**Malachi: Bible Study**

**Is It Useless to Serve God? (3:13-4:3): Questioning Whether
Serving God Pays**

The final argument in Malachi begins with an indictment similar to the charge in
2:17. The people were accused of slandering Yahweh's name. Specifically, they have
spoken harshly about Yahweh by returning to the question of God's justice. How is
it, in the world governed by Yahweh, that there is such violence, poverty, crime,
conflict, grief, death, and innumerable injustices?

A. Return to Theodicy: The Question of God's Justice (3:13-15)

The last accusation against the people is the charge by Yahweh that their words
have been harsh against him. In typical fashion, rather than accepting responsibility,
the people question Yahweh's accusation: "How have we spoken against you?"

 1.They claim that there is no profit in following Yahweh

 2.They have confused material prosperity with blessing.

They live not by the credo, "blessed are the meek. Theirs is "blessed are the
arrogant," who stand in opposition to God. The wicked put God to the test, but
without the invitation God gave to those who repent [3:10]. The result: rather than
curses and judgment, they fare better than the righteous.

B. Comfort for Those Who Fear the Lord (3:16-4:3)

1. Comfort in the present: God hears the cries of his people (3:16).
He knows their struggles. They do not pass unnoticed. In fact, there is a book of
remembrance so that Yahweh is reminded. The exact phrase "book of remembrance" appears only here in Scripture, but the idea of a heavenly book does
appear elsewhere.

a. A book that describes the future of a person's life including their number of days.

(Ps 139:16).

b. A "book of life" where the names of God's people, in contrast to the dead, are

written (Ps 69:28; Phil 4:3; Heb 12:23; Rev 3:5).

c. A book of remembrance. This book records the obedient deeds of individuals as

well as their suffering and hardship. It is a book that ensures things will be made
right. It is a book that shows the distinction between God's obedient people and the

ungodly (Rev 20:12).

2. Comfort in the future: God will vindicate his true people and

destroy the wicked (3:17-4:3)

Not only will the wicked be punished, but also God will vindicate his people. The
survival and prosperity of evildoers will no longer stand as evidence against the
justice of God.

C. Conclusion (Malachi 4:4-5)