

Arguing With God

(A Study in Malachi)

It's funny how easy it is to criticize others in the wrong. I'm sure you've done so a time or two. Sometimes we're in the right, but others we're in the wrong without realizing. So, because we're either in the right, or don't realize we're in the wrong, such moments don't challenge or scare us. It seems to be very straight forward: here's an area where someone has missed the mark. It's black and white. No need for a long conversation. To give an example, let's criticize God's people of old together, shall we? This should be fun and make us feel great about ourselves! About 100 years after God's people returned to their home from Babylonian captivity (because of their unbelief), they argue with God concerning His accusations and we'll take a look at each section.

(I'm walking through these passages and giving commentary - this is the meat of the lesson. Please see video for commentary).

- Argue about God's love (1:1-5)

- But you say, "How have You loved us?" 1:2

- Argue about God's sacrifices (1:8-2:9)

- But you say, "How have we despised your name?" 1:6
- But you say, "How have we polluted you?" 1:7
- But you say, "What a weariness this is (their worship to God - SB)" and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. 1:13

- Argue about their marriages (2:10-16)

- But you say, "Why does He not (accept their offerings - SB?" 2:14

- Argue about God's justice (2:17-3:5)

- But you say, "How have we wearied Him?" 2:17

- Argue about reconciliation and tithing (3:6-12)

- But you say, "How shall we return?" 3:7
- But you say, "How have we robbed you?" 3:8

- Argue about speaking against God (3:13-15)

- But you say, "How have we spoken against You?" 3:13

What a mess! They doubt God's love? They attempt to ignore their sincerity in worship? They don't bring Him their best? They feel like worship is a burden? They act like they don't know what the problem is or how to return to God? Did anyone feel a little awkward, or dare I say . . . guilty? "Well, that's true Shawn, but the thing is . . ." Yeah, exactly. The thing you've probably questioned God's goodness before have't you? You've played the ignorant card before, haven't you? You've not always offered God your best (and I'm not talking Sunday mornings only). You've not ever wearied God before, have you! You've not ever dreaded meeting together, have you? "Oh, good! Shawn gets it! So let's not be too hard on ourselves!" Well, I'm not saying that either. I'm saying, let's be humble enough to realize this isn't an old struggle or problem. Let's realize that if people long ago could do . . . so could you.

The end of the book (whether coincidence or not) reads like the end of Revelation. God is coming again. There's blessings for those who fear and love Him. There are curses for those who will not listen and love. Which are we? We see what happened with the majority when John and Jesus arrived on the scene. What will happen with Jesus returns with His angels?