

I AM A GREAT KING, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS

July 3, 2016

Malachi 1:1-16

**“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,
and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.” Psalm 89:7**

Malachi wrote to people who had some knowledge of God, and some religious practices handed down to them from earlier generations. But they did not have a vital, controlling knowledge of God, and this was evident in their worship. Their priests were spiritually reckless, and they followed that example. Malachi’s prophecy was a “burden” (1:1), meaning that it was primarily a rebuke and condemnation.

Their approach to holy things showed that they had forgotten who God is. God reminded them, “I am a great king, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen” (1:15).

Three evidences of their spiritually lifeless plight become evident in this first chapter.

First, they were unaware of their separation from God, that their ways earned God’s scorn. Responses to God’s messages through Malachi showed no alarm or concern. God said, “I have loved you,” and they respond, “Wherein hast thou loved us?” Careless repetition of religious activities inherited from earlier generations showed contempt for God, yet they respond, “Wherein have we despised thy name?” (6).

Spiritual lethargy, inattention, carelessness and ultimate apostasy from God overtake a person or a church before one realizes anything is amiss. Israel was going through the motions of religion with heartless, inattentive repetition, mindless of God’s nature and unaware of their own state. The fact that He is a “great king” whose name is “dreadful among the heathen” was not in their heads or their hearts. No knowledge of this was exhibited by their worship.

Second, the offerings they brought to God were not according to His demands. Sacrifices were to be unblemished specimens of their flocks (Lev. 22:21, 22). But they were bringing sick, blind and lame animals. They failed to offer their best unto God, keeping it for themselves. Going through the motions of worship, they showed that they were mindless that the Great King should receive our best. Worship was just another duty to them, soon becoming a drudgery

Third, the priests who offered defective sacrifices, whose food came from the sacrifices they offered, complained that food harvested from the sickly animals was of poor quality. And they laid this charge against God, saying that the altar of the Lord was therefore “contemptible” (12).

A mark of the unbeliever, or of a backslidden believer, is to throw spiritual caution to the wind, focusing only upon one’s own comfort and welfare. Then, grumbling erupts, sometimes against God, when matters do not develop to the desired comfort-level. Sadly, this elevation of perceived comfort above God is prevalent in this age.

God’s glory, not man’s pleasure, is the objective of true worship. True worship consciously brings to God the very best, mindful that He is worthy of more than our best. God is dishonored and displeased when anything less is presented as worship.