

# Robbing God

**Key Verse:** “*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*”  
—*Malachi 3:8*

**Selected Scripture:**  
*Malachi 3:5-10*

THE PROPHET MALACHI was a contemporary of Nehemiah. It is thought by some Bible scholars that Malachi’s prophecy was given during the period of Nehemiah’s absence from Jerusalem at the court of Persia, during which time there was much confusion among the Israelites. The burden of Malachi’s prophecy is a mixture of God’s love for Israel, his rebuke of the sins of the priests, and his displeasure with the people, many of whom had gotten away from worshipping the Lord properly. In Malachi 1:6, a fixed principle is laid down that a son should honor his father, and a servant should honor his master. These principles were applied here to the relationship between God and Israel. If they claimed God as their Father, they should render to him proper love and reverence as his children. As servants they should also render to him obedience and honor.

Israel, especially their religious leaders, had drifted away from proper reverence for God, and Malachi addressed them as if they did not recognize the true situation. He said they had offered “polluted bread” upon his altar, but they asked, “Wherein have we polluted thee?” The prophet continues saying they offered blind, lame and sick animals for sacrifice, and then asks, “Is it not evil?” (vss. 7,8) He then urges that they pray to God, and ask for grace and

forgiveness, else how could they expect his special favor to continue in the future.—vs. 9

Turning to chapter three of Malachi's prophecy, we come to our Key Verse, where the Lord, through the prophet, inquires, "Will a man rob God?" This is a startling question. Who would dare think or imagine to rob God? First, we must realize that everyone has a responsibility to God, the one who created us, and without whom we do not exist. It is our obligation, yea privilege, to bring to him the best that we have in the way of obedience, love and service.

To rob God with full knowledge and willfulness would, we believe, be rare. Hence, the Israelites are represented as doubting this matter and saying, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" Israel had often expressed displeasure with what it viewed as a lack of divine favor and blessing. However, the Lord's testimony now came to them through Malachi to show them that their problems were not the result of God's lack of care over them, but due to their own irreverence and failure to show appreciation to him by rendering true worship from their heart. This failure on their part was well illustrated by the fact that they were bringing blemished and polluted offerings to God.

Verses 10-12 give us the point of this lesson. When the Lord reproves, it is not for the purpose of discouraging his people. Rather, it is to stir them to repentance and growth in a way pleasing to him. It is God's desire that all his people in every age are daily revived and motivated to serve him with a singleness of purpose, even if there have been past failures. Thus, we all are encouraged, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (vs. 10) Let us pray as the psalmist did when he recognized his wayward course: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—Ps. 51:10 ■