

Subject: *Despising God's Name*

Scripture: *Malachi 1:6-14*

The historical setting of Malachi (“my messenger”) is a key to understanding and applying this book. This was a time of apathy and indifference toward God and the worship of God. We have a picture of God’s people and their worship about 400 years before Christ was born.

God’s people were not a reflection of the God they claimed to know and serve. They were just going through the motions of worship, and it was a disgrace to God and His grace. The NT predicts the same spiritual condition will be prevalent in the last days.

2 Timothy 3:5 *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

The people doubted God’s love (Mal. 1:1-5), and they despised God’s name (vs. 6-14).

1. The people dishonored God’s name (vs. 6)

God’s name represents all that He is. His name stands for His character (attributes). God’s people treated the character and authority of God as something common or ordinary. They were not giving God the respect and reverence He deserves.

A father deserves to be honored by his son. A master deserves to be honored by his servant. John Calvin commented: “In these two respects God had a just cause to complain of the Jews, for he had been a father to them, but they did not in turn conduct themselves as children, in a submissive and obedient manner, as they ought to have done. And farther, he became their master, but they shook off the yoke and allowed not themselves to be ruled by his authority.”

If we look at verse at verse 14, God says, “I am a great king.” God is more than a father; He is more than a master; He is a great king. He has a throne and He is seated on His throne. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He has absolute authority, everlasting authority, and complete authority over all creatures. God’s name was being dishonored by Israel, His own people, but His name will be feared among all other nations (vs. 11, 14).

2. The priests and people defiled God’s altar (vs. 7-13)

How were the people despising and dishonoring God’s name? Not by what they said, but by what they did. Their actions spoke louder than any words.

- A. Their unacceptable offerings – bringing animals that were blind, lame, sick
They wouldn’t offer this kind of animals to the governor. He would reject them and be highly offended. But yet they didn’t care to offer them to God.

This indictment against the priests is similar to what happened in the days of Eli the priest and his sons in the days of Samuel (see 1 Samuel 2:27-30).

- B. Their ungodly attitude – vs. 7b, “the table of the LORD is contemptible (to be despised)” and vs. 13, “what a weariness it is.” What used to be worship had turned into drudgery. What a terrible thing it is when God’s people become weary of worship. In the book of Revelation we get a glimpse of worship around God’s throne.

Revelation 4:8 *And the four beasts (living creatures) had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

These living creatures are similar to the seraphim that Isaiah saw in his vision (Isaiah 6). Can you imagine one of the angelic creatures saying, “Please, not another day of worship. I’m so tired of praising the King. What a weariness it is.”

What was God’s reaction to their unacceptable offerings and ungodly attitude? God says (verse 10, ESV): “Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain!”

3. They deserved God’s curse (vs. 14)

Cursed is the person who vows to give God his best but then gives Him something diseased or defective. He is foolish enough to think he can deceive God.

Our worship says a lot about us. How we worship reveals the condition of our heart. Do we worship because we want to or because we have to? Are we weary of worship or eager to worship? Are we just going through the motions of worship or is our heart really in it?

As we get ready to approach the Lord’s Table in communion, examine your heart and make sure it is acceptable in God’s sight. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Is He pleased with what He sees and knows about you?