

CrossWalk NOTES

Bailout!

What's Left First for God?

January 25, 2009 – Mark Jeske

⁶ "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty. "It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name.

"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

⁷ "You place defiled food on my altar.

"But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'

"By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. ⁸ When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

⁹ "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"-says the LORD Almighty.

¹⁰ "Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. ¹¹ My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

¹² "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' ¹³ And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty.

"When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. ¹⁴ "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations. (Malachi 1:6-14, NIV)

⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

"In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. ¹² "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty. (Malachi 3:8-12, NIV)

Treat God like the great _____
he is!

Questions for thought:

- 1. Is it possible to steal from God? If not, why not? If yes, how?**
- 2. How does bad spiritual leadership affect people's Christian giving?**
- 3. How can God bless you by taking things away from you? Give some examples.**
- 4. In God's scheme of things, which comes first: his blessings or our generous gifts to him?**

My next steps in the "Cross-Walk":

- Ask myself: What attitudes about money/possessions have I held that require a change of mind and heart?
- Answer the questions above with someone you are close to and apply your answers to relevant facets of your life.
- Memorize and meditate on Malachi 3:10.