

FOR WE OFFER TO HIM HIS OWN:
EUCHARIST AND MALACHI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
AND EARLY CHURCH

By
JON R. JORDAN
B.A., University of Texas at Dallas, 2007

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*To my beautiful wife, Vivien, who has patiently, faithfully, and sacrificially supported my
work and study; may you one day know
how much I learn from you*

*To our precious daughter, Zoë, who has shared her infancy with this project;
may you grow to know and love our King*

*To Tyson Guthrie, who has instilled in me a love
for the early Church*

*And to my students, whose curiosity has pushed me deeper
into our Scriptures and tradition*

ABSTRACT

In describing the Eucharist as the "new oblation of the new covenant," Irenaeus of Lyons presents Malachi 1:10-11 as a foreshadow of this new sacrifice. He is not alone in doing so: the *Didache* and Justin Martyr also view the Eucharist as the fulfillment of Malachi 1:10-11. The primary question for this project is whether the text of Malachi itself or its use by New Testament authors warrants the type of Eucharistic interpretation seen in these second century authors.

In his essay "Eucharist, Sacrifice, and Scripture", Michael Vasey comments that "two facts are clear: the New Testament never speaks of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and the early church very quickly began to do so." One might well get the impression that the two bodies of literature are at odds. We will propose that when second century writers speak of the Eucharist as sacrifice, they are doing so on the basis of what they find in the New Testament's own use of Malachi.

We begin by exploring Malachi in its own Old Testament context and highlighting key changes to the text during its translation into the Septuagint. This is followed by an overview of two key New Testament allusions to Malachi that are found in Eucharistic contexts. An overview of the Eucharistic use of Malachi before Irenaeus is followed by a final chapter on his own use of Malachi in the context of his wider sacramental theology.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The modern interpreter of Scripture, when presented with Patristic exegesis, is often taken aback by the hermeneutical methodology and conclusions of many early Christian writers.¹ Are they merely proof-texting the Old Testament in search of nuggets of support for their own theology? Would not a modern grammatical-historical hermeneutic negate much of their conclusion? While this discomfort is initially off-putting for some interpreters, Claire Matthews McGinnis sees otherwise, “it is precisely because Patristic exegesis does not seem comfortably familiar that it promises to have something to offer us.”² Along these lines, C. John Collins proposes that in reading Patristic exegesis we are not presented with an antiquated—and therefore insignificant—hermeneutic, but rather an opportunity “to see Scripture through another set of eyes.”³ Perhaps it serves the modern reader well to listen carefully to the Fathers of the church, especially when their interpretations are initially perceived as peculiar.

One early Christian interpretation in particular has long been intriguing to this author: the Eucharistic interpretation of Mal 1:11. Three documents from the first and second century

¹ McGinnis recalls the occasional laughter at an SBL session when patristic readings of Isaiah 7 were shared. Claire Mathews McGinnis, “Stumbling over the Testaments: On Reading Patristic Exegesis and the Old Testament in Light of the New,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* vol. 4 (2010): 16.

² McGinnis, 16.

³ C John Collins, “The Eucharist as Christian Sacrifice: How Patristic Authors Can Help Us Read the Bible,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 66, (2004): 2.

find the fulfillment of Mal 1:11 in the Eucharist. While the *Didache* represents an early attestation to the Eucharistic interpretation of Malachi, it is particularly the writings of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus that this project wishes to explore. This thesis will demonstrate that in their Eucharistic interpretation of Mal 1:11, alongside their wider understanding of sacrifice, these authors convincingly present the Eucharist as a new and distinct form of Christian sacrifice whose roots are clearly found in the Old and New Testaments.

Outline of Procedure

We will begin by placing Malachi itself within its own Old Testament context. As we explore the ways in which Malachi uses the earlier Old Testament, as well as the ways in which it looks forward, we will pay particular attention to possible Eucharistic motifs found throughout the text. It will also be necessary to trace textual changes that occurred in the translation of Malachi from the Hebrew into the Septuagint, and the effect this translation has on a possible Eucharistic understanding of Malachi.

This will bring us to an exploration of two New Testament texts that appear to use Malachi in a Eucharistic sense: the Gospel of Luke, and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. An overview of first and second century non-canonical Eucharistic texts that do not reference Malachi will pave the way for an exploration of those non-canonical Eucharistic texts that do. The Eucharistic interpretation of Malachi found in the *Didache*, and the writings of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus will then be addressed. Our study will conclude with suggestions for the ways in which these Eucharistic interpretations of Malachi shed light on our understanding of the sense in which the early Church viewed the Eucharist as a sacrifice.

CHAPTER 2

MALACHI 1:11 AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Introductory Matters

In the Christian canon, Malachi marks the closing of both the Twelve Prophets and the Old Testament itself. These fifty-five brief verses were considered by Tertullian to be “the skirt and boundary of Christianity.” First century canonical and non-canonical Christian writings reference Malachi, and by the end of the second century the Eucharistic interpretation of Mal 1:11 in question is being used apologetically by Christian authors over against Jewish and Gnostic thinkers.

While our primary focus is the interpretation of Mal 1:11 in early Christian literature, it will be necessary to begin by placing Malachi within its own Old Testament context. Ways in which Malachi uses the earlier Old Testament, as well as ways in which it looks eschatologically forward will be addressed below. Along the way, we will highlight possible Eucharistic motifs found in the text of Malachi.

Canonical Considerations

Though constructed independently from Zechariah and Haggai, Malachi’s position alongside these other post-exilic texts at the end of the Twelve in both Jewish and Christian canons is significant. Recent scholarship has emphasized the unity of the “Haggai, Zechariah,

Malachi corpus” and its role in rounding out the Twelve.¹ As the conclusion of this three-prophet corpus, Malachi serves as a “literary and theological complement to Haggai and Zechariah in that he calls the restoration community to ‘complete’ their worship to Yahweh, even as Haggai and Zechariah called the people to complete the Second Temple building project.”² Childs notes that while there is no “salvation oracle” in this corpus, the opening of Malachi assures its readers that “Yahweh still loves Israel, notwithstanding the fact that appearances seem to tell against the belief in such love.”³

Textual Considerations

Though it is primarily the use and interpretation of LXX Malachi in the New Testament and early Christian literature that this project wishes to address, the Hebrew text of Malachi will be important to a portion of our study. As we seek to place the book of Malachi within its Old Testament context, the Hebrew text will be our primary concern. When the focus of our study turns to the New Testament’s use of Malachi and its interpretation in early Christian literature, the Septuagint translation of Malachi will be of primary concern. The Hebrew text cited herein is from the Masoretic Text (MT) as represented in the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*⁴ (BHS). The Greek text cited is from the

¹ Ronald W. Pierce, “Literary Connectors and a Haggai - Zechariah - Malachi Corpus,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* vol. 27 (1984): 277–289.

² Andrew E Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation and Commentary*, vol 25, *The Anchor Bible*, (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 14.

³ Brevard S Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 497.

⁴ K Elliger and Rudolph, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Gesamtherstellun Biblia-Druck, 1977).

Septuagint (LXX) as represented in Rahlfs's *Septuaginta*.⁵ English translations, unless otherwise noted, are from the NRSV for the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, and from the *New English Translation of the Septuagint*⁶ for the Septuagint.

Malachi and the Earlier Old Testament

As the last book in the Twelve, Malachi represents one of three Second Temple texts included in the Old Testament canon. These later texts contain several direct and indirect references to the earlier Old Testament. It is Malachi's use of the earlier Old Testament that will be addressed here. The pericope containing Mal 1:11 (1:6-2:9) as well as the pericope that precedes (1:1-5) will be addressed here.

Yahweh's Election of Israel

The first of Malachi's six oracles begins its prophetic disputation with a reminder from Yahweh of his love for Israel. The purpose of this proclamation is twofold: to offer reassurance to a weary people and to serve as a foundation for the series of rebukes that follow. The visions of a return to Zion given by earlier prophets had thus far failed to become reality. Especially telling of the mindset of Malachi's audience is the people's response to Yahweh's claim of love in 1:2a: "How have you loved us?"⁷

It is in the answer to this very poignant question that we see Malachi's first reference back to the earlier Old Testament. How has Yahweh loved Israel? By loving their father,

⁵ Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta Septuagint (Old Testament in Greek)*. (Hendrickson Pub, 2006).

⁶ Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁷ Mal 1:2b.

Jacob, over Esau. In the oracles that follow, Israel will be told once again that she has failed in her covenant obedience. The reference back to the Pentateuch and Yahweh's election of the patriarch Jacob serves as a foundation to these rebukes, a call for Israel to "consider the precedent of history, both in terms of God's faithfulness to Israel and his propensity to judge Israel for lapses of covenant obedience."⁸ In the rebukes that follow, Israel is urged to remember the *covenantal* nature of Yahweh's love as well as the great responsibility of covenant obedience.⁹

The Failure of the Levitical Priesthood

In the second oracle of Malachi we are confronted with the prophet's first major rebuke: the priests of Israel have despised the name of Yahweh by offering polluted food on the altar.¹⁰ The Temple has been rebuilt, yet pure worship of Yahweh is not taking place within the restoration community. The problem that had plagued humanity in the very opening chapters of the Old Testament persists here in its final chapters: the offering of impure sacrifices.¹¹

This oracle contains no less than three allusions to earlier Old Testament passages that will prove to be significant for later Christian use of Malachi 1:11: the message from the man of God to Eli in 1 Samuel 2:27-36, the reforms of Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 29:3-11, and the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:23-27.

⁸ Hill, 146.

⁹ See Mal 2:4-9.

¹⁰ Mal 1:6-2:9.

¹¹ One is reminded at the close of the OT canon of the jealousy of Cain over Abel's offering at the opening of the canon.

1 Samuel 2:27-36: Honor and Despise

Table 1. 1 Samuel 2:27-36 and Malachi 1:6

“Far be it from me; for those who <u>honor</u> me I will <u>honor</u> , and those who <u>despise</u> me shall be treated with contempt.” (1 Sm 2:30)	“A son <u>honors</u> his father, and servants their master. If then I am a father, where is the <u>honor</u> due me? And if I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who <u>despise</u> my name. You say, ‘How have we <u>despised</u> your name?’” (Mal 1:6)
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In the beginning of the second oracle of Malachi, we see a contrast between those who *honor* כָּבֵד Yahweh and those who *despise* בָּזָה his name. This juxtaposition of *honor* and *despise* alerts the reader to the words of Yahweh in 1 Sm 2:30.¹² The context of the honoring and despising of God in 1 Sm 2:30 is the same as that found in Malachi: improper sacrifice.

In 1 Samuel, the problem with the sacrifice is not rooted in *what* is being sacrificed but rather in *who* receives the sacrificial food. Eli’s sons had “fattened [themselves] on the choicest parts of every sacrifice of the people of Israel.”¹³ Yahweh responds with a reminder of his promise to the Levites and follows with a warning that this special treatment will not be open to all Levites, but only those who *honor* him. Yahweh insists that those in Eli’s household who *despise* the name of Yahweh be punished, and gives an eschatological vision of a day when he will “raise up [for Himself] a faithful priest, who

¹² The close proximity of *honor* כָּבֵד and *despise* בָּזָה seen in Mal 1:6, Ps 15:4, and 1 Sm 2:30. In Ps 15:4, *honor* and *despise* see people as their subject, whereas Mal 1:6 and 1 Sm 2:30 have Yahweh as their subject.

¹³ 1 Sm 2:29b.

shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind.¹⁴ I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed one forever.”¹⁵ In the opening chapters of Samuel, we see an oracle concerning the failure of the Levitical priesthood and an eschatological vision of a day where sacrifices will be continually made to Yahweh.

2 Chronicles 29:3-11: Shut the Doors

Table 2. 2 Chronicles 29:3-11 and Malachi 1:10a

<p>“For our ancestors have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the LORD our God ... they also <u>shut the doors</u> of the vestibule and put out the lamps, and have not offered incense or made burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel” (2 Chr 29:6-7)</p>	<p>“Oh, that someone among you would <u>shut the temple doors</u>, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain!” (Mal 1:10a)</p>
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Before the reign of the reforming King Hezekiah, the Levitical priesthood had “forsaken” Yahweh by abandoning the Temple. They “shut the doors of the vestibule and put out the lamps, and have not offered incense or made burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel.”¹⁶ It is because of this, the author of Chronicles argues, that Yahweh has made Judah an object of his wrath. Their fathers had “fallen by the sword” and their sons, daughters, and wives are in captivity. Hezekiah’s call to the Levitical priests of his day was to remember this fact and take up their priestly duty with all diligence, “for the LORD has

¹⁴ 1 Sm 2:31-34.

¹⁵ 1 Sm 2:35.

¹⁶ 2 Chr 29:7.

chosen you to stand in his presence to minister to him, and to be his ministers and make offerings to him.”¹⁷

How far, the reader of Malachi might ask, had the Levitical priests fallen from their enthusiastic return to faithfulness during the reign of Hezekiah? An answer is seen in the plea from Yahweh in Malachi 1:10, “Oh, that someone among you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain!” It would be better for Israel if no offerings were made in the Temple than for them to continue in their offering of impure sacrifices. The very offense made by the Levitical priests under the reign of Hezekiah is now seen as a plausible suggestion for the Levitical priests of Malachi’s day.¹⁸

Numbers 6:23-27: Inverted Priestly Blessing

Table 3. Numbers 6:23-27 and Malachi 2:1-3

<p>“The LORD <u>ble</u>ss you and keep you; the LORD make <u>his face to shine upon you</u>, and be gracious to you; the LORD <u>lift up his countenance upon you</u>, and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26)</p>	<p>“I will <u>rebuke your offspring</u>, and <u>spread dung on your faces</u>, the dung of your offerings, and I will <u>put you out of my presence</u>.” (Malachi 2:1-3)</p>
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In our first two earlier Old Testament allusions we see examples of the Levitical priesthood straying from their vocation and preventing a pure sacrifice from being offered. In our final allusion, we see Malachi “exegetically invert” the Priestly Blessing of Numbers

¹⁷ 2 Chr 29:11.

¹⁸ See 2 Chr 29:7.

6:23-7.¹⁹ Fishbane notes that “all the key terms of the Priestly Blessing are alluded to, or played upon” in Malachi 1:6-2:9, and that this oracle by Malachi appears to condemn the priests “measure for measure” in relation to the Priestly Blessing.²⁰ Perhaps the most drastic of these measure for measure inversions is the reversal of “the LORD make his face shine upon you” in the Priestly Blessing into the spreading of the dung of the impure offerings onto the faces of the priests themselves in Malachi 2:3.

In these allusions to previous prophetic rebukes of the Levitical priesthood, we see the oracle against the priesthood in Malachi 1:6-2:9 in the context of a wider Old Testament pattern. As Israel progresses through the ages, the failure of the Levitical priesthood is a constant theme.²¹ By the time of Malachi, it would appear as if the Levitical priesthood had reached a new low. In turning now to address how Malachi 1:1-2:9 looks forward, it is important to note that while the priesthood itself is often threatened, the offering of sacrifices is not. In other words, through all that has been said against the Levitical priesthood, the necessity of offering itself is unchallenged. The means by which offering is made is surely being challenged by the end of Malachi, but that an offering will always be necessary for true worship of Yahweh appears to be quite clear.

¹⁹ Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Clarendon Press, 1985). That Malachi’s oracle is “*exegetical* in nature” and the inversion of the Priestly Blessing is successfully argued for in 332-334.

²⁰ Fishbane, 333.

²¹ The Golden Calf incident under the soon-to-be High Priest Aaron serves in retrospect as an ominous foreshadow of things to come.

Malachi, Eschatology, and the LXX

It has been demonstrated that Malachi's oracle in 1:1-2:9 stands in a long line of Old Testament prophetic grievances against the corruption of the Levitical priesthood and the prevention of the offering of pure sacrifices. In comparison to earlier offenses against Yahweh regarding pure offerings, the status of the Levitical priesthood in Malachi's day is perhaps worse than Israel had previously seen. We turn now to the ways in which Malachi looks eschatologically forward. Whether Malachi 1:11 is to be read as eschatology will be addressed first, followed by an overview of significant interpretive decisions made by the authors of the LXX and their possible effect on later Christian understandings of the prophet.

Malachi 1:11 as Eschatology

Hill astutely notes that Malachi 1:11 "remains a *crux interpretum* for the book of Malachi."²² Of the many interpretive questions presented by this pivotal verse, its eschatological nature must be first addressed.²³ Interpreters have differed considerably concerning the temporal aspect of Malachi 1:11. Whether it refers to a current or future reality has significant impact on who one interprets as bringing the "pure offering" to Yahweh. Several proposed readings will be addressed below.

Smith notes no less than five major interpretations of Malachi 1:11: (a) a foreshadow of the Eucharist; (b) a reference to the Jewish diaspora; (c) the worship of Yahweh present in all religions; (d) a metaphorical suggestion that pagan worship "supersedes the adulterated worship of post-exilic" Israel; (e) a prophecy concerning the "imminent conversion of the

²² Hill, 218.

²³ The authenticity of this passage is assumed (see *Textual Assumptions* above).

nations and the worldwide worship of Yahweh.”²⁴ No less than two of these readings (a, e) are clearly future-oriented, and a third (b) could also be understood as being concerned with the future. While a decision concerning the eschatological nature of Malachi 1:11 alone does not solve the exegetical dilemma, it does narrow the possible conclusions drawn from the text.

Among those who read Malachi 1:11 as primarily eschatological is Beth Glazier-McDonald. She convincingly notes that the opening—*For from the rising of the sun to its setting*—appears throughout the Old Testament in several passages “which look to a future demonstration of Yahweh’s power and greatness to the whole world.”²⁵ Achtemeier also notes that our verse “refer[s] to the future establishment of the kingship of God over all the earth,” which fits “well within the purpose that underlies every prophetic book.”²⁶ Read in its own Old Testament context, Malachi 1:11 appears to be an eschatological vision of the *future* global worship of Yahweh.

Malachi in the LXX

Having established the plausibility of an eschatologically futuristic reading of Malachi 1:11, it will now be necessary to trace significant textual changes from its time of composition through its use by New Testament and other early Christian writers. Of primary significance for our purposes here are those Greek words or phrases from Malachi 1:1-2:9

²⁴ Hill, 219.

²⁵ Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi, the Divine Messenger* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1987), 60.

²⁶ Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), 177.

that appear in later New Testament and early Christian passages concerning the eucharist: *θυσία* (*thusia*, *sacrifice*) and *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou*, *the table of the Lord*).

Θυσία in Mal 1:8, 10, 13

Establishing a unified understanding of Old Testament notions of sacrifice is notoriously difficult. The various forms of sacrifice presented in Leviticus 1-7 alone present a variety of different rituals, not to mention the less defined notions of sacrifice before the Levitical code²⁷ and later developments within the Old Testament canon. The development of the notion of sacrifice within the Old Testament canon itself, though fascinating, is beyond the scope of this project. It is the Septuagint translation of Hebrew sacrificial language found in Malachi 1:1-2:9 that will be addressed.

McGowan notes that the Septuagint “uses *θυσία* (*thusia*, *sacrifice*) as the preferred translation for both Levitical *zabah* and *minhah*,” resulting in a closer association between cereal and animal sacrifices than previously seen in the Hebrew Bible.²⁸ Unlike some Hebrew notions of sacrifice, the ancient Greek ritual of *θυσία* (*thusia*, *sacrifice*) included “alimentary blood sacrifice,”²⁹ to the extent that the act of *θυσία* (*thusia*, *sacrifice*) even accounted for “most of the ancient meat diet” in Athenian culture.³⁰ In using *θυσία* (*thusia*,

²⁷ See Cain/Abel (Gen 4:3-5) and Abraham/Isaac (Gen 22).

²⁸ Andrew McGowan, “Eucharist and Sacrifice: Cultic Tradition and Transformation in Early Christian Ritual Meals” in *Mahl und religiöse Identität im frühen Christentum = Meals and religious identity in early Christianity* eds., Matthias Klinghardt and Hal Taussig, (Tübingen: Francke, 2012), 195-6.

²⁹ Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 89.

³⁰ Nancy A. Evans, “Sanctuaries, Sacrifices, and the Eleusinian Mysteries,” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 49, (2002): 227–254.

sacrifice) as a translation of various Hebrew words referring to sacrifice found in our text, the authors of the LXX deliberately avoid other Greek concepts of sacrifice, such as *ἐναγισμός* (*enagismos, sacrifice*), which included the destruction of the offering as opposed to its consumption. The alimentary undertones of *θυσία*, combined with the blending of cereal and animal sacrifices under the umbrella of one term opens the possibility of an early Christian understanding of *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) as “a sacred communal meal, and even a meatless one.”³¹

τραπέζης κυρίου in Malachi 1:7, 12

Though it is found again later in the New Testament, and is common language within the Christian community throughout its history, *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) appears only twice within the entire LXX, and both instances fall within our passage.³² The MT has *שֻׁלְחַן יְהוָה* (*šulḥan YHWH*) in 1:7 and *שֻׁלְחַן אֲדֹנָי* (*šulḥan ’adōnāy*) in 1:12. As is often the case, the LXX translates both *שֻׁלְחַן* (*YHWH*) and *שֻׁלְחַן* (*adonay*) as *κυριος*. Perhaps lost by the LXX in this Hebrew move from the covenantal name in 1:7 to the divine name in 1:12 is the inference by Malachi that “Yahweh is ‘Lord of all’ tables of sacrifice.”³³

Though *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) is not found in our primary verse, it plays a significant role in the description of a “pure offering” that is to take place among the nations. In both instances (1:7, 12), *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the*

³¹ McGowan, 196.

³² Mal 1:7, 12.

³³ See Hill, 190 and Terry Eddinger, *Malachi: a Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012), 31. Both scholars raise the possibility that the later use of *adonay* carries with it the connotation of “Lord of all” and is used here to stress Yahweh’s supremacy over all sacrificial tables.

table of the Lord) is being defiled or despised. This creates a direct contrast between a future *pure* sacrifice (1:11) to be offered among the nations and the current *defiled* ones (1:7, 12) being offered by the Levitical priests. Though there is a contrast between the pure and defiled offerings, both are presumedly being offered on the *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, table of the Lord*).

Sacrifice, the Table of the Lord and the Nations

In his *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, Beale convincingly concludes that Isaiah and other exilic prophets provide a framework for understanding that in the latter days, “God will make gentiles from the nations to be Levitical priests.”³⁴ In Malachi, the reader is presented with yet another instance of the rebuking of a failed Levitical priesthood. If the establishment of the inclusion of gentiles into Israel’s priesthood is made in Isaiah, what development of this theme is seen in Malachi? Isaiah’s vision of a priesthood including gentiles is echoed in the pure offering made by “the nations” in Malachi 1:11.

Inclusion of the gentiles into the priesthood is not as directly addressed in Malachi as it is in Isaiah. Instead, Malachi’s eschatological vision is of a day when Yahweh’s “name is [made] great among the nations” through the bringing of a pure *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) “in every place”. While the Levitical priesthood is not named in this vision, the functions of the priesthood are necessarily present in the nations’ worship of Yahweh. Both *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) and “the table of the Lord” are presented as essential components of future global worship of Yahweh.

³⁴ G. K Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2011), 660. Among others, Beale cites Isaiah 66:18-22: “For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am *coming to gather all nations and tongues*; and they shall come and shall see my glory, 19 and I will set a sign among them. . . . 21 And *I will also take some of them as priests and as Levites*, says the LORD.” [Emphasis mine]

The necessity of *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) for the proper worship of Yahweh is seen throughout Malachi. The impure *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) brought to *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) by the Levitical priests is preventing Israel from truly honoring Yahweh,³⁵ causing Yahweh's name to be profaned,³⁶ and will ultimately bring a curse upon the priests and their offspring.³⁷ From negative examples to a positive one, *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) is also presented as central to the future global worship of Yahweh.³⁸ If “the nations” are to worship Yahweh, they are to do so in a way that includes *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*). Given that the impure *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) is brought to the *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) in 1:7–8 and in 1:12–13 there is no reason to see the pure *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) of 1:11 as being offered anywhere other than on the *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*). As *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) is an essential component of the future global worship of Yahweh, *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) is an essential context of the offering of a pure *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*).

In Malachi, then, we see a new development of Isaiah's theme of the inclusion of gentiles into the priestly service. In the future global worship by the nations, the *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) and *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) are seen as the means through which the gentiles are brought in to participate in the worship of Yahweh. At the closing of the Old Testament canon, there is hope for a day when gentiles are included in the priestly service, and all nations are able to worship Yahweh through *θυσία* (*thusia, sacrifice*) presented on the *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*).

³⁵ Mal 1:6–7.

³⁶ Mal 1:12.

³⁷ Mal 2:2–3.

³⁸ Mal 1:11.

CHAPTER 3

EUCHARIST AND MALACHI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Introductory Matters

Given its relative brevity, one is not surprised to find no direct mention of Malachi and only a small number of quotations or allusions from the book in the text of the New Testament. If, as Justin and Irenaeus maintain, Malachi 1:11 represents an early foreshadow of the Eucharist, why is there no direct mention of our verse in the handful of Eucharistic passages in the New Testament? In lieu of a direct reference, we do find two New Testament texts with links to Malachi that contain possible Eucharistic material: Luke 13:29 and 1 Cor 10:21.

Recent apparatuses of the Greek New Testament cite between two and four allusions¹ to Malachi 1:11 throughout the New Testament. Three of the four possible allusions contain material that, in the opinion of this writer, is far too generic to be specifically applied to Malachi 1:11.² One allusion in particular demands closer attention as we seek to discover traces of Eucharistic motifs from Malachi in the New Testament. In Luke 13:29, Jesus presents an eschatological vision of a time when “people will come from east and west, from

¹ UBS⁴ (*The Greek New Testament, with Greek-English Dictionary*. 4th ed. by K. Aland, et al. New York: United Bible Societies, 1993.) lists 2 Thes 1:12 and Rv 15:4, while NA²⁸ (*Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011.) adds Lk 13:29 and 1 Tm 2:8.

² 2 Thes 1:12 has “name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you”; 1 Tm 2:8 has “I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands”; and Rv 15:4 has “All nations will come and worship before you.”

north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God” at the conclusion of a conversational diatribe similar to that found in Malachi 1:6–11. Following our evaluation of this Lukan allusion to Malachi 1:11, we will address Luke’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper as it relates to Luke’s use of Malachi in 13:29. We will then explore the possible Eucharistic context of 1 Corinthians 10:21, the only New Testament instance of LXX Malachi’s *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou*, *the table of the Lord*).

Malachi 1:11 in the Gospel of Luke

It is not uncommon for Lukan scholars to view 9:51–19:28 as merely “a collection of *miscellanea*” presented by an author that is “more adept at *collecting* tradition than redistributing it in a unified whole.”³ As he works to dispel this notion, Shirock convincingly argues that the literary center of this pericope is the chiasmic 13:1–35. Upon taking a closer look at the center of this potential Lukan chiasmus (13:22–30), parallels begin to arise between it and Malachi’s disputation with the priests in Malachi 1:6–11. In addition to both containing an eschatological vision of the unexpected inclusion of outsiders into the people of God,⁴ there exist several conceptual and linguistic parallels between Luke 13:22–30 and Malachi 1:6–11, reaching their climax in the allusion to Malachi 1:11 found in Luke 13:29.

³ Robert J. Shirock, “The Growth of the Kingdom in Light of Israel’s Rejection of Jesus : Structure and Theology in Luke 13:1-35,” *Novum testamentum* 35, (1993): 15–16. Emphasis mine.

⁴ Mal 1:11; Lk 13:29.

Table 4. Linguistic Parallels in Malachi 1:10-11 and Luke 13:25-29

	Malachi	Luke
<i>Θύρα (thyra, door)</i>	“Oh, that someone among you would <u>shut the temple θύραι</u> . . .” 1:10a	“Strive to enter through the narrow <u>θύρας</u> . . .” 13:24 “When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the <u>θύραν</u> . . .” 13:25
First-person Dismissal by Superior	“ <u>I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hands.</u> ” 1:10c	“ <u>But [the owner] will say, ‘I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!’</u> ” Luke 13:27
“The Nations”	“For from <u>the rising of the sun to its setting my name is glorified among the nations</u> , and in every place incense is brought to my name, and a pure offering, for my name is great <u>among the nations</u> , says the Lord Almighty.” 1:11	“Then people will come <u>from east and west, from north and south</u> , and will eat in the kingdom of God.” Luke 13:29

Whereas Matthew uses language of a “narrow gate” and “hard road” in his similar account of Jesus’ saying,⁵ Luke curiously uses “narrow door” and “closed door” here. Not only does Luke’s language add to the number of linguistic connections between Luke 13:22-30 and Malachi 1:6-11, but also prepares the reader to pick up on the meal undertones in the teaching that follows.⁶

⁵ Mt 7:13-14.

⁶ Joachim Jeremias, “θύρα” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 173. Jeremias notes that “Whether the door is expressly mentioned (Mt 25:10; Lk 13:24 f.) or not, in the Gospels the image of the door into the festive hall, in which the eschatological banquet is held, seems almost always to be presupposed (cf. Mt 7:7f.; 22:12; 25:10, 21, 23; Lk 13:24f.; 14:23).”

Also in both our passages is an authority figure making a declarative statement regarding an inferior, followed by a dismissal of that inferior.⁷ This appears, in both passages, amidst what may be considered a series of prophetic disputations.⁸ In Luke's otherwise "orderly account" of the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth, his writing takes on an unusually prophetic tone throughout 13:25-28.⁹

These disputations and dismissals both reach their climax in an eschatological vision of inclusion of "the nations" at the exclusion of some within Israel. The Levitical priests of Malachi were surprised to hear of a day when "the nations" will bring a pure offering to Yahweh; Jesus' audience is surprised to hear of a day when those "from east and west, from north and south" are included in a kingdom meal while they themselves will no longer be invited to "eat and drink" with him. In addition to these linguistic parallels, there also exist several conceptual and structural parallels between our two passages.

⁷ See Mal 1:10, Lk 13:27.

⁸ Assigning the genre "prophetic disputation" to Malachi needs few, if any, qualifiers. For our passage in Luke, the genre is perhaps best considered "pronouncement story: inquiry", though the parable that runs from 13:25-28 has striking similarities to Jewish prophetic disputations.

⁹ See Luke's framing of his gospel as an "orderly account" in 1:3.

Table 5. Conceptual and Structural Parallels in Malachi 1:6-11 and Luke 13:22-30

	Malachi	Luke
<p>Prophetic Disputation</p> <p><i>Malachi:</i> <i>(Y)ahweh vs (P)riests</i></p> <p><i>Luke:</i> <i>(O)wner vs (E)vildoers</i></p>	<p><i>Y:</i> “Where is the respect due me, O priests, who despise my name?”</p> <p><i>P:</i> “How have we despised your name?”</p> <p><i>Y:</i> “By offering polluted food on my altar.”</p> <p><i>P:</i> “How have we polluted it?”</p> <p><i>Y:</i> “By thinking that the LORD’S table may be despised.” 1:6-8</p>	<p><i>O:</i> “Lord, open to us”</p> <p><i>E:</i> “I do not know where you come from.”</p> <p><i>O:</i> “We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.”</p> <p><i>E:</i> “I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!” 13:25-27</p>
<p>Statement concerning the gravity of the situation</p>	<p>“Oh, that someone among you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain!” 1:10a</p>	<p>“There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God...” 13:28a</p>
<p>Exclusion of Israel</p>	<p>“I will not accept an offering from your hands.” 1:10b</p>	<p>“... and you yourselves thrown out.” 13:28b</p>
<p>Eschatological Vision of Inclusion of the Nations</p>	<p>“For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.” 1:11</p>	<p>“Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.” 13:29</p>

It has been demonstrated that the allusion to Malachi 1:11 cited by NA²⁸ in Luke 13:29 is warranted. Given the linguistic, conceptual, and structural parallels between our two passages, it appears as if Luke is using Malachi's disputation with the Priests as a model for his presentation of Jesus' words in 13:22-30. Given that it is not Levitical sacrifice that Jesus is addressing in this pericope, why would Luke choose Malachi 1:6-11 as a model here? Why place an eschatological vision of the nations participating in a great kingdom meal at precisely the point in this model where his audience might expect an eschatological vision of the nations participating in the sacrificial worship of Yahweh? What may Luke have in mind by associating *sacrifice* and *meal* in this part of his "narrative of the events that have been fulfilled"?¹⁰ It is in viewing Luke's wider meal motif that an answer may be found. In a Gospel that presents Jesus as participating in ten meals, it is one in particular that further illuminates Luke's intriguing allusion to Malachi 1:11 in Luke 13:29.

Luke 22:14-30: The Institution and Farewell Discourse

In his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper and the discourse that follows, Luke makes a connection between the remembering of Jesus's sacrifice in the celebration of the Eucharist and the great eschatological kingdom meal.

The Last Supper Among Other Meals

That meals and food are central themes throughout the Gospel of Luke has been well established.¹¹ Jesus' company at the meals recorded throughout the Gospel range from tax

¹⁰ Luke 1:1.

¹¹ Jerome Kodell, *The Eucharist in the New Testament* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 106. Kodell references a study by Robert Karris (*Luke: Artist and Theologian Luke's Passion*

collectors and sinners¹² to large crowds¹³ and Pharisees.¹⁴ The participants in his final three meals, however, are limited to the Apostles,¹⁵ and two smaller groups of disciples.¹⁶ Several aspects of the Last Supper account in 22:14-38 lead the reader to see this final moment with his Apostles before his death as Jesus' climactic meal.

Luke is alone among the synoptics in using *ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡ ὥρα* (*hote egeneto hē hōra*, *when the hour came*) to open the Last Supper meal. Fitzmyer notes that as opposed to noting that it was *ὀψίας* (*opsias*, *evening*),¹⁷ Luke desired for *ὥρα* (*hōra*, *hour*) to carry “a salvation-history connotation” at this “critical moment in that history.”¹⁸ There are several meals throughout Luke's writings, but it is *this* meal that takes place at the climactic *ὥρα* (*hōra*, *hour*) of his Gospel.

Account As Literature. (Wipf & Stock Pub, 2009) which found at least one instance of food or meals in each chapter.

¹² Lk 5:27-32, 7:36-50.

¹³ Lk 9:10-17.

¹⁴ Lk 11:37-52, 14:1-24.

¹⁵ Lk 22:14-38.

¹⁶ Lk 24:28-32, 36-43.

¹⁷ cf. Mk 14:17; Mt 26:20.

¹⁸ Joseph A Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: (X-XXIV)* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Comp, 1985, 1384.

Table 6. Meal Scenes of Luke 14:1-25 and Luke 22:14-30

<p>“Then Jesus proposed a parable to those who had been invited, as he noticed how they were <u>seeking out the first places</u>. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, <u>do not sit down at the place of honor</u> ... But when you are invited, go and <u>ἀνέπεσεν</u> at the lowest place” 14:8-10</p>	<p>“When the hour came, Jesus <u>ἀνέπεσεν</u> at table, and the apostles with him.” 22:14 “But not so with you; rather the <u>greatest among you must become like the youngest</u>, and <u>the leader like one who serves</u>. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” 22:26-27</p>
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In addition to the emphasis on *ῥα* (*hōra, hour*) in the introduction to the Lord’s Supper, Luke also distinguishes this meal from the others in his Gospel by the posture taken by Jesus and the Apostles. Immediately following Luke’s allusion to Malachi 1:11 in Luke 13:29, we see Jesus participate in yet another meal.¹⁹ During the meal, Jesus notices the jockeying for position taking place among the other guests at the table. Through his parable to those “seeking out the first place,” Jesus calls for a posture of *ἀνέπεσεν* (*anepesen, reclining*) at the lowest table position. In setting the scene for the Last Supper, Luke tells us that Jesus assumed this very posture of *ἀνέπεσεν*²⁰ (*anepesen, reclining*), as did his disciples.²¹ Luke’s account is unique among the synoptics in including this particular

¹⁹ Lk 14:1-24.

²⁰ Not all New Testament instances of *ἀνέπεσεν* denote a specific posture or position at table (see Leonhard Goppelt, “τράπεζα” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 211), but given the importance of the Passover meal our instance in 22:14 is certainly referring to an actual posture of reclining (see also Bock, 1718; Fitzmyer, 1384).

²¹ Fitzmyer, 1384. Fitzmyer notes that since “no vb. is expressed in the elliptical,” *οἱ ἀπόστολοι σὺν αὐτῷ* refers to the Apostles *reclining* with him.

posture.²² The hour had finally come, and the participants have taken their places at the table. The meal that serves as the “final installment in a series of meals which reveal Jesus’ identity and purpose during his ministry” was ready to take place.²³

Sacrifice and Meal in the Last Supper

Having established the Last Supper as the climactic meal in the Gospel of Luke, we now turn to its role in understanding the relationship between sacrifice and a great eschatological meal. If Luke is indeed associating sacrifice and meal with one another in his allusion to Malachi in 13:29, it is the Last Supper that he has in mind as the resolution to that association.

Any questions that linger concerning whether the Last Supper was a Passover meal²⁴ are not important for our purposes here: that Luke wishes to present the Last Supper in light of the Passover is difficult to dispute.²⁵ Johnson is right to note that Luke “emphasizes in every way that [this] was a Passover meal, [and] we are justified in picking up the various

²² Darrell L Bock, *Luke, Volume 2*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), 1718. Additionally, Bock notes that the practice of reclining “had replaced the command to stand in readiness for departure on the exodus (Exod 12:11).”

²³ Kodell, 113.

²⁴ In seeking an answer to our question: *What does the inclusion of the Gentiles into the sacrificial worship of Yahweh (Mal 1:11) have to do with the vision of the nations joining into the great kingdom feast in Luke 13:29?*, we are only concerned with Luke’s portrayal of the Last Supper, which is decisively linked to the Passover.

²⁵ Unique to Luke’s account, Jesus opens the meal with *ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ’ ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν (epithymia epethymēsa touto to pascha phagein meth’ hymōn, I have desired with desire to eat this Passover with you all).*

allusions that this [Passover] setting provides.”²⁶ What follows are those concepts throughout Luke’s institutional narrative that shed light on the relationship between *sacrifice* and *meal*.

Sacrifice in Luke 22:14-23

Following his emotional opening words, Jesus reveals the significance of eating *this meal now*: “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you *before I suffer* (πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν, *pro tou me pathein*).²⁷ The rest of this meal is framed by Jesus’ impending suffering. In a Passover setting—where a sacrificial lamb is normally prepared for consumption—Jesus opens the meal by foreshadowing his own sacrificial suffering.

After distributing the cup and the bread to his disciples, Jesus utters those words that have been the subject of much controversy throughout Christian history: *this is my body* (τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου, *touto estin to sōma mou*).²⁸ It is precisely in the context of a Passover meal, which includes overtones of a Passover lamb sacrificed and prepared for consumption, that Jesus shares *his broken body* as food for those gathered to eat. The Synoptics are unified in their account of these words. Later in 22:20 Jesus refers to his own blood as being *poured out* (ἐκχυννόμενον, *ekchynnomenon*) just as the Levitical priest *pours out* (ἐκχεεῖ, *ekcheei*) the blood of the animal being sacrificed for atonement (LXX Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34).²⁹ Jesus is presenting *himself* as the sacrificial lamb, one that is to be eaten *in*

²⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Liturgical Press, 1991), 341.

²⁷ Lk 22:15.

²⁸ Lk 22:19.

²⁹ David E. Garland and Clinton E. Arnold, *Luke* (Zondervan, 2012), 857.

remembrance (εἰς ἀνάμνησιν, *eis anamnēsin*) during the Eucharistic meal of the *new covenant* (καινὴ διαθήκη, *kainē diathēkē*).

The Eschatological Kingdom Meal in Luke 22:14-23

Included in Luke's institutional narrative are several references to a great eschatological meal, similar to the one found in Luke's allusion to Malachi in 13:29. After expressing his desire to eat "this" Passover with his Apostles, Jesus curiously shares that he will not eat "it" until "it" is fulfilled in the kingdom of God (οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, *ou mē phagō auto heōs hotou plērōthē en tē basileiā tou theou, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God*). The former "it" (αὐτὸ) of 22:16 is not referring to abstaining from this particular meal; it is Jesus' indication that after participating in *this* Passover, "he will not again partake in a Passover until the Passover is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."³⁰ Fitzmyer notes that this forward-looking aspect of the Last Supper has its roots in the Passover itself:

The Passover meal was not merely a commemoration of the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage, but one which also looked for deliverance of a new sort (in messianic expectation). The connection that is now made by Jesus between the newly interpreted Passover and the kingdom of God introduces a different eschatological dimension.³¹

In sharing these words with the Apostles, Jesus is framing this meal as "look[ing] forward to the consummation at the end of the age."³²

³⁰ Joel B Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1997), 759. Among those who agree are Bock, XXX; Fitzmyer, 1396-7.

³¹ Fitzmyer, 1392.

³² Garland, 854.

After *εὐχαριστήσας* (*eucharistēsas*, *giving thanks*) over the cup, Jesus shares similar words to those found in 22:16: “from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”³³ Both abstaining statements—*I will not eat* (*οὐ μὴ φάγω, ou mē phagō*) and *I will not drink* (*οὐ μὴ πίω, ou mē piō*)—are followed by an eschatological reference. In 22:16 Jesus says he will not eat this type of meal again until the meal “reaches its fulfillment in the kingdom of God,” and in 22:18 he says he will not eat this type of meal again until “the kingdom itself has come.” Once again in the institutional words of 22:19 a link is made between the celebration of this Last Supper and a kingdom meal that Luke has referenced elsewhere in his Gospel.³⁴

Their participation in the Last Supper was not to be understood as only having immediate significance: the Apostles were charged with performing this action *in remembrance* (*εἰς ἀνάμνησιν, eis anamnēsin*) of the sacrificial *body* (*σῶμα, sōma*) of Jesus. The Apostles are called to perform the very act of which Jesus himself has promised to abstain. Fitzmyer notes here that once again Jesus is using the celebration of the last Passover to establish himself as the basis for a new Passover-like meal: “As Jesus has substituted himself for the Passover lamb, so the memento of him is to replace the *anamnēsis* of the Passover itself.”³⁵ The regular *remembrance* (*ἀνάμνησιν, anamnēsin*) of Jesus in the Eucharist—like the Passover itself—was to be more than a mere reminder or commemoration. It is to be “a re-presentation that proclaims the saving significance of his

³³ Lk 22:18.

³⁴ cf. Lk 13:29, 14:15.

³⁵ Fitzmyer, 1401.

sacrificial death until he comes.”³⁶ Jesus has presented the continued celebration of the Last Supper as a Passover-like re-presentation of his sacrifice and a foreshadow of the eschatological kingdom meal that He will finally enjoy with his people when he returns. It is the Last Supper’s linking of sacrifice and meal that Luke has in mind in his allusion to Malachi 1:11 in Luke 13:29.

τραπέζης κυρίου in 1 Corinthians 10:21

Having seen the Eucharistic significance of Luke 13:29’s allusion to Mal 1:11, our attention now turns to another instance of a New Testament author’s Eucharistic use of Malachi. Appearing only twice throughout the LXX, Malachi’s *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) is found only once in the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:21. The pericope within which this phrase is found is decisively Eucharistic in nature.

Meal and Sacrifice in 1 Corinthians 10:14-22

In bringing his lengthy section on Christian freedom to a conclusion, Paul addresses a specific concern of the Corinthian church: the eating of meat sacrificed to pagan deities in pagan temples.³⁷ Paul’s use of the Lord’s Supper as a counter-example to this practice is seen

³⁶ Garland, 856.

³⁷ Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “1 Corinthians,” in *Romans-Galatians* Vol. 10 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2005), 347 notes that “almost all ancient meat sold for human consumption in the Greco-Roman world came from pagan sacrifices.” See also Nancy A. Evans, “Sanctuaries, Sacrifices, and the Eleusinian Mysteries,” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 49, (2002): 227–254.

by Verbrugge as “the key to his climactic argument.”³⁸ Before reaching his own account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper,³⁹ Paul’s language here is full of Eucharistic overtones:

Table 7. Eucharistic Overtones in 1 Cor 10:14-22

<p><i>Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;</i> (1 Cor 10:16)</p>	<p>The <u>cup of blessing</u> that we bless, is it not a sharing in the <u>blood of Christ</u>? The <u>bread that we break</u>, is it not a <u>sharing in the body of Christ</u>? (1 Cor 10:16)</p>
<p><i>ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν.</i> (1 Cor 10:17)</p>	<p>Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, <u>for we all partake of the one bread.</u> (1 Cor 10:17)</p>

Earlier in 5:7, Paul has already referred to Christ as “our Passover lamb” (*τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτόθη, to pascha hēmōn etythē*). This reference to an alimentary sacrifice is not Paul’s only instance of mixing themes of meal and sacrifice. Before invoking Malachi’s language of *τραπέζης κυρίου (trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord)* and all its sacrificial overtones in 10:21, Paul uses sacrificial meal language to describe the Eucharist itself in 10:14-20: *the cup of blessing, the breaking of bread, and partaking of the one bread.*⁴⁰ This sacrificial meal language reaches its own climax in the parallel dichotomies of 10:21:

οὐ δύνασθε ποτήριον κυρίου πίνειν καὶ ποτήριον δαιμονίων, οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων.

³⁸ Verbrugge, 345.

³⁹ 1 Cor 11:23-26.

⁴⁰ Paul’s *ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος (hoti heis artos, because there is one bread)*, in 10:17 is a clear reference to Jesus, as *πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν (pantes ek tou henos artou metechomen, we all partake of the one bread)* is a clear reference to the partaking of Jesus in the Eucharist.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

It is in this context of meal language that Paul invokes Malachi's *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*). That Paul has Malachi's dispute with the Levitical priests in mind here is clear.⁴¹ The collision of sacrifice and meal are seen once again in a context where language from Malachi is being used.

Paul does not forbid the Corinthians from "drinking the cup of demons" or "participating in the table of demons" because Christians do not do this sort of thing (i.e. consuming that which has been sacrificed); he forbids it precisely because Christians *already* participate in alimentary sacrifice when they drink "the cup of the Lord" and participate in "the table of the Lord." It is not possible (*οὐ δύνασθε, ou dynasthe, you all are not able*) to perform alimentary sacrifice to God *and* idols. The Eucharist is able to serve as a "key" to Paul's argument here because Paul believes that what is happening in the pagan temples is an empty parody of what actually happens in the Eucharist.

The New Testament's Eucharistic Use of Malachi

Though the allusions are sparse, we have seen the two most prolific New Testament authors use Malachi 1:6-12 in passages that are directly or indirectly Eucharistic. Along the

⁴¹ The NA²⁸ lists 1 Cor 10:21 as an allusion to Mal 1:7, 12, and several commenters agree that Paul here has Malachi in mind. See Joseph A Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 394; Anthony C Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 777; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner "1 Corinthians" in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* ed. G. K Beale and D. A Carson, (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Nottingham, England: Baker Academic ; Apollos, 2007), 729; and Hans Conzelmann, *Corinthians. a Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 174.

way to reaching the climactic meal of his Gospel, Luke alludes to Malachi 1:11 in his own portrayal of Jesus' eschatological vision in Luke 13:29. When viewed within the series of meal references that lead to the climactic Last Supper, the reason for Luke's association of sacrifice and meal in 13:29 becomes clear. For Luke, Malachi's vision of a day when the nations are included in the sacrificial worship of Yahweh is linked—in the celebration of the Eucharist itself—to Jesus' vision of a day when the nations are able to join together in a great kingdom meal. The Apostles are to continue celebrating the meal *εἰς ἀνάμνησιν* (*eis anamnēsin, in re-presenting remembrance*) of the sacrifice of Jesus *until* the day when Jesus will join His people in the great eschatological kingdom meal. Malachi's vision of a day when the nations are able to participate in the sacrificial worship of Yahweh is fulfilled every time “the nations” participate *εἰς ἀνάμνησιν* (*eis anamnēsin, in re-presenting remembrance*) of Jesus' sacrifice in the Eucharist.

Paul, in a more direct manner, uses Malachi's language of *τραπέζης κυρίου* (*trapeza kyriou, the table of the Lord*) as one of his many names for the celebration of the Eucharist.⁴² The Eucharist serves as the perfect counter-example to the participation in the alimentary sacrifice to idols because, for Paul, it is in the Eucharist that Christians themselves participate in a form of alimentary sacrifice. Before addressing 1st and 2nd century non-canonical Eucharistic use of Malachi, we see the New Testament set a precedent that to do so is indeed plausible.

⁴² 1 Cor 10:21.

CHAPTER 4

EUCHARIST AND MALACHI IN DIDACHE AND JUSTIN

Introductory Matters

Along the way to an exploration of Irenaeus' Eucharistic use of Malachi, it will be important to address earlier non-canonical Christian works that do the same. The Eucharistic writing of four authors in particular will be addressed here before moving onto Irenaeus. Two of our four works—the *Didache* and the writings of Justin Martyr—specifically reference the Eucharist as the fulfillment of Malachi 1:10-11. Those first and second century non-canonical works that reference the Eucharist without specific mention of Malachi will be addressed first, followed by our two writings that do use Malachi.

The limited availability of sources and the lack of complete manuscripts in their author's original language makes a uniform understanding of the Eucharist in the second century difficult to obtain. For our question in particular, it is impossible to prove whether the Eucharistic use of Malachi was as widespread as it appears given the evidence in our extant writings. The extant evidence, however, certainly moves the case for a Eucharistic interpretation of Malachi in the right direction. Of our five authors that reference the Eucharist from Clement to Irenaeus, three explicitly cite and quote Malachi 1:10-11.

The text of our four Eucharistic references leading to Irenaeus will be presented alongside their context and any contributions they make towards our understanding of the Eucharistic use of Malachi. The chronological order of some of these writings is difficult to

recreate. Our purposes are not directly affected by any of the major chronological debates. Whether *Didache* was written or edited before the end of the first century, for example, has little impact on how it is seen as using Malachi.

Our four Eucharistic writings include Clement's letter to the Church in Corinth, various letters by Ignatius, the *Didache* and finally the writings of Justin Martyr. The range of attention paid to the Eucharist in these works varies considerably. Some contain Eucharistic liturgies, while others appear to use the Eucharist to supplement their wider arguments.

The Eucharist in Clement of Rome: *First Clement*

While questions of authorship are often raised, the occasion of *First Clement* is made quite clear throughout the letter: "a schism had just erupted at Corinth" when certain presbyters were removed from their ministry that had been performed "in a blameless manner."¹ It has been traditionally understood that Clement, serving in the evolving position of Bishop in Rome, wrote a letter on behalf of the Church of Rome to the struggling Church in Corinth.

Clement does not use the noun *εὐχαριστία* (*eucharistia*, *Eucharist*) in his letter. There is also no formal liturgy of the Eucharist like those we will see in some of our other first and second century writings. Our purpose of addressing *First Clement* is found in the way he describes the "blameless" ministry of the bishops who were "unjustly removed from their ministry."² Clement argues that not only were the disposed bishops "appointed by [the

¹ Georges Blond, "Clement of Rome" in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians* ed. Willy Rordorf, (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 24.

² 1 Clem 44:3.

apostles] or, later on, by other reputable men with the consent of the whole church," but they also have "ministered to the flock of Christ blamelessly, humbly, peaceably, and unselfishly." In what kind of ministry were they participating?

In 44:4 he laments that it is "no small sin for us if we depose from the bishop's office those who have *offered the gifts* (*προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα, prosenegkontas ta dōra*) blamelessly and in holiness." It is significant to consider that the only task of the Bishop specifically mentioned in this section is the *offering of gifts* in a blameless and holy manner. While not an explicit mention of the Eucharist, this primary task of the Bishop is certainly open to being interpreted as such.³

The Eucharist in Ignatius: *Philadelphians*, and *Smyrnaeans*

On his way to Rome to face martyrdom, Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch wrote seven hurried letters to churches along his route and with whom he had previous contact. Though not foremost among the topics he covers in these letters, we do see a glimpse of one bishop's thoughts concerning the practice of the Eucharist.⁴ These thoughts are seen most clearly in his letters to the *Philadelphians* and *Smyrnaeans*.

³ Felix Lossing Cirlot, *The Early Eucharist* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1939), 101-103. For Cirlot, "The 'δῶρα of the Episcopate' in 1 Clem 44:4 must be at least the Eucharistic elements, and possibly alms and other material offerings as well."

⁴ Holmes considers the three primary topics throughout the seven letters to be "(1) the struggle against false teachers within the church; (2) the unity and structure of the churches; and (3) his own impending death." (Michael W Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007], 167).

Philadelphians

The Church at Philadelphia was one that had "found mercy and [was] firmly established in godly harmony" and was being led by a Bishop who is "attuned to the commandments as a harp to its strings."⁵ This is why Ignatius can encourage the Church to "flee from division and false teaching" by following their shepherd.⁶ It is in this context that we find Ignatius' only mention of the Eucharist in his letter to the Philadelphians.

Philadelphians 4:1

Take care, therefore, to participate in one Eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup that leads to unity through his blood; there is one *θυσιαστήριον* (*thysiaστήριον, altar*), just as there is one bishop, together with the council of presbyters and the deacons, my fellow servants), in order that whatever you do, you do in accordance with God.

Participation in the one Eucharist, Ignatius would argue, requires the "flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ," "his blood," and one *θυσιαστήριον* (*thysiaστήριον, altar*). This sacrificial language is placed alongside submission to ecclesial leadership as necessary ingredients for unity. Were this type of sacrificial language surrounding the Eucharist a novelty there would be little reason for Ignatius to reference it in a section on unity. Ignatius also uses *θυσιαστήριον* (*thysiaστήριον, altar*) elsewhere to relate the Eucharist and church unity.⁷ The Eucharist, for Ignatius, was the sacrament of unity. While there is no reference to Malachi throughout Ignatius, the bringing of pure sacrifice by "the nations" in Malachi 1:11 certainly carries with it the theme of unity.

⁵ Phila 1:1.

⁶ Phila 2:1.

⁷ cf. Ephesians 5:2, Magnesia 7:2.

Smyrna

If the Church in Philadelphia was known for their unity, the Church in Smyrna was known for their spiritual gifts, which were perhaps most exemplified in their display of wisdom.⁸ Along his way to Rome, Ignatius warns this gifted community of those who they may encounter that “ignorantly deny [Christ], or rather have been denied by him, for they are advocates of death rather than of the truth.”⁹ It is in this context that we see his teaching on the Eucharist.

Smyrna 2:2

Now note well those who hold heretical opinions about the grace of Jesus Christ that came to us; note how contrary they are to the mind of God. They have no concern for love, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the oppressed, none for the prisoner or the one released, none for the hungry or thirsty. They abstain from Eucharist and prayer because they refuse to acknowledge that the Eucharist is the flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father by his goodness raised up.

The celebration of the Eucharist, for Ignatius, is included in a longer list of orthodox practices that are noticeably absent in “those who hold heretical opinions about the grace of Jesus Christ.” His pairing of neglect of the poor with neglect of the Eucharist is reminiscent of Luke’s account of the Church in Jerusalem, whose “breaking of the bread” is listed alongside the report that they would “sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.”¹⁰ Elsewhere in his letter, as here in the end of our verse, Ignatius uses *σάρκα* (*sarka*, *flesh*) to emphasize the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus.¹¹

⁸ Smyr 1:1.

⁹ Smyr 5:1.

¹⁰ Acts 2:45-46.

¹¹ cf. Smyr 3:1-3; 5:2.

Orthodoxy, for Ignatius, would not only result in a right attitude towards the outcast, but also a recognition of the *σάρκα* (*sarka, flesh*) of the risen Jesus in the Eucharist.

From this emphasis on orthodoxy, Ignatius moves once again to using the Eucharist as a source of unity.

Smyrna 8:1

Flee from divisions as the beginning of evils. You must all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the council of presbyters as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything that has to do with the church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself designates) is to be considered valid.

In Ignatius, we see little teaching on how the Eucharist is to be celebrated.¹² Instead we see him use the Eucharist for the purposes of his wider argument in no less than two of his letters. For Ignatius, the Eucharist was “a source of unity, a test for orthodoxy, and a witness to authority.”¹³ We see in his letters the sacrificial language of *θυσιαστήριον* (*thysiaστήριον, altar*) being closely associated with the Eucharist, as well as the emphasis on the presence of the *σάρκα* (*sarka, flesh*) of Jesus.

Eucharist and Malachi in *Didache* 9, 10 and 14

We move now to a document that contains at least one Eucharistic liturgy, as well as an explicitly Eucharistic use of Mal 1:11. Since its discovery in 1875 and first publication in 1883, the *Didache* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* has provided scholars of early Christianity with a rare glimpse into an early moral catechism and church manual. The

¹² The instruction that “Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself designates) is to be considered valid” in *Smyrna* 8:1 being the exception, though its emphasis is on unity.

¹³ Dennis Joseph Billy, *The Beauty of the Eucharist: Voices from the Church Fathers* (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2010), 35.

Didache presents two chapters with possible Eucharistic implications (*Didache* 9, 10) as well as a full chapter containing a Eucharistic liturgy for a Sunday gathering (*Didache* 14). Before exploring the text of these chapters, a few introductory words are in order concerning the origin and use of the *Didache* for our purposes.

To summarize several debates concerning the origin and proper use of the *Didache*, and to ignore other significant ones will be necessary in order to remain within the scope of this project. For our purposes, it matters little when the *Didache* reached its final form, other than to note that most scholars would place its completion before the writings of Justin and Irenaeus.¹⁴ LaVerdiere places its period of composition from roughly A.D. 50 to A.D. 100.¹⁵ The question of provenance for the *Didache* is also debated. Some see its origins in an Egyptian community, while others see it coming from Antioch in Syria.¹⁶ Neither option bears much weight for our purposes, though this writer sees more merit in a provenance of Syria given the similarities between the *Didache* and the Gospel of Matthew.

¹⁴ Willy Rordorf summarizes the origin debates well: “For some, the text is very ancient, dating perhaps even from the apostolic period; that is the view, for example, of J.P. Audet. For others the text dates from the beginning of the second century (A. von Harnack, many others after him.)” Very few, such as those in the so-called “Anglo-Saxon School,” would argue for a significantly later date. (Willy Rordorf, “*Didache*” in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 1,18-19).

¹⁵ Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 131.

¹⁶ Rordorf, 18 lists several scholars in support of each, while he holds to a Syrian provenance.

Didache 9 and 10

The following text is taken from *Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations, 3rd edition* (AF) edited by Michael W. Holmes.¹⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all English and Greek quotations of *Didache* herein are from AF.

Didache 9

1. Now concerning the Eucharist (*τῆς εὐχαριστίας, tēs eucharistias*), give thanks as follows:
2. First, concerning the cup: We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever.
3. And concerning the broken bread: We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever.
4. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.
5. But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist (*τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὑμῶν, tēs eucharistias hymōn*) except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for the Lord has also spoken concerning this: “Do not give what is holy to dogs.”

Didache 10

1. And after you have had enough, give thanks as follows:
2. We give you thanks, Holy Father, for your holy name, which you have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality that you have made known to us through Jesus your servant; to you be the glory forever.
3. You, almighty Master, created all things for your name’s sake, and gave food and drink to humans to enjoy, so that they might give you thanks; but to us you have graciously given spiritual food and drink, and eternal life through your servant.
4. Above all we give thanks to you because you are mighty; to you be the glory forever.
5. Remember your church, Lord, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in your love; and from the four winds gather the church that has been sanctified into your kingdom, which you have prepared for it; for yours is the power and the glory forever.
6. May grace come, and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha! Amen.
7. But permit the prophets to give thanks however they wish. [Underline mine]

¹⁷ Michael W Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek texts and English translations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007).

The debate surrounding the Eucharistic nature of these chapters in particular is as lively as those concerning the date and origin of the *Didache*. At the center of the debate is whether “the Eucharist” (τῆς εὐχαριστίας, *tēs eucharistias*) is to be taken as a general prayer of thanksgiving to be said during normal community meals or as the prayer used at the celebration of the Eucharist itself. Several theories have sought to resolve this question, as well as the questions surrounding the relationship of *Didache* 9 and 10 to *Didache* 14. Billy provides a concise summary of the range of opinion concerning the Eucharistic nature of Chapters 9 and 10:

Some scholars believe they evolved from ordinary blessings used by Christians before and after their meals. Others see them as prayers meant to be said at some point during the Eucharist, possibly as prayers to be said before and after the words of Institution. Still others see them as prayers to be said during a special meal of fellowship (i.e., an agape) that anticipated the Eucharist itself. Others still envision two different kinds of Eucharist in the Christian community of the time: one celebrating fellowship in Christ and anticipating the messianic banquet (chaps. 9 and 10); the other using the words of Institution to focus on the sacrificial offering of Christ's body and blood (chap. 14).¹⁸

Given that our primary focus is on the Eucharistic use of Malachi, which comes later in *Didache* 14, it is not necessary to take a strong stance in this debate. This writer tends to agree with Rordorf who sees in these chapters "not a Eucharistic liturgy in the strict sense, but prayers spoken at table before the Eucharist proper."¹⁹ The restrictions on participation in 4:5 as well as the framing of the prayer around the cup and the bread²⁰ point to a reading that

¹⁸ Billy, 50.

¹⁹ Rordorf, 6.

²⁰ *Didache* 4:3-4.

is at least Eucharistic in nature, while the lack of any institutional language leads one to stop short of considering these chapters a complete presentation of the Eucharist.²¹

Didache 14

In the final of our three potentially Eucharistic chapters in the *Didache* we find our earliest extant non-canonical Eucharistic reading of Malachi 1:11. In three brief verses, we see instructions for participating in the Eucharist, warnings against improper observance similar to those found in Matthew 5:23-24, and a modified quotation of Malachi 1:11 and 1:14.

Didache 14

1. On the Lord's own day gather together and break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice (*θυσία*, *thysia*) may be pure.
2. But let no one who has a quarrel with a companion join you until they have been reconciled, so that your sacrifice (*θυσία*, *thysia*) may not be defiled.
3. For this is the sacrifice concerning which the Lord said, "In every place and time offer me a pure *θυσίαν* (thysian, sacrifice), for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is marvelous among the nations." [Underline mine]

Sunday is presented as the day on which the celebration of the Eucharist took place within the community of *Didache*. The *Didache* has already placed significance on properly recognizing certain days over others, such as the command to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays in order to avoid fasting on the same days as "the hypocrites" (*Didache* 8:1). This insistence on Sunday worship may have been necessary for a Syrian community that was transforming from a largely Jewish population into a Jewish-Gentile one.

²¹ LaVerdiere, who sees the *Didache* community as a fringe separatist group, asks "But was what they celebrated really the Eucharist? Everything indicates that it was not. From a Christological point of view, their Eucharistic tradition was too poor. As the sacrament of unity, the Eucharist is not compatible with separatism" (LaVerdiere, 145) and later that the *Didache* community was "striving to celebrate the Eucharist authentically, however not quite making it." (LaVerdiere, 148).

Before arriving at its quotation of Malachi, *Didache* 14:1-2 makes two references to Malachi's disputation with the Priests and applies them to the celebration of the Eucharist. The first is seen in 14:1 and the instructions to "confess your sins so that your *sacrifice* (*θυσία, thysia*) may be *pure* (*καθαρά, kathara*)." Other early non-canonical writings have used sacrificial language to describe what takes place in the Eucharist, and the *Didache* is no exception. As with the sacrifices of Malachi's day, there exists within the Eucharist a potential for impure sacrifice.

This warning, as well as the one that follows, is similar to those found throughout Malachi's disputation with the Levitical priesthood.²² In 14:2 the *Didache* appears to use Jesus' words of "reconciliation before offering" in Matthew 5:23-24 as instructive for their own celebration of the Eucharist. The community is warned to reconcile with their companions before participating so that their "*sacrifice* (*θυσία, thysia*) may not be defiled." Both the desire for a pure *sacrifice* (*θυσία, thysia*) as well as the warning against the defiling of *sacrifice* (*θυσία, thysia*) are seen throughout Mal 1:6-14. Why is the *Didache* so concerned with purity of sacrifice? The answer comes in 14:3, where the author contends that it was concerning the Eucharist that the Lord spoke to Malachi.

In quoting Malachi in 14:3, the author of *Didache* combines language from both Mal 1:11 and 1:14.

²² Mal 1:6-2:9.

Table 8. Didache 14:3 as a Combination of Mal 1:11 and 1:14

Malachi 1:11, 14	Didache 14:3
<p>διότι ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου ἕως δυσμῶν τὸ ὄνομά μου δεδόξασται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ θυμίαμα προσάγεται τῷ ὀνόματί μου καὶ θυσία καθαρὰ, διότι μέγα τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ. 1:11</p> <p>διότι βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐγώ εἰμι, λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπιφανὲς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. 1:14</p>	<p>Ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ καὶ χρόνῳ προσφέρειν μοι θυσίαν καθαρὰν· ὅτι βασιλεὺς μέγας εἰμί, λέγει κύριος, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου θαυμαστὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι.</p>
<p>For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is glorified among the nations, and in every place incense is brought to my name, and a pure offering, for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord Almighty. 1:11</p> <p>for I am a great king, says the Lord Almighty, and my name is notable among the nations. 1:14</p>	<p>"In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is marvelous among the nations."</p>

The result is a transformation from Malachi's vision of a day when the nations will participate in *θυσία καθαρὰ* (*thysia kathara*, *pure sacrifice*) into a command to those within the community of *Didache* to actually do so.

The imperative nature of the Malachi quotation is telling of how the *Didache* community saw the Eucharist as a fulfillment of Malachi 1:11. Malachi's disputation with the priests revealed that there was always a potential for impurity in their sacrifice. Their status as priests was not enough to ensure that their sacrifice was always pure. Malachi's vision was of a day when even *the nations* were able to bring a pure sacrifice to God. The same warning

against impure sacrifice appears to be present in the *Didache* community. The community is to confess their sins and reconcile with one another so that they can fulfill Malachi's vision in the proper celebration of the Eucharist.²³ In the *Didache* we see our first explicit assertion that the proper sacrifice of the Eucharist is the pure sacrifice of Malachi's vision.

The Eucharist and Malachi in Justin Martyr

So far our Eucharistic texts have been largely internal in nature. Their primary concern was not teaching or defending the practice of Eucharist to those outside the church, but rather addressing internal concerns. This is in keeping with the wider theme of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. By the middle of the second century, however, Christianity had become “an active player . . . on the world stage,” and many of its “concerns shifted from internal to external matters.”²⁴ As a growing religion that was becoming increasingly recognized as distinct from Judaism, Christianity of the second century often had to confront “philosophical schools and mystery cults.”²⁵ Misconceptions arose concerning the Christian faith, many of which concerned the Eucharist. LaVerdiere describes the situation that Justin found himself within well:

As Christianity grew and became more prominent, rumors of its Eucharist, mostly sensational and scurrilous, spread through the population. Many discounted such rumors but did not understand what the Eucharist really was and what Christians did when they celebrated it. The Eucharist needed an apologist, one who could present it, describe it, and explain it. Justin, a lay person with philosophical credentials, took on the challenge.

²³ Didache 14:1-2.

²⁴ LaVerdiere, 167.

²⁵ LaVerdiere, 168.

As opposed to the letters from ecclesial leaders and church manuals we have read thus far, the writings of Justin are those of a layman who was converted to Christianity after spending much of his life exploring Platonic philosophy. After his conversion and establishment of a school of Christian philosophy, Justin set out to write his *First Apology* to address many of the questions common to those unfamiliar with Christianity. It is in his *First Apology* that we see three chapters devoted to Eucharistic material. His *Second Apology* does not address the Eucharist, but he does return to the topic in his final work, the *Dialogue with Trypho*. It is in *Dialogue*, written as a conversation between Justin and a Jewish man name Trypho, that we find Justin's two references to Malachi 1:10-11. His two Eucharistic writings will be addressed below.

First Apology (c. A.D. 150)

Written while Justin was in Rome, his *First Apology* is addressed to the Roman emperor and his sons, as well as to the Senate and the "whole People of the Romans."²⁶ Regardless of whether his *Apology* ever reached its addressed audience, this work has survived and proved valuable to Christians down through the centuries. Following his introduction, Justin appeals for those persecuting Christians to hear their case, responds to various charges often brought against Christians, outlines various Christian theological and philosophical truths, and finally addresses baptism and the Eucharist in the final six chapters.²⁷ The Eucharist itself is specifically addressed in the final three chapters. *First Apology* 65 contains a description of a post-baptismal Eucharistic service, and *First Apology*

²⁶ Justin, *First Apology*, (ANF 1:163-186).

²⁷ Outline slightly adapted from LaVerdiere, 171.

66 contains a theological explanation of what is actually happening in the Eucharist.²⁸ *First Apology* 67 contains a more general description of a Sunday liturgy.

Chapter 65: Administration of the Sacraments.

[After bringing the recently-baptized into the assembly, praying, and greeting one another with a kiss,]

There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to γένοιτο [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

Chapter 66: Of the Eucharist

And this food is called among us *Εὐχαριστία* [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, “This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;” and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, “This is My blood;” and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

Chapter 67: Weekly Worship of the Christians.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the

²⁸ This distinction is noted in Maurice Jourjon, “Justin” in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians* ed. Willy Rordorf (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 74.

prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration. [Underline mine]

Description of the Eucharist

Justin's description of the Eucharist represents the earliest extant description of a Eucharistic service held in Rome.²⁹ The celebration of the Eucharist is said to take place in the place of assembly on "the day called Sunday."³⁰ Only those who are baptized are allowed to join in on this celebration. There also exists a clear distinction between the president, who "gives thanks at great length" over the elements, the deacons who distribute the elements, and the people who offer assent in saying "Amen" and receive the elements.³¹ Given his audience, Justin here avoids referring to the president as bishop, and only names the office of deacon. Jourjon asserts that the office of deacon would be recognizable by those outside the Church due to their role in bringing the Eucharistic elements to those unable to attend,

²⁹ Billy, 57.

³⁰ *First Apology*, ch. 67.

³¹ *First Apology*, ch. 65.

including those in prison.³² As in Ignatius, there is a close association between the celebration of the Eucharist and giving to “the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want.”³³ We also have in Justin a note that the elements of the Eucharist are brought “to those who are absent.”³⁴

Explanation of the Eucharist

Justin gives a title to the food eaten in these Christian ceremonies: Eucharist (*Εὐχαριστία, Eucharistias*). He further explains that to participate in this meal, one must (1) “believe that the things which we teach are true,” (2) have been baptized “for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration,” and (3) “is so living as Christ has enjoined.”³⁵ Justin also sees a connection between the incarnation and the elements of the Eucharist. In the incarnation, “Jesus Christ our Saviour [was] made flesh by the Word of God.” Likewise in the Eucharist, “the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word ... is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.” What begins as “common bread and common drink” becomes the “flesh and blood” of Jesus, that which can nourish our own “flesh and blood.”

Perhaps sensing the difficulty of this teaching, Justin turns to the authority of Jesus himself, as communicated in the Gospels. It is in Justin that we first see a specific non-canonical reference to an institutional account of the Lord’s Supper. In doing so he appears to quote Luke 22:19 for the institution of the bread, but is likely following Matthew or Mark in

³² Jourjon, 75.

³³ *First Apology*, ch. 67.

³⁴ *First Apology*, ch. 65, 67.

³⁵ *First Apology*, ch. 67.

his description of the cup.³⁶ Justin does not explicitly mention the content of “the prayer of His word” that is said over the elements, but in placing his account of Jesus’ institution directly after the mention of such prayers, we are to assume that the “prayer of His word” includes at least a thematic relationship to the words of institution.

A specific reason for Justin’s detailed explanation for the Eucharist is seen in the final words of *First Apology* 67. There are some religious rituals, such as “mysteries of Mithras,” that would appear to outsiders as strikingly similar to the Christian Eucharist. The distinction between the Christian Eucharist and the “mysteries of Mithras” is precisely what Justin has been describing in *First Apology* 67: what Christians eat and drink in the Eucharist is more than “common food and common drink.” The mysteries of Mithras included bread, a drink, and incantations. What they lack, Justin forcefully argues, is the person of Jesus Christ. LaVerdiere helpfully provides the following arrangement of the text to “show the special nature of [the] Eucharistic food” itself:

We are taught that:

Just as

- 1a. Jesus Christ
- 2a. Made flesh (*sarkapoiethis*)
- 3a. Through the word of God (*dis logo theo*),
- 4a. Took both flesh and blood
- 5a. For our salvation

So also

- 1b. The food,
- 2b. Made Eucharist (*eucharistetheisan*)
- 3b. Through the word of prayer (that comes) from him (Jesus)
(*Di’ euches logou tou par’ autou*)
- 4b. Is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus
- 5b. From which our blood and flesh receive transforming nourishment
(*kata metabolic trephontai*).

³⁶ Jourjon, 76 notes that Justin inverts Luke’s order, placing the bread first. His preference for Matthew/Mark in the institution of the cup as “This is My blood” as opposed to Luke’s “this is the New Covenant in my blood.”

It is the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist that distinguishes it from other celebrations of sacrificial meals. That common food and drink is “made Eucharist” through the blessing word of prayer is what makes the Christian celebration of the Eucharist exclusively Christian. Justin thus far has turned to the Gospels to support his case; it is in his *Dialogue with Trypho* that we see him use Malachi to do the same.

Dialogue with Trypho

Written after both *First* and *Second Apology*, Justin records a conversation between he a Jewish leader named Trypho, a literary style that is perhaps a nod to his former days as a Platonic philosopher. Throughout the *Dialogue* one gets the impression that this writing is based on a series of conversations with those defending Judaism, a point that Justin even has Trypho suggest, saying, “You seem to have debated with many persons on every possible topic and consequently are ready to answer and of my questions” (*Dialogue* 50).

The *Dialogue* is divided into what could be considered an introduction and three primary sections. In the first of these sections, Justin attempts to show “how the Mosaic Law and the Jewish practices have been abrogated by the definitive Law of Christ, the gospel for all human beings” (*Dialogue* 11-31). Next he addresses “how Jesus is the Christ of God with divine and human origins” (*Dialogue* 32-110). It is in this second major section that we see our first Eucharistic use of Malachi. Finally, Justin closes by exploring “how the Gentiles were called to conversion, repented, and became part of the new covenant” (*Dialogue* 111-141). It is in this final section that we see Justin’s second Eucharistic use of Malachi (*Dialogue* 117).

Given that *Dialogue* is primarily an interaction with Judaism, it comes as no surprise that it is in this work that we find Justin's Eucharistic use of Malachi. While Justin mentions the Eucharist on two other occasions (*Dialogue* 10 and 70), it is specifically those two passages that contain a Eucharistic use of Malachi that will be addressed here.³⁷ The text of our two Eucharistic uses of Malachi (*Dialogue* 41 and 117) will be followed by commentary.

Dialogue 41

Up to this point, Trypho has already informed Justin that he does not regard the claim that Christians are cannibalistic in the Eucharist to be of any merit. This does not prevent Justin from addressing other aspects of the Eucharist, particularly those that relate to the divinity and humanity of Jesus and the interpretation and fulfillment of the Scriptures in the Eucharist itself. In a chapter before our first Eucharistic use of Malachi, Justin argues that the Passover lamb was a type of Christ (*Dialogue* 40). In *Dialogue* 41, he turns to the Levitical offering of flour as a type of the Eucharist.

“And the offering of fine flour, sirs,” I said, “which was prescribed to be presented on behalf of those purified from leprosy, was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, the celebration of which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed, in remembrance of the suffering which He endured on behalf of those who are purified in soul from all iniquity, in order that we may at the same time thank God for having created the world, with all things therein, for the sake of man, and for delivering us from the evil in which we were, and for utterly overthrowing principalities and powers by Him who suffered according to His will. Hence God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [prophets], as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: ‘I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord; and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands: for, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure offering: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord:

³⁷ In the first mention of the Eucharist (chap. 10), Trypho informs Justin that the traditional objection to the Eucharist (i.e. that “we eat men”) is “not worthy of belief.” In the second mention of the Eucharist that will not be addressed (chap. 70), Trypho and Justin discuss the same “mysteries of Mithras” addressed by Justin in his *First Apology*.

but ye profane it.’ [So] He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His name, and that you profane [it].
[Underline mine]

There are at least two textual differences between the reference to Mal 1:11 in Justin and *Didache*. First, Justin includes Malachi 1:10 as part of his quotation. In a dialogue with a Jew, Justin sees fit to use the Scriptures to critique the Levitical sacrifices brought in Malachi’s day. *Didache* was content to present Malachi as containing “an order from the Lord that a pure sacrifice should be offered in every place,” with the celebration of the Eucharist seen as a “faithful response to this command.”³⁸ For Justin, Malachi’s vision is more than just an order to offer pure sacrifice, it is the vision that defines the Eucharist as *the* sacrifice at the expense of other systems. Justin sees Malachi as “affirming both that we [Gentiles] glorify His name, and that you [Jews] profane [it].” The second textual difference between the Malachi reference in *Didache* and *Dialogue* is Justin’s more accurate rendering of the text of Malachi (see Table 8. *Didache* 14:3 as a Combination of Malachi 1:11 and 1:14). In a dialogue with the Jewish Trypho, Justin must be committed to accurately present the Scriptures.

In *Dialogue* 41 we see our clearest assignment of the Eucharist as a direct fulfillment of Mal 1:11 to date. For Justin, it is Christians “who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist.” The Levitical priests of Malachi’s day brought impure *sacrifice* (*θυσία, thysia*); in the Eucharist, Christians *offer to him sacrifices* (*προσφερομένων αὐτῷ θυσιῶν, prospheromenōn autō thysiōn*). What sacrifices do Christians offer to God? According to Justin, it is the Eucharistic bread and cup. Elsewhere we have seen Justin go to great lengths to show that the Eucharistic elements

³⁸ Jourjon, 79.

become the “flesh and blood of Jesus.” For Justin, the sacrifice offered to God in the Eucharist is Jesus himself. This is why Justin is able to claim that the “pure sacrifice” of Malachi 1:11 is fulfilled in the Eucharist. What purer sacrifice is there to offer to God than Jesus himself?

Dialogue 117

In his final Eucharistic use of Malachi, Justin engages Trypho’s own interpretation of Malachi 1:11. Trypho has agreed that God indeed does not accept the sacrifices of the Levitical priests in Jerusalem, but instead that the “pure sacrifice” of Malachi 1:11 refers to “the prayers of the individuals of that nation [that has been] dispersed.” It is the Jewish diaspora, Trypho contends, that is fulfilling Malachi’s prophecy. In combating this interpretation of Malachi, Justin makes a concession of his own: “that prayers and giving of thanks, when offered by worthy men, are the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices to God, I also admit.” For Justin, is it the Eucharistic elements (cf. *Dialogue* 41) or the prayers of worthy men (*Dialogue* 117) that represent a pure sacrifice?

Justin’s answer to that question is *both*. After making his concession regarding the status of prayer as “the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifice to God,” Justin shows that this is precisely what is happening in the celebration of the Eucharist: “For such [prayers and giving of thanks] alone Christians have undertaken to offer, in the remembrance effected by their solid and liquid food, whereby the suffering of the Son of God which He endured is brought to mind.”

A final problem with Trypho’s interpretation is addressed by Justin towards the end of the chapter. How can the Jewish diaspora be a fulfillment of Malachi 1:11 if “not even

now does [the diaspora] extend from the rising to the setting of the sun?" It is Christianity, Justin argues, that may claim to be offering a pure sacrifice "from the rising to the setting of the sun":

There is not one single race of men, whether barbarians, or Greeks, or whatever they may be called, nomads, or vagrants, or herdsmen living in tents, among whom prayers and giving of thanks are not offered through the name of the crucified Jesus.

Justin ends his argument with a pragmatic appeal to the wide-spread and multi-ethnic celebration of the Eucharist across the known world. Part of the fulfillment of Malachi 1:11 in the Christian celebration of the Eucharist is the fact that it is celebrated by "the nations" across the known world.

Eucharist and Malachi Before Irenaeus

In a survey of extant Eucharistic texts before Irenaeus, including two with a direct Eucharistic use of Malachi 1:11, several themes have emerged that will prove significant to our understanding of Irenaeus' own Eucharistic use of Malachi.

In *1 Clement* we see the office of the bishop given the task of *offering the gifts* (*προσενεγκόντας τὰ δῶρα, prosenegkontas ta dōra*). Ignatius also relates the office of the bishop to the true celebration of the Eucharist in his encouragement to "partake of the one Eucharist ... just as there is one bishop" (*Phil* 4:1). The *ἓν θυσιαστήριον (hen thysiastērion, one altar)* of the Eucharist serves as both a sign of unity and, in some cases, a test for orthodoxy. Like the Levitical sacrificial system, the celebration of the Eucharist in the earliest century of the Church was only considered valid if performed by an approved presider (cf. *1 Clement* 44:4; *Phil* 4:1; *FA* 65; and esp. *Smyr* 8:1). The Eucharist as a test for

orthodoxy was needed as a growing number of groups from within and without Christianity challenged the practice and its teaching (cf. *Smyr* 2:2; *Dialogue* 10).

Continuing the trend seen in our New Testament passages,³⁹ sacrificial language continues to be used in the first and second centuries in discussing the Eucharist. Whether it is the insistence on describing the Eucharist as the *bringing of gifts*, taking place on *one altar*, containing the *flesh and blood* of Jesus, or referred to explicitly as the *pure sacrifice* of Malachi, it is clear that even before it is described as the "new oblation of the new covenant," the Eucharist is being treated as such.⁴⁰

Specifically concerning the Eucharistic interpretation of Malachi 1:11, we find far more content in the writing of Justin than in the *Didache*. What the *Didache* offers, however, is a very early account of a Eucharistic interpretation of Malachi. Justin offers a more substantial contribution to the question of how Malachi was used in a Eucharistic sense before Irenaeus. For Justin, the Eucharistic elements, when they become for us the "flesh and blood" of Jesus through the Eucharistic prayers, are the "pure sacrifice" offered to God in Malachi's vision. The nations participate in making the name of the Lord great every time they offer Jesus, the pure sacrifice of the Eucharistic elements and prayers (cf. *Dialogue* 41, 117).

³⁹ See Luke 22:14-23 and 1 Cor 10:21, discussed in Chapter 3.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 5: Eucharist and Malachi in Irenaeus.

CHAPTER 5

EUCCHARIST AND MALACHI IN IRENAEUS

As the Bishop of Lyons, Irenaeus encountered a heretical sect of Gnostics that threatened the faithfulness of the Christian churches in his region. It is this threat that led Irenaeus to write as extensively as he did. Hamman notes:

If he wrote, it was not because he felt called to be a theologian, but because it was another way of teaching and of defending the orthodox faith against the obscure utterances of the gnostics.¹

In his extant writings, the defense of orthodoxy against gnostic attacks occupies most of his attention. His writing on the Eucharist is no exception. We do not find in Irenaeus an independent treatise on the proper observance or meaning of the Eucharist; instead we find the Eucharist presented as yet another argument for the continuity between the Christian faith and the Old Testament that gnostic dualism was determined to break. Amidst these arguments, however, the beginnings of a sacramental theology of the Eucharist emerges.

A brief overview of Eucharistic references throughout his *Against Heresies* that do not cite Mal 1:11 (*AH* 1.13.2; 3.11.5; 5.2.2-3) will be followed by an exploration of our primary passage that does (*AH* 4.17.1-4.18.6).

¹ Adalbert Hamman, "Irenaeus of Lyons" in *The Eucharist of the Early Christians* ed. Willy Rordorf (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1990), 90.

Eucharistic Thought Without Reference to Malachi

Before exploring Irenaeus' Eucharistic use of Malachi, an overview of the passages in which he discusses the Eucharist *without* reference to Malachi will be addressed here. As seen in Justin, some of Irenaeus' Eucharistic concerns have to do with the Eucharist-like practices of those outside the orthodox Christian faith. It is primarily those aspects of each passage that inform our understanding of Irenaeus' Eucharistic use of Malachi that will be addressed below.²

Against Heresies 1.13.2

The apologetic nature that defines much of his Eucharistic writing is on display in his first Eucharistic section of *Against Heresies*. In a section outlining the “deceitful arts and nefarious practices of Marcus,” an apparently influential gnostic leader for those living in his region, Irenaeus describes the Eucharist-like ritual performed by Marcus:

Pretending to consecrate cups mixed with wine, and protracting to great length the word of invocation, he contrives to give them a purple and reddish colour, so that Charis, who is one of those that are superior to all things, should be thought to drop her own blood into that cup through means of his invocation, and that thus those who are present should be led to rejoice to taste of that cup ... Again, handing mixed cups to the women, he bids them consecrate these in his presence.³

While he does not here refute these practices directly, we do see an early glimpse of Irenaeus' linking of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Specifically with an opponent like Gnosticism—whose extreme dualism sets the physical and spiritual worlds against one another—Irenaeus is concerned not just with cerebral orthodoxy but also with its associated practices. That his problem with Marcus is not just limited to his thinking, but his practice as

² The selective nature of the scope of this paper will necessarily prevent us from exploring each passage fully.

³ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.13.2 (ANF, 1:335).

well, sets up Irenaeus' later emphasis on Eucharistic practice and thought: "our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion."⁴

Against Heresies 3.11.5

In a larger discussion of the Gospel of John's own defense against gnostic thought, Irenaeus makes reference to the first miracle of the Gospel: the wedding at Cana. It is against the gnostic dualism expressed in Cerinthus' teaching that "the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another" that Irenaeus highlights Jesus' preference for using the created order:

For although the Lord had the power to supply wine to those feasting, independently of any created substance. . . . He did not adopt this course;

Jesus' insistence on using the created elements in making the wedding wine at Cana is then linked to his use of the created elements in the Last Supper:

taking the loaves which the earth had produced, and giving thanks and on the other occasion making water wine, He satisfied those who were reclining [at table], and gave drink to those who had been invited to the marriage; showing that the God who made the earth, and commanded it to bring forth fruit, who established the waters, and brought forth the fountains, was He who in these last times bestowed upon mankind, by His Son, the blessing of food and the favour of drink. [Underline mine]

In response to the claims of Cerinthus, Irenaeus replies that the same God who created the physical realm in the Old Testament also gives the blessings of the physical Eucharistic elements in the New. It is in his emphasis on God not just interacting with but *using* the created order to fulfill his purposes that we see a glimpse of Irenaeus' sacramental theology. The physical elements of the Eucharist are the means through which the creation is able to receive the blessing of its creator: "the Incomprehensible by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible."

⁴ AH 4.18.5.

Against Heresies 5.2.2-3

The gnostic belief that it was not the Almighty Father—but rather a demiurge—who created the world caused them to necessarily “regard matter [itself] as hostile to man.”⁵ This dichotomy between the physical and spiritual made a rejection of the resurrection of the flesh necessary for those influenced by gnostic thought. For Irenaeus, the Eucharist is able to serve here as an authoritative voice for the orthodox faith. The rejection of the resurrection of the flesh is simply not compatible with the Christian practice of the Eucharist:

But if [the flesh] indeed does not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of His blood, nor the bread which we break the communion of His body. For blood can only come from veins and flesh, and whatsoever else makes up the substance of man, such as the Word of God was actually made.

The cup and bread taken in the Eucharist is the flesh and blood of the Word of God, who was made “the same substance [as] man.” If the Word of God was not actually made flesh and blood, Irenaeus informs his church, than the Eucharist that they celebrate is not a true communion with His body and blood, and their flesh will not “attain salvation.” The incarnation, then, serves as a necessary element of the Eucharist. As D. Jeffrey Bingham notes, “the Eucharist only has meaning because the divine economy includes the corporal.”⁶

Irenaeus then moves from the incarnation’s role in the Eucharist to the Eucharist’s role in the resurrection of the flesh. Like his earlier discussion of the wedding at Cana, Irenaeus notes that the elements of the Eucharist come from creation itself:

He has acknowledged the cup (which is a part of the creation) as His own blood, from which He bedews our blood; and the bread (also a part of the creation) He has established as His own body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.

⁵ Hamman, 95.

⁶ D. Jeffrey Bingham, “Eucharist and Incarnation” in *Rediscovering the Eucharist: Ecumenical Conversations* ed. Roch A Kereszty (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 127.

Though these elements have their origin in creation, it is in “receiving the Word of God” that the “Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made,” enabling the elements therefore to “increase and support” the substance of our flesh. Irenaeus continues with an analogy between the created elements present in the Eucharist and “our bodies” which are nourished for the resurrection by the Eucharist:

And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ . . .

[S]o also our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God.

The Eucharist, for Irenaeus, depends on creation, incarnation, and atonement, while preparing for the resurrection. The bread and cup are “part of creation,” become the “body and blood of Christ,” point to Jesus’ redemption “by his blood,” and “nourish” our bodies until they “shall rise at their appointed time.” This sacrament “captures for the church the whole reality of God’s relationship with the creature.”⁷

In those Eucharistic passages throughout *Against Heresies* that do not reference Malachi, we see the Eucharist serve a central role in the life of the orthodox Christian church. The Eucharist reinforces the significance of orthodox thought and practice.⁸ Like Jesus’ changing of water to wine at the wedding in Cana, it represents God’s insistence on using the created order to fulfill his purposes.⁹ The celebration of the Eucharist also serves as the

⁷ Bingham, 132.

⁸ *AH* 1.13.2

⁹ *AH* 3.11.5

summation of orthodox Christian belief in creation, incarnation, atonement, and resurrection.¹⁰

Eucharist and Malachi in Irenaeus

Though direct quotations of Malachi 1:11 are found in *AH* 4.17.5 and 4.17.6, their wider context needs addressing. Just as the offering of pure sacrifice in Malachi 1:11 depends on the previous rejection of Levitical sacrifice, so Irenaeus' understanding of Malachi 1:11 finding its fulfillment in the Eucharist depends on his own wider understanding of sacrifice.¹¹

Sacrifice in *AH* 4.17.1-4

Before calling the Eucharist the “new oblation of the new covenant,”¹² Irenaeus addresses the nature of sacrifice itself. Two themes emerge throughout this section: (1) God does not stand in need of anything sacrificed, but rather (2) sacrifice was instituted for the benefit of humanity:

Moreover, the prophets indicate in the fullest manner that God stood in no need of their slavish obedience, but that it was upon their own account that He enjoined certain observances in the law. And again, that God needed not their oblation, but [merely demanded it], on account of man himself who offers it.

It is because God does not stand in need of sacrifice that He is able to both prescribe and reject sacrifice throughout the Old Testament. Irenaeus notes that God rejected sacrifices “when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God.”¹³

¹⁰ *AH* 5.2.2-3.

¹¹ cf. *AH* 4.17.1-4.

¹² *AH* 4.17.5.

¹³ *AH* 4.17.1.

In rejecting their sacrifices, God was rejecting “those things by which sinners imagined they could propitiate God.”¹⁴

Just as God does not stand in need of sacrifice, he also does not institute and reject sacrifice at random. In rejecting their sacrifices, Irenaeus maintains, God was doing a great service to his people:

For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of *suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him.* (AH 4.17.2) [Emphasis mine]

The purpose of the rejection of Levitical sacrifice, for Irenaeus, was to point God’s people towards the “true sacrifice” that they are to offer to God so that they “may receive life.”

Though Irenaeus does not here cite Malachi directly, the prophet’s disputation with the Levitical priests is surely in his mind. In Malachi we see a rejection of the Levitical sacrifices immediately followed by the eschatological vision of a day when the nations are able to bring a pure sacrifice. In AH 4.17.1-4, we see Irenaeus present the rejection of Israel’s sacrifice as a means of pointing them to a “true sacrifice,” which he presents as being fulfilled in the Eucharist in AH 4.17.5-6.

Eucharist and Malachi in AH 4.17.5-6

That Irenaeus intends for the Eucharist to be seen as a sacrifice is confirmed in several places throughout AH 4.17.5-6. Much of what was discussed in regards to sacrifice in 4.17.1-4 sets the framework for his presentation of the Eucharist as the new Christian sacrifice. At the Last Supper, the disciples were instructed by Jesus to “*offer* to God the first-

¹⁴ AH 4.17.1.

fruits of His own, created things,” and that the Eucharist was to be “the new *oblation* of the new covenant; which the Church . . . *offers* to God throughout all the world.”¹⁵ Given that this presentation of the Eucharistic sacrifice is preceded by a lengthy discussion of God’s rejection of former sacrifices, it is no wonder that Irenaeus invokes Malachi 1:10-11 here.

After confessing the bread as his body and the cup as his blood at the Last Supper, Jesus:

taught the new oblation of the new covenant . . . concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: “I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Omnipotent, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], My name is glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice; for great is My name among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Omnipotent.” (AH 4.17.5) [Underline mine]

It is specifically the Eucharist as the “new oblation of the new covenant,” Irenaeus argues, that is the fulfillment of Malachi’s eschatological vision. Like in Justin, Irenaeus here quotes Malachi 1:10-11 together.¹⁶ In this he emphasizes the necessity of the rejection of the former sacrifices for the fulfillment of the new sacrifice of the Eucharist. It is in his subsequent commentary on Malachi 1:10-11 that this is made clear:

indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to Him, and that a pure one; and His name is glorified among the Gentiles.

It is here, particularly with the gnostic chasm between the God of the Old Testament and the Jesus of the New Testament in mind, that Irenaeus moves towards addressing how the sacrifice of the *New Testament* Eucharist is able to glorify the name of the God of the *Old Testament*.

It is the relationship between the Father and the Son that allow the sacrifice of the Eucharist to be the fulfillment of Malachi 1:11. For Irenaeus, the union between the Father

¹⁵ AH 4.17.5. Emphasis mine.

¹⁶ As opposed to *Didache*’s quotation of just Mal 1:11.

and the Son makes it such that the name of the Father is glorified when the name of the Son is glorified:

But what other name is there which is glorified among the Gentiles than that of our Lord, by whom the Father is glorified, and man also? And because it is [the name] of His own Son, who was made man by Him, He calls it His own.

the Father confess[es] the name of Jesus Christ, which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be His own, both because it is that of His Son, and because He who thus describes it gave Him for the salvation of men. Since, therefore, the name of the Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings through Jesus Christ, He says well on both these grounds, “And in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure sacrifice.” [Underline mine]

It is orthodox Christianity, not Gnosticism, that is able to truly glorify the name of the Father. This is done through the glorifying of his Son in the Eucharist. Once again it is the practice of the Eucharist that informs proper thinking. After establishing the Eucharist as the pure sacrifice of Malachi 1:11, Irenaeus seeks to combine his previously-stated understanding of the nature of sacrifice with the practice of the Eucharist itself.

Eucharist and Sacrifice in *AH* 4.18.1-6

As in his previous section on sacrifice,¹⁷ Irenaeus maintains here that God does not require sacrifice for his own sake, but rather for the sake of those making the offering:

The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted. (*AH* 4.18.1) [Underline mine]

Irenaeus again affirms that the Eucharist (the “new oblation of the new covenant”) is the pure sacrifice that the Church offers “throughout all the world.” This offering is pleasing to God, but is also for the benefit of the one who offers. Throughout *AH* 4.18.1 the bringer of

¹⁷ *AH* 4.17.1-4.

the offering is “glorified” and “receives honor” from God when the sacrifice is “acceptable to Him.”

We have already seen a sense of discontinuity between the former Old Testament sacrificial system and the New Testament Eucharist: the former had been rejected while the later is “accounted with God [as] a pure sacrifice.”¹⁸ Here, however, Irenaeus notes that there still remains continuity between the Old and New:

And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, too, in the Church. (AH 4.18.2)

Likewise, the problems that plagued the sacrifices of the Old Testament¹⁹ are still liable to plague the sacrifice of the New Testament as well:

For if any one shall endeavour to offer a sacrifice merely to outward appearance, unexceptionably, in due order, and according to appointment, while in his soul he does not assign to his neighbour that fellowship with him which is right and proper, nor is under the fear of God; — he who thus cherishes secret sin does not deceive God by that sacrifice which is offered correctly as to outward appearance; nor will such an oblation profit him anything, but [only] the giving up of that evil which has been conceived within him, so that sin may not the more, by means of the hypocritical action, render him the destroyer of himself. (AH 4.18.3) [Underline mine]

In seeing the Eucharist as the fulfillment of Malachi’s eschatological vision of a “pure sacrifice,” Irenaeus does not mean to imply that the state of the “conscience of the offerer” is of no consequence.²⁰ There is a proper and improper way to participate in the offering of the Eucharist. As does the *Didache*, Irenaeus also references the necessity of a pure conscience

¹⁸ AH 4.18.1.

¹⁹ AH 4.17.1-4.

²⁰ AH 4.18.3.

before approaching the altar.²¹ The Eucharist is the new sacrifice of the new covenant, but like those sacrifices of the Old covenant it must be offered in a proper manner. It is only then that the offering “is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God.”²² It is the Church, when they are “found grateful to God,” that is able to offer “this pure oblation to the Creator.”²³

To participate in the Eucharist, for Irenaeus, is also to “proclaim the unity of the flesh and the spirit.”²⁴ It is absurd for the Gnostics, who do not affirm this unity, to continue to celebrate what appears to be a Eucharist-like meal.

Then, again, how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption, and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion.

For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity. [Underline mine]

The relationship between the Eucharist and the resurrection of the flesh that he will develop later²⁵ makes an appearance here towards the end of his two chapters on sacrifice and the Eucharist.²⁶

²¹ cf. Matt 5:23-24.

²² *AH* 4.18.4.

²³ *AH* 4.18.4.

²⁴ Bingham, 131.

²⁵ *AH* 5.2.2-3.

²⁶ *AH* 4.17, 18.

As he brings this chapter to a close, Irenaeus returns to the two themes he set out in *AH* 4.17.1-4: (1) God does not stand in need of anything sacrificed, but rather (2) sacrifice was instituted for the benefit of humanity:

Now we make offering to Him, not as though He stood in need of it, but rendering thanks for His gift, and thus sanctifying what has been created. For even as God does not need our possessions, so do we need to offer something to God. (*AH* 4.18.6)

As, therefore, He does not stand in need of these [services], yet does desire that we should render them for our own benefit, lest we be unfruitful; so did the Word give to the people that very precept as to the making of oblations, although He stood in no need of them, that they might learn to serve God: thus is it, therefore, also His will that we, too, should offer a gift at the altar, frequently and without intermission. (*AH* 4.18.6) [Underline mine]

The benefits received by our participation in the Eucharist include the nourishment of our bodies for the resurrection, but are not limited to such. For Irenaeus, it is through faithful participation in the Eucharist that we receive the blessings of “learning to serve God.”

Irenaeus’ Sacramental Theology of the Eucharist

We have seen in Irenaeus the beginnings of an early sacramental theology of the Eucharist. In instituting a sacrament that uses—and transforms—the created order, God is blessing his people by revealing “the Incomprehensible by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible.”²⁷ The whole economy of God's plan of salvation—including creation, incarnation, atonement, and resurrection—is captured in the sacrament of the Eucharist.²⁸ It is perhaps due to this summative nature of the Sacrament that it is given such a

²⁷ *AH* 3.11.5.

²⁸ *AH* 5.2.2-3.

central role in the life and practice of the early church.²⁹ In his Eucharistic use of Malachi, Irenaeus clearly presents the Eucharist as the new Christian sacrifice.³⁰

If the Eucharist is indeed the “new oblation of the new covenant,” what exactly is offered to God during its celebration? In the Eucharist, the Church offers “the first-fruits of His own created things.”³¹ Who better fits the description of “the first-fruits of [the Father’s] own” than Christ? Elsewhere Irenaeus describes the offering as “the things taken from His creation”³² and that in celebrating the Eucharist “we offer to Him His own.”³³ Who is more “His own” than His own Word? It is clear that the Eucharistic offering—like the making of wine at the wedding at Cana—begins with those elements that are part of the created order; it is equally clear that throughout the celebration of the Eucharist they do not remain as such:

When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made. . . .

[The elements] having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ. (AH 5.2.3)

When the Eucharistic elements, offered by the Church, “receive the Word of God,” they become the body and blood of Christ.

What began as a simple offering of bread and wine has become the only thing that can be considered a *pure sacrifice*. The Eucharist, for Irenaeus, serves as the fulfillment of Malachi 1:11 because it is through the Eucharist that the church is able to offer to God that which is His own: the *pure sacrifice* of Jesus His son.

²⁹ AH 1.13.2; 4.18.5.

³⁰ AH 4.17.5-6.

³¹ AH 4.17.5.

³² AH 4.18.4.

³³ AH 4.18.5.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has set out to understand the ways in which the New Testament and early Church used Malachi 1:10-11 in a Eucharistic sense, and whether such an exploration can contribute towards our understanding of how the early Church may have viewed the Eucharist as sacrifice. What follows is a brief overview of our conclusions as well as their implications for an understanding of the early Christian notion of the Eucharist as sacrifice.

Eucharist and Malachi in the New Testament

When viewed in its own Old Testament context, it becomes clear that Malachi stands in a long line of disputations against the Levitical priesthood. Isaiah's theme of gentile inclusion into the priesthood is developed in Malachi to specifically include the nations in the task of offering a pure sacrifice to Yahweh. As Malachi is translated into the Septuagint, its authors replace various Hebrew words for sacrifice with the Greek word *θυσία* (*thysia*, *sacrifice*), which usually carried alimentary undertones. Even before the writing of the New Testament, one would be justified in reading LXX Malachi's eschatological vision of 1:11 as looking forward to a day when the nations were able to participate in a sacrificial meal that brings honor to Yahweh's name.

Two New Testament authors use Malachi's disputation with the priest in contexts that are Eucharistic in nature. Luke uses Malachi 1:6-11 as a model for his presentation of Jesus'

words in Luke 13:22-30. In reaching the climax of the pericope, Luke gives Jesus' own vision of a day when the nations are able to participate in an eschatological kingdom meal at just the point when his readers would expect to hear of the nations bringing a *pure sacrifice* to Yahweh. In following the prominent meal scenes throughout Luke to their climax in the Last Supper, the reader is met with a Passover meal in which Jesus presents himself as the new Passover lamb to be sacrificed and consumed.

In this same Supper, Jesus points to a day when He will join the nations in an eschatological kingdom meal. It is the linking of sacrifice and meal in the Last Supper that Luke is pointing the reader toward in his allusion to Malachi 1:11 in Luke 13:29. In the Last Supper, the Twelve were told to continue in their participation of Jesus' sacrifice through this meal. As the earliest Christians spread across the Roman empire in the book of Acts, the celebration of this meal was brought also to the nations.

Paul, more directly, uses language from Malachi's disputation with the Priests in a Eucharistic sense. He refers to the celebration of the Eucharist as participating in the *table of the Lord* (*τραπέζης κυρίου, trapeza kyriou*). In using this phrase, found only in LXX Malachi, as a name for the Eucharist, Paul is certainly paving the way for later Eucharistic use of Malachi.

In his essay "Eucharist, Sacrifice, and Scripture", Michael Vasey comments that "two facts are clear: the New Testament never speaks of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and the early church very quickly began to do so."¹ It is with Vasey's former point that this study disagrees. Short of a direct quotation equating the Eucharist with sacrifice, in just our two New Testament passages alone there is certainly room to understand the celebration of the

¹ Michael Vasey, "Eucharist, Sacrifice, and Scripture" in *Essays on Eucharistic Sacrifice in the Early Church*, eds. Colin Ogilvie Buchanan and Rowan Williams (Bramcote, Notts.: Grove Books, 1984), 7.

Eucharist as sacrificial in nature. Luke presents the Last Supper as a Passover meal, wherein Jesus presents himself as the lamb to be sacrificed and consumed. Paul's argument against the Corinthian participation in alimentary sacrifice to demons is based on the reality that Christians are already doing that sort of thing when they participate in the *table of the Lord* (*τραπέζης κυρίου, trapeza kyriou*). When the early church begins to "speak of the Eucharist as a sacrifice," they find ample precedent in the New Testament to do so.

Eucharist and Malachi in the Early Church

Of our five extant Eucharistic writings from the first and second century, three explicitly reference the Eucharist as the fulfillment of Malachi 1:11. This certainly makes the validity of such an interpretation worthy of further consideration. Before reaching the first Eucharistic use of Malachi in the *Didache*, the Apostolic Fathers are certainly seen using themes from Malachi 1:10-11 in their own writing on the Eucharist. In Clement and Ignatius, we see the Eucharist presented as the sacrament of unity, a theme certainly present in Malachi's vision of a day when *the nations* will offer a pure sacrifice to Yahweh. Also present in these authors is a stress on the significance of proper observance of the Eucharist, bringing to mind Malachi's warning against the offering of impure sacrifice.

It is towards the end of the first century and throughout the second that we see our three Eucharistic interpretations of Malachi 1:11 most explicitly. In the *Didache*, the confession of sin and call for reconciliation with one another before participation was seen as the way to ensure that Malachi's vision of a "pure sacrifice" was fulfilled in the community's own celebration of the Eucharist. For Justin, it is the transformation of the Eucharistic

elements into the flesh and blood of Jesus,² as well as the global nature of its celebration³ that make the Eucharist the fulfillment of Malachi's vision.

In seeking to demonstrate the continuity between the orthodox Christian faith and the Old Testament, Irenaeus presents the Eucharist as the *pure sacrifice* of Malachi's eschatological vision. The former sacrifices have indeed ceased, but it is still through sacrifice⁴ that God's name is glorified among the nations.⁵ Irenaeus places the Eucharist within his own wider understanding of sacrament and sacrifice. The Eucharist, as a sacrament, serves to reveal "the Incomprehensible by means of the comprehensible, and the Invisible by the visible."⁶ This sacrament was instituted by God as the "new oblation of the new covenant."⁷ God does not stand in need of this "new oblation," but rather instructs that sacrifice be made in order to benefit "he who offers."⁸ In the Eucharist, the Church offers the visible and comprehensible bread and cup, which God transforms into the body and blood of His Son, which in turn nourishes and blesses the one who offers.

It has been demonstrated that the "pure sacrifice" of LXX Malachi is certainly open to being interpreted as alimentary in nature. Luke's use of LXX Malachi in passages that relate sacrifice and meal and Paul's Eucharistic use of *table of the Lord* (*τραπέζης κυρίου*, *trapeza kyriou*) both contribute towards the plausibility of a Eucharistic interpretation of

² *First Apology* 66, *Dialogue* 41.

³ *Dialogue* 117.

⁴ *AH* 4.18.2.

⁵ *AH* 4.17.5.

⁶ *AH* 3.11.5.

⁷ *AH* 4.17.5.

⁸ *AH* 4.18.1.

Malachi 1:11. That our first and second century non-canonical authors use Malachi in a Eucharistic sense cannot be viewed as a departure from the faithful interpretation of Scripture.

Eucharist as Sacrifice

While our primary purpose has been to present the Scriptural foundation of the second century Eucharistic interpretation of Malachi, this project may shed some light on the sense in which the early Church understood the Eucharist to be a sacrifice. What follows are some ways in which this study can contribute to the understanding of early Christian notions of Eucharistic sacrifice.

Rather than understanding the Eucharist as the realization of a specific Jewish or Greek sacrificial meal, this author would contend that the early Church understood the Eucharist as sacrifice in the broadest sense of those sacrifices which they read about in their Old Testament. In those sacrifices, an offering is brought forth to God in a worthy manner, over which a qualified presider prays, and from which blessings are given to those who participate.

At a minimum, the early Church understood the Eucharist to be a sacrifice in the sense that by partaking, the church is making an offering to God. What offering can be brought before the God who stands in need of nothing? For the Church to participate in the “new oblation of the new covenant,” they are to offer ordinary elements from creation in a worthy manner. When the Eucharistic prayers are said, their ordinary offering is made by God into the broken flesh and poured-out cup of Jesus, our Passover lamb. In the Eucharist,

“we offer to Him His own,” both His own creation and His own Son. Those who partake receive from God all the blessings of creation, incarnation, atonement, and resurrection.

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