

## Honoring God; To God be the Glory!

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### Malachi 3:10-12

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the Lord of hosts; "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts."

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This passage of Scripture is from Malachi, which is the last book in the Old Testament. Malachi was a prophet of the Lord. Not much is known of him other than what God had him write in this book. The theme of this book I think is chapter 1 verse 6, where God speaks through the prophet to the people of Israel. God first addresses the priests by saying, "**A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence? Says the Lord of hosts to you priests who despise My name.**"

Yes, He is the same who is "the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him." (**Zechariah 12:1**) He is the same who is spoken of in **Colossians 1:16**, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." He is the same who said in **Isaiah 43:7**, "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." Yes, we were all created for His glory! He is the same God Almighty, Creator of all things who is spoken of in **Revelation 4:11**, "'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.'" He is the same who says through the Apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 10:31**, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." We must ask ourselves, is everything I do honoring God? Are we honoring God, recognizing as King David did, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." All things belong to God. We belong to God. To God be the glory whether we are His vessels that dishonor Him or whether we are His vessels that honor Him. Yet the vessels of dishonor face the wrath of God while the vessels of honor reap the blessings of God, which includes eternal life.

This message today is on HONORING GOD. He IS worthy of all the glory, honor, and praise. "All things were created through Him and for Him." This is His show, His plan, His purpose, and His desire, His will. It is not up to us to get God on our plan and purpose, it is up to us to get on His plan and purpose. He created all of this, He puts us here, breathed the breath of life into each one of us, and has given us an instruction manual on what to do; that is the Word of God, what we now call the Bible or the Holy Bible. To God be the glory!

Many people throughout history, including myself, have contemplated whether God really takes time to see all that we do or say. "Perhaps He just takes notice of us when we're doing good deeds or acts of kindness. **Psalm 33:13-15** says, "The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works." Also in **Psalm 139**, David says, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me." You may say something like "wow, we're just like fish in a fishbowl", or "we're like a child with a hammer watching ants, where at the mere whim of the child he will smash an ant into the pavement." But David says that His hand will HOLD him, that HE will lead him. Back to **Psalm 133** where David says, "The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works." He continues by saying in verses **18-22**, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His **mercy**, to deliver their soul from death, and to **keep them alive** in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our **help** and our **shield**. For our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name. Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, just as we hope in You." God is not like the child looking to squash ants with a hammer, He is looking to His people to help them, to protect them, to bless them, and to guide them and teach them His ways. God can't change who He is. In **Malachi 3:6**, God says, "For I am the Lord, I do not change." He does want to change us into who He is. "God wants to get us back onto His purpose, His plan. "All things were created through Him and for Him."

The first things God addresses to the Israelites is in them questioning God's love for them by them saying Jacob was loved but Esau was hated. When we read the story of Esau and Jacob in the book of Genesis, we find that Isaac does speak a blessing over Esau. We also know that God blessed Esau throughout his life. Yet what we don't read about is Esau confessing his sin before God and repenting. Esau gave up his blessing and birthright to his brother Jacob for a

bowl of lentils. It was not just a blessing from his father that he was forsaking, he was forsaking a blessing from God. Esau wanted the blessings of the temporary comfort of the things of this world over the eternal blessings from God. This is when God says in one of our passages of Scripture in Malachi, "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then **I** am the Father, where is **My** honor? And if **I** am a **Master**, where is My reverence? We know that from **1 John 4:8** that "God is love." Yet God is also justice, and mercy, and righteousness, and holiness. God can't forsake who He is but He can change who we are.

What were the Israelites and the priests missing in questioning God's love for them? That He is their Redeemer, that He is their Hope and Righteousness and Savior! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) [and] God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (**Romans 5:8**) We have all sinned against God (**Romans 3:23**) and the wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 6:23**) Even while knowing the wretched sinners that we are Jesus paid the price for our sin to be reconciled unto God so that we can have fellowship with Him (**1 Corinthians 1:9**) and God the Father (**1 John 1:3**) and the holy Spirit (**2 Corinthians 13:14**) and have eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord! And as Peter said in **Acts 5:31-32** Him [being Jesus] God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel [and to all who will believe] and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." How great indeed is the love of God for each of us!

God continues by saying to the priests in Malachi, "Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'" God speaks through the prophet telling the priests that they have been dishonoring God by offering lame and sickly animals for the sacrifice. Which says that the priests were condoning the people giving lame and sickly animals for the sacrifices. They were also dishonoring God by showing partiality in the law which no doubt meant that they were taking bribes in judgment cases. They were also freely giving consent to divorce which God says, "[He] hates." It is in that passage of Scripture that pastors use in counseling couples that are considering divorce. Jesus also addressed divorce by saying, "'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." God hates divorce. There are circumstances that it must be so but God hates divorce. If anyone would like prayer and counseling on marriage and divorce, Susie and I will be glad to talk and pray with you. They were also dishonoring God by speaking good on those who did evil saying that they were "good in the sight

of the Lord." God says in **2:2**, "If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name," says the Lord of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart." **"All things were created through Him and for Him."**

Just as God spoke to the Israelites as He was sending them to go into the Promised Land that was "flowing with milk and honey", He said in **Deuteronomy 10:12**, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it." But wait, you may say, that is Old Testament stuff. We are no longer under the law but of grace through Jesus Christ. Yet Jesus Himself was asked what is the greatest commandment of all and Jesus responded with, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." He didn't say, "don't worry about it, just believe in me." God does not change and has not changed. When Jesus was questioned on the ten commandments, Jesus didn't tell them to not follow God's laws anymore. In fact Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Toward the end of Malachi, God says, "Your words have been harsh against Me," says the Lord, "yet you say, 'what have we spoken against You?' You have said, 'it is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the Lord of hosts? That's kind of along the lines of saying that God just isn't fair. God is too hard on us. I can never please God. Following God seems pointless when all around me I see people prosper without following God and here I am in my misery and sorrow. That's fair enough to question I think what this all means. Yet God gives us His Word, the Bible to help us to understand Him and His ways, to help us to know that He isn't just waiting to bonk us on the head with a hammer, that He sets before us an impossible task that He knows that we will fail at just so He can reign His justice upon us all so that He can be God, the great and glorious God that has an ego trip. To address that, first it has to be pointed out that **He alone is God**, that there is none beside Him (**Isaiah 45:5**). And once again, "All things were created through Him and for Him." **Deuteronomy 32:4** says, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He."

So let's look at God's ways from the beginning. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...(Genesis 1:1) God made man in His own image. He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God gave them a free will, to choose to obey God or not but He warned them of the consequence of disobeying or sinning against God. Yet they did sin against God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and were kicked out of the Garden of Eden. As time went on all of mankind became so corrupt and evil that God decided to flood the earth and do away with man. But Noah found grace in the eyes of God because He honored God. After the flood Noah and his family populated the earth and then we read of the story of the Patriarchs that leads to the beginning of the nation of Israel through Jacob. God first gave man free will to do as they pleased. That didn't work out so well for most of the people on earth. God then began to establish a nation, Israel so that He would be their God. Well, the Israelites settled with the Egyptians became in bondage to them because of their sinning against God. Then God sent a deliverer, Moses, to lead the people out of Egypt. God led the Israelites by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. God finally got the Israelites to the promised land (after 40 years, the long duration wasn't because of God's doing but because of the sin of the Israelites). Then God chose to lead His people through judges that He appointed to administer justice. Time after time, the sin of Israel became so great that they would go into bondage to other nations. Then God would send another deliverer, a judge to save them. Then in time, the Israelites cried for a king, as the other nations had kings. Through Samuel, the judge and prophet, God told them that they didn't need a king. But they persisted and God gave them Saul, who became an evil king. Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament, good and bad kings arose and God sent many, many prophets to try and get Israel to repent and stop sinning against God, and to honor God and live in His ways. Time and time again God has been speaking the same thing to His people, even now. Time and time again people have said, "why follow God, He isn't fair, why can't we just do what we want?" Yet time and time again God responds with what Malachai says in 3:7, "Return to Me, and I will return to you." Just as God said to the Israelites through King Solomon, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Some of you may say, "brother you're preaching to the choir, I am trying my best to follow the Lord." Yes, me too, yet I think we all from time to time say or think, "this following Jesus stuff is hard." Or you may feel at times that God really isn't fair. "Where are my blessings?" you may ask. **"All things were created through Him and for Him."** God doesn't want us giving a half-hearted effort at loving Him and serving Him. We were created by God for His pleasure and His glory. He wants all of us. We are His! And He more than gives us

reason to honor Him and love Him. He is our Sustainer, our Provider, Our Helper, our Protector, Our Comfortor, and our Redeemer, and our Eternal Hope.

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the Lord of hosts; "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts."

This passage of Scripture is used frequently by pastors before passing around the offering plate, to remind people that God wants to bless our giving. Another passage of Scripture that pastors use for the offering is **Luke 6:38**, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Taken in context, if we back up in what Jesus was talking about He was saying, "But love your enemies, **do good**, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

God doesn't want us just giving what spare change we have in our pocket, God wants us to recognize that the "earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof." All things were created by Him and for Him. He made us all for His purpose and His pleasure. **Ephesians 2:8-10** says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. **For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**" It has always been God's plan for Himself through His Son Jesus, to be our Redeemer, to save us from our sin against God, to reconcile us back to God so that we can have a relationship with God, to be our Father, and it has always been God's plan for us to honor God as being THE God Almighty, Creator of all things, including us, for us to honor Him with all that we are and have. He wants to bless us, be our Protector, for us to be His delight. We find His blessings through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is a devourer out there that is out to steal, kill, and destroy. (John 10:10) Satan and all his demons. They can't be rebuked though if we are entertaining

or following them, right? But to those who will obey God, He gives of His Holy Spirit to where we can be blessed with ALL of the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." That is when we are born-again. When we abide in Him and surrender to the will of the Father, He begins to work in us. That is where we can have love overflowing, joy abundant, peace that flows like a river, and all that is of the character and goodness of God. Yet, He alone is God. We don't become God we are God's. We are His, not Him. There is only one God. When we let Him reign IN us we find what we need and are looking for because it is how we were created to be, in the blessings and fullness of God. Living for God isn't easy. With wisdom comes sorrow with godliness comes persecution and following Jesus comes at a cost. But listen to this. **Malachi 3:16-18** says, "Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His name. "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." As if it weren't enough to be His jewels, we will also reign with Him, and we will be joint-heirs with Jesus of His eternal kingdom (**Romans 8:17**). Guaranteed, the best is yet to come!

In **4:2** He says, "But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves." Spirituall fat, of course, no extra calories. In closing, **1 Peter 5:6-7** says, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." God loves you more than you could possibly imagine. God wants the best for you and He does indeed want to bless you. He has laid it out before us. "Try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."