

Do You Despise the Holy Name? – Malachi 1:6-14

I. Introduction:

- A. If you were going to define “*salvation*” according to Biblical terms, what words would you use?
1. If you need some help, let me give you some suggestions.
 2. When **Zacharias**, the father of John Baptist, had his voice miraculously restored, he began to praise God.
 - a. One of the things he said was: *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath **visited** and **REDEEMED** his people, and hath **raised up** an **HORN of SALVATION** for us in the house of his servant David.”*
 - b. He was saying that salvation is found in Jesus Christ, the promised son of David.
 - c. And that, by the way, is the first reference to “*salvation*” in the New Testament.
 3. Zacharias went on to say, John’s ministry will be *“to give **knowledge of salvation** unto his people by the **REMISSION** of their **sins**.”*
 4. Salvation boils down to remission of sin, the removal or forgiveness of sin, through the sacrifice of Christ.
 5. Elsewhere we read, *“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”*
 6. *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*
- B. If salvation involves the **remission of SINS**, we need to understand the nature of **SIN**.
1. In order for someone to be saved, he must understand that he is a sinner before God. So what is sin?
 2. The **Apostle John** succinctly says, *“Sin is the **transgression of the law**,”* referring to the law of God.
 3. Two chapters later he says, *“All **unrighteousness is sin**.”* And what determines unrighteousness? The standard of righteousness is the Lord Himself.
 4. **Solomon** wrote, *“The thought of **foolishness is sin**.”* What is foolishness? Ultimately it is the denial of God and His revelation. *“The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.”*
 5. **Paul** said in **Romans**: *“Whatsoever is **not of faith is sin**.”*
 - a. He wasn’t referring to just any kind of faith.
 - b. He was talking about trust in the one true and living God, and trust in what He has revealed to us.
 6. Essentially, **sin** is a **contrary relationship to Jehovah**, and **salvation** is that **relationship restored**.
- C. What has this got to do with **Malachi chapter one**?
1. Will you admit with me that this chapter is filled with sin?
 2. The people of Israel were bringing **unworthy sacrifices** to the Lord’s altar.
 - a. It would be like offering your own righteousness as grounds for your salvation.
 - b. **The priests** of Israel were **accepting those sacrifices**, not making a difference between righteous and unrighteous offerings.
 3. Then there was **deception**, which provoked the Lord’s condemnation, *“cursed be the deceiver.”*
 4. And there was **arrogant back-talk** from those sinners: *“Wherein have we committed these sins?”*
 5. There was **distrust** in God’s authoritative statements, and a flagrant **disregard of God’s prophet**.
 6. There is sin in this chapter.
- D. And **in addition** to the **definitions** of sin which I just gave you, I’d like to suggest that we have another here.
1. Notice **verse 6** once again: *“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”*
 2. When we understand God’s name and what it is to despise that name, we have another definition of sin.
 3. If you despise the name of God, your fellowship with the Lord is broken.
 4. If you despise the name of God, you are a sinner in need of salvation, and you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire if that is not corrected by the Lord Himself.
 5. But perhaps you say with the priests of Israel, *“Wherein have we despised thy name?”*
 6. Therein is our subject for this message.

II. First, we must understand what is referred to in “the NAME of God.”

- A. But I’ll digress just a bit, returning to one of my points in an earlier message.
1. Several times lately, I have vented upon the flippant use of “*Jesus’ name*” which is so common today.
 2. A preacher friend made some comments which helped me to understand my own words and emotions.
 3. It is not so much the use of Jesus’ earthly name which is so provocative; it is the way it is used.
 4. He pointed to the way people address **Jesus in the first person**, or in ways related to that.
 5. I’ll condense what Brother Ken Carter said to me in an email: *“Thank you for the message.”*
 - a. In regard to *“addressing Jesus in the first person. You didn’t put it that way, but that is what came to my mind when you mentioned his name on t-shirts etc. We dealt with that a little over a year ago...”*
 - b. *There is just a passage or two in the New Testament where he is addressed that way, but it was by the demon possessed man of the Gadarenes. (“What have I to do with thee, Jesus?”)...*
 - c. *The overwhelming conclusion that I saw anyway was that it is just not correct to address Him in the first person; by his name Jesus. You talked about a son honoring his father in the message.*
 - d. *Who in their right mind would address their earthly father by his first name.*
 - e. *I wasn’t even 10-11 years old when I thought one time it would be cool to address my aunt by her first name. I did it and even before anyone corrected me, which they did, I knew I was wrong.*
 - f. *I knew I was wrong before I did it. There was something inside of me that just told me it was wrong.*
 - g. *As you said in the message His name is thrown around in so many ways that are not honoring.”*
 6. The problem with so many peoples’ use of Jesus’ name is in using it in the first person; speaking to the infinitely holy Son of God as though he was a neighbor or employee.
 7. It’s not so much saying, *“Jesus saved my soul,”* which still provokes me.
 8. It’s in saying, *“Hey, Jesus, thank you for saving my soul, man.”*
- B. Getting back to the name of God in general, I have often said that whichever name or title we use, it is never just an appellation or a label.
1. As it is here, throughout the Bible *“the name of God”* refers to **who God is** and everything about him.
 2. Someone has said, *“The name of God is the sum of His revealed character.”*
- C. My full name is Kenneth David Oldfield, and from time to time, I am addressed by any or all of these.
1. But as yet, no animal or intergalactic alien has ever called to me, saying, *“Hey, human.”*
 2. **My NAME** is *“Oldfield,”* but I am **by NATURE** a *“human being.”*
 3. I have a son, whose name is *“Kraig.”* I call him by that name, and he responds to it.
 4. He is also **my son**, which is not his name. It is our relationship, and who he is naturally.
 5. I could talk about *“Judy, my wife,”* in the same dualistic sort of way.
- D. God told Moses His name was *“I am that I am,”* which in Hebrew is – *“Yahweh, Yahweh – Jehovah, Jehovah.”*
1. But even then, the Lord was **describing** Himself more than just **sharing His name**.
 2. *“I am that I am,”* the basic meaning of *“Jehovah,”* is a statement of fact, not just a name.
 3. Jehovah is the eternal God, the unoriginated source of all things.
 4. *“I am”* is not just His name, but **who He is**.
 5. There have been several million people with the name *“David,”* because that is all it is: a name.
 6. But there has been only one *“Yahweh.”*
 7. No one else should bear that name, because no one else is the eternal *“I am.”*
- E. If you can’t quite see what I’m saying, let’s return to **Malachi**.
1. God refers to His name several times in this book, and if we stop to consider each of them, He is referring to much more than just an appellation, a label or a divine name tag.
 2. **Malachi 4:2:** *“Unto you that fear MY NAME shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”*
 - a. He says, *“To you, who fear my name, there is a Saviour.”*
 - b. Does that mean all we have to do is tremble a little when we hear the name of God to be saved? No.
 - c. To fear the name of God is to reverence the Person of God.

3. **Malachi 2:5:** *“My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was **afraid before MY NAME.**”* Was Malachi talking about fear of a simple name?
 4. **Malachi 1:14:** *“... I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and **MY NAME is dreadful among the heathen.**”*
 - a. Do you remember: *“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names can never hurt me?”*
 - b. If the name of God was nothing but a label, then we’d have nothing to fear in it; but it is so much more.
 - c. There is very good reason to fear the Lord, and His name represents Him; it too must be feared.
 5. **Malachi 2:2:** *“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to **give glory unto MY NAME,** saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings...”*
 - a. Do you think the Lord would be content to have us glorify His title, if in our hearts we despised Who He actually is?
 - b. Is God pleased with people who hate His sovereignty, but who say *“Thank you, Jesus, for saving my soul?”*
 - c. *“Give glory unto my NAME”* is not speaking about honoring his title; it speaks of Jehovah Himself.
 6. **Malachi 3:16:** *“Then they that **feared the LORD** spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that **feared the LORD,** and that **thought upon his NAME.**”*
 7. **Malachi 1:11:** *“From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same **MY NAME** shall be great among the Gentiles.”*
 - a. This is not speaking of some label or nickname for God; it is speaking of God Himself.
 - b. When uttering the *“name of God,”* we are referring to the One who gloriously carries that name.
- F. There are many scriptures and many different ways to prove that the *“name of the Lord”* is more than a label.
1. For example, in the days of **Enos** *“began men to **call upon the NAME of the LORD.**”*
 - a. The intention of **Genesis 4:26** is not to say that people became idolatrous, mindlessly blurting out *“Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah”* as if it was some Hindu mantra.
 - b. No; those people began to seek the face of God and His blessings through prayer and worship.
 - c. But it is described as *“calling upon the NAME of the Lord”* and that is common throughout the Bible.
 2. For example there is **Romans 10:13:** *“For whosoever shall **call upon the NAME of the Lord** shall be saved.”*
 - a. That does not mean if you say the name of Jesus twelve times, He will be obligated to save your soul.
 - b. Nor does **Romans 10:13** say that if you utter a little prayer God will forgive you of your sins.
 - c. It is speaking about seeking the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the source of salvation.
 - d. And yet, it is described as *“calling upon the NAME of the Lord.”*
 3. **Zechariah 13:9** is speaking about the salvation of Israel, when God says,
 - a. *“And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: **they shall call on my NAME,** and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, **The LORD is my God.**”*
 - b. Notice the correlation between *“shall call on my name”* and *“they shall say, the Lord is my God.”*
 - c. Theologically and Biblically those two things are the same when done properly.
 4. In **Revelation 3** Christ Jesus dictated a short letter to the Church in Philadelphia, Asia.
 - a. Toward its conclusion the Lord said, *“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the **NAME of my God,** and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”*
 - b. To be given the name of God is not wear an identification badge which says *“I belong to Jesus.”*
 - c. To bear the name of God is to possess the life, the righteousness & the character of the Lord Himself.
 - d. It is to be born of Him.
- G. What I am trying to say is that the Name of God is not merely a term whereby we address Him; it refers to the Lord Himself.

- H. You may not consider all that information useful, but it will be on the final exam at the end of your course.
1. However there is a more important point contained in the words of **verse 6**: *“If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that **DESPISE my name**. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?”*
 2. One definition of sin might be worded, *“Ye despise my **NAME**.”*

III. All right then, what is meant by “ye **DESPISE** my name,” and what are it’s results?

- A. There is nothing surprising about the Hebrew word *“despise.”*
1. It means to *“hold something in contempt,”* or *“to disdain.”*
 2. To hold something with disdain is to consider it **unworthy of consideration** or **respect**.
- B. There are lots of vivid examples in the Bible to explain the word.
1. *“When the Philistine (Goliath) looked about, and saw David, he **disdained** him: for he was but a youth...”*
 2. When David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, *“Michal Saul’s daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she **despised** him in her heart.”*
 3. When Nehemiah started repairing the wall of Jerusalem, *“Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and **despised** us...”*
- C. And going back to where our chapter began, **Genesis 25:34** says that **Esau** *“**despised** his birthright.”*
1. Some commentators suggest that in his hunger, Esau simply didn’t consider his birthright important; he lightly esteemed it.
 2. But the same Hebrew word is used three more times in **Malachi**, and there the translation is much stronger
 - a. **Malachi 1:7**: *“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is **CONTEMPTIBLE**.”*
 - b. **Malachi 1:12**: *“But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is **CONTEMPTIBLE**.”*
 - c. And **Malachi 2:9**: *“Therefore have I also made you **CONTEMPTIBLE** and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.”*
 3. As I have said, the word *“despise”* is precisely what you’d expect it to mean.
- D. And that is the word used when God says, *“You priests have **despised** my **NAME**.”*
1. Ultimately that means, *“You priests despise **ME** – your Father, your Master, your God.”*
 2. And please keep in mind that Malachi wasn’t addressing a coven of witches.
 3. He wasn’t speaking to the annual meeting of the **Atheist Alliance International** or the **American Humanist Association**.
 4. This is a message addressed to people professing faith in Jehovah.
 5. And we can apply this to professing Christians.
- E. How is it that professing Christians can actually convey a message of distaste and disdain toward the Lord?
1. What is the immediate context of our text?
 2. *“If then I be a father, **where is mine honour?** and if I be a master, **where is my fear?** saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that **despise** my name.*
 3. We are **naturally prone** to make things in our lives **relational**; everything is relative to something else.
 - a. We foolishly think, I love God more that you do, so I am righteous and you are not.
 - b. We say, I don’t sin as often as you do, so I am safe and you are not.
 - c. But it doesn’t work that way.
 4. As I said last week, God doesn’t grade on a curve.
 - a. He doesn’t have a dimmer switch when it comes to His grace or love.
 - b. And He doesn’t give us one to use either.
 5. If we are not giving Jehovah the honor and fear which He is due, then He sees us as despising His name.
 6. The matter is either black or white in the sight of the holy God.

7. If the sacrifice we are giving the Lord isn't 100% then we are polluting His altar and holding it in contempt.
8. Praise God for His grace, because we are wretchedly fallen in this area.

F. How many times in this book has God exposed some sinfulness in Israel, and they responded with *"Wherein have we....?"*

1. Weren't those people saying, *"What evidence do you have for making that statement, Lord?"*
2. Correct me if I am wrong, but to me, each one of these cases is an example of God's professed people telling the Lord that they didn't believe Him.
3. To doubt and correct the revelation of God is to despise His name.
4. To treat the word of God as optional is to despise the name of the Lord.
5. The Holy Spirit could go through every Biblical command and exhortation applying them to our lives.
6. And every time we fail, He could ask, *"Why do you despise my name, O Christian?"*
7. When we don't trust the Lord, we are holding Him in contempt.

G. Isn't every act of sin telling the Lord, *"I hold you in contempt?"*

1. In **II Samuel 12**, the prophet Nathan approached King David, taking his life in his hands in doing so, if David had been any ordinary king.
2. David had sinned with Bathsheba, committing adultery with her and then murdering her husband.
3. So Nathan came to David with a parable about a poor man with one lamb which had been stolen by a rich and powerful neighbor.
4. When David burst into self-righteous anger, the prophet pointed his finger, saying, *"Thou art the man."*
5. God's prophet surgically exposed the sin in David's heart and concluded with *"now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast DESPISED me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."*
6. David had despised the Lord by committing those sins. Every sin shows contempt for God and His name.

H. In **Numbers 11**, Israel had been on the wilderness road for some time.

1. It was a good road, filled with the blessings of God, including a daily ration of manna.
2. But the people began to loath the kindness and grace of the Lord, murmuring about their diet.
3. So the Lord told Moses to bring the seventy elders of the nation together for a divine tongue lashing.
4. God said, *"Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat."*
 - a. *Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;*
 - b. *But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you:*
 - c. *because that ye have DESPISED the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?"*

I. *"Wherein have we despised thy name?"*

1. We despise the name of God, when we **don't give Him the honor He deserves**, and when we don't honor the things He honors, such as His Word and His church.
2. We despise the name of the Lord, when we are **dissatisfied** with the blessings He gives us, especially when we go to the point of accusing the Lord of mistreating us.
3. We despise His name, when we **don't believe** what He tells us.
4. We despise Him, when, like the priests of Israel, we **misrepresent Him** before the world.
5. We despise the name of the Lord when there is **no joy in our service**.

IV. What should we do when the Lord reveals this wickedness in us?

A. There are a couple of things revealed to us in this text and its context.

1. First, we need to plead with the Lord for mercy and grace.
2. **Verse 9:** *"And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us."*

3. Some experts think that this was spoken as *irony*.
4. It was ironic, since those priests were so far from the Lord, God wasn't interested in their prayers.
5. Others, like Matthew Henry, insist this is sincere advice, and for the sake of application let's agree.
6. How can we go wrong if we repent and plead with the Lord for mercy?

B. 1 John 1:9: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

1. Christians sin, but they have someone to represent them before God's offended holiness.
2. **1 John 2:1:** *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*
3. If the Lord charges you with contempt, then repent and seek the face of God through the Saviour.

C. Then **Malachi 2:2**, in a round about way, adds an important corollary:

1. It says, reverse those things in your life and *"give glory to God's NAME."*
2. Stop offering inferior and corrupt sacrifices, no matter what everybody else is doing.
3. Stop questioning God's Word and revelation, debating with the Lord about what is and isn't sin.
4. Turn completely around; turn 180 degrees; repent before God.
5. And once your life is where it ought to be, then give proper glory to God; give glory to the name of the Lord.

V. Conclusion:

A. There is one more application of the word *"despised"* that I need to make this morning.

1. It is found in **Isaiah 53** which speaks prophetically of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sin.
2. The Holy Spirit reveals that unregenerated people, unbelievers, have special hatred for the Saviour.
3. **Isaiah 53:3** says, *"He is **DESPISED** and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was **DESPISED**, and we esteemed him not."*
4. But those sins against Christ have been borne by Him, when He took them all the way to the cross.
5. *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*
 - a. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*
 - b. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."*

B. To despise the name and person of God is a horrible sin, worthy of eternity in the Lake of Fire.

1. But to God, all sin is black and wicked to the Nth degree.
2. So, for instance, the lying I referred to in an earlier lesson, is no lesser or worse than this sin of contempt.
3. *"All have sinned and come short of the glory God,"* and for this reason we all need to repent.
4. But for the humble believer, those sins have all been put onto the back of the crucified Saviour.
5. Christ Jesus, *"did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*
 - a. *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:*
 - b. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."*

C. If those priests of Israel were to repent of their sinful disregard and hatred of the name of God...

1. If they would have sought the mercy of Jehovah through the merits of the Lamb of God...
2. They would have been forgiven and delivered.
3. And the same might be true of you.
4. So I plead with you, *"repent before God and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."*