

# Malachi 1 Commentary

## THE ORACLE OF THE WORD OF JEHOVAH THROUGH MALACHI

(Malachi 1:1)

(Malachi means "My Messenger" or "Messenger of Jehovah")

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<b>Mal 1:1-5</b>	<b>Mal 1:6-2:9</b>	<b>Mal 2:10-3:15</b>	<b>Mal 3:16-4:3</b>	<b>Mal 4:4-6</b>
<b>Love of God for Israel Rejected!</b>	<b>Rebuke of Sins of Priests:</b> Illicit Practices Indifference	<b>Rebuke of Sins of People:</b> Mixed Marriages Divorces Robbing God	<b>Blessing to All Who Fear Jehovah God's Wrath on the Wicked</b>	<b>Remember the Law Promise of... Elijah, Restore Hearts Warning of... Day of the Lord</b>
<b>PRIVILEGE OF ISRAEL</b>	<b>POLLUTION OF ISRAEL</b>		<b>PROMISE TO ISRAEL</b>	
<b>PAST CARE</b>	<b>PRESENT COMPLAINT</b>		<b>FUTURE COMING</b> (See also Mal 3:1-6)	
<b>GOD'S COMPASSION for Israel</b>	<b>GOD'S COMPLAINT Against Israel</b>		<b>GOD'S CONSOLATION to Righteous Remnant GOD'S CONDEMNATION of Wicked</b>	
			<b>Mal 3:16</b> <b>Book of Remembrance</b>	<b>Mal 4:1</b> <b>Coming of Messiah</b>
				<b>Mal 4:4</b> <b>Coming of Elijah</b>
	GOD'S LOVE SADLY SPURNED!		GOD'S GRACE STILL OFFERED!	
<b>PLACE: JERUSALEM</b>				
<b>TIME OF WRITING:</b> Difficult to Date but... <b>Circa 445-420BC</b>				

Remember that all the OT writings are of value to our spiritual life and growth, Paul writing...

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction (teaching), that through perseverance and the encouragement of the **Scriptures** (Refers here to the entire OT) we might have hope. (Ro 15:4)

**Comment** - Here is my "loose paraphrase" of this passage: Malachi was written for our instruction that thru the perseverance and the encouragement of the God of Malachi the thoughts and actions of Israel in Malachi we too might have hope in the midst of our trying circumstances. (Real Life Version)

**Corollary** - If you don't believe the Bible (and if you don't read and study the OT) you will be hurting for hope and confidence in the future.

**Ray Stedman:** The Old Testament is really the richest commentary ever written on the New Testament. If you are coming to a place where faith is beginning to fail and your heart finds itself in the grasp of doubt, then turn

to the record of God at work with men of the Old Testament. You will find, as you read thoughtfully, that your faith will begin to flame up again because "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," {cf, Ro 10:17}. It's as the Word of God rings in our ears that faith is created in our hearts to lay hold of the truth we hear, and to make it available in our lives.

Now these things (What things? 1Cor 10:4-5) happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. (1Cor 10:6)

Now these things (What things? 1Cor 10:7, 8, 9, 10) happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Cor 10:11)

As **Robert Rayburn** says the

minor prophets are for many of us *terra incognita*, unknown territory, and I want to overcome your sense that the message of these prophets is inaccessible, inscrutable, or too far removed from the issues of your own lives. I love to help you see how down-to-earth, how practical, how helpful, how relevant the prophets are. They were, after all, just the best preachers of their time.

**G Campbell Morgan:**

The prophecy reveals a sensitive God, and a stultified (proved to be of unsound mind, cause to appear absurd) people. Malachi declared the sensitiveness of Jehovah, and charged the people with lack of sensitiveness, hardness, callousness. The people were not conscious of their own shortcoming. They imagined they were perfectly satisfying the Divine heart, and fulfilling the Divine requirement. The book presents the picture of a people having a form, while they are devoid of power; fulfilling all the external requirements of religion, but being utterly without the internal experience; maintaining the sacramental symbols, while destitute of the spiritual grace of which those symbols should be the sign. It should be remembered that this message was delivered not to Judah, and not to Israel, if by Israel we mean the Northern kingdom. The burden of the word of the Lord was to Israel. Malachi spoke not to the ten tribes or to the two; not to the North, or to the South, as in separation from each other, but to the whole nation. When these people had returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel, and when later another contingent had returned in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the returning remnants were made up of members of all the tribes.

In the last book of the inspired history of these people, the book of Nehemiah, we saw them without a king, without a priest, and without prophet; and moreover, without any Messianic hope. To people in that condition Malachi delivered his message. As the book of Nehemiah was the last page of inspired history, the book of Malachi is the last page of inspired Hebrew prophecy.

#### **FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD**

The master thought of Malachi is that of fellowship with God. He had to deal with a people whose glorious history was that of their fellowship with Jehovah, whose shameful history was that of their infidelity to that fellowship. If that be recognized, we shall find the threefold permanent value of this book.

It is first, a revelation of the unfailing love of Jehovah. It is secondly, a revelation of human infidelity. It is finally, a revelation of the secrets of strength in an age of failure. Let us take these in order.

#### **REVELATION ONE: UNFAILING LOVE OF JEHOVAH**

First, its revelation of the unfailing love of Jehovah. If we read this prophecy, listening for the master tone of it, we shall find it to be that of love, the love of God. Its opening words are almost startling, "**The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, saith Jehovah.**" That is the whole burden. "**I have loved you, saith Jehovah.**" Our translation does not quite convey all the forcefulness of the thought. The tense employed is not exactly the Hebrew tense, nor have we any tense that exactly answers the Hebrew. I do no violence to the declaration that fell from the lips of Malachi if I render it thus,

**I have loved you, I do love you, I will love you,  
saith Jehovah.**

It is a declaration of the continuity of His love. That is the opening statement; the burden of the book is that of the constancy of the love of God. God sent that message to His people, when the nation was without king, priest, or prophet, when the nation consisted of a remnant satisfied with formality and lacking power (cp 2Ti 3:5), when the spokesmen of the nation answered the prophet by denying his charges, so callous had they

become. There was to be no other voice until the herald (John the Baptist) should announce the Advent of the King. The last message of Isaiah's thunder had died away. Jeremiah's lamentations were almost forgotten. Malachi, the last prophet, came declaring, "**I have loved you, saith Jehovah,**" and right through the prophecy that is the master note of the music. It rises high above all the other notes. Whether we listen to the thunders of judgment, or to the plaintive complaint, we hear the great love-song of Jehovah. Malachi charged the people with profanity, sacrilege, greed, indifference; he charged them with perversion of the moral order, calling good evil and evil good; he charged them with robbing God in that they did not bring the whole tithe to His altars; he charged them also with blasphemy, in that they said, "There is no value in serving God." These charges reveal in every case the consciousness of love in the presence of sin. It is love that is wounded. The book, therefore, is a revelation of the **constancy of love**, the **consciousness of love**, and the **courage of love**.

The chief sinfulness of form without power is that it hurts the heart of God. The one master note of the message which God sends to every age of failure is that which affirms the constancy of His love.

**Then, in contrast, we have the revelation of human failure. This prophecy teaches that all motives other than love fail to produce maintenance of true relationship to love.** It is possible to attend the temple, bend the knee, and make an offering regularly, but unless there is love in the heart there is no communion with God. To go to the temple merely as a matter of duty is to blaspheme. To carry offerings to the house of God simply because it is commanded, is to be guilty of sacrilege. There is only one motive sufficiently strong to maintain the relation between the heart of God and the heart of man, and that is love. When these people lost their love for Jehovah, all their religious observances became as tinkling brass and a clanging cymbal, noise without music.

The death of love issues in callousness. Think how surprising a thing it is, that when the last prophet came with his message, "I have loved you, saith Jehovah," the people answered, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" That is the inspiration of all sin, and when we consider it, and wonder at it, we have no astonishment at all the other charges which Malachi brought against these people. The hour in which we cease to love God is the hour in which we begin to wonder whether God loves us. Then form is robbed of power, and form without power is not only useless, it is paralysis, blight, mildew; and when the matchless music of the Divine love is declared by the messenger of love, the formal religionists will say "Wherein?"

#### Irving Jensen:

The main subjects of Malachi's message were the **love** of God, the **sin** of the priests and people, **judgment** for sin, and **blessing** for righteousness. One cannot help but observe that the Gospel of God has been the same message for sinners of all generations....

In many respects it is a sad book, because it reveals what little progress—if any—Israel had made since the nation was born fifteen hundred years earlier (Gen 12). Dark and distressing as this is, however, the sun of God's grace arises out of its pages; so, when the reader has arrived at the last verses, there is no question but that in the end the day of glory will come for a repentant Israel, as well as for all believers.

#### James Van Dine:

Last words are always important. Malachi is the last word of the Old Testament. It is mostly criticism—a reminder that Israel was still in need of a **New Covenant**, with a new spirit and motivation (cf. Jer 31:31; Ezek 36:26–27). But it also contains encouragement, for it reminds Israel that Yahweh was indeed coming and that His coming would not only bring judgment but restoration and blessing as well. While awaiting that glorious appearing, Israel is exhorted to give attention to the essence of Torah because it still had value for regulating the life of the community and for exalting Yahweh's name among the nations. ([Analysis of Malachi](#))

**Malachi** is difficult to date because there are no specific historical events or reigning kings mentioned. Most estimates place the writing between 445-420BC overlapping with the book of Nehemiah, and most scholars agree that Malachi is the last book written in the OT canon. The three post-exilic prophets are Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi.

**Jensen** adds that the following facts support the dating of Malachi in the range of 445-420BC...

- 1) The Temple project had already been completed, and Mosaic sacrifices were being offered (Mal 1:7–10; 3:1, 8).
- 2) A Persian governor, not Nehemiah, was ruling the Jews at the time. Mal 1:8.
- 3) The sins denounced by **Malachi** were the same sins that **Nehemiah** dealt with during his second term. E.g.:

laxity and corruption of priests (Mal 1:6–2:9; Neh 13:1–9); mixed marriages (Mal 2:10–16; Neh 13:23–28); neglect of tithes (Mal 3:7–12; Neh 13:10–13)

**G Campbell Morgan** elaborates on point #3 above...

The reading of these passages is quite sufficient to show that the general conditions described at the close of the book of Nehemiah were identical with the conditions to which Malachi's message was addressed. Nehemiah deplored the defiled and corrupted priesthood. Malachi's central charge was that the priesthood had corrupted the covenant. Nehemiah dealt with the mixed marriages and the evil resulting therefrom. Malachi's message was directed against the same evil which was cursing the people. Nehemiah charged the people with neglecting to bring the tithe into the storehouse and so making it necessary for the Levites to turn from the service of the house of God to earn their own living upon the soil. Malachi uttered a complaint in the presence of the same neglect, there being a deeper spiritual note in his word, in that he recognized the spiritual failure involved in the material which Nehemiah deplored, and against which he made his protest. ([Malachi - Living Messages](#))

Given the caveats regarding being too dogmatic on the date of Malachi, it is still profitable to make a few general approximations to help us get a sense of the times (the historical setting or context) in which Israel was living and Malachi was speaking. These days were approximately

- 100 Years after the Jews had returned to Jerusalem from 70 years of Exile in Babylon (538-537BC) So Jerusalem was rebuilt at least to some degree.
- 80 years after the Temple was rebuilt (516BC), albeit far less glorious than the Temple in Solomon's day.
- 10 years after Nehemiah had finished rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem (445BC), so that (as noted above) the sins confronted by Nehemiah were similar to those confronted by Malachi.

**G Campbell Morgan** emphasizes that it is important to understand the historical context to most accurately interpret Malachi's rather caustic message.

It would seem as though the special evils which Ezra and Nehemiah set themselves to combat still existed, side by side with correct **outward** observance. The people are seen restored to Jerusalem, their temple built, the services of the temple observed, both special fasts and feasts and regular seasons of worship.

**Malachi** marks the beginning of God's 400 years of silence broken by John's cry "Behold, the Lamb of God" Jn 1:29 (Mal 3:1)

**Malachi 1:1 The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi** (Isa 13:1 Hab 1:1 Zec 9:1 12:1)

## **MALACHI'S HEAVY BURDEN**

**Dr Charles Ryrie** has an excellent outline of this first section

**GOD'S COMPASSION FOR ISRAEL** - Malachi 1:1-5

His Compassion Declared (Malachi 1:1-2a)

His Compassion Doubted (Malachi 1:2b)

His Compassion Demonstrated (Malachi 1:3-5)

[Oracle \(Burden = KJV\) \(Dictionary articles\) \(04853\)](#)(**massa'** from **nasa'** = to lift up to carry, to bear or to support) means that which is carried, and thus a burden or load, focusing on the effort needed to transport something. Figuratively refers to a prophetic utterance. **Massa'** is used literally to describe a load or burden on an animal (Ex 23:5, 2Ki 5:17, 8:9) or man (Parts of the Tabernacle to be carried - Nu 4:15, 19, 24, 27, 31, 32, 47, 49).

In Malachi **massa'** refers to a weighty word full of meaning.

Notice that the root Hebrew verb **nasa'** can mean either to bear or to lift up. Focusing on the first meaning (to bear) has led to the meaning of **massa'** as burden, a message speaking predominantly of judgment. Other scholars have focused on the second nuance of **nasa'** (to lift up - "lifted his voice" Jdg 9:7, "cry out" in Isa 3:7) and conveys the sense of lifting up (with one's voice) whether in the form of a threat or a promise.

**Craig Blaising** notes that "In the prophetic books **maśśā'** introduces messages of a threatening nature 27 times." Indeed, the Word of the LORD is a "**heavy**" one, but in view of the fact that it is "**to** Israel" and not "**against** Israel," it is also a word of comfort (E.g., cf

promises of future consolation, Mal 3:1, Mal 4:2).

**Blaising** adds that...

Standing alone at the beginning of Malachi, the word *maśśā'* gives this prophet's entire message a sense of anxiety and foreboding.

**John Piper** gives two reasons explaining why Malachi's message was a "**burden**"...

One is that the word of God is never light and trifling. It is always weighty and serious and heavy. I don't mean dull, or boring, or morose. I mean it is always substantial. There is no mirage in the word of God. It's always meaty—even the milk is meaty. The word of God comes to a prophet as a burden because it is so thick and rich with truth.

The other reason that the word of God is called a **burden** is because even when it's good news, it will be rejected by many. You remember how Isaiah groaned under the weight of his preaching ministry (in Isa 6:11-note)? Why? Because even the glorious things that he spoke made the heart of the people fat and their ears heavy and their eyes shut (Isa 6:10-note). And he cried out (in Isa 53:1), "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" So the word of the Lord is a **burden** because it meets with opposition. Words designed for life become the aroma of death for those who are perishing.

My understanding of what it means to be a faithful pastor is that I should take up the **burden** of each text that I preach on, and deliver it to you as my own **burden** with as much of the spirit and truth of the text as God gives me. So I come this morning with a **burden**—a burden first because the word of God in this text is weighty and because I know that not all will believe what I say. ([The Greatness of God's Electing Love](#))

**Spurgeon** adds...

The prophets of old were no triflers. They carried a **burden**. The servants of God mean business; they have something to carry, worth carrying. Those who speak for God must not speak lightly. God's true servants, who are **burdened** with His Word, right willingly and cheerfully carry that burden. We bear a **burden** indeed, but we should be sorry not to bear it.

**Why is the word of the Lord a burden to him that speaks it?** It is a **burden** because it is the Word of the Lord.

1. The Word of the Lord becomes a **burden** in the reception of it. No man can preach the Gospel aright until he has had it borne into his own soul with overwhelming energy. True preaching is artesian, it wells up from the great depths of the soul.

2. The Word of God is a **burden** in the delivery of it. He that finds it easy to preach, will find it hard work to give an account of his preaching at the last great day. To speak aright, God's Word beneath the Divine influence is, in the speaking as well as in the getting of the message, the burden of the Lord.

3. When we have preached, the Gospel becomes a **burden** in after consideration. If God sends any of us to do good to our fellow-men, and to speak in His name, the souls of men will be a perpetual burden to us. (For Spurgeon's other 4 points of why God's Word is a burden see [The Burden of the Word of the Lord](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** introduces his exposition of this chapter with a church story...

A church member scolded her pastor for preaching a series of sermons on "The Sins of the Saints."

"After all," she argued, "the sins of Christians are different from the sins of other people."

"Yes," agreed her pastor, "they're worse."

They are worse, for when believers sin, they not only break the Law of God, but they break the heart of God. When a believer deliberately sins, it isn't just the disobedience of a servant to a master, or the rebellion of a subject against a king; it's the offense of a child against the loving Father. The sins we cherish and think we get away with bring grief to the heart of God.

As **Robert Rayburn** says the

minor prophets are for many of us *terra incognita*, unknown territory, and I want to overcome your sense that the message of these prophets is inaccessible, inscrutable, or too far removed from the issues of your own lives. I love to help you see how down-to-earth, how practical, how helpful, how relevant the prophets are.

**They were, after all, just the best preachers of their time.**

Malachi is all about "*preparing ourselves for God's blessing by presenting to Him the kind of lives He delights [to bless].*" [Jack Collins, Syllabus, 57] We ought all to be aspiring to do that and Malachi will tell us how. In particular it will tell us what baskets we ought to be putting our eggs in if we would bring the blessings of the Lord down upon our heads. ([STUDIES IN MALACHI No. 1](#))

**The Word of the LORD** - This phrase speaks of divine revelation and divine authority behind the Word spoken by God's prophet or "mouthpiece." The Word of **Jehovah** or **Yahweh**, the Name of God which especially recalls the fact that He is **acovenant keeping God**. Malachi is addressing the nation of Israel with whom He was in covenant, a relationship in which the priests and people had been unfaithful. In fact God's covenant with Israel was pictured as a "husband" and "wife" (Israel) relationship (Jer 31:32, cp Hos 2:19, Isa 54:5, Je 2:2, 3:14), which accounts for the frequent figurative description of Israel's unfaithfulness as spiritual "adultery" or "harlotry." For example, in the Prophecy of Ezekiel, God describes Israel's judgment for unfaithfulness declaring that...

those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, howl **(God!) have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me**, and by their eyes, which **played the harlot after their idols**; and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations. (Ezekiel 6:9)

**Constable:**

What follows is evidence that Israel was in trouble with Yahweh because the Jews had not kept the Mosaic Covenant. Yahweh, of course, was completely faithful to His part of the covenant.

The last word of the Old Testament is a reminder of the coming of this **Day of the Lord**. So is the last word of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation. Therefore it must be very important that all people remember that this day is coming and live in the light of it. Let us, too, live by meditating on God (**Ed: Meditating on His Word**) and fearing Him, maintaining fellowship with others who do the same, with our eyes on the horizon of history waiting for "**the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ**" (Titus 2:13-note). I would summarize the message of this book this way.

**Appreciating God's constant love  
is the key to revitalizing present spiritual life and  
assuring future divine blessing.**  
([Malachi Commentary](#))

**To Israel** - The recipient of Jehovah's burden of rebuke and comfort to all of **Israel** (implying all the tribes, not just the nation of Judah)

**Through Malachi** - Malachi is a "conduit" through which flows the living Word. NT believers by analogy are to be "vessels for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2Ti 2:21-note) Literally this reads "by the hand of Malachi." The **Septuagint** (Greek translation of the Hebrew) reads "by the hand of his messenger." Compare Mal 1:1 to Jer 37:2 which is literally "by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet." It is interesting that the Septuagint renders it "by the hand of his angel" or "messenger" which has led to some ridiculous interpretations such as an angel was the real author of the book or that a real angel came and explained it to the people!

**Malachi** (04401)(**malakiy** form **malak** = a messenger or an angel, the idea denoting one who is sent in place of another) means "My Messenger" or "Messenger of Jehovah." It is interesting that the word "**messenger**" (**malak**) appears 3 times in this short book (once in Mal 2:7 and twice in Mal 3:1) Scholars debate whether **Malachi** is actually the writer's name or simply the designation of an anonymous writer. If the latter, it would be the only prophetic book which is not ascribed to a specific known individual (which seems unlikely). Furthermore as **Van Dine** reasons "meanings of the names of the prophets usually have something to do with their messages, this (Malachi - "my messenger") would not be an unusual play on words." (Ibid)

Note that most of the OT prophets (major and minor) spoke before the Babylonian captivity. **Daniel** and **Ezekiel** spoke during the captivity while only **Haggai**, **Zechariah** and **Malachi** spoke after the return from exile to Babylon (thus their designation as '**Post-Exilic Prophets**")

**Henrietta Mears** observes that...

Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem and completely destroyed the Temple. This, however, did not bring the Jews to national repentance. In reading Ezra, we find that when Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree permitting all the captives to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild their Temple, only about 50,000 returned. Most of these were priests and Levites and the poorer among the people. Although the Jews increased in power and

in numbers, they never established their political independence. They were a subject people under Gentile rulers from this time on. (What the Bible is All About)

**Malachi** is unusual from several standpoints - 47 of the 55 verses are personal addresses to the LORD, the highest percentage (85%) of such a pattern in all the prophetic books. It is as if we the readers of this book are being allowed to "ease drop" on an intensely personal conversation between two parties who had drifted far apart from their original relationship (Israel drifted, not Jehovah!)

**Malachi's** message is based primarily on a repeated pattern of declaration by God (usually an accusation) followed by a question from Israel which was identified by the phrase "**you say**" in which Israel raised a doubt as to the veracity of God's accusation. God then gives a specific explanation of their sin. See Mal 1:2, Mal 1:6, 7, Mal 2:14, Mal 2:17, Mal 3:7, Mal 3:8, Mal 3:13.

**Malachi** is the only prophetic book which ends with the threat of a **curse!** (Malachi 4:6-sermon). In fact Israel would have to wait 400 years (the so called "Silent Years" during which there was no direct revelation from God) for the next **messenger** ("my messenger" = John the Baptist) who cleared the way for Jesus, the **Messenger of the Covenant** (Mal 3:1-note), Who would in turn remove the **curse** (Gal 3:13-sermon, Rev 22:3-note) and enable the NT to end with a **blessing...**

**The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen** (Rev 22:21-note)

While Malachi does not end with a word of hope, Malachi does record prophecies which clearly promise Israel a **Messianic Hope...**

Mal 3:1 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger (John the Baptist), and he will clear the way before Me. And the **Lord**, Whom you seek (the Messiah), **will suddenly come** to His temple (Lk 2:21-32,38,46); and the **Messenger of the Covenant**, in Whom you delight, behold, **He is coming**," says the LORD of hosts.

Mal 4:2 "But for you who fear My name (**Ed**: Here this equates with "believers", cp Rev 14:6-note, Rev 14:7-note) the **Sun** (cf Ps 84:11-note) **of righteousness** (The LORD our righteousness = Jer 23:5, 6; 1Co 1:30) will rise with healing in its (Lxx = genitive masculine singular = "His") wings and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall (Allusion to the Ro 11:25, 26, 27-note and the immediately following **Millennium**).

**Malachi 1:2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob;** (Dt 7:6-8 Dt 10:15 Dt 32:8-14 Isa 41:8,9 Isa 43:4 Jer 31:3 Ro 11:28,29)

What is the oracle or burden that Malachi the messenger of Jehovah is to convey? It is one of the most beautiful phrases a holy God could ever utter to children of Adam (Ro 5:12)

### **GOD'S COMPASSION DECLARED: "I HAVE LOVED YOU"**

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were ev'ry stalk on earth a quilt  
And ev'ry man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God above,  
Would drain the ocean dry.  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Tho' stretched from sky to sky.

The **NLT paraphrase** really catches the sadness and tragedy of this first interchange...

**"I have loved you deeply," says the LORD.**

**But you retort, "Really?"**

Yes "**really**" - God has really loved Israel and still really loves them! And yet they question His love...

**How have you loved us?"**

**And the LORD replies,  
"I showed my love for you  
by loving your ancestor Jacob.**

**Love** ([0157](#)) ('**ahab**) describes an affection based on a close relationship, a strong emotional attachment and desire either to



possess or to be in the presence of the object of one's love. It implies an ardent and vehement inclination of the mind and a tenderness of affection at the same time. The Bible uses 'ahab to refer to love of a man for a woman (Ge 24:67), love between a parent and a child (Ge 22:2 - first use of 'ahab in Scripture), of family love (Ru 4:15) and God's love for Israel as in our present usage (Dt 4:37, 1Ki 10:9).

**I have loved you** - The message from Jehovah begins with a clear reminder of His love for Israel. He is not speaking of love for all mankind as in Jn 3:16, but specifically of His love which prompted Him to choose Israel out of all the other nations of the world (See Levy's expansion of the meaning in the following paragraph). As noted above, the perfect tense of the Hebrew verb means "I have loved you, I do love you, I will love you." The idea is "I have loved you in the past and will continue to love you." Considering Israel's sins against God as outlined in the Book of Malachi, God's persistent love is an excellent example of unconditional love, even in the face of Israel's unfaithfulness.

**David Levy** gives an excellent summary of God's love for Israel...

**First**, His love is unconditional, for it was an act of pure grace, not dependent on anything Israel had done (Dt 7:7-8, Dt 10:15; Dt 23:5).

**Second**, God's love was sovereignly bestowed. He called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans, made a covenant with him, and confirmed it through Isaac and Jacob.

**Third**, God's love for Israel is everlasting (Jer 31:3)-a commitment He has not made with any other nation. His compassion for Israel is like that of a mother for her child. In fact, God has engraved them on the palms of His hands (Isa 49:14-16).

**Fourth**, God's love for Israel is like that of a husband and wife (Malachi 2:11).

**Fifth**, God's love for Israel is like a father's love for his son (1:6; 3:17). On two occasions He called Israel His son (Ex 4:22; Hos 11:1).

Scripture pictures Israel as the apple of God's eye (Dt. 32:10), which literally means the pupil of the eye. When we look into the eye of another, that person's pupil acts as a mirror reflecting our image. In this passage, the Jew is the reflected image from the pupil of God's eye. Israel is so precious in God's sight that the Lord protects them from danger as He would His own eye. When the Jew is afflicted, God feels it as if it had happened to Him. ([Malachi Messenger of Rebuke and Renewal David M. Levy](#))

**Matthew Henry** writes that God reminds Israel that He...

loved them because he would love them (Dt 7:7, 8), loved them in their childhood, Hos. 11:1. His delight was in them, Isa. 62:4. "I have loved you, **but** you have not loved me, nor made any suitable returns for my love."

Remember that Jesus equated **love** with **obedience**, not legalistic obedience but obedience as a loving child would show their father who loved them. And so we read His words to His disciples in the Upper Room discourse just before He went to the Cross...

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John 14:15)

**Comment:** The only way we can love Jesus in this way is by the enabling work of the the Holy Spirit in us, Who gives us both the desire and the power to obey Him (Php 2:13NLT-note). If we try to keep His commandments in our own strength we will fall into the trap of legalism and ultimately will fail to keep them!

We see God's unconditional love portrayed in His choosing Israel to be His very own possession...

Dt 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has **chosen** (Isa 41:8, 9) you to be a people for **His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 **Why did God do it this way?** The LORD did not **set His love** on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because **the LORD loved you** and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers (Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Dt 10:15 "Yet on your fathers did the LORD **set His affection to love them**, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.

Isa 43:4 "Since you (Israel) are precious in My sight, since you are honored and **I love you**, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life.

Amos 3:2 "You (Israel) only have I chosen among all the families of the earth. Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Ed: Divine "Tough Love!" a phrase we often hear today from parents of rebellious sons and



daughters!)

These previous passages are all from the Old Testament and beg the question "**Is God through with Israel as a nation, as a ethnically distinct people group**" as many in our day teach? Paul answers this question in the New Testament writing...

I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (Ro 11:1-note)....

From the standpoint of the Gospel they (Israel) are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they (Israel) are beloved for the sake of the fathers for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. (Ro 11:28-29-note)

**A C Gaebel**in: observes that Jehovah's message to Israel that "**I have loved you**" is

written large on every page of their history....And this generation, brought back through His mercy from Babylon, the generation that had listened to the marvelous words of **Haggai** and **Zechariah**, could brazenly answer back, "**Wherein hast Thou loved us?**" How deep they had sunk! Greater still is the insensibility of nominal Christendom which rejects, yea, despises, the great love wherewith He has loved us in the gift of His Son.

**Spurgeon** in His comments on Ps 46:10 ([note](#)) made an interesting statement about the **love of God** observing that...

Either by terror or love, God will subdue all hearts to Himself.

Dear brother or sister in Christ, when we find ourselves in a "slough of despond," experiencing discouragement or disillusionment in our spiritual life, even to the point that we wonder if God really loves us, we do well to re-read John's amazing declaration...

**See** (aorist imperative - command to "Just Do It!") how great (not just love, but great love!) a love the Father has bestowed (not earned, but given as a gift of grace) upon us, that we should be called **children of God**; and such we are. For this reason (Term of conclusion) the world does not know us, because (term of explanation) it did not know Him. (1John 3:1-note)

#### **And Can It Be That I Should Gain**

by Charles Wesley

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Savior's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

**But...yet** - Both are Terms of contrast - Always **pause** to **ponder** (meditate) the **passage** in the **power** of the Spirit (His teaching ministry), asking at least "**What is contrasted?**" which will force you to examine the context.

**Beloved of God, this divine declaration of redeeming love begs the question - How would we respond to Jehovah's declaration? Would we be like Israel and ask "How have You loved us God?"**

**John Piper** applies these truths to our lives asking...

How would you describe God's love to you. Is your life and family in such a shambles that you feel as skeptical about it as the Israelites did? Do you want to say, "**How hast Thou loved me?**" I don't doubt that there is a little of that in all of us. And so it will do us all good to listen to God's answer which is almost never heard today. How hast thou loved us? Answer: "Is not Esau Jacob's brother? says the Lord. Yet I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau.

**Steven Cole** observes that...

It has been observed that the opposite of **love** is often not **hatred**; it is **apathy**. I hope that no one here hates God, but some of you may have grown indifferent towards God. You may be going through all the motions of being "*a good Christian*." You go to church, you're outwardly moral, maybe you even tithe. Like a functional marriage, you have a functional relationship with God, but the passion has leaked out over the years. Perhaps you've gone through some difficult trials and you've wondered, "*If God really loves me, then why is this*

*happening to me? Why do I suffer while people who don't even believe in Christ prosper?" Malachi's audience was there.*

Keep in mind that Israel's "life and family" was to some degree in shambles" as **Piper** phrased it. Yes, the Jews were back in Israel after 70 years exile (reflecting God's faithfulness to His promise in Jer 29:10 - which should encouraged them!) but were still under Persian rule, they possessed their Temple but it was far less glorious than Solomon's Temple and finally they were experiencing both a "plague (which was) ruining (their) crops" and a loss of fruit of "the vine...before harvest" (Mal 3:11NET). And thus in light of their somewhat dismal (from a human perspective) circumstances their first of a series of replies to God's rebukes is the question "**How have You loved us?**" The implication of their question is that they deserved much better treatment than they had received!

**Logsdon** "To sin against love is more reprehensible than sinning against law, though the latter is the result of the former and is not without seriousness."

**But you say** - This identifies the first of a series of interchanges that follow the pattern of...

### God's Declaration Israel's Refutation God's Rebuttal

In short Israel's priest and people repeatedly failed to see their sin against God and their need to confess so that they might experience His mercy and forgiveness. As **Wiersbe** wisely points out "*It is a dangerous thing when people argue with God and try to defend their sinful ways.*"

ISRAEL'S REFUTATION OF THEIR SIN		
1	<b>Mal 1:2</b>	<b>But</b> you say, "How hast Thou loved us?"
2	<b>Mal 1:6</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How have we despised Thy name?'
3	<b>Mal 1:7</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How have we defiled Thee?'
4	<b>Mal 2:14</b>	<b>Yet</b> you say, 'For what reason?'
5	<b>Mal 2:17</b>	<b>Yet</b> you say, "How have we wearied Him?"
6	<b>Mal 3:7</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How shall we return?'
7	<b>Mal 3:8</b>	<b>But</b> you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?'
8	<b>Mal 3:13</b>	<b>Yet</b> you say, 'What have we spoken against Thee?'

Israel doesn't even reply to God's accusations by "**Yes, but**" but only "**But!**" There is no "Yes," no acknowledgement whatsoever of their guilt before a holy God. This reflects their intractably stony hearts, their immutably stiff necks, their unresponsive rebellious spirits! A sad state indeed, for a people chosen by God to be lights unto the Gentiles!

### GOD'S COMPASSION DOUBTED

**How have You loved us?**- Is this not brazen? Are you not shocked at the creature responding to the Creator in such a way? They question the Almighty's love. They in a sense quarrel with God's claim.

**G Campbell Morgan** sum's up Israel's attitude this way, noting that

they look at the prophet with mingled astonishment and incredulity, and they say, "**Wherein?**" (in the KJV - "**How**" in the NAS)." What do you mean? You charge us with having despised God and polluted His altar, with having wearied Him, and with wandering from and refusing to return to Him, and accuse us of robbing and speaking against Him; we don't see that we have done these things, so why should we be subjected to these accusations? You come and say we despise God's work. Look at our sacrifices and offerings! You tell us that we have polluted the altar. We have brought our gifts! You tell us that we have wearied Him. We don't see where or when! We are not conscious of having done anything to displease Him! You tell us to return. We don't see where we are to return from; we don't see where we are to return to! You tell us we have robbed God. We want to know when? You say we have spoken against God. We don't remember having spoken against Him; when was it?"

What is the significance of this word "**Wherein?**" (**How?**) These people are not in open rebellion against God, nor do they deny His right to offerings, but they are laboring under the delusion, that because they have

brought offerings, they have been true to Him all along. Theirs is not the language of a people throwing off a yoke and saying, "*We will not be loyal,*" but of a people established in the Temple. It is not the language of a people who say, "*Let us cease to sacrifice, and worship; and let us do as we please*"; but it is the language of a people who say, "*We are sacrificing and worshipping to please God,*" and yet He says, by the mouth of His servant, "*Ye have wearied Me: ye have robbed and spoken against Me*"

They have been most particular and strict in outward observances, but their hearts have been far away from their ceremonials (Isa 29:13, Mt 15:8, Mk 7:6). They have been boasting themselves in their knowledge of truth, responding to that knowledge mechanically, technically; but their hearts, their lives, their characters, the inwardness of their natures, have been a perpetual contradiction in the eye of Heaven, to the will of God; and, when the prophet tells them what God thinks of them, they, with astonishment and impertinence, look into his face and say, "*We don't see this at all!*" To translate it into the language of the New Testament—**having the form of godliness, they deny the power.**" (2Ti 3:5-note) They have passed into the fearful condition of imagining that what God asks for is but **the letter**, and they are failing to understand that **the letter** is, at best, but an awkward representation of what God is demanding in the spirit (cp 2Cor 3:6-note)...When the prophet came to these people, he came to a people who were feeling thoroughly satisfied with their religious observances, and were prepared to say, "Wherein have we done this, or failed to do that?" ([The Spirit of the Age](#))

**Steven Cole** observes that Israel was

so focused on their problems that they were oblivious to God's great covenant love towards them. It's as if God says, "I love you," and they respond, "Ho hum!"

**Matthew Henry** puts God's question and Israel's response in perspective writing...

As God traces all his favors to them to the fountain, which was His love, so He traces up all their sins against Him to the fountain, which was their contempt of His love. Instead of acknowledging His kindness, and studying what they shall render, they scorn to own that they have been beholden to Him, challenge Him to produce proofs of His love that are material, and think and speak very slightly of the instances they have had of His kindness, as if they were so few, so small, as not to be worth taking notice of, and no more than what they had sufficiently made returns for, or at least than He had sufficiently balanced with instances of His wrath. "Have we not been wasted, impoverished, and carried captive; and wherein then hast thou loved us?"

**Was not Esau Jacob's brother?** - God answers Israel's question with a rhetorical question. He asks this question because He knows that the answer to the question contains the key to understanding of His distinctive love for **Israel** (Jacob). Clearly **Esau** was **Jacob's brother**, in fact his twin brother. Not only that, but he was also the elder brother, who customarily would have received his father Isaac's blessing. **Can you see Jehovah's "logic"?** Although they were twins, **God choose Jacob**. And although Esau was the elder, **God choose Jacob**. So what does all of this say about God's love for Jacob?

**John Piper** explains that God showed Jacob...

free, sovereign, unconditional, electing love; that is how I have loved you. My love for you is electing love because I chose you for myself above your brother Esau. My love for you is unconditional love because I chose you before you had done anything good or evil—before you had met any conditions—while you were still in your mother's womb (Genesis 25:24). My love for you is sovereign love because I was under no constraint to love you; I was not forced or coerced; I was totally in charge when I set my love upon you. And my love for you is free because it's the overflow of my infinite grace that can never be bought.

Now I ask you, if you are a Christian here today, and if you say to God, "How have you loved me?" can you answer the way God answered the Israelites? Do you look at your sister or brother living in sin and tremble that you have been chosen? And that your election is not because of anything in you? And that your faith and hope are owing wholly to God? Do you look at that childhood friend or college roommate who took a turn away from God when you stayed on the path, and tremble at the awesome thought that God chose you? (Ibid)

**Yet I have loved Jacob** - Note the "bookends" of this verse are the love of God for Israel! One would think this should have given them a deep sense of conviction!

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**Returning God's Love** - The book of Malachi begins with this wholehearted word from the Lord to His halfhearted worshippers: "I have loved you" (Mal 1:2). Though Israel had long been the object of God's love, they no longer returned His love.

God listed the ways His people had offended His love through their disobedience. Israel's response was to question God. When He implored them, "Return to Me, and I will return to you," they questioned Him in their blindness, "In what way shall we return?" (Mal 3:7). With divine "tough love," the Lord exposed their many blind spots. He did this so that they might repent and accept His love, and return it with wholehearted obedience.

We too are often halfhearted in our faith, appearing to love and serve God but really loving and serving ourselves. Today, as in Malachi's time, God looks for people who reverence Him by maintaining two spiritual practices: speaking to each other about Him, and meditating on His wonderful attributes (Mal 3:16). The first is fellowship with God's people; the second is fellowship with God Himself. Not only are we to receive and share God's love, we are also to return it through glad obedience.

Such worshipers are God's "**jewels**" (Mal 3:17KJV). Are you one of them?—Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

"We love You, Lord Jesus," we often will say,  
But are we as ready His will to obey?  
Let's heed what God's Spirit would have us to do—  
That's how we show Him a love that is true.  
—D. De Haan

#### **To love God is to obey God.**

(**Ed**: Yes His Spirit **tells** us what to do but also **enables** us to do it! Php 2:13-note.

Beware of the subtle trap of legalism - "*I must do* this or that" to prove my love!

We can do nothing supernatural in reliance on our own strength! cp Jn 15:5

Remember that **Faith/Trust** includes renouncing confidence in our own power &

Relying wholly on the Holy Spirit's enabling power!

**Click for more elaboration on this topic)**

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#### **WHICH DO YOU SAY?**

**IT'S SO UNFAIR!**

or

**I'M SO UNDESERVING!**

We seem to use some things more than others—our mouths more than our ears, our stomachs more than our minds. We also seem to use the phrase "**It's so unfair!**" so much more often than "**I'm so undeserving.**"

In Malachi 1:1-5, we read about God's love for Jacob and His hatred for Esau. On the surface it seems so unfair, especially when we think about the kind of person Jacob was. He deceived his father into giving him the blessing that should have gone to his older brother Esau (Genesis 27:1ff). It's easy to think of him as a "low-down schemer."

Was God unfair to love Jacob and hate Esau? Why was Esau undeserving of God's love? These are valid questions that are difficult to answer or explain. But have we considered a more basic question: Has anyone ever been deserving of God's love? God is perfect, and even in our best moments we still struggle with sin. Dare we think we are anything but undeserving?

We do not know why God chose to love Jacob. But we do know that none of us deserves God's love. Why does He love us so much that He sent His own Son to die for our sins? We can't explain it. All we can do is respond in gratitude to God's amazing grace and love. —AL —Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Died He for me, who caused His pain?  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
—Wesley

#### **God's grace gives us what we don't deserve.**

(God's **mercy** keeps us from getting what we do deserve!

Remember also that **Grace** includes God's privileges and His power)

**Malachi 1:3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.":** (hated: Ge 29:30,31 Dt 21:15,16 Lk 14:26)(made his: Isa 34:9-12 Jer 49:16-18 Eze 25:13,14 Ezek

## **GOD'S COMPASSION DEMONSTRATED: GOD CHOSE JACOB NOT ESAU**

### **Wiersbe:**

Someone said to **Dr. Arno C. Gaebelein**, the gifted Hebrew Christian leader of a generation ago, "I have a serious problem with Malachi 1:3, where God says, 'Esau I have hated.'" Dr. Gaebelein replied, "I have a greater problem with Malachi 1:2, where God says, 'Jacob, I have loved.'" We certainly can't explain the love and grace of God, nor do we have to, but we can experience God's grace and love as trust Christ and walk with Him. The Lord is even willing to be "the God of Jacob."

**But** - A **term of contrast** should always prompt us to pause and ponder the passage in the power of the Spirit. In this context we find that this is one of the more striking contrasts in Scripture!

**I have hated Esau** - Remember that Scripture uses terms of contrast to highlight differences, in this case, God's hatred of Esau highlights his love for Jacob and his descendants. Notice that the context goes on to clearly outline the ways Jehovah "hated Esau" - laid waste Esau's hill country, gave his inheritance to the jackals, God will tear down what they build up (v4), they will be given over to wickedness (v4), they will experience God's anger forever (v4).

**I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness** - God now reminds Israel of what had He had done and will do to Esau, clear evidence that underscores the continuance of His original choice of Israel over Esau.

**Piper** reasons that God explained His love using this striking contrast ...

- To humble Israel.
- To take away Israel's presumption.
- To remove every ground of boasting in themselves.
- To cut the nerve of pride that boasts over Esau as though their salvation were owing to anything in themselves.
- To put to naught the cavalier sense of self-reliance that lets them dally enter God's presence as though they were an equal partner in this affair.
- To make them tremble with tears of joy that you belong to God.

**Scofield** offers this explanation of Jehovah's hatred of Esau...

The statement that God loved Jacob but hated Esau, must be taken as relative rather than absolute. Special blessings were promised to Esau and his descendants (Gen 27:38-40). However, the spiritual insight of Jacob was far greater, and Jacob was the one through whom the promised seed was to come. The comparison of the good things done for Jacob with those done for Esau is like the difference between loving and hating. Compare Luke 14:26, the statement that if a man does not hate his father and mother he cannot be a disciple of Christ. Love for father and mother is commanded in the Scripture (See Mt 19:19, Pr 30:17). No Christian can hate his father and mother. What is meant is that his love for Christ should be so great that, in comparison, the love for father and mother would **seem almost like** hate.

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not **hate** his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

**Wiersbe** writes...

The statement that God loved Jacob but hated Esau has troubled some people. Paul quoted it in Ro 9:10-13 to prove God's electing grace for both Israel and all who trust Jesus Christ for salvation. But the verb "**hate**" must not be defined as a positive expression of the wrath of God. God's love for Jacob was so great that, in comparison, His actions toward Esau looked like hatred....Our love for Christ may occasionally move us to do things that appear like hatred to those whom we love....

While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. 47 And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." 48 But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and

who are My brothers?" 49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! 50 "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Mt 12:46-50)

**Paul** uses this passage in his letter to the Romans writing...

And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; 11 for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, 12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER." 13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED." 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! (Ro 9:10-13-note, Ro 9:14-note)

**Malachi 1:4** Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; thus says the LORD of hosts, "They may build, but I will tear down; and men will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom the LORD is indignant forever." (but: Isa 9:9,10 Jas 4:13-16) (build: Job 9:4 12:14 34:29 Ps 127:1 Pr 21:30 Isa 10:4,15,16 La 3:37 Mt 12:30) (border: Jer 31:17 Eze 11:10 Am 6:2) (The people: Mal 1:3 Ps 137:7 Isa 11:14 34:5,10 63:1-6 La 4:21,22 Eze 25:14 35:9)

**NLT** - And Esau's descendants in Edom may say, "We have been shattered, but we will rebuild the ruins." But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may try to rebuild, but I will demolish them again! Their country will be known as 'The Land of Wickedness,' and their people will be called 'The People with Whom the LORD Is Forever Angry.'

**Edom** - The land of Esau, and used as a synonym (metonym) for Jacob's brother **Esau**.

**Though Edom says** - God emphasizes the distinction between Jacob (loved) and Esau (hated). Edom may return and build up but God will tear down. Not only that, He would be **indignant** toward Esau forever. Yes, He had disciplined His chosen people but would never be "indignant forever" with them. That's how much and how long and how freely He had chosen to love Israel.

**LORD of hosts** - The transliterated Name is **Jehovah Sabaoth or LORD of armies**. This Name of God is heavily concentrated in the Book of Malachi occurring 24 times (in every chapter) out of total of 239 uses in the OT (almost 10% in this small book).

**LORD of hosts** in Malachi - Mal 1:4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14; 2:2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 16; 3:1, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17; 4:1, 3

**LORD of hosts** - 239x in the OT - 1Sa 1:3, 11; 4:4; 15:2; 17:45; 2Sa 6:2, 18; 7:8, 26f; 1Kgs 18:15; 2Kgs 3:14; 1Chr 11:9; 17:7, 24; Ps 24:10; 46:7, 11; 48:8; 84:1, 3, 12; Isa 1:9; 2:12; 5:7, 9, 16, 24; 6:3, 5; 8:13, 18; 9:7, 13, 19; 10:26; 13:4, 13; 14:22ff, 27; 17:3; 18:7; 19:12, 16ff, 20, 25; 21:10; 22:14, 25; 23:9; 24:23; 25:6; 28:5, 29; 29:6; 31:4f; 37:16, 32; 39:5; 44:6; 45:13; 47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 54:5; Jer 6:6, 9; 7:3, 21; 8:3; 9:7, 15, 17; 10:16; 11:17, 20, 22; 16:9; 19:3, 11, 15; 20:12; 23:15f, 36; 25:8, 27ff, 32; 26:18; 27:4, 18f, 21; 28:2, 14; 29:4, 8, 17, 21, 25; 30:8; 31:23, 35; 32:14f, 18; 33:11f; 35:13, 18f; 39:16; 42:15, 18; 43:10; 44:2, 11, 25; 46:18, 25; 48:1, 15; 49:7, 26, 35; 50:18, 33f; 51:5, 14, 19, 33, 57f; Mic 4:4; Nah 2:13; 3:5; Hab 2:13; Zeph 2:9f; Hag 1:2, 5, 7, 9, 14; 2:4, 6ff, 11, 23; Zech 1:3f, 6, 12, 14, 16f; 2:8f, 11; 3:7, 9f; 4:6, 9; 5:4; 6:12, 15; 7:3f, 9, 12f; 8:1ff, 6f, 9, 11, 14, 18ff; 9:15; 10:3; 12:5; 13:2, 7; 14:16f, 21; Mal 1:4, 6, 8ff, 13f; 2:2, 4, 7f, 12, 16; 3:1, 5, 7, 10ff, 14, 17; 4:1, 3

**R L Alden** comments that

This **anti-Edom theme** recurs in the prophets (cf. Isa 11:14; 34:5-6; Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11; and all of Obadiah). Of all the enemies of Israel, Edom was perhaps the most long-lived and consistent one. The enmity began with Amalek, an Edomite (Ex17:8-16), and continued through the Exodus (Nu 14:44-45), into the period of the Judges (Jdg 3:12-13), and to the time of Saul (1Sa15:1-3) and David (1Sa 27:8). Moreover, the enemies mentioned by Ezra (Ezra 4:7) and Nehemiah (Neh 4:7) probably included Edomites (Amalekites), and this special curse directed at them would be an oblique kind of encouragement to the Israelites. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary OT 7 Volume Set: Books: Zondervan Publishing](#) or [computer version](#))

**Malachi 1:5** Your eyes will see this and you will say, "The LORD be magnified beyond the border of Israel!" (your: Dt 4:3 11:7 Jos 24:7 1Sa 12:16 2Ch 29:8 Lk 10:23,24)(The Lord: Ps 35:26,27 Ps 58:10,11 Ps 83:17,18 Eze 38:16,23 39:21,22)

Luke 10:23 And turning to the disciples, He said privately, '**Blessed** are the **eyes** which **see** the things you **see**, 24 for I say to you, that many prophets and kings wished to **see** the things which you **see**, and did not **see** them, and to hear the things which you hear, and did not hear them.'

**Your eyes will see this** - See what? The doom of Edom (Esau). When they see it, Israel will magnify the name of Jehovah. In the



context of Malachi and the sins of the priests and people, this declaration by Israel would seem to describe a **future time**, one that ultimately will be fulfilled when Messiah returns to defeat Israel's enemies and save a faithful **remnant**.

**Allan Ross** writes...

God declares that they will see (**Ed**: actually declare) the greatness of God, even beyond the land. This word anticipates the themes in this book that speak of the blessings on Israel, the salvation of the Gentiles, and the coming of the Lord to destroy all the wicked. Clearly, not everyone in Malachi's day would see all of this--they would see bits of it. But true to the prophetic style, "**you**" refers to the people of God in general, and not just the immediate audience. Likewise in Matthew 24 and 25, the "Olivet Discourse," Jesus gives the signs of His coming to the disciples in the form of "when you see ...." **But some of what He described lay off in the future.**

**Baldwin** alludes to a future fulfillment writing...

Malachi therefore expects to see a 'conversion' away from apathy to new conviction, and **it may well be that he expected an eschatological event which would demonstrate once and for all the universal dominion of the Lord.** (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary)

**John MacArthur** also alludes to a future fulfillment...

Though the Edomites would attempt to rebuild their ruins, God would negate their efforts. Israel, on the other hand, is restored; and **though complete restoration has been delayed, it will come and the nation will bear witness to God's gracious rulership, both within as well as beyond her borders** (cf. Ge 12:3; Mal 1:11, cp Ro 11:26, 27-note). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

## **GREAT IS THE LORD!**

**The LORD be magnified** - "Great is the LORD" (ESV, NAB, NIV), "The LORD is great" (CSB). The **NET Bible** renders it as a prayer ("May the LORD be magnified) from the lips of those who will see God's work, especially His faithfulness to fulfill His Word. The glorious duty of magnifying the LORD, of "making" Him great (see Spurgeon's comments below on Ps 34:3 on this seemingly "impossible" act!) is rightly recorded as the very first question and answer in the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#)...

**Q. 1.** What is the chief end of man?

**A.** Man's chief end is to glorify God, [1Co 10:31, 1Co 6:20, Isa 60:21, Rev 4:11] and to enjoy him forever. [Ps 73:25-28, Ps 16:5-11, Ps 144:15, Isa 12:2, Php 4:4, Rev 21:3-4]

**Comment:** It is important to note that we are to magnify and glorify Jehovah, not just with our lips but even more importantly with our lives (1Co 6:20, Isa 60:21), lest our praise be hypocritical, which was God's accusation of the priests and people in Israel. I

**Magnified** ([01431](#))(**gadal**) is a verb meaning to become great or to make great and refers not to numbers but only to being great in size, importance etc. Below are some other uses of **gadal** in the context of magnifying the LORD.

Ps 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, Thou art very **great**; Thou art clothed with splendor and majesty,

**Spurgeon makes the point:** the wonder expressed does not refer to the creation and its greatness, but to Jehovah himself. It is not "the universe is very great!" but "THOU art very great." Many stay at the creature, and so become idolatrous in spirit; to pass onward to the Creator himself is true wisdom.

Ps 34:3 O **magnify** the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.

**Spurgeon has a wonderful word for us:** Is this request addressed to the humble? If so it is most fitting. Who can make God great but those who feel themselves to be little? He bids them help him to make the Lord's fame greater among the sons of men. Jehovah is infinite, and therefore cannot really be made greater, but his name grows in manifested glory as he is made known to his creatures, and thus he is said to be magnified. It is well when the soul feels its own inability adequately to glorify the Lord, and therefore stirs up others to the gracious work; this is good both for the man himself and for his companions. No praise can excel that which lays us prostrate under a sense of our own nothingness, while divine grace like some topless Alp rises before our eyes and sinks us lower and lower in holy awe.

Ps 35:27 Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; And let them say continually, **The**



**LORD be magnified**, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.”

Ps 40:16 Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; Let those who love Thy salvation say continually, **“The LORD be magnified!”**

**Spurgeon:** Another result of the Redeemer's passion is the promotion of the glory of God by those who gratefully delight in his salvation. Our Lord's desire should be our directory; we love with all our hearts his great salvation, let us then, with all our tongues proclaim the glory of God which is resplendent therein. Never let his praises cease. As the heart is warm with gladness let it incite the tongue to perpetual praise. If we cannot do what we would for the spread of the kingdom, at least let us desire and pray for it. Be it ours to make God's glory the chief end of every breath and pulse. The suffering Redeemer regarded the consecration of his people to the service of heaven as a grand result of his atoning death; it is the joy which was set before him; that God is glorified as the reward of the Saviour's travail.

2Sam 7:22 “For this reason (see 2Sa 7:22) Thou **art great**, O Lord GOD; for there is none like Thee, and there is no God besides Thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

2Sam 7:26 that (conclusion from 2Sa 7:25) Thy name may be **magnified** forever, by saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is God over Israel’; and may the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee.

**Beyond the border of Israel!** - This phrase introduces a recurrent theme in Malachi -- the promotion of proper "planetary" praise!

In Malachi 3:12 we read that **"all the nations will call you (Israel) blessed, for you shall be a delightful land."** Indeed, in the end times the LORD of hosts will restore the fortunes of Israel and the nations of the world ("beyond the border of Israel") will see this supernatural (miraculous) work and understand that only Jehovah could have done this and only Jehovah is worthy of being magnified and called "Great!" Beloved, we who have the holy privilege of knowing Him today, should not let a day go by without magnifying the LORD with our life and our lips (cp our purpose in Mt 5:16).

Also in Malachi 1:11 we read **"from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, My name will be great** (adjective gadol = great in importance) **among the nations, and in every place"**. In Malachi 1:14 we read God's declaration **"I am a great** (adjective gadol = great in importance) **King...and My name is feared among the nations."**

The **Psalmist** echoes Malachi's words...

Ps 83:17 Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever; And let them be humiliated and perish, **18 That they may know that Thou alone, whose name is the LORD, Art the Most High over all the earth.**

**Spurgeon:** Hearing of the Lord's marvelous deeds in defeating such a numerous confederacy, the very heathen would be compelled to acknowledge the greatness of Jehovah. We read in 2Ch 20:30, that the fear of God was on all the neighbouring kingdoms when they heard that Jehovah fought against the enemies of Israel. Jehovah is essentially the Most High. He who is self-existent is infinitely above all creatures, all the earth is but his footstool. The godless race of man disregards this, and yet at times the wonderful works of the Lord compel the most unwilling to adore his majesty. Thus has this soul-stirring lyric risen from the words of complaint to those of adoration; let us in our worship always seek to do the same.

**Piper** explains that...

part of what it means to be loved by God is to know that God reigns—that He is great and mighty—even beyond the people called by His name. He reigns in Edom. His purposes are not ultimately frustrated by the wickedness of any people. "Great is the Lord, beyond the border of Israel!" Yes, even in Edom.

**Constable** sums up Malachi 1:1-5...

The point of this message was to get the Jews of the restoration community, who were thinking that God had abandoned them and forgotten His promises to them, to think again. Even though they seemed to be experiencing the same fate as their ancient enemy, the Edomites, God would restore them because He had entered into covenant relationship with them. He would keep His promises, both to the Israelites and to the Edomites, for better and for worse respectively.

**Malachi 1:6 " 'A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My respect?' says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My Name. But you say, 'How have we despised Your Name?': (son: Ex 20:12 Lev 19:3 Dt 5:16 Pr 30:11,17 Mt 15:4,6 19:19 Mk 7:10 Mk 10:19 Lk 18:20 Eph 6:2) (servant: 1Ti 6:1,2 Titus 2:9,10 1Pe 2:17-19) (if: Ex 4:22,23 Isa 1:2 64:8 Jer 31:9 Mt 6:9,14,15 Lk 6:36,46 1Pe 1:17)(and if: Mt 7:21 Lk 6:46 Jn 13:13-17)(O priests: Mal 2:8 1Sa 2:28-30 Jer 5:30,31 Jer 23:11 Eze 22:26 Ho 4:6 Ho 5:1)(But you say: Mal 2:14-17**

## YAHWEH'S BURDEN TO THE PRIESTS, THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS

After addressing Israel in general in Malachi 1:1-5, Jehovah begins His "complaint" against Israel by addressing Israel's **priests**, the spiritual leaders. Why the priests? Because of the principle, "Like priests, like people." In other words as the leaders of the nation go, so goes the nation. How true that is becoming in America (2012). And the sad irony is that the priests should have been the messenger's of Jehovah, but now needed to receive a message of rebuke from one whose very name was "My Messenger!"

### PROFESSION VERSUS PRACTICE

There is a disconnect between what the priest say and what they do. Their creed does not match their conduct. Their belief does not beget behavior that honors and respects God. Their doctrines are in discord with their deeds! **Of course, this never happens to us as NT believers who are priests** (1Pe 2:9) **indwelt by the enabling presence and supernatural power of the Holy Spirit...or does it?**

**A son honors his father...Then if I am a father, where is My honor?** - The LORD of hosts now presents two earthly comparisons or analogies (albeit imperfect for God is the perfect Father, the perfect Master, cp terms of comparison), would help His spiritually dull hearers get the point! The priests apparently were calling God "Father" and yet not living like His sons! See Jesus' interpretation below regarding who is the real "father" of unbelievers.

This plea to the father-son relationship should have been significant to any of the priests who had children, for their personal experience would help them be better able to understand the pain of a child honoring his father with his lips but not with his life (attitudes and actions).

How does a son honor his father? Certainly by obedience but also by love, by the esteem the son has for the father who had trained him in the way of righteousness. A son honors a father by protecting his father's reputation, by not acting or living in a profane way which would bring criticism or even contempt upon the father's reputation.

1Sa 2:30 "Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; but now the LORD declares, 'Far be it from Me—for **those who honor Me I will honor**, and **those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed**."

**A C Gaebelein** explains that...

The Lord called Israel to be His firstborn son, and therefore, nationally, He is their Father. He is the Lord, and Israel called to be His servant. But they had not honored Him, as a son should honor the father by obedience; they did not fear Him, but despised His Name.

**The Pulpit Commentary** adds an interesting note that...

Disobedience begets dislike. Submission strengthens love....Let our lives be answers to our prayers, "Hallowed be Thy Name. ([The Reverence Due to God](#))"

**Aristotle** was correct when he said...

A son must always be his father's debtor, because he can never repay him for those greatest of all benefits, birth and upbringing, and in these the fathers resemble God.

### NO REVERENTIAL FEAR OF ADONAI

**A servant his master...and if I am a Master** (see Adonai), **where is My respect** (KJV = My fear, Lxx = phobos = fear)? - The priests apparently called God "Master" in word but not in deed, and in so doing they disrespected His Lordship over their lives.

The LORD'S words here in Malachi recall His words in Luke...

And why do you **call Me, 'Lord (Master = Kurios), Lord (Master = Kurios),'** and do not **do** what I say? (Lk 6:46)

**Comment:** Do not miss Jesus' point - one's **profession** of Jesus as "**Lord**" does not necessarily correlate with one's "**possession**" of Him as Savior! In some of the most frightening words to ever come from the mouth of

our Lord, He declared

"Not everyone who says to Me, '**Lord, Lord,**' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does (present tense = one's habitual pattern of conduct) the will of My Father Who is in heaven. Many (This is frightening! Not a *few*, but *many*. Do not be deceived by those who "water down" the Gospel - the true Gospel produces a new style of life, reflecting a new heart brought about by the New Covenant in Jesus' blood - See also discussion of the vital Relationship of faith and obedience) will say to Me on that day, **Lord, Lord**, did we not prophesy in Your Name, and in Your Name cast out demons, and in Your Name perform many miracles? (Note that Jesus does not counter their claims, implying that they were true, but tragically not true evidence of saving faith! The "fruit" Jesus was looking for was obedience, not mystical experiences!) 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART** (a command!) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense = as one's general pattern of behavior - Jesus is not speaking of "perfection" but "direction" of our life - are we living lives generally aimed at heaven or at hell?) **LAWLESSNESS.**' (Mt 7:21-23-note)

As **Augustine** wisely wrote "Let the acts of the offspring indicate similarity to the Father!"

**If I am a Father** - Jews who are saved today in the New Covenant of course can call God **Father** (Jn 1:9-11, 1Jn 3:1), but there is a future day when Messiah returns and delivers the believing remnant of Israel (Ro 11:25, 26, 27-note) that all Israel (all who in that day receive Messiah as Redeemer) will call God **Father**. Lord hasten the day! Maranatha! Jeremiah describes that coming glorious day...

In those days (Always ask "When?" "In what day?" - see context Jer 3:14-17) the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel and they will come together from the land of the north to **the land** (The Land of Israel - promised not to the church but to Israel) that I gave your fathers as an inheritance (Ge 15:18). Then (expression of time = "then" marks an event in a sequence of events) I said, 'How I would set you among My sons, and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful inheritance of the nations!' And I said, '**You shall call Me, My Father, and not turn away from following Me.**' (Jer 3:18-19) (Why will Israel not turn away from following Jehovah at that time? Because they will have received a new "circumcised" heart cp Dt 30:5-6, Ro 2:28, 29-note. They will have entered into the New Covenant [see Why the New is Better] promised to Judah and Israel in Jer 31:31-34 and still not completely fulfilled.)

Because of their rejection of their Messiah, some 400 years later Jesus explained who His Jewish audience's true father was...

I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 "I speak the things which I have seen with **My Father**; therefore you also do the things which you heard from **your father.**" 39 They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham (**Ed**: Abraham's children = by grace through faith = Ge 15:6, cf Ro 4:3-6, Ro 4:9, Gal 3:6-10). 40 "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth (**Ed**: A prophecy fulfilled only moments later in Jn 8:58-59!), which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. 41 "You are doing the deeds of **your father.**" They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; **we have one Father, even God.**" (**Ed**: They were deceived just as were their ancestors in Malachi's day!) 42 Jesus said to them, "If **God were your Father, you would love Me**; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because **you cannot hear My word.** 44 "**You are of your father the devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies. (Jn 8:37-44)

**O priests who despise** (See word study of [bazah](#) below) **My Name** - They "undervalue" God's great and precious Name with their perverted, polluted practices (Mal 1:7). And mark it down to despise His Name is to despise God Himself, for His Name stands for all that He is!

**Wiersbe** observes that the priests

instead of living exemplary lives, were guilty of breaking the very Law they were supposed to obey and teach. The way they were serving the Lord was a disgrace to His Name.

Contrast the words of Job after he was stripped of earthly possessions and children...

And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the **Name** of the LORD. (Job 1:21)

Now that is real **honoring** and **respecting** of the LORD, in short **real worship**, which was quite the opposite of what the priests of Israel were doing!

**Name** (08034)(**shem**) is what specifically identifies a person, place or thing and thus is one's name, renown, fame (Ezek 16:14), reputation (Ge 11:4, 2Sa 8:13), a good name equates with good character (Ec 7:1). "The Name" is a title of God (Lev 24:16).

There is an interesting combination of the Hebrew word "**yad**" (hand) and "**shem**" used to refer to a memorial or monument. Thus in Isaiah 56:5 the passage reads "I will set up within My temple and My walls a **monument**" which is transliterated by two Hebrew words, **Yad Wasem** (**Yad Vashem**) ([Wikipedia](#)) which has been taken as the modern name of the memorial in Israel that honors the victims of the Holocaust.

God's **Name** is a **key word** in Malachi and refers to His character, His attributes, His reputation - 10x in 7v = Mal 1:6, Mal 1:11, Mal 1:14, Mal 2:2, Mal 2:5, Mal 3:16, Mal 4:2

**But you say, 'How have we despised Your Name?' -** They don't seem to have a clue what they have done. They are totally blinded to spiritual truth! Their heart is cold, calloused, insensitive. God will help open their eyes in the next verse!

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**Meaning And Purpose** - When our daughter was 3 years old, my wife and I introduced her to the "fine art" of dishwashing. It amuses me that many preschoolers want to wash dishes but parents refuse to let them. Then, when they become teenagers and no longer desire to clean plates, parents insist that they do.

The real issue, of course, is not doing dishes. Rather, it has to do with loving, honoring, and obeying God. As children love, honor, and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3), they are showing respect for God. And when they do, they find meaning and purpose in their lives.

We are living in a world in which teen suicide is a disturbing reality. Why such despair? Too many young people have not found a reason for living. They don't know the joy of a relationship with God.

In Malachi 1:6, God had to remind His people that He was their Father, because their behavior reflected that they had forgotten their relationship to Him. Not only had they forgotten that God was their Father but also that He was their Master, and they had failed to serve Him.

We can all live meaningful and purposeful lives. How? By knowing God as our heavenly Father, and obeying Him as our Master and Lord. — by Albert Lee

Grant us, Father, hearts that love You,

Hearts that serve You day by day;

Help us find in You our purpose

For the things we do and say.

—Fitzhugh

**Knowing God gives meaning to life;**

**Obeying God gives purpose to life.**

**Malachi 1:7 "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we defiled You?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.":** (defiled: Lev 2:11, 21:6 Dt 15:21) (altar: Mal 1:12 1Sa 2:15-17 Eze 41:22 1Co 10:21 11:21,22,27-32)

## **HOW TO DESPISE THE NAME OF THE LORD**

**Presenting defiled food** - God now explains how the priests were despising His Name. His charge is that Israel offered a "polluted" or profane sacrifice. They wanted a **form of religion** but not the **reality of relationship** with Jehovah. Isn't this always the danger of "religion"? They are willing to make some offering, but not their best offering. They are glad to do something for God, but it must cost them nothing. In some of Paul's last words he warned Timothy that in these last days there would be those who would be...

holding (present tense = as their lifestyle, their habitual practice) to **aform** (outward show without internal change) of godliness, although they have denied its power (dunamis); and **avoid** (present imperative = command to continually avoid) such men as these. (2Ti 3:5-note)

**Table** - a synonym for God's altar. The picture of a table "has overtones of covenant imagery in which a feast shared by the covenant partners was an important element" (cf Ex 24:11)(NET Notes)

**How have we defiled you?** - They fail to acknowledge their guilt before God. How does this apply to NT believers (priests - 1Pe 2:9)?

**Matthew Henry** applies God's charges to believers today

We may each charge upon ourselves what is here charged upon the priests. Our relation to God, as our Father and Master, strongly obliges us to fear and honour him. But they were so scornful that they derided reproof. **Sinners ruin themselves by trying to baffle their convictions.** (cp Pr 28:13-note) (**Ed:** When the Spirit convicts us and we ignore His gentle promptings, doing our will, going our way instead of God's, we hurt the heart of God, grieving His Spirit!) Those who live in careless neglect of holy ordinances, who attend on them without reverence, and go from them under no concern, in effect say, "The table of the Lord is contemptible."

**The table of the LORD is to be despised** - "The table of Jehovah -- it is **despicable.**" (YLT) "The table of the LORD is **contemptible.**" (KJV) "The altar of the LORD **deserves no respect.**" (NLT)

In Malachi 1:6 God says they had **despised** His **Name** and here he uses the same Hebrew word to say they have **despised** His **table** (altar)! This is amazing! How great is His mercy which led Him to begin His conversation with Israel by saying **'I have loved you!'** knowing that they despised His Name! If we are honest, we have all at times been where Israel was in her heart - cold, callous, indifferent, apathetic, rejecting, etc. In fact, do we not despise and reject God (and His Lordship over our lives) every time we willfully, wantonly sin against Him! We say "My will God, not Yours!" And we forget how our "adulterous actions" hurt Him (Ezek 6:9). And all through out willful sinning, He continues to love us! How great are His lovingkindnesses and compassions! (Lam 3:22, 23)

In short, the priests had despised God's Name by despising His Table! Their actions reflected how much value or worth they gave to His great Name!

### **G Campbell Morgan**

The Divine requirement under the Mosaic economy was that "the lamb placed upon the altar should be without spot or blemish—the finest of the flock," but these men have lost the sense of what worship means, in that they have retained the finest of the flock for themselves, and brought to the altar that which engenders its contempt, simply to keep up the form of sacrifice and the appearance which they so much covet.

**Defiled** ([01351](#)) (**ga'al**) signifies ritual pollution or contamination that makes one ceremonially unclean (La 4:14) and thus disqualifies or renders them unfit for divine service (Ezra 2:62, Neh 7:64). **Ga'al** means to defile, to pollute, to stain, to make impure. In Isa 59:3 one's hands are polluted with blood. In Isa 63:3 Messiah's garment is polluted with blood as a result of His judgment of the nations. This ritual pollution or contamination is the result of some violation of the holiness code specified in the law of Moses (in this case the laws concerning acceptable animal sacrifices, cf. Lev 22:17–25; Deut 15:21).

**R. Laird Harris** says - This root doubtless is to be distinguished from gā'al I, "to redeem." It appears that this root is a secondary formation from the similar root gā'al found also in Aramaic, meaning "abhor," "loathe." ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates ga'al in Dan 1:8; Mal 1:7, 12 with the verb **alisgeo** meaning to pollute. Alisgeo is not found in the NT but the derivative noun **aligema** is used once in Acts 15:20 where it speaks of the effect of contact with idols causing (ceremonial) pollution or ritual defilement. In other passages (La 4:14), ga'al is translated with the verb **moluno** (cf cognate - molusmos), which means to cause something to become dirty or soiled (used metaphorically of saints in Sardis - Rev 3:4) or to cause to become ritually impure.

This Hebrew word shares the same root form with the Hebrew word for kinsmen-redeemer, but has a much different meaning. Albert Barnes explains the possible connection between the two meanings.

The word which is rendered "defile himself" (in Da 1:8) - from ga'al - is commonly used in connection with "redemption," its first and usual meaning being to redeem, to ransom. In later Hebrew, however, it means, to be defiled; to be polluted, to be unclean. The "connection" between these significations of the word is not

apparent, unless, as redemption was accomplished with the shedding of blood, rendering the place where it was shed defiled, the idea came to be permanently attached to the word.

**Gaal** - 11x in 9 verses in the OT - Usage: defile(2), defiled(6), stained(1), unclean(2). KJV renders it - pollute 7, defile 3, stain 1.

Ezra 2:62 These searched among their ancestral registration, but they could not be located; therefore they were considered **unclean** and excluded from the priesthood.

Nehemiah 7:64 These searched among their ancestral registration, but it could not be located; therefore they were considered **unclean** and excluded from the priesthood.

Isaiah 59:3 For your hands are **defiled** with blood And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken falsehood, Your tongue mutters wickedness.

Isaiah 63:3 "I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I **stained** all My raiment.

Lamentations 4:14 They wandered, blind, in the streets; They were **defiled** with blood So that no one could touch their garments.

Daniel 1:8-**note** But Daniel made up his mind that he would not **defile** himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not **defile** himself.

**Comment:** Notice "defile" is used twice indicating it is a **key word** (see discussion of the value of learning to identify and interrogate "key words" in Scripture) in this key verse in the book of Daniel, as this choice determined the subsequent course of his godly life as vessel sanctified, useful to His Master and prepared for every good work (including the writing of some of the most profound prophecies in the entire OT! cf 2Ti 2:21-note)

Zephaniah 3:1 Woe to her who is rebellious and **defiled**, The tyrannical city!

Malachi 1:7 "You are presenting **defiled** food upon My altar. But you say, 'How have we **defiled** You?' In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is to be despised.'

Malachi 1:12 "But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is **defiled**, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised (bazah - see below).'

**Despised** ([0959](#)) (**baza/bazah** is from a root meaning to accord little worth to something) means to disdain or to hold in contempt. Bazah is used in a number of places to mean "despise" in the sense of treating someone or something as totally insignificant or worthless. Bazah means to raise the head loftily and disdainfully, to look down one's nose at something (so to speak)! The idea is that one undervalues something or someone which implies contempt for that thing or person (in this case God's Name in Mal 1:6 and here His table/altar, the place He is to be worshipped, revered, and adored! Woe!) **Lest we be too hard on these ancient Israelites, let us "moderns" consider what we do EVERY TIME we willfully sin against God!** Are you as convicted as I am! In fact **Larry Richards** writes that "Disobedience and other sins are portrayed in the OT as nothing less than evidences that we despise God. When we disobey, we show that we place little value on the Lord."

**Bazah** means to treat things of value with contempt, as if they were worthless, the classic example being the very first use in Scripture in which Esau "**despised** his birthright" and sold it for lentil stew! (Ge 25:34, cp Heb 12:15-16-note)

**Bruce K Waltke** writes - The use of **baza** shows that disobedience to the Lord is based on "contempt, despising" of him. Thus David's adultery with Bathsheba is equated with contempt for the Lord (2 Sa12:10) and his word (v. 19). Likewise to "despise an oath" is equated with breaking the Lord's covenant (Ezek 16:59; Ezek 17:16, 18). A person who despises the Lord is deviant in his ways (Prov 14:2). **The opposite of baza is kabad "to honor" (1Sa 2:30), yare' "to fear" (Prov 14:2), and shamar "to keep" commandments (Pr 19:16).** The person who acts contrary to the community founded on the "fear of the Lord" must be cut off from it (Num 15:31); those who treat the Lord with contempt will themselves be held contemptible by him (Mal 1:6-7, 12; Mal 2:9) and will die (Prov 19:16). Those who treated his messengers with disrespect experienced his wrath (2Chr 36:16). The Lord also condemns to insignificance those who despise what he chose: Esau for despising the birthright (Ge25:34), worthless fellows for despising Saul's election (1Sa10:27), Goliath for despising David's youth (1S 17:42), and Michal for despising David's religious enthusiasm (2Sa6:16). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament- R Laird Harris, Gleason L Archer Jr., Bruce K. Waltke](#))

In the **Septuagint (Lxx)** Greek verbs used to translate baza/bazah are **phaulizo** (to hold cheap, to depreciate, disparage, to despise, to consider worthless = translates **baza** in Ge 25:34, Nu 15:31 2Sa 12:9 Isa 37:22 Mal 1:6) and **exoutheneo** (as treating



someone or something as of no account despise, disdain, make light of Ro 14:3. As making something or someone as of no account disregard, reject, despise- 1Th 5:20 = exoutheneo translates baza in 2Sa 6:16, , 12:10, , 1Chr 15:29, , Ps 15:4, 22:24, 69:33, 73:20, 102:17, 119:141, Eccl 9:16, Da 11:21, Mal 1:7, 1:12; 2:9)

**Bazah** - 42x in the OT - **NAS renders it** - careless(1), contempt(1), despicable(1), despise(5), despised(32), despises(2), disdained(1), disdained\*(1).

**Meditate** (See also **Primer on Biblical Meditation**) on God's uses of **Bazah** in the list below (there are some "starter" questions to encourage you to do this simple, yet profound devotional study) -- you will find yourself blessed, challenged, convicted and grateful! Compare others who despised the things of God (Nu 15:31, Mal 1:6) See God's response to those who despise Him in 1Sa 2:30! But praise God for His mercy, grace and forgiveness - see who else despised the things of God in 2Sa 12:9! Then see despise in Ps 51:17-**note!** But note consequences in 2Sa12:10. See 2Chr 36:16 for what happened to Israel when she despised God's Words! See Who was despised in Isa 53:3! And who is despised in Da 11:21-**note**. Enjoy!

**Here are all 42 OT uses of bazah for your perusal**-Ge 25:34; Nu 15:31 (**despised** the Word of the LORD); 1Sa 2:30 (despise Me = God); 1Sa 10:27; 1Sa 15:9; 17:42 (Philistine looked and saw David, he **disdained** him); 2Sa 6:16; 12:9, 10; 2Kgs 19:21; 1Chr 15:29; 2Chr 36:16; Neh 2:19; Esther 1:17; 3:6; Ps 15:4; 22:6, 24; Ps 51:17-note; Ps 69:33; Ps 73:20;Ps 102:17; Ps 119:141; Pr 14:2; 15:20; Pr 19:16; Ec 9:16; Isa 37:22; Isa 53:3; Jer 22:28; Jer 49:15; Ezek 16:59; 17:16, 18, 19; 22:8; Da 11:21; Obadiah 1:2 (Though Edom loftily lifts his head in pride against God and against the surrounding nations [cf. Obadiah 1:3], the fact is that God and the nations loftily lift their heads in disdain against Edom); Mal 1:6, 7, 12; Mal 2:9.

**NAS translates bazah as** - careless(1), contempt(1), despicable(1), despise(5), despised(32), despises(2), disdained(1), disdained\*(1).

**Now take a moment and read and ponder the English definitions of the word despise especially thinking about how God associates this word with our sin** - The English definition of **despise** means to look down on with contempt, repugnance or aversion. **Despise** suggests an emotional response which ranges from strong dislike to loathing! To have the lowest opinion of something! To abhor! To scorn! To disdain! To regard as negligible, worthless, or distasteful. To regard as unworthy of one's notice or consideration. **Antonyms of despise** include - to adore, to admire, to cherish, to esteem, to love. The related verb to disdain means to feel a contempt for what is beneath one, to look upon with scorn, to abstain from because of disdain, to treat as beneath one's notice or dignity, to regard as unworthy of one's notice or consideration. Webster's 1828 dictionary says disdain is "To think unworthy; to deem worthless; to consider to be unworthy of notice, care, regard, esteem, or unworthy of one's character; to scorn; to contemn (view with contempt)." To **despise** means to look down on with contempt or aversion; regard as negligible, worthless, or distasteful; may suggest an emotional response ranging from strong dislike to loathing. To **disdain** implies an arrogant or supercilious aversion to what is regarded as unworthy; look on with scorn; refuse or abstain from because of disdain; to treat as beneath one's notice or dignity, may or may not include overt feelings of contempt or scorn; feeling of contempt for what is beneath one. **Contempt** is the act of despising: the state of mind of one who despises; lack of respect or reverence for something; willful disobedience to or open disrespect of a court, judge, or legislative body

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**SERVING GOD THE "LEFTOVERS"** - A few years ago, radio commentator Paul Harvey shared a true story about a woman and her frozen turkey. The Butterball Turkey Company set up a telephone hotline to answer consumer questions about preparing holiday turkeys. One woman called to inquire about cooking a turkey that had been in her freezer for 23 years. The representative told her the turkey would be safe to eat, but did not recommend eating it because the flavor would have deteriorated. The caller replied, "That's what I thought. Okay, we'll probably just give it to our church then."

That woman was guilty of serving leftovers to her church. The priests and people of Malachi's day were also guilty of serving leftovers to a holy God. Questioning God's love for them (Malachi 1:2-5), the priests and the people became negligent in their worship. God sent Malachi to scold them for "serving" Him careless worship (Malachi 1:6-7). The people were offering defective animals for sacrifice, and the priests, who were responsible for inspecting the animals and offering up unblemished sacrifices to God (Leviticus 22:17-25), were accepting them. The Lord said it was insulting that they were bringing Him—the Great King of the universe— sacrifices that weren't even fit for one of their human authorities (Malachi 1:8).

Are we offering God less than our best? Here are three standards of sacrifices to test our worship and service to God:

- (1) Are we giving to God first?
- (2) Are we giving God our best?
- (3) Are we offering God a sacrifice that costs us something?



Let's apply those questions to these areas of our life: our bodies (Romans 12:1-2), our money (Philippians 4:14-18), our praise (Hebrews 13:15), our good works (Hebrews 13:16), and our witnessing to unbelievers. Let's give our best, not simply the leftovers. ([Our Daily Journey serving God leftovers](#))

**Malachi 1:8 "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.: (the blind: Mal 1:14 Lev 22:19-25 Dt 15:21)(Be pleased: Mal 1:10, Mal 1:13 Job 42:8 Ps 20:3 Jer 14:10 Ho 8:13)**

## **OFFERING LESS THAN YOUR BEST!**

**But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil?** - God's rhetorical question clearly expects a "Yes!" God had just accused the priests of despising the altar of God and now substantiates His charge regarding how they accomplished this evil deed. God says they are offering blemished sacrifices which He would not accept. They were going through the motions of worship but it was false worship, and it was unacceptable to Jehovah.

**NLT Paraphrase** - When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!" says the LORD Almighty.

**Are we ever guilty of despising the altar of the LORD? Are we ever guilty of bringing less than our best, of worshipping the Holy God externally and/or with unclean hands and an impure heart** (cp Ps 24:3-4).

The priests were behaving in a lawless manner (lawlessness is sin - 1Jn 3:4). The laws related to the priests were clear and clearly strict, so much so that if a priest broke them, he was to forfeit his life!

They (the priests) shall therefore keep My charge, so that they may not bear sin because of it, and die thereby because they profane it; I am the LORD who sanctifies them. (Lev 22:9)

Notice that after a detailed discussion of what constituted acceptable sacrifices to God (Lev 22:17:31), we then see Moses make the clear association with God's **Name**...

**And you shall not profane My holy Name**, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel: I am the LORD who sanctifies you, Who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD. (Lev 22:32, 33)

**Comment:** In other words to offer unacceptable sacrifices was to treat God's Name as profane or common, not pure, not holy. Remember that God's Name stands for His character, attributes, reputation, all of which would be impugned or treated with contempt if one were to offer less than what He had prescribed, less than the best.

**Blind...lame and sick** - Lame and blind are repeated again in Mal 1:13 where there God adds animals that were stolen. Blind, lame and sick animals were of no real value - they could not work or they could not be sold. They were essentially worthless to their owners and yet that is what the priests allowed the people to present on God's altar!

**Campbell** asks...

What does sacrifice reveal? Not a selfish seeking for favor, but a soul's estimate of the One to whom the gift is offered. Sacrilege we have always thought was the breaking into a church and stealing therefrom. That is not so; it is going into Church and putting something on the plate. Do not forget that. Sacrilege is centered in offering God something which costs nothing, because you think God is worth nothing. God looks for the giving at His altar of a gift that costs something. Men are perpetually bringing into the Christian Church the things they do not need themselves.

The Mosaic law however was crystal clear. Offerings of defective animals were strictly forbidden...

Dt 15:21 But if it has **any defect**, such as **lameness** or **blindness**, or any **serious defect**, you **shall not sacrifice it to the LORD** your God.

Lev 22:22 'Those that are **blind** or **fractured** or **maimed** or having a running **sore** or **eczema** or **scabs**, you **shall not offer to the LORD**, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to the LORD. 24 'Also anything with its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut, **you shall not offer to the LORD**, or sacrifice in your land,

**Why did the sacrifices need to be perfect?** Warren Wiersbe notes that one reason is that...

these (OT) sacrifices pointed to (were pictures of) the (NT sacrifice of the) Lamb of God who would one day die for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29; Heb. 10:1-14), and if they were imperfect, how could they typify the Perfect Sacrifice, the (sinless) Son of God?

**Matthew Henry** applies this section to us today...

They despised God's Name in what they did. It is evident that these understood not the meaning of the sacrifices, as shadowing forth the unblemished Lamb of God; they grudged the expense, thinking all thrown away which did not turn to their profit. If we worship God ignorantly, and without understanding, **we bring the blind for sacrifice**; if we do it carelessly, if we are cold, dull, and dead in it, **we bring the sick**; if we rest in the bodily exercise, and do not make heart-work of it, **we bring the lame**; and if we suffer vain thoughts and distractions to lodge within us, **we bring the torn**.

And is not this evil? Is it not a great affront to God, and a great wrong and injury to our own souls? In order to the acceptance of our actions with God, it is not enough to do that which, for the matter of it, is good; but we must do it from a right principle, in a right manner, and for a right end.

**Pulpit Commentary...**

"A cheap religion," says one, "costing little, is rejected by God, worth nothing: it costs more than it is worth, for it is worth nothing, and so proves really dear." God despises not the widow's mite, but he disdains the miser's gold.

**Why not offer it to your governor?** - The NLT picks up the hint of sarcasm "*Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!*" God asks the priests if they would dare present a blemished sacrifice to their **governor**? The point of course is that they would not dare do that to a human authority, so how much more evil and blameworthy to do that to the Supreme Authority, the LORD of hosts.

**Hallmark cards** used to have a saying that you would buy their cards "**When you care enough to give the very best!**" Clearly this was not the brand of "greeting cards" sent by these polluted priests because just as clearly, they did not care enough about God, His Name and His Altar to give their best! **What brand of greeting card do I send to the LORD of hosts?**

**A C Gaebelein** explains that the priests...

had considered the table of the Lord contemptible; instead of offering upon the altar the very best, as demanded in the law, they showed their contempt by bringing the blind, the lame and the sick, a thing which they would never have done to an earthly governor, who would have been sorely displeased at such an insult and rejected their person on account of it. They had treated the Lord of Hosts shamefully in their worship. Is it different in Christendom? Under such conditions, even if they were to pray to Him to be gracious, would He, or could He, regard their persons and listen to their prayers (Mal 1:9)?

## **"NOISE WITHOUT MUSIC"**

**G Campbell Morgan** adds that...

It is possible to attend the temple, bend the knee, and make an offering regularly, but unless there is **love in the heart** there is no **communion with God**. To go to the temple merely as a matter of duty is to blaspheme. To carry offerings to the house of God simply because it is commanded, is to be guilty of sacrilege. There is only one motive sufficiently strong to maintain the relation between the heart of God and the heart of man, and that is **love**. When these people **lost their love for Jehovah**, all their religious observances became as **tinkling brass and a clanging cymbal, noise without music**.

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**The Polluters** - For centuries man has polluted the earth. Now he's cluttering up space. Experts say that enough high-flying debris has accumulated to raise the possibility of space collisions. In addition to all the worthwhile satellites circling our globe, it is estimated that over a million small pieces and many large chunks of metal are orbiting the earth.

Man contaminates more than his physical environment.

**The Bible says that he's also prone  
to defile his worship of God.**

When we fail to give God proper reverence, we bring dishonor to His name and reputation.

That's what Israel did. Malachi chapter one pictures the people as polluting their worship by giving the Lord their "leftovers." If the halfhearted respect they showed to God had been given to their human leaders, it would have been rejected (Mal 1:7-8). They littered their worship of God by offering forbidden sacrifices and by complaining that what God required was wearisome and contemptible (Mal 1:12-13).

We know that disobedience and irreverence can be forgiven through Christ's ongoing mercy. But that doesn't change the damage it does in the meantime. God deserves and demands allegiance that is unpoluted. Let's be careful to keep useless clutter out of our worship. —Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May our best be offered to You,  
Gracious God, Almighty King;  
As we come to You in worship,  
Let our lives Your praises sing.  
-Sper

### **True worship acknowledges God's true worth.**

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**In Crazy Love:** Overwhelmed by a relentless God, Francis Chan writes "The priests of Malachi's day thought their sacrifices were sufficient. They had spotless animals but chose to keep those for themselves and give their less desirable animals to God. They assumed God was pleased because they had sacrificed something. God described this practice as evil. Leftovers are not merely inadequate; from God's point of view (and lest we forget, His is the only one who matters), they're evil. Let's stop calling it 'a busy schedule' or 'bills' or 'forgetfulness.' It's called evil." (Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a relentless God, P. 91-92. Illustration by Jim L. Wilson)

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**F B Meyer in Our Daily Homily - Present it now unto your governor** - Malachi's special work was in stirring up the priesthood to their duty, to the proper maintenance of the Temple services. They were very careless of these, and treated their holy duties with great contempt. The special method adopted seems to have been in the presentation of the blind, the lame, and sick on the altar; while the healthy and whole were reserved for private use. "The table of the Lord was polluted, and his meat contemptible." Such unconcealed irreverence and greed could not pass unrebuked. They are asked to compare their service to God with their service to man; their sacrifices in the Temple with their gifts before their governors and rulers. Would these be pleased, and accept the gift, if they were treated in the same way as God was?

Professing Christians might sometimes be addressed in the same terms. When they slip a copper coin into the collecting-bag, which they would not think of offering to the butler in a friend's house; when they give more to the revenue officer than to the Church or poor; when they give to the Lord's work whatever they can spare without loss, and, indeed, are glad to be rid of; whenever they spend more time and strength on public duties than on the calls of Christianity—at such times we might fairly bid them present it to their governor. In Malachi 1:10 God is heard asking for someone to close the doors of the Temple. He would rather this than be mocked by such heartless rites. It was as though He would rather that no prayers were offered, no services maintained. no holy hymn sung—than that there should be such perfunctory and heartless worship.

**Let us be very careful against this spirit  
in our daily devotions!**

**Malachi 1:9 "But now will you not entreat God's favor, that He may be gracious to us? With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts.:** (entreat: 2Ch 30:27 Jer 27:18 Joel 1:13,14 2:17 Zec 3:1-5 Jn 9:31 Heb 7:26,27)(**God's favor:** Heb. the face of God, Ex 32:11 Jer 26:19 La 2:19) (**will He:** Ac 19:15,16 Ro 2:11 1Pe 1:17)

NLT = "Go ahead, beg God to be merciful to you! But when you bring that kind of offering, why should He show you any favor at all?" asks the LORD Almighty.

**Comment:** Implied answer? No!

NET = But now plead for God's favor that He might be gracious to us. "With this kind of offering in your hands, how can He be pleased with you?" asks the LORD who rules over all.

**Will you not entreat God's favor** - Notice that this is the **LORD of hosts** speaking. Although some see this as a call for Israel to repent, more likely this request is divine irony.

The psalmist says "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Ps 66:18) and these priests clearly had wickedness in their hearts as evidenced by their **evil** deeds (Mal 1:8). God would not hear nor respond to their futile entreaties for God to show favor!

**Spurgeon's** comments on Psalm 66:18 are relevant to the sins of the priests and any petitions they might seek to make to Jehovah...

If, having seen it (wickedness) to be there, I continue to gaze upon it without aversion; if I cherish it, have a side glance of love toward it, excuse it, and palliate it; **The Lord will not hear me.** How can He?

**Can I desire Him to connive at my sin, and accept me while I willfully cling to any evil way?**

Nothing hinders prayer like iniquity harbored in the breast; as with Cain, so with us, sin lies at the door, and blocks the passage.

**If you listen to the devil, God will not listen to you.**

**If you refuse to hear God's commands, He will surely refuse to hear your prayers.**

An imperfect petition God will hear for Christ's sake, but not one which is **willfully miswritten by a traitor's hand.** For God to accept our devotions, while we are delighting in sin, would be to make Himself the God of hypocrites, which is a fitter name for Satan than for the Holy One of Israel. ([Treasury of David—Psalm 66](#))

**How can we apply this truth today?** Plainly put, if we are simply going through the motions of worship, we must not be deceived into thinking that such "worship" warrants God either hearing or answering our prayers. False worship blocks true prayer. Compare God's declaration in face of Israel's disobedience...

**And it came about that just as He called and they would not listen,  
so they called and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts**  
(Zechariah 7:13)

**John MacArthur** adds...

The invitation to repent is best taken as **irony**. How could they expect God to extend His grace when they were insulting Him with unacceptable sacrifices? ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Criswell** comments...

The prophet employs **sarcasm** here in an effort to convict the people. The point is, "Although you would not be foolish enough to offer such gifts to your governor and expect him to be pleased (Mal 1:8), offer them to God -- surely He is much easier to please!" The opposite, of course, is the case, as Mal 1:10 makes clear.

The words of this anonymous poem accurately describe the profane priestly practices...

With lip we call Him **Master**,  
In life oppose His Word,  
We ev'ry day deny Him,  
And yet we call Him **Lord**

No more is our religion  
Like His in soul or deed  
Than painted grain on canvas  
Is like the living seed.

In the balance we are weigh'd,  
And wanting we are found,  
In all that's true and Christly  
The universe around.

**Malachi 1:10 "Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates, that you might not uselessly kindle fire on My altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of hosts, "nor will I accept an offering from you.:" (That there: Job 1:9-11 Isa 56:11,12 Jer 6:13 8:10 Mic 3:11 Jn 10:12 Php 2:21 1Pe 5:2) (That you might not: 1Co 9:13)(Accept: Isa 1:11-15 Jer 6:20 Am**

## **SHUT THE GATES LOCK THE TEMPLE DOORS!**

**Oh that there were one among you who would shut the gates** - Simply stated, God desired to find someone who would prevent the ritualistic (going through the motions) presentation of profane sacrifices.

**Wiersbe** writes...

Malachi told these disobedience priests that it would be better to close the doors of the temple and stop the sacrifices altogether than to continue practicing such hypocrisy. Better there were no religion at all than a religion that fails to give God the very best. If our concept of God is so low that we think He's pleased with cheap halfhearted worship, then we don't know the God of the Bible. In fact, a God who encourages us to do less than our best is a God who isn't worthy of worship.

**Did you ever "play church" as a child? That's innocent fun when we are children, but we are not innocent of offending God if we do it as adults! We always need to check ourselves to make sure that we are not playing church presently!**

**MacArthur** comments that "*It would be better to stop all sacrifices than to offer insincere offerings*" ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Uselessly kindle fire on My altar** - "will not kindle the fire of mine altar for nothing." (KJV), "stop the pointless lighting of fires on my altar" (NJB) To light the fire for burning the sacrifices was without cause and served no purpose. It was going through the motions, but without a heart for God. Form without substance. Indeed form without power (2Ti 3:5). It was like their useless prayers in Malachi 1:9! God is not interested in our external efforts, our "religiosity" so to speak. He wants our whole **heart**. In fact there is a wonderful promise for those who make the conscious choice to present their whole **heart**...

the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose **heart** is completely His. (2Chr 16:9)

**I am not pleased with you** - "I have no pleasure in you." (KJV, ESV) God is not delighted. The corollary is that acceptable sacrifices delight the Holy God! Amazing! So let us as New Testament saints...

Through Him (Jesus, our Great High Priest, our Mediator between God and men) then...continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. (Heb 13:15-note)

As **Paul** exhorted the saints at Rome...

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. (Ro 12:1-note)

**A C Gaebelein** rightly reminds us that today God does not take

any pleasure in the unscriptural worship of ritualistic Christendom, or the dead, Spirit-less worship of an apostate Protestantism.

**Nor will I accept your offering** - Literally "a present I do not accept of your hand." (YLT) "From your hands I find no offerings acceptable" (NJB) The priests were spiritually blind to the fact that their offerings were unacceptable to God. Jeremiah gave a similar description of Judah before the 70 year exile, indicating that the post-exilic community had failed to learn their lesson...

Jer 6:20 For what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are **not acceptable**, and your sacrifices are **not pleasing** to Me.

There is a parallel passage in the **prophecy of Isaiah**...

Isaiah 1:11-15 (**note**) "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. **I have had enough** of burnt offerings of rams, And the fat of fed cattle. And **I take no pleasure** in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. 12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? 13 "**Bring your worthless offerings no longer**, Incense is an **abomination** to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— **I cannot endure iniquity** and the solemn assembly. 14 **I hate** your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, **They have become a burden** to Me. **I am weary** of bearing them. 15 "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, **I will hide** My eyes from you, Yes, even though you multiply prayers, **I will not listen**. Your hands are covered with blood.

**Amos** records God's assessment of Israel's worship...

"I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 "Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. 23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. 24 But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (Amos 5:21-24)

**Wiersbe** applies this section to our lives asking...

What does this say to professed Christians who spend hundreds of dollars annually, perhaps thousands, on gifts for themselves, their family, and their friends, but give God a dollar a week when the offering plate is passed? Our offerings to God are an indication of what's in our hearts, for "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). People who claim to love the Lord and His work can easily prove it with their checkbooks! Giving is a grace (2Cor 8:1, 6-9), and if we've experienced the grace of God, we'll have no problem giving generously to the Lord who has given so much to us. How can we ask God to be gracious to us and answer prayer (Mal 1:9) if we've not practiced "grace giving" ourselves?

**Pulpit Commentary...**

A fact narrated to me by the late Rev. Dr. Leifchild some years ago affords a striking illustration of the discrepancy between profession and practice in religion. He told me that there was an old lady in his Church, very wealthy, and very loud in her professions, and apparently very enthusiastic in her devotions, but whose contributions for religious purposes were of the most niggardly kind. One Sunday, in singing a hymn with which they closed the service of the Lord's Supper, she being near to the table, he observed her as the deacons were going round, according to their custom, collecting subscriptions for the poor. It so happened that the verse they were singing at the time the deacon came to her with the plate was—

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small:  
Love so amazing, so Divine,  
Demands my heart, my life, my all.**

No one in the whole congregation seemed more hearty in shouting out those words with his voice than she. Meanwhile the deacon held the plate right under her eye, but she let it pass without enriching it by even a copper. ([The Reverence Due to God](#))

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**Trouble at the Top** - Leadership has its privileges, but more important—it comes with huge responsibilities.

Through the years, I've observed the lives of many Christian leaders. I've noticed that they don't always demonstrate godly traits. Sometimes there can be trouble at the top.

When God removes His hand of blessing because a leader engages in ungodly activity, everyone suffers. That's why it's so important for every Christian in a leadership position to strive daily to keep his heart attuned to God and His Word.

In Israel in 450BC, there arose some leadership issues that God dealt with directly. Apparently the priests who were supposed to be serving God weren't. They had stopped honoring the Lord, and they were offering defiled sacrifices (Malachi 1:7-8). Those actions caused God to remove His blessing from the priests. He could not accept their sacrifices (Mal 1:10). Imagine the difficulties this brought on the people.

Are you a leader? At home? At work? At church? Stay close to God. Give Him the glory and honor due His name. Obey His Word. Worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Don't risk losing the Lord's blessing by causing trouble at the top. — by Dave Branon

They truly lead who lead by love  
And humbly serve the Lord;  
Their lives will bear the Spirit's fruit  
And magnify His Word.  
—D. De Haan

**Follow the leader who follows Christ.**

**Malachi 1:11 "For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure; for My name will be great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.: (For from: Ps 50:1 Ps 113:3 Isa 45:6 Isa 59:19 Zec 8:7) (My name: Mal 1:14 Ps 22:27-31 67:2 72:11-17**



98:1-3 Isa 11:9,10 Isa 45:22,23 Isa 49:6,7,22,23 Isa 54:1-3,5 Isa 60:1-11,16-22 Isa 66:19,20 Am 9:12 Mic 5:4 Zep 3:9 Zec 8:20-23 Mt 6:9,10 28:19 Ac 15:17,18 Rev 11:15 15:4)(**and in:** Isa 24:14-16 42:10-12 Zep 2:11 Jn 4:21-23 Ac 10:30-35 Ro 15:9-11,16 1Ti 2:8 Rev 8:3) (**Offering:** Ps 141:2 Isa 60:6 Lk 1:10 Ro 12:1 Php 4:18 Heb 13:15,16 Rev 5:8 8:3,4) (**For My:** Isa 66:19,20)

## **GOD'S FAME FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET AMEN!**

**For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name will be great among the nations (Gentiles)...every place** - Note that the NAS, KJV, ESV, NET, NIV translate this passage using the future tense ("will be great...will be great") whereas the NAB, NJB, YLT translate it using the present tense as "My Name is great", but that would hardly seem to be the actual case in the world at the time of Malachi's writing (circa 450BC).

This passage states that all day long and everywhere, from the **Rising** (east) to **setting** (west), from morning until evening from the east to the west God's Name will be great.

### **WHEN WILL MALACHI 1:11 BE FULFILLED?**

This verse has given rise to two interpretations as to when it will be fulfilled, a present and/or a future fulfillment. Perhaps **C H Spurgeon** has the most reasonable interpretation for he sees both a present and a future fulfillment of God's Name being great among the nations...

At the first proclamation of the Gospel the Name of the Lord was glorious throughout the whole earth;**shall it not be much more so ere the end shall be?**

**Comment:** So if God's Name is great today (even when used in vain...it is still great!), there is coming a day when it will be even greater, for the world will see that He alone is God and there is no other (cf the universal, unanimous declaration that "Jesus Christ is Lord" = Php 2:9-11-note)

And so some commentators see Malachi 1:11 as fulfilled in our present day, pointing out that the Gentile nations recognize God's Name more than does Israel. And yet is "**incense...offered**" in every place to God's Name? Yes, the nations know about Him but do they truly reverence His great Name (as indicated by offering incense to Him)?

Another view sees this as a declaration by the LORD of hosts of a future time when His Name will be **great among the nations...in every place**. So when will His **Name be great** throughout the world in the future? This clearly refers to the coming **Millennial Kingdom** of the Messiah, and recalls several similar OT prophecies..

They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, **for** (term of explanation - Always ask "What's it explaining?") **the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea** (Speaks of Messiah's worldwide **Millennial Kingdom**). 10 Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious (Refers to Messiah's Temple in Jerusalem). (Isa 11:9-10-note)

So (At the **Second Coming of Jesus**) they will fear the name of the LORD from the west and His glory from **the rising of the sun** (Where? It rises in the East = thus Isaiah is describing the Messiah's worldwide fame and acclaim), **for** (term of explanation - Always ask "What's it explaining?") He (Messiah) will come **like** (introduces a simile) a rushing stream (KJV = "come in like a flood" = a powerful picture of Messiah's power), which the wind of the LORD drives. (Isa 59:19)

**A C Gaebelein** comments that Malachi 1:11 "*is a prophecy. Is it fulfilled today, during this age? We think not; it refers to the millennial age.*"

**John MacArthur** comments on **rising of the sun...setting** explaining that this...

phrase is a way of referring to **the whole earth** (cf. Ps 50:1; 103:12; Is 45:6; 59:19; Zec 8:7), as the subsequent phrase, "**In every place,**" indicates. Although no indication is given as to the time when such worship of God will fill the earth, this cannot be a reference to any historic Jewish worship outside the borders of Israel. Malachi's zeal for Israel's sacrifices, coupled with his negative attitude toward foreigners and their gods (Mic 1:2-5; 2:11), points to the **millennial era**, when they will worship in the rebuilt temple and incense plus offerings will be present. At that time, and not until that time, the Lord will receive pure worship throughout the world and His name will be honored everywhere. ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville:](#)



[Word](#) (Bolding added)

**Scofield on rising of sun even to its setting** - "So it would have been had Israel been true. So it shall be despite Israel's failure"

**Every place incense is going to be offered to My name, and a grain offering that is pure-** To what does this refer? **Gaebelein** writes that "The last chapters of Ezekiel reveal the fact that with the millennial worship in the millennial temple incense and offerings are connected. The prophecy of the eleventh verse will be fulfilled during the Millennium. Now His Name is not universally **great among the Gentiles**; it will be otherwise when the Lord Jesus Christ has come back."

**The Psalmist** calls for worldwide praise of Jehovah...

**From the rising of the sun to its setting  
The Name of the LORD is to be praised.**

Ps 113:3

(Praise His Name with [Paul Wilbur as you sing Praise Adonai](#))

**Spurgeon comments on this beautiful song:** From early morn till eve the ceaseless hymn should rise unto Jehovah's throne, and from east to west over the whole round earth pure worship should be rendered unto his glory. So ought it to be; and blessed be God, we are not without faith that so it shall be. We trust that ere the world's dread evening comes, the glorious name of the Lord will be proclaimed among all nations, and all people shall call Him blessed. At the first proclamation of the Gospel the Name of the Lord was glorious throughout the whole earth; shall it not be much more so ere the end shall be? At any rate, this is the desire of our souls. Meanwhile, let us endeavor to sanctify every day with praise to God. At early dawn let us emulate the opening flowers and the singing birds...when the sun sinks to his rest, let us not cease our music, but lift up the vesper hymn ([Treasury of David—Psalm 113](#)) ([All The Earth Will Sing Your Praises - Paul Baloche - YouTube](#))

**My Name will be great** - This is a sure promise. God's Name has always been great, is great today and will be great in the future and forever. A day is coming when all men everywhere will recognize and acknowledge and respond with proper worship to His great Name.

The **NET Bible note**

In what is clearly a strongly ironic shift of thought, the LORD contrasts the unbelief and virtual paganism of the postexilic community with the conversion and obedience of the nations that will one day worship the God of Israel.

**Malachi 1:12 "But you are profaning it, in that you say, 'The table of the Lord is defiled, and as for its fruit, its food is to be despised.'":** (You are: Mal 1:6,8 2:8 2Sa 12:14 Eze 36:21-23 Am 2:7 Ro 2:24)(The table: Mal 1:7,13 Nu 11:4-8 Da 5:3,4)

**Profane** ([02490](#)) (**chahal**) means to defile, pollute, desecrate. To desecrate is to treat a sacred place or thing with violent disrespect and so to violate. **Profane** is used primarily of ceremonial objects of worship (Ex. 20:25; Ezek 44:7; Da 11:31); of the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14; Neh. 13:17; Ezek. 23:38); of God's Name (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 34:16); of God's priests (Lev. 21:4, 6).

**But you** (priests) **are profaning it, in that you say** - First, what are they profaning? From the context, it is clear that they are profaning His great Name (Mal 1:11). Second, how were they profaning the LORD's Name? The priest defiled the table and despised its food. They were treating the Lord's table (altar) with abuse, irreverence and contempt. In Malachi 1:7 they were profaning God's altar by presenting defiled food on it

**Its fruit** - This refers to the offerings on the LORD's table or altar.

**G Campbell Morgan...**

What is profanity? The root meaning of the word is "away from the temple" (*pro*, from; *fanum*, temple), and it has come to be used with reference to things not sacred, but commonplace. These people were guilty of profanity in the worst possible way, in that they took the names of God, and claimed the relationship that those names imply: Father, "honor"; Master, "fear"; and yet they did not fear Him; they accorded Him no honor save in their words, and their creeds, and their outward doings. Thus they degraded the sacred things of God to the common level of mediocrity, and in effect made the statement, "The table is contemptible."

**There is no profanity which is so awful as that of  
orthodox expression and heterodox heart.**

Gifts presented to God by hands that are impure, are themselves impure, for God only receives the gift

according as He has received the giver. The offering that we bring to God is the true expression of the value at which we appraise the altar. If a man says, "I honor the altar of God," and then puts upon it something that his own life has contaminated, his true estimate of the value of the altar is not the statement he vouchsafes, but his contaminated gift. Such a consideration should make us exceedingly careful how we give to God, and save us from that heresy of heresies, of imagining that we can purchase our acceptance by our gifts.

**God receives or rejects all the gifts of man in proportion  
as He has received or rejected the giver.**

If that be a true statement, how many gifts are not received by God which have been placed upon His altar? And is not this profanity within Christendom to-day more terribly profane and far-reaching in its evil influence than all the profanity of the slum?

**Malachi 1:13 "You also say, 'My, how tiresome it is!' And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the LORD of hosts, "and you bring what was taken by robbery and what is lame or sick; so you bring the offering! Should I receive that from your hand?" says the LORD. (My how: 1Sa 2:29 Isa 43:22 Am 8:5 Mic 6:3 Mk 14:4,5,37,38) (Lame: Mal 1:7,8 Lev 22:8,19-23 Dt 15:21 Eze 4:14 44:31) (should I receive: Mal 2:13 Isa 1:12 57:6 Jer 7:9-11,21-24 Am 5:21-23 Zec 7:5,6 Mt 6:1,2,5,16)**

**My how tiresome** - What a trouble. What hardship. That which produces weariness. What is that the priests are saying is so **tiresome**? The Levitical regulations for sacrifices were so exacting that the priest were saying they were wearisome!

Dear saint, are you growing weary of worshiping and serving God. It is one thing to be tired **from** the work but quite another to be tired **of** the work.

And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. (Gal 6:9)

**Brian Bell** cautions that if we find ourselves wearying in worship, we are in dire straits and desperate need of..

**personal revival** so we don't fall into the same burn-out trap as the priests did here! Personal Revival is like remodeling your house: it takes longer than you hoped, costs more than you planned, and makes a bigger mess than you ever thought possible. [1] Longer – no quick fix to spiritual apathy! [2] It Costs – no cheap way. [3] Big Mess – no leap frog over personal hidden sins.

**You disdainfully sniff** (ESV = "you snort at it") - NET = "You turn up your nose at it." You belittle it.

We have to be careful not to **disdainfully sniff** at the sacrifices of others for we don't necessary know their heart nor their motives...

Charles Spurgeon and his wife, according to a story in The Chaplain magazine, would sell, but refused to give away, the eggs their chickens laid. Even close relatives were told, "You may have them if you pay for them." As a result some people labeled the Spurgeons greedy and grasping. They accepted the criticisms with out defending themselves, and only after Mrs. Spurgeon died was the full story revealed: All the profits from the sale of eggs went to support two elderly widows. Because the Spurgeons were unwilling to let their left hand know what the right hand was doing (Mt 6:3), they endured the attacks in silence.

**You bring what was taken by robbery** (ESV = "You bring what has been taken by violence") - They were bringing that which was stolen, that which did not belong to them!

**Lame** (also Mal 1:8) - Crippled or disabled in a limb, or otherwise injured so as to be unsound and impaired in strength. The point is that these animals were of no real value - either they could not work or they could not be sold. They were essentially worthless to their owners and yet that is what the priests allowed to be presented on God's altar!

**Spurgeon** comments that...

When we listen to the reading of the Word of God or the preaching of His truth, shall that be **aweariness**? Yes, when we have no part or lot in it, when it is like reading a will in which we have no legacy. But if the Gospel be preached as our Gospel, the Gospel of our salvation, and we have a share in it, what can so inspire our soul with joy? If God had been weary of us we need not have wondered. But we ought to blush and be silent for shame, because we have wearied of Him. **Are we tired of God?** If not, how is it that we do not walk with Him from day to day? Really spiritual worship is not much cared for in these days, even by professing Christians. Many will go to a place of worship if they can be entertained with fine music or grand oratory, but if communion with God is the only attraction, they are not drawn thereby. (2200 Quotations from the Writings of Charles H. Spurgeon)

"It is a sure sign of want of grace in your hearts, when God's service is **aweariness**." (Montagu Villiers)

**Shopping Strategy** - "I have no pleasure in you." This was the Lord's stinging rebuke to His people through the prophet Malachi (Mal 1:10). God was angry with their **careless, shoddy** methods of worship. The animals they brought for sacrifice were not acceptable to Him because they were not the best of the herds and flocks. Instead, they offered stolen, lame, and sick animals (Mal 1:13).

While we may not be showing this degree of contempt toward God, sometimes we are too casual in our worship. A friend of mine made this observation about herself: "When I shop for simple things like soap or butter, I hardly think about it. But when I'm looking for a blouse to match a skirt, I shop very carefully. I go from store to store until I find exactly what I'm looking for." Then she added thoughtfully, "I should pay that same attention when I am worshiping God. But sometimes I approach Him as casually as if I were shopping for a box of Kleenex."

During worship services in our churches, we may fail to give God our full attention. **We rush in late. (Ed: You never do that do you?)** Our thoughts wander. We need to discipline our minds so that we are not focusing on **yesterday's** cares or **tomorrow's** responsibilities. When we worship the Lord with **all our heart**, He will be pleased with us.— by David C. Egner

**Our very best we offer to You,  
Gracious God, Almighty King;  
As we come to You in worship,  
Let our lives Your praises sing.**

—Sper

**At the heart of worship is  
worship from the heart.**

**Malachi 1:14 "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, for I am a great King," says the LORD of hosts, "and My name is feared among the nations.:** (cursed: Mal 3:9 Ge 27:12 Jos 7:11,12 Jer 48:10 Mt 24:51 Lk 12:1,2,46 Ac 5:1-10 Rev 21:8)(**who has:** Ec 5:4,5 Mk 12:41-44 14:8 2Co 8:12) (**for I am a great King:** Mal 1:8,11 Dt 28:58 Ps 47:2 48:2 95:3 Isa 57:15 Jer 10:10 Da 4:37 Zec 14:9 Mt 5:35 1Ti 6:15) (**My name:** Ps 68:35 76:12 Da 9:4 Heb 12:29 Rev 15:4)

**Steven Cole...**

We should give God the best in terms of personal integrity. Here we're talking about motive-why you do what you do. In Mal 1:14, the Lord says, "But cursed be the swindler who has a male in his flock and vows it, but sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord, ..." This guy wants to look good in public, so he makes a grandstand vow to give the best to the Lord. But when it comes time to give, he slips in an inferior animal and keeps the best for himself. He wasn't really offering his sacrifice to the living God, who sees the motives of the heart. He was doing it to be seen by men.

**John Piper** applies the truths of Malachi to the church reminding us that...

The great temptation for Israel in the OT and for the church of Christ today is to forget that we are pilgrims not natives in this world (cp 1Pe 1:1-note, 1Pe 2:11-note). The temptation is to let the Lord's delay (in returning) make us settle into the world and become passive as we wait, forgetting that we are aliens & strangers on the earth, seeking another homeland." (Piper)

**Comment:** Malachi and Revelation both close with a description of the Second Coming of Christ, a truth which should serve to continually motivate us to seek "a better country, a heavenly one" (Heb 11:16-note), living set apart lives in light of the Coming of the "**Sun (Son) of righteousness**" Who will bring complete healing in His wings. (Mal 4:2-[sermon by Spurgeon](#)) Hallelujah! Listen to this old Keith Green song [To Obey is Better Than Sacrifice](#) which does a great job summarizing the message of Malachi...

**To obey is better than sacrifice  
I don't need your money, I want your life!  
And I hear you say that I'm coming back soon  
But you act like I'll never return!**

**Disciple's Study Bible** sums up this introductory chapter...

The Book of Malachi is a reminder of how God's people allowed the **worldly thinking** of their day instead of their **reverence for God** to determine their **behavior**. It does matter if the people of God do not truly **fear God**

(Ed: Reverential awe) and **magnify His name.** ([Disciple's Study Bible](#))

**William Orr** says the story of Malachi is...

the same old story of sin and unrighteousness. Mankind has not changed in all these years. But turn around and look the other way. There is coming a day of light when the Sun of Righteousness will arise. Thank GOD there is also a New Testament!

## **A TEST BASED ON MALACHI 1**

**Pastor Steven Cole** devised a short test based on the truths in Malachi chapter 1. Consider taking it yourself (It's not even pass/fail). Here are the five questions:

### **1. Is your service for God less than you would offer a human dignitary?**

If you heard that John MacArthur would be sitting in on your Sunday School class, would you prepare any differently? If Chuck Swindoll had been sitting next to you during worship, would you have sung more enthusiastically or dropped more into the offering plate? The point is, Jesus is watching all that you do. He listens to every sermon I preach. We must serve as unto Him.

### **2. Is God answering your prayers?**

In Mal 1:9, Malachi sarcastically tells the people to entreat God's favor. Then he adds, "With such an offering on your part, will He receive any of you kindly?" The implied answer is, "No!" If we play games with God by giving Him the leftovers, how can we sincerely ask Him to bless our lives?

### **3. Are you playing church?**

These priests were going through the motions, keeping the fires burning on the temple altar. But God says that it was useless (Malachi 1:10). He would rather that they close the doors than to go on playing their religious games. It's easy to have all sorts of activities and programs in a local church, but to lose sight of the reason why we do these things. It is not to attract people. Who cares how many people attend your church if they are just giving God the leftovers of worldly lives? God looks on our hearts, not on activities or programs (cp 2Chr 16:9, Pr 5:21, Pr 15:3, Job 34:21, 22). He is looking for those who worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24).

### **4. Are you bored with worship and/or Christian service?**

These priests were tired of the routine (Malachi 1:13). Offer another animal, go through the motions one more time, put in your shift at the temple to get your paycheck and go home. They were bored with worship because they had lost sight of the greatness and majesty of God, "**the Lord of hosts**" (used 7 times in these verses), which means that He commands all the armies of heaven and all of the galaxies in the universe!

### **If you're bored with worship or with serving the Lord, you've lost sight of the glory and majesty of God.**

Rituals and routines can be pretty boring, but the living God is definitely not boring! Whenever in the Bible someone got a glimpse of God, I assure you, they were not glancing at their watch to find out how much longer the service would last! I realize that not every worship service will give you a glimpse of God! Not every quiet time will be glorious. But if you're consistently bored with worship, you probably need a fresh glimpse of the greatness of God.

### **5. Is your passion in life to promote God's glory among the nations?**

You may be thinking, "Hey, I'm not a pastor or missionary! I'm just a layman." But if God's aim is that His name will be great among the nations, and you are His blood-bought servant, shouldn't His aim be your aim? Shouldn't pleasing Him be your daily desire (see Mal 1:8, 9, 10)? Shouldn't His kingdom and glory be your passion?

Comedian Rodney Dangerfield is famous for his line, "**I don't get no respect.**" But he stole that line from the Lord! God says to His people, "If I am a father, where is My honor? If I am a master, where is My respect?" Don't give God the leftovers. Give Him the best you've got! His name will be great among the nations. **Make sure that He is great in your daily life!**