

I. **Introduction**

A. The prophet Malachi appeared to the Jews in a time when, by all outward appearances, the Jews seem to have it made.

1. Yes, in the past, they had been guilty of being carried away by all manner of false doctrine - chasing after the idols and wickedness of their neighbors.
2. But, God had punished them with seventy years of Babylonian captivity.
 - a. During that captivity, they had learned their lessons.
 - b. They have:
 - (1) Returned to Judah.
 - (2) Rebuilt the city of Jerusalem.
 - (3) Rebuilt the temple.
 - (4) Restored the Levitical priesthood.
 - (5) Re-instituted temple worship and animal sacrifices.
 - c. Most importantly, they have learned their lesson about idol worship.
 - (1) From the time the Jews returned to Jerusalem, they never again had a problem with idolatry as a nation.
 - (2) They had learned their lesson well that they were to worship God and Him alone.

B. Yet, God sends Malachi to them to warn them that their worship still is not good enough.

1. What is it that God could possibly have against them?
2. They showed no reverence for God in their worship.

"A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'"

(Malachi 1:6 NKJV)

- a. God tells them that they have failed to show Him a proper honor and reverence.

(1) A good son will honor his father.

(a) As a father, I can tell you that there is no greater feeling than to have one of my sons to hug me and tell me, "I love you, Daddy."

(b) A good son will honor his father out of love.

(2) A servant will honor his master.

(a) While the relationship may be different, the servant still gives honor to the master.

(b) He recognizes that the master holds a position of authority over him.

(c) He respects him and honors him as his master.

(3) The reality is that God was both a Father and a Master to the Jews.

(a) He was worthy of a double honor.

i) As their Father, they ought to have honored Him out of love.

ii) At the very least, as their Master, they ought to have honored Him out of respect for His position over them.

(b) Yet, God asks them, "If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?"

(c) They had failed to show God proper reverence.

b. Worse yet, God points out that they did not even realize how they had neglected to show Him proper reverence.

(1) They could only see the things they had done right.

(a) We have:

i) Rebuilt the temple.

ii) Restored the priesthood.

iii) Re-instituted the animal sacrifices.

iv) Remained loyal to God alone.

(b) What more could God possibly expect from us?

- (2) They were a nation that could not see its own sin.
 - (a) Throughout the book of Malachi, God portrays the Jews as a people who do not see how they have neglected to honor God.
 - (b) They are so blinded by their own self-righteousness, that they cannot see their sins.
3. A major problem with the Jews was still with their worship.
 - a. In the rest of **Malachi 1**, God proceeds to point out some of the problems with their worship.
 - b. With the remainder of our time, we want to study those problems and make some applications to our own worship.

II. ***True Worship Does Not Offer Our Second-Best***

⁷ "You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.' ⁸ And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts. ⁹ "But now entreat God's favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts. ¹⁰ "Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you," Says the LORD of hosts, "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands." (**Malachi 1:7-10** NKJV)

- A. God tells them that their sacrifices are contemptible, because they were only offering Him their leftovers.
 1. They were offering sacrifices that were blind, lame, or sick.
 - a. In other words, they were only offering animals that had no value to them.
 - b. These animals were going to have to be slaughtered anyway - they might as well be used as sacrifices.

2. God tells them that as long as they are offering such sacrifices, they were wasting their time in worship.
 - a. God was not going to accept them favorably.
 - b. In fact, God calls upon someone to shut the doors of the temple, so that they could not offer sacrifices at all.
 - c. As long as they were only bringing God the leftovers, they might as well not be offering sacrifices at all.
3. When we approach God with our offerings of worship, God demands our very best!
4. The Jews are offering God these lame, blind, and sick animals, and then they are left scratching their heads wondering why God is not pleased with their sacrifices.
 - a. God calls them on it, asking them, "Do you not think that it is evil for you to offer such sacrifices?"
 - b. "If your sacrifices are so special, then why don't you bring these same offerings to your governors?"
 - (1) By this time, the Jews have governors that have been placed over them.
 - (2) They were expected to give a certain portion of their flocks to the governors as a form of taxation.
 - (3) God asks them, "If these sacrifices are so good, then why don't you give them to your governors?"
 - (a) How did they think their governors would respond to such offerings?
 - (b) They knew their governors would never accept these offerings - they only wanted the best.
 - (c) So, why did they think God would accept these same offerings?
- B. Brethren, God is not interested in having our leftovers!
 1. How much are you really giving to God?
 - a. Are you setting aside a portion of your blessings to give back to God, or do you simply give God what you have

left over at the end of the week?

- b. Are you setting aside time for Him (time to spend in worship, personal study, or service); or are you simply giving God the time that you have left over after you have done everything else (work, family time, hobbies, and chores)?
2. Again, let us look at the test that God puts before the Jews.
 - a. Would your boss be pleased with you if you put the same amount of effort and energy into your job that you put in your service to God?
 - b. Brethren, God wants our very best!
 - (1) He does not want us offering things that have no value to us.
 - (2) In a very real way, our offerings to God show just how much we really love God.
 - (a) If we love God, then we are going to give Him our very best.
 - (b) We are not going to offer Him our leftovers!
 - c. Are you giving God your very best?

III. True Worship Does Not Grow Weary

¹¹ "For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts. ¹² "But you profane it, In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.' ¹³ You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it,' Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD. (Malachi 1:11-13 NKJV)

- A. The second problem with the Jewish sacrifices is the fact that they considered them to be a weariness.

1. Oh, they continued to offer the sacrifices because they knew that God expected them - even demanded them.
 - a. Keep in mind, they have spent seventy years in exile for offering sacrifices to false gods and for failing to offer sacrifices to the God of heaven.
 - b. They have learned that lesson.
 - c. So, they are going to continue to make sure that animals are being offered as sacrifices.
2. But, their hearts are certainly not in their worship.
 - a. They sacrifice, because they have to sacrifice - not because they want to sacrifice.
 - b. The sacrifices had become a weariness to them.
 - (1) It was something that had to be done.
 - (2) So, they endured it.
3. Notice, that this weariness had a great deal to do with what they were offering.
 - a. Because they viewed it as a burden and weariness, they offered God animals that were sick, lame, and *even stolen!*
 - b. They only did as much as they thought they had to do in order to get by.
- B. What is really intriguing about this passage is the contrast that God offers between the Jews and the Gentiles.
 1. In this passage, God is speaking about the lengths that the Jews were willing to go to in order to avoid worshiping God.
 2. On the other hand, God speaks of a time when the Gentiles would gladly offer worship to God - not because they had to, but because they wanted to!
 - a. From sunup to sundown, the Gentiles would praise God.
 - b. Their offerings would be pure and pleasing to God, because they worshipped Him out of desire!

"Where is My Reverence?"

Malachi 1:6-14

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- C. Brethren, I have to tell you that worship ought to be a pleasure and a joy for us - not a burden!
1. We should never view the assembly of God with dread or as something that we just have to do!
 2. We ought to want to come together to worship a God:
 - a. Who created us.
 - b. Surrounded us with blessings.
 - c. Sent His Son to die upon the cross for us.
 3. It should be a joy for me to be able to:
 - a. Pray to the God of heaven, and to know that He is listening to me.
 - b. Sing songs of worship and praise to God.
 - c. Study God's word.
 - (1) I love to preach and teach - and, I love the study that goes with preparing lessons.
 - (2) I also love it when I have the opportunity to hear other men proclaim the gospel of Christ.
 - d. Give back an offering to God.
 - e. Remember the sacrifice of Christ in the Lord's Supper.
 4. True worship is not a burden that God has placed upon us.
 - a. It is a privilege that God has passed on to us!
 - b. We ought to be thankful for it.

IV. True Worship Does Not Withhold from God for Self

¹³ "You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD. ¹⁴ "But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished - For I am a great King," Says the LORD of hosts, "And My name is to be feared among the nations." (Malachi 1:13-14 NKJV)

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- A. A third reason that God finds their worship to be contemptible is the fact that they found reasons to hold back their offerings to God so that they might keep them for themselves.
1. Again, it has to do with the fact that they would keep the good for themselves, while they offered God what was blemished.
 2. God comes back to this point in **Malachi 3:8-10**.
 - ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:8-10 NKJV)
 - a. God asks the question, "Will a man rob God?"
 - (1) Of course, our first reaction is to say that this is ridiculous.
 - (2) How can a person possibly hope to rob God?
 - (3) Yet, God tells the Jews that this is exactly what they are guilty of doing - robbing God!
 - b. How had they robbed God?
 - (1) They had robbed Him by withhold their offerings to Him!
 - (2) They had heaped up their own storehouses, but God's house remained empty - because they had not given God His proper due!
- B. Brethren, when we fail to give back to God, we are in effect guilty of robbing God!
1. Do we not understand that everything that we have belongs to God?
 - a. God made it.
 - b. It is His by right.

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- c. While He has certainly given us use of His creation, it still belongs to Him.
- d. We ought to have a desire to give back to Him, so that it might be used for His own purposes:
 - (1) To feed the sick.
 - (2) To clothe the poor.
 - (3) To teach the lost.
- 2. Brethren, if we truly love God, then we will gladly give to God - and we will give generously!

V. **Conclusion**

- A. Does God have our reverence?
 - 1. Is our worship something that has to be done, so we seek to meet the minimum requirements?
 - 2. Do we gladly approach God in worship, because He is God and we desire to honor Him?
- B. Where is our reverence for God?