

MALACHI: CALL TO OVERCOME SPIRITUAL APATHY
II: Overcoming Disrespect For God In Our Worship
(Malachi 1:6-14)

I. Introduction

- A. About 100 years after the Hebrew exiles had returned from Babylon and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple, their “initial enthusiasm had worn off,” with life and worship becoming mere routines. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, “Introduction to the Book of Malachi: The Times,” p. 1325)
- B. God raised up Malachi to call the people to repentance from spiritual apathy, and Malachi 1:6-14 addressed the issue of disrespect for God in Israel’s worship. We view the passage for our insight and application:

II. Overcoming Disrespect For God In Our Worship, Malachi 1:6-14.

- A. The Lord noted that in a normal society of Malachi’s era, a son honored his father and a servant his master, Malachi 1:6a. This statement set the stage for God’s comparing His relationship to Israel both as her Father and as her Master, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1577.
- B. God then asked that since He was Israel’s Father, where was His honor, and since He was her Master, where was His respect, and He directed this question to the priests who served Him in the temple, Malachi 1:6b.
- C. The Lord added that the priests actually despised His name (Malachi 1:6c), so Malachi voiced the response of the priests who would ask how they had despised God’s name, Malachi 1:6d.
- D. God charged that the priests offered defiled “food” on His altar, Malachi 1:7a. The offerings of God were figuratively called His “food” in Leviticus 21:6, and since Leviticus 22:17-30 provided “specific instructions on what constituted defective sacrifices,” what the priests would certainly have known, they did not say, “We have not defiled You,” but instead asked “how” they profaned the Lord, Malachi 1:7b. “Apparently they had become so hardened and had so rationalized their sin that Malachi could portray them as daring God to spell out their wrongs,” Ibid.
- E. The Lord charged that they had profaned Him by saying that the Lord’s “table,” figurative for the altar of burnt offering where His figurative “food” was offered, was contemptible, a charge verified in their actions of “disregarding God’s requirements concerning the kinds of sacrifices that should be placed on it,” what was “deserving of death (Lev. 22:9),” Ibid., p. 1577-1578; Malachi 1:8a.
- F. The priests were offering blind, crippled and diseased animals (v. 13) in violation of Leviticus 22:18-25 and Deuteronomy 15:21, and to show how repulsive this was even in their human culture, God ironically suggested that they try offering such animals as gifts to their governor, and no governor would be happy with such animals! (Malachi 1:8b; Ibid., p. 1578)
- G. God asked that if the worshippers tried to give such imperfect sacrifices to God and then tried to entreat the Lord’s favor with such sacrifices, were the worshippers to think that God would grant them their requests, a question that expected a “No!” response, Malachi 1:9. Therefore, the Lord said that He would wish someone of the priests would shut the doors of the temple to keep any priest from kindling a fire on His altar with such polluted offerings from their hands, Malachi 1:10.
- H. The Lord explained that in the Millennial Kingdom to come, from the rising of the sun to its setting, His name would be respected among the nations, that in every place incense would be offered to His name in a pure offering, for His name would be great among the nations, Malachi 1:11.
- I. However, in the temple in Malachi’s day, the priests said that the Lord’s “table” was defiled and its food contemptible, not caring to correct the wrongs, and in an attitude of contempt they belittled the Lord’s “table” and thus the Lord Himself by offering blemished animals that God could not accept, Malachi 1:12-13.
- J. In Malachi 1:14, the prophet addressed the specific sacrifices given for the payment of vows, Ibid., p. 1579. Though making a vow was not required, if one made such a vow to the Lord, he was required to pay it (Deuteronomy 23:21-23), and Leviticus 22:17-25 directed the priests what kinds of sacrifices were required for the payment of these vows; Ibid. Thus, God critiqued the bringing of blemished animals to pay for vows, like bringing a blemished female when an unblemished male was required, Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Malachi 1:14. God was a Great King, and His name was revered among the nations, so Israel’s sacrifices needed to reflect it.

Lesson: *God called the priests to offer biblically acceptable sacrifices that showed respect for the Lord if they would desire God’s favor and blessing, for the Lord was a Great King Who deserved to be honored and respected.*

Application: *May we revere God in our worship by giving of our best in all that we do in our worship of the Lord.*