

Study Guide for July 17th, 2005. The Rewards of Righteousness. Malachi 3:13 - 4:3.

Introduction: When have you felt that trying to serve and obey God is worthless?

I. The Accusation: Serving God is Futile! (Mal. 3:13-15)

- A. The phrase, “You have spoken harsh things against me,” could better be translated, “You have overruled me.” (See II Sam. 24:4) Can people overrule God?
- B. What conclusions are the people making about service and obedience to God?
- C. Note on **mourning**: This was the most self-denying aspect of worship. It required going without the pleasures of life in order to call God’s attention to one’s plight. What did Malachi’s audience say about the value of such religious activities?
- D. Where have you encountered people with such attitudes toward religion?

II. The Challenge: Commit to Fear the Lord! (Mal. 3:16-18)

- A. What did the people who **feared the Lord** do? How did God respond?
- B. How does the response here compare with that in Nehemiah 9:38 – 10:39?
- C. What are some implications of being **exclusively owned** by God? (See also Ex. 19:5, Deut. 7:6, 14:2 and Psalm 135:4)
- D. Who is speaking in vs. 17 – 18? What does he say to bring assurance?
- E. What time frame is anticipated from vs. 17? (See also II Pet. 3:3-8)

III. The Vindication: When He Comes Again . . . (Mal. 4:1-3)

- A. What will happen on **the day**?
 - 1) What warning is given to the wicked and the arrogant?
 - 2) What encouragement is given to those who revere God’s name?
- B. Imagine what will follow the rise of the **sun of righteousness**?

Conclusion: Reflect on Paul’s words in I Cor. 15:58, “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” How must you apply this?

