

SHUT THE DOORS

Monday, November 13

Reading: Malachi 1:1-14

Malachi 1:6 *"A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due Me? If I am a master, where is the respect due Me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you priests who show contempt for My name."*

Malachi is the last of the Old Testament prophets. He ministered about 100 years after the Jews returned from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple (c. 450-430 BC). The people of Israel had drifted away from the Lord. God sends His prophet to confront them about their lax and lazy faith.

God begins by restating His love for Israel (1:2-5). However, the people reveal their lack of faith by questioning His love. This question shows their mistrust of God's faithfulness. Malachi takes them back to God's choice of Jacob over his twin brother (and firstborn) Esau. God loved Jacob (whose name would be changed to Israel) but rejected Esau and his descendants called Edom. They had been constant enemies of their "brothers" in Israel (see Numbers 20:14ff; Amos 1:11), even siding with the Babylonians and cheering on the destruction of Jerusalem (see Psalm 137:7; Obadiah; Ezekiel 35). God would turn their territory into a wasteland because of their sin, but He would not do this to Israel even though they too had sinned and turned away from God.

Malachi now moves on to the ways in which Israel had dishonored God. He begins with the priests who were the leaders of the nation (1:6-14). They showed contempt for God by offering "defiled" sacrifices in the Temple and they don't even seem to see to problem! Instead of the perfect spotless lamb, they were offering blind, lame, and diseased animals, keeping the best for themselves. God wonders if they would treat their governor this way! This act of disrespect so angers God that He calls their sacrifices "useless fire" and "contemptible." The Lord's response is, "I am not pleased with you and I will accept no offering from your hands."

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "O That One of You Would Shut the Temple Doors." The defiled sacrifices reveal the defiled hearts of God's people. Not only will God refuse to accept their offerings, He wishes they would just close the whole Temple down instead of making these vile sacrifices from sinful hearts. Sacrifice without heart devotion is worthless! They were offering God their "leftovers" instead of their best. Today, we can be guilty of the same. When we spend a majority of our time and resources on worthless pleasures and fail to give God the honor and service He deserves we fall into the same trap as the Israelites. God would rather see the church close, then to see it filled with half-hearted worshippers who are just "playing" at Christianity. How does your worship, service, and giving to God honor Him? Are you giving your best to Him?
2. "My Name Will Be Great Among the Nations." God's purpose in choosing Israel as His people was that they would declare His glory and greatness to the surrounding nations. Israel failed at this task and actually tarnished God's name more than they magnified it. We have the same mission today – to share the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ with all nations. How does your life shine the glory of God to others?