

**MALACHI 3:13-18**  
**God's Rebuke to Murmurers in Israel**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. This section of Malachi deals primarily with the sin of murmuring against God with a griping and complaining spirit. A negative, bitter spirit is not from God and it indicates that the fruit of the Spirit is missing in one's life (Gal. 5:22-23).
- B. Christians are commanded to "do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Phil. 2:14). A carping attitude shows a very low degree of spirituality. NOTE: This sin of murmuring is just as bad as or worse than any of the so-called gross sins.

**II. THE NATION MURMURS AGAINST GOD (3:13-15)**

- A. **"Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?"** The Lord charges this obstinate Jewish nation with uttering hard, harsh, offensive language against Him. So hardened were they by self-ignorance and self-conceit, that they did not know anything about their critical attitude. They resented God's charge and pleaded not guilty.
- B. **"Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"**
1. These rebellious Jews said that it was "vain" (useless, unprofitable) to serve God. For them it was an unprofitable venture to obey God who demanded so much and gave so little in return. NOTE: They regarded God's service worthless if it did not prosper them somehow materially. To them profit was the chief end of service to God.
  2. They claimed to keep His commandments and have a mournful (repentant) attitude. They thought outward conformity was all that was necessary in repentance and real change of heart was optional. They went through all the outward ritual of walking in sackcloth and sitting in ashes but there was no heart in it.
  3. APPLICATION: These Jews had their mental perspective in time and had no concept of eternal rewards. They had a complete human viewpoint about life and forgot that God's rewards come after this earthly life is over. In view of this, Christians should never look at their service for the Lord as vain (I Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9). God's rewards in time are more often in a spiritual sense rather than material in nature.
  4. The Jews were questioning the justice and purposes of God. What good did it do to serve the true God when the wicked go unpunished and prosper! They were the chosen people and yet the wicked Gentiles all about them were prospering. They claimed that those who defy God were happy; that those who are evil are built up (set up) and those who make daring moves to tempt God are being delivered from judgment. Why is it that the Jew is suffering? NOTE: The reason the Jew was suffering was because of his rebellion to God. God would not bless them until they got right with Him. NOTE: The Jew did not understand God's purposes in dealing with men. All they knew of God's program was what they saw in time, but God's plan goes far beyond what man can see with the eye.
  5. APPLICATION:
    - a. The problem of why the wicked prosper is a problem to all true believers but it can only be solved as one communes with his God and sees His plans and purposes for this world (Psa. 73:2,3-2,16-17,22, 25-28).
    - b. These Jews were guilty of complaining and murmuring. They had hardened their hearts to God and this was typical of the Jew throughout the history of Israel (Psa. 95:8-11 cf. Ex. 15:22-24; 16:2-4).

**III. THE REMNANT SPEAKS FOR GOD (3:16-17)**

- A. **"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another"** There was still a small godly remnant (elect,

true believers) within the nation of Israel (I Kings 19:18). They met in order to speak to one another about spiritual things. Because of mutual needs and desires, the godly remnant was drawn together in the fear of the Lord. This remnant strengthened and encouraged one another in the midst of spiritual decline in the nation. NOTE: Christians are to do the same thing (Heb, 10:24-25).

**B. "And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."** The Lord heard the conversations of the godly remnant and wrote their names in the book of believers in heaven. Their names were recorded because they "feared the Lord" and "thought upon his name." NOTE: Their works proved the reality of their profession of faith in Jehovah, God (Matt. 7:20 "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them"). NOTE: God does keep books but this is not to help Him remember for He is omniscient, but books are kept in heaven for the encouragement of the godly (Psa. 56:8). In God's books are the names of true believers (Dan. 7:10; 12:1; Rev. 13:8; 20:12-15 cf. Ex. 32:32; Psa. 69:28). NOTE: Christians should rejoice because their names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

**C. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (special treasure); and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,"** "That day" when God makes up His jewels will be at the second advent of Christ. He will gather all the elect of all ages from heaven and earth and they will enter into His earthly kingdom. That will be the day that God possesses His own possession. NOTE: The Lord knows those that are His and will bless them in a yet future day (Matt. 24:30-31).

**IV. THE WICKED SHALL BE JUDGED (3:18): "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."** The "ye" refers to the righteous in Israel who will be resurrected to the righteous judgment and enter into the kingdom prepared from the eternal counsels of God. At the second advent, God, as incarnated in Christ, will return in judgment and He will make a perfect judgment concerning those who are true believers and those who are not; those who truly serve God and those who do not. At that day, the Lord will gloriously deliver the godly and sovereignly destroy the wicked.

**"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"**