

# DEBATING WITH GOD

By Keith Greer

In the book of Malachi, the last of the Minor Prophets and thirty-ninth book of the Old Testament, the children of Israel are "**debating with God**". To be sure this is a debate they can never win. Could anyone?

"I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved;" {Malachi 1:2}

God had always displayed His love for His children. Who brought their fathers out of Egypt? Who gave them the land? Who brought them out of Babylonian captivity? Who was sending Malachi with this message? God had done His part. What about Israel?

"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. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name? You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible. And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?' Says the LORD of hosts. "{Malachi 1: 6-8}

According to the Law of Moses, they were strictly forbidden to offer anything other than the best! Leviticus 20:20-33. How much respect did they have for God? How much honor were they giving Him? What they gave reflected how much they thought of Him. God's charge is correct, they had despised Him!

"You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, "In what way have we wearied Him?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, And He delights in them," Or, "Where is the God of justice?" {Malachi 2:17} Were they guilty of taxing God's patience? Calling people who do evil good, how much more would that tax God? Isaiah 5:20.

"Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. "{Malachi 3:7,8}

Robbing God. How could they be guilty of such a crime? By offering the lame, sick, and blind and withholding their tithes and offering. Failing to keep God's commandments and ordinances. Do you need any more evidence to find them guilty?

How could they even believe they had an issue with God? Who had done who wrong? Did God correctly show the truth of His charges? Guilty, end of the debate!

Before you start to shake your heads in disbelief, would you ever take issue with God? Maybe a better question, would be could God take issue with you?

Do you serve God by doing the "least you can"? Do you rob God? Do you despise Him by not showing Him honor and reverence? Could you be guilty of wearying God? Taking but never giving back to Him for all He does for you? Seriously, can you honestly say in your heart that the service you give the Lord is the best you can do?

Man will never win a debate with God. God is never on trial or in question. God richly and graciously gives us every good thing that we have in this life, James 1:17, an expression of His love. Do our lives express the same deep affection and thanksgiving one should have in our daily walk with Him? How would you do if God were debating you? Just a thought. \*\*\*