

## Will A Man Rob God?

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Malachi 3:8

### Introduction:

In Malachi, we can see one theme and that is where the Levites were robbing God. These acts of robbery can be classified into two main groups. The first being robbery of God's glory by *negative action* and the second being robbery of God's glory by *lack of action*. Throughout this lesson we will discuss the ways that the Levites robbed God. We will then compare our modern lives against those of the ancient Levites to see if we are robbing God in similar ways. Finally, we will examine how we can keep ourselves, and others, from doing so.

### Discussion:

- I. When considering the two ways we can rob God of his glory, doing so by negative action is by far the more noticeable and therefore more frowned upon. In the days of Malachi, we can see that he calls the Levites out for their participation in several negative acts. The first of act is defilement of the worship of God in Malachi 1:7ff. Malachi lists examples such as offering tainted bread and sacrificing blind, lame, or sick animals as offerings. He then contrasts this with the high treatment they were giving to men such as their governor. We can tie this to today when considering the payment of taxes: Many of us keep track of receipts and spend hours on tax forms just to make sure that the government gets everything they should. But when the collection plate comes around at worship service, many times we just throw in

whatever we happen to have in our pockets. Malachi also shows us that the Jews were giving to God that which was stolen (Malachi 1:13). Sometimes, in today's society, we can think that if we do something like steal or gamble, and then give some of it to God, He will accept and that will make it all better. But as we will see, God does not accept worship if it is not the right action and in the right heart. In Malachi 3:8, our key text, we can see that they were robbing in tithes and offerings. This is significant because it shows that they were robbing God in a physical and spiritual way. From Malachi 2:8-10 we can see that they were robbing God of the glory due him by doing such things as turning themselves, and others, aside from the Lord, dealing treacherously with their brothers and speaking vain or arrogant words against the service and worship of God.

II. Malachi also condemns the Levites because of their lack of action. The robbery due to lack of action is not nearly as noticeable as the negative action, but it is much more common and easy to ignore by our spiritual defenses. Malachi first notes that they were despising the Lord's name in Malachi 1:6. They were calling God "Father" but not giving Him the honor due to a father and calling Him "Master" but not giving him the respect of a master. This can be connected today most easily in the much too commonly used phrase of my generation "Oh My God" or "OMG". We have turned God's most holy name into an excitation point. This is more or less the kind of thing they were struggling with in that day and time as well. We also see that the Levites were offering uselessly-kindled fire in Malachi 1:10, and that God wished that someone would close the gates to the temple. This, along with Leviticus 10:1 recording of use of "vain" fire, shows us that we must be doing the right acts of

worship AND have the right heart for it to be acceptable to God. Malachi also noted in Malachi 1:13 that the Jews were being slack in worship, calling it tiresome or worrisome - in the sense of there being lots of loopholes they had to jump through to make God happy and it wasn't worth it. An illustration of this in today's time might be the idea of waking up Sunday morning and saying "GREAT! I get to go to church today!" versus "great... I guess I have to go to church today". They also robbed God by not giving Him what they promised to in Malachi 1:14. Likewise, Christians, when we are baptized, promise ourselves to Jesus and if we give him anything less than everything we have we are robbing Him of what we promised. Lastly, in Malachi 2:2, we see that they were not heeding God, not listening to, taking to heart his words, nor giving honor to His name.

- III. So how can we prevent ourselves and others from robbing God of the Glory due to Him? Well, the first and simplest solution is to simply do what needs to be done and don't do what shouldn't be done. For example we should start heeding God, listening to His words, and taking them to heart while giving honor to his name. We also should revere and stand in awe of God as seen in Malachi 2:5. We also must follow and set good examples. This can be done by living the list given in Malachi 2:6-7. We must have true instruction in our mouth, have righteousness on our lips 2:6, be walking with the Lord in Peace and uprightness 2:6, help to turn others (as well as each other) back from iniquity 2:6, preserve the knowledge of the Lord and his will 2:7, and we must always be seeking instruction and growing in the word of the Lord. We must also constantly be refining and purifying ourselves through God as seen in Malachi 3:2-3.

Conclusion: In conclusion of this matter we can see that there are many ways to rob God both by negative actions and by lack of actions. The cure for this sin is simple and summed up in one verse (Malachi 4:4), "Remember the God's Law, statutes, ordinances, and keep His commandments." We are all God's and, if we have not given ourselves completely to Him, we are robbing God of the glory we could be bringing Him - as well as the blessings that He will bring into our lives if we live for Him.