

SUNDAY SCHOOL

H

A.P. 07-29-18

HIGHLIGHT: Malachi 1:6-14

⁶“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. But if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is your fear of Me? says Yahweh of Hosts to you priests, who despise My name.”

Yet you ask: “How have we despised Your name?”

⁷“By presenting defiled food on My altar.”

You ask: “How have we defiled You?”

When you say: “The Lord’s table is contemptible.”

⁸“When you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not wrong? And when you present a lame or sick animal, is it not wrong? Bring it to your governor! Would he be pleased with you or show you favor?” asks the Lord of Hosts.

⁹“And now ask for God’s favor. Will He be gracious to us? Since this has come from your hands, will He show any of you favor?” asks the Lord of Hosts. ¹⁰“I wish one of you would shut the temple doors, so you would no longer kindle a useless fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you,” says the Lord of Hosts, “and I will accept no offering from your hands.

¹¹“For My name will be great among the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting. Incense and pure offerings will be presented in My name in every place because My name will be great among the nations,” says Yahweh of Hosts.

¹²But you are profaning it when you say: “The Lord’s table is defiled, and its product, its food, is contemptible.”

¹³You also say: “Look, what a nuisance!” “And you scorn it,” says the Lord of Hosts. “You bring stolen, lame, or sick animals. You bring this as an offering! Am I to accept that from your hands?” asks the Lord.

¹⁴“The deceiver is cursed who has an acceptable male in his flock and makes a vow but sacrifices a defective animal to the Lord. For I am a great King,” says Yahweh of Hosts, “and My name will be feared among the nations.



EXPLAIN

Even though we don't know much about the author of Malachi, we do know whose message it is, for God is the speaker in 47 of the 55 verses it contains. After the Temple was rebuilt in 515 B.C., proper worship of Yahweh had resumed. But by the time that the Word God delivered through Malachi came, worship had also stagnated and become corrupt. In today's passage we are going to see how the Lord views corrupt worship and discover how we can avoid letting our worship of the King of Kings stagnate.

- v.6** When the Lord instructed Moses to go to Pharaoh, He said to tell Pharaoh that "Israel is My firstborn son" (Ex. 4:22). He also makes it clear that Israel is God's servant (Deuteronomy 10:12). So when Israel heard this talk about sons and servants in verse 6, it would have brought back memories of the privileges they enjoyed as God's chosen people when the relationship was right. When we are far from the Lord, we can look back at what it was like when our relationship was right, as well.

- vv.7-8** The Lord draws an interesting parallel in these two verses: He parallels the altar with the Lord's table. This is a useful illustration of our offerings to the Lord which is made sharper by the Lord's sharp rebuke at the end of verse 8: "Bring it to your governor! Would he be pleased with you or show you favor?" Since their offerings were frequently animals, comparing them to a meal you would set before a distinguished guest is an effective way to think of them. God is asking, "would you set rotten meat on the Governor's table? No? Then why do you keep sacrificing only what's left to me?" How often do we give God what's left over instead of what's best?

- v.10** God is not ordering that they stop sacrificing or worshipping Him; He's demanding that they quit the religious charade they're involved with. Simply showing up and doing what they were told to do (even though they couldn't even do *that*) does not cut it. David wrote in Psalm 51:16-17, "You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit." Even if the priests in Malachi were doing the right thing, they weren't doing it out of adoration and respect for God; they were doing it to check a box off of a long list of things they had to do.

- v.11** There will be a time when every single person will understand the greatness of God, yet these priests can't even do *the very thing they were called to do* correctly. What would it look like if the focus of every one of our actions was to make Malachi 1:11 happen? May we do all things as to make God's name great among the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting.



A**APPLY**

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you read in the text?
2. What was something that you did recently that excited you? When was a time you had to do something you weren't excited about doing? Have you ever done something with an apathetic attitude?
3. What was the issue God had with how the Priests were worshipping? What do you think that worship is? How do you fight against an apathetic attitude toward worship?
4. What do you think are some ways that we profane God's name and trivialize our approach to the King of Kings today, whether it be intentionally or unintentionally?
5. What does it look like for someone to honor God with their daily life? Share an area you can improve on.

R**RESPOND**

- Write down one step you can take toward fulfilling your answer to Question 5.
- Is your primary focus on temporal things or spiritual things? (Do you find yourself squeezing things of God into your busy schedule or do you fit your schedule around the things of God?)

