

## FOOLING YOURSELF ABOUT GOD

### Malachi 1:6-14

**Introduction:** God's people had been released from bondage and were now back in their own land. The walls had been rebuilt and they were settling down into a routine of life. However in doing so, they had become sensual, selfish, grown neglectful, skeptical and were neglecting vital worship. They were living immorally and worship was just formality and they lived in a spirit of worldliness.

### I. GOD BRINGS CHARGES AGAINST ISRAEL

1. v 6. **There is a lack of awe and respect.**
  - They honored their fathers, but not God.
  - They obeyed their masters (supervisors), regulations, job requirements, but not God.
  - If God is God, where was the fear, reverence, and honor due Him?
  - It is vain to call Him Lord, Master, God and not do His sayings.
  - The reality of one's profession of faith is shown by his/her attitude toward God.
  - Are we guilty of doing the same things?
  
2. v7. **They have looked down the nose at God.**
  - They gave polluted offerings. All offerings were required to be perfect and firstfruits.
  - They gave tainted, impure service.
  - Cheap religion costs little and is rejected by God, it is worth nothing.
  
3. v8. **They substituted their standards for God's.**
  - They offered blind, lame, and sick animals in place of the spotless, perfect as required.
  - They felt nothing was wrong with substituting.
  - What if we treat everyone as we treat God?
  - What if we were treated by everyone and by God as we treat Him?
  - Is God pleased with what you and I have been offering Him?
  - Is there any excuse for such behavior that God will accept?
  
4. v12. **They treated God's Name with irreverence.**
  - It was not only by words, but by actions as well. His Name didn't carry any authority.
  - They didn't give God their best since He was not worth it. They substituted.
  - One's real attitude about God is revealed in his/her actions toward their Church.
  
5. v13. **Serving God was a bothersome burden to them.**
  - Poor service in God's Church shows this (late, absent, unprepared, etc.)
  - When you can't wait till the services are over.
  - When you don't bother to attend much of the time.
  - Where does God ask too much? Where is serving Him a burden? Show God why you can't serve Him according to His standards.
  - God grew weary of Israel's actions toward Him, and He grows more weary of our actions than we have of serving Him. Self love creates this wrong attitude of serving God.

- Why should God accept anything from most of us?

## **II. IT IS PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN FOOLED, NOT GOD**

1. People only deceive themselves for substitutes are not accepted by God.
2. We have much better to give and have not given the pure and spotless but have kept those for ourselves and given God the second-best.
3. Sacrificial behavior, not empty professions and substitutions reveal where our thoughts are about God.
4. Examine yourself! God isn't fooled with left-overs or second-class substitutes.
5. God requires the best from Israel and from His Church - and that's US.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Not giving our best is the same as a lame or crippled offering.
2. Half-hearted offerings are at the best sick animal type offerings.
3. Our weak, partial service is no more than a torn offering.
4. We dare offer God that which we would not dare offer anybody else.
5. We deceive ourselves, we play church when we are being less than what God requires of our time, abilities, money, and our lives.
6. Just a cup of water is plenty and readily accepted by God when done from the heart.
7. Israel was guilty! Is there anybody here who would say, "I'm not guilty of the same?"  
But "I've been substituting, slighting the name of God, thinking that serving Him is a bothersome burden and I've looked down my nose at His standards for me and have failed to give God the respect and honor due Him."
8. God stands ready to forgive IF we acknowledge our guilt and want to do something about it.  
To repent, turn around, and change our behavior. If not then one is only fooling him/herself about serving God.
9. God demands and deserves our very best.