

Title: DISHONORING THE LORD

Text: Malachi 1:6-10

Intro: The Lord is great (**Psa. 145:3**) over all the earth. Here, God's people failed to properly honor Him. Since Israel was supposed to fear God and love Him wholeheartedly (**Deut. 6:3, 5**), the severity of her spiritual condition was truly alarming. Again, the Lord reminds and rebukes Israel.

I. THE CHARGE OF DISRESPECT (Mal. 1:6)

In every civilized society, it is a rule that a son honors his father and a servant fears his master. God was like a father to Israel (see **Exo. 4:22; Hos. 11:1**). The fifth of the Ten Commandments teaches that children are to honor both of their parents (**Exo. 20:12; Deut. 5:16**). Rebellious children who despise discipline were to be stoned and killed under Mosaic Law (**Deut. 21:18-21**)! Praise God, we are under the NT grace period! I just wonder how many children today would have died long ago if such OT law was still imposed?

Should the nation which was considered a "firstborn son" of the Lord be less obedient and so careless? That is why God's question was so sharply declared, "**If then I be a father, where is mine honour?**" (**1:6a** cf. **Isa. 1:2**)

Notice also that the Lord is Israel's Master (**Isa. 44:1-2**). How could this nation that was the Lord's chosen servant be disrespectful to Him? The Lord's second question was, "**If I be a master, where is my fear?**" (**1:6b** cf. **Isa. 1:3**)

II. ISRAEL'S QUESTION OF THE CHARGE (Mal. 1:6)

"**O priests, that despise my name...**" (**1:6c**). This charge is sad since after their return from exile, priests were liable to teach the people of God's covenant and turn their hearts back to Him (**Mal. 2:7; Ezra 7:10**). If the priests failed to honor God, what could be expected of the people?

III. THE PROOF OF GOD'S CHARGE (Mal. 1: 7-10)

Mal. 1:7> The Lord's reference to "**polluted bread**" should have caused the priests to repent. They had specific directives concerning defective sacrifices (**Lev. 22:18-25**).

They were strictly warned against offering such sacrifices lest the priests profane God's name (**Lev. 21:6; 22:2, 32**). Yet the priests were guilty of that very sin God warned about – offering “**polluted bread**” to God (**Mal. 1:7**).

The priests asked, “**Wherein have we polluted and despised thee?**” The priests were so insensitive to their sin and greatly unaware that they have been despising the Lord through the very holy work He had appointed them to do!

Malachi answered that they had defiled God by saying, “**the table of the Lord is contemptible...**” (**1:12**). The fact that the priests called the Lord's table contemptible was proven by their very actions. They were treating God's table with contempt by disregarding His requisites concerning the quality of sacrifices that should be placed on it. Also, their contempt worsened as they themselves were required to eat from those blemished sacrifices. This made them very guilty, deserving of capital punishment!! (**Lev. 24:9** cf. **22:8-9**)

Mal. 1:8a> Malachi pointed out that the priests brought **blind, lame and sick animals** as sacrifices (cf. **1:13**). He asked if it was **evil**. Their answer based on **Lev. 22:18-25** and **Deut. 15:21**, should have been **YES**. It was to their shame that such basic things had to be pointed out to them!

Mal. 1:8b> Ironically, Malachi suggested, “**Offer it now unto thy governor!**” The governor's table was a lavishly prepared banquet (**Neh. 5:17-18a**) including “free will offerings” from the people. Any governor would not have been pleased with food prepared from rejected animals. In fact, he would surely not give any thought of accepting it.

Mal. 1:10>How absurd it was to expect God's favor by offering flawed sacrifices to Him! God declared that it was useless to light the fires on the altar of burnt offering and that the whole temple service might as well be shut down!

Conclusion: The lesson for us in this Bible study is very clear and simple – God as our Father and Master is never pleased with just any religious ceremonies, formalities and rituals. God would only accept the best of the time, abilities, talents, and offerings from His children (cf. **Psa. 24:3-5**).