

## Return to God

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Rev. Lex DeLong / General

Major Posts from Minor Prophets: Be an Influencer / Malachi 3:7–12

Here is how Israel, or any gathering of God's people can be spiritually heart-healthy and experience God's blessing.

### Notes

10/22 Malachi 3:7-12 "Return to God," Subtitle: Your heart and God's Blessing, Scripture: Jer. 17:5-8

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Haggai, Malachi ((1) Call for Repentance (3:7))

The problem was that Judah failed to recognize that they had strayed from the divine path. Although they had noticed the absence of God's blessings (1:2; 2:13–14, 17; 3:14–15), they had not noticed the absence of their God. They were like the stereotypical husband who has failed to recognize that his relationship with his wife has deteriorated. The interrogative word "how" (bammeh/bammâ, lit. "by what?") occurs twenty-nine times in the Hebrew Bible, more frequently in Malachi (6x) than in any other book except Judges (8x).<sup>10</sup> In Malachi these obtuse and obstreperous people ask, "How have you loved us?" (1:2), "How have we shown contempt for your name?" (1:6), "How have we defiled you?" (1:7), "How have we wearied him?" (2:17), and now, "How are we to return?" (3:7), and "How do we rob you?" (3:8). Their other questions are similar: "Why [ʿal-mâ] [do you not accept our offerings]?" (2:14), and, "What [mâ] have we said against you?" (3:13). In each case Judah's question is not just for information (as in 2 Sam 21:3) but contains an element of complaint and disputation.

**Here they arrogantly question why they should need to repent.**

As the NLT renders it, "How can we return when we have never gone away?"<sup>11</sup> The Lord's patience with his people is indeed amazing.

*New American Commentary*, Taylor, Richard A.; Clendenen, E. Ray

Israel was blind to their own rebellion against God, not just in the overt sins of the surrounding nations that they had adopted ("How can we return when we have never left you?"), but even in what they owed to God as His chosen people ("How have we robbed you?").

How many times have we asked ourselves, "Why aren't there more people in our church? Why don't people stay when we visit? We are friendly, we have a fairly nice building, we preach truth from the Word of God."

What is missing from our church that answers these questions? This is a passage that requires us to look deep within ourselves and ask the question, "Is this passage talking to me? Is this what I am doing?"

This passage tells, "Here is how Israel, or any gathering of God's people can be spiritually heart-healthy and experience God's blessing."

1 Kings 8:33. Solomon's prayer, when they sin and if they return, then I will...

2 Chron. 7:14. Same

Zech. 1:3. Same

## **Return to the Lord (Malachi 3:7)**

Consider the church's view of this, Heb. 12:1-3.

If we are willing to return to the Lord, He will return to us.

Note the last part of v. 7, "But you say, 'How shall we return?'"

## **Stop Robbing God (Malachi 3:8-11)**

Consider the church's view on this, 1 Thes. 5:12-24.

If we put this precept of God for His people to the test, then He will bless this church.

## **Trust the LORD of Hosts (Malachi 3:12)**

Consider the church's view on this, 2 Cor. 1:18-20.

God is faithful ... "For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes..." If God promises blessing if we are willing to return to Him and stop robbing Him, then we can trust the LORD of Hosts to return to us and bless these, His people.

Full, consuming repentance will result in such divine blessing that any doubt that might remain about God's favor, God's compassion, or God's undeniable blessing will be fully erased.