the southern kingdom and its capital, representing all Israel's worship.

The phrase **as in the days of old, and as in former years** (כִּימֵי עוֹלָם וּכְשָׁנִים קְדָמוֹת, kimei olam ukh-shanim qadmoniyot) looks back to when Israel's worship was pure—perhaps to David and Solomon's reign, or to the tabernacle period when Aaron's sons offered fire before the LORD with proper reverence. God promises restoration of acceptable worship after the purifying judgment described in verses 2-3.

This prophecy finds partial fulfillment in the remnant who returned from exile with renewed devotion, but ultimate fulfillment in Christ. He is both the perfect offering (Hebrews 9:14) and the great High Priest who enables our worship to be acceptable to God (Hebrews 13:15-16, 1 Peter 2:5). Through Christ's finished work, believers now offer spiritual sacrifices—praise, good works, faithful service—that are "pleasant unto the LORD" because they come through the Mediator.

Historical Context

Post-exilic worship in Malachi's time (450-400 BC) had become corrupt and perfunctory. The priests offered defiled animals (1:7-8, 13), showed contempt for God's altar (1:7), and served from greed rather than devotion (1:10). The people withheld tithes (3:8) and intermarried with pagans (2:11). This verse promises that God's refining judgment will restore pure worship. The reference to "days of old" reminded Israel of times when worship pleased God—when Solomon dedicated the temple and God's glory filled it (1 Kings 8:10-11), or when David brought the ark to Jerusalem with joyful celebration (2 Samuel 6:12-15). The promise looked forward to new covenant worship in Spirit and truth (John 4:23-24), when Christ's sacrifice would make all other sacrifices obsolete and believers would offer acceptable worship through Him.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's refining work in our lives prepare us to offer worship that pleases Him?
2. What does acceptable worship look like under the new covenant through Christ?
3. In what ways might our worship become routine or defiled, requiring God's purifying work?

Interlinear Text

וְעֵבְרָה	לִיהוָה	מִנְחָת	יְהוּדָה	וִירוּשָׁלַם
be pleasant	unto the LORD	Then shall the offering	of Judah	and Jerusalem
H6149	H3068	H4503	H3063	H3389
כִּימִי	עוֹלָם	וּכְשֶׁנִּים	קִדְמֹנִית:	
as in the days	of old	years	and as in former	
H3117	H5769	H8141	H6931	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 56:7 (Sacrifice): Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

Zechariah 8:3 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.