

“Putting God First In All Things!”

Malachi 3:6-18

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Teaching Aim: To demonstrate we can trust God because of His unchanging nature, His word is true and is the same yesterday, today, and forever. To explore the topic of Old Testament tithing and compare how it relates to New Testament giving today. To understand we don't serve God to get, we serve God to give. To realize God will remember those who are faithful in His Book of Remembrance.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The immutability of God and our hope in Him (Mal. 3:6-7)

1. What is the definition of the word, “*immutable*?” (See Dictionary) How does this word relate to God and to His relationship with the Jewish people? According to **verse 6**, what benefit did the nation of Israel receive because of God's attribute of immutability? How does God's immutability relate to His promises in the Bible and to us as Christians today?
2. According to **verse 7**, had the Jews remained faithful to God? What gracious promise did God give to the Jews in **verse 7**? Does this promise still apply to us today? (See **Isa. 55:6; Jam. 4:7-10**) How did the Jews respond to God's gracious offer? What can we learn about the hearts of these people from their response? (See **Jer. 17:9-10**)

Part II: The difference between robbing God and trusting God (Mal. 3:8-12)

1. When God asked the question, “*Will a man rob God?*” in **verse 8**, what was the obvious answer? Have you ever robbed God? If so, in what way? How did Ananias and Sapphira rob God? (See **Acts 5:1-11**) How were the Jewish people in the Book of Malachi robbing God (**vs. 8**)? Did they believe that they had robbed God?

2. What did God place upon the land of Judah because the people were thieves (**vs. 9**)? (See **Deut. 28:45-68**) What would this mean for their future prosperity? We might be able to con other people, but can we con God?

3. What corrective challenge did God make to Judah in **verse 10**? (*Note: Israel and Judah are often used interchangeably in Scripture.*) Discuss how the people were robbing God, robbing the priests and their families, robbing the poor and widow, and even robbing themselves by not tithing. Is this still true for us today when Christians do not give? If so, how?

4. What second challenge did God give to the Jews in **verse 10b**? What promise did He make in this passage to the people who obey Him? What would opening *“the windows of heaven”* mean to an agrarian society? What would it mean to our own society today?

5. Is there ever a time in the Bible where we should *“test God”* (**vs. 10**)? (See **Isa. 7:11-12**; **1 Kin. 18:22-46**) Why do you think God challenged the Israelites to test Him on the matter of tithing? Do you think this same challenge is for Christians today? If so, how?

6. According to the New Testament, Christian giving should be systematic, be done on the first day of the week (Sunday) and be proportionate to one’s income. (See **1 Cor. 16:1-2**) Additionally, Christian giving should not be done out of compulsion, but from a cheerful heart (See **2 Cor. 9:7**). Why do you think each point listed above is important?

7. According to **Luke 6:38** and **2 Cor. 9:6**, what can the believer giving with the right motives expect? Should New Testament giving be done hoping to receive a reward? Why should Christians give? Are the proponents of the *“name it and claim it”* philosophy correct, or are they in error? Why? What is the proper position on giving?

8. Who might be referred to as “*the devourer*” in an agrarian society (**vs. 11**)? (See Commentaries) What special promises did God make to the nation in **verse 11** if they are simply faithful to Him? How would the perception of other nations be changed toward Israel if they were obedient according to **verse 12**? Why? What should the demeanor of the Christian be? Why?

Part III: The people’s grumbling, but a “Book of Remembrance” for the faithful (Mal. 3:13-18)

1. What additional charge did God make against the Jews in **verse 13**? Are you ever guilty of the same? If so, how? According to **verse 13**, how did the Jews respond to God’s accusation?
2. What harsh words did the Jewish people speak against God in **verse 14**? Do we find these very same charges being made by our own generation today? Why do you think we have so many church hoppers in our “*me generation*?” Is church about us? What should be the main purpose be for going to church?
3. What additional charges did the Jews make against God in **verse 15**? Are these charges true Scripturally? (See **Isa. 5:20-21**) Have you ever wondered the age-old question: “*Why do the wicked prosper?*” (See **Job 21:7-15**) Will the wicked always prosper, or will a day come when they must answer for their sin? If so, what do we call this day? (See **Amos 5:18-20**)
4. What do we find the faithful remnant doing in **verse 16**? What did it mean to say, “*they feared the Lord?*” How did the LORD respond to this kind of reverence? What other book do we find often spoken of in the Scripture? (See **Exod. 32:32-34; Neh. 13:14; Psa. 69:28; Dan. 7:10; 12:1**) How does the book in **verse 16** apply to you today? According to **verse 16b**, who will have their name written in “*The Book of Remembrance?*”

5. According to **verse 17**, what will the result be for those who fear the LORD (*the faithful remnant*)? *“My jewels”* can also be interpreted as *“My special treasure.”* What does this teach us about the value of God’s people to Him? What is the only people group referred to as *“My special treasure”* in the Old Testament? (See **Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; Psalms 135:4**) Who is referred to as *“His own special people”* in the New Testament? How does this truth relate to you and the Church today?
6. When will we ultimately be able to distinguish the difference between the righteous and the wicked? (See **Matt. 25:31-46**) Can people tell by your behavior that you are a Christian? Are you making Christianity attractive to others, or are you pushing them away from the Lord Jesus? What makes Christianity attractive to you personally? On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your Christian Walk? Are other people seeing Christ in you?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Because God is *“immutable,”* we can always trust Him to keep His word.
- We rob God when we don’t give Him the offerings that He deserves.
- God challenges us to test Him when it comes to sacrificial giving to see if He won’t open the flood gates of heaven.
- We should not be focusing on what God can do for us; we should be focusing on what we can do for God.
- The faithful remnant who reverence the LORD will be blessed abundantly by God, they will be His jewels and His special treasure.