



[Malachi 3:13-16](#)

(13) "Your words have been all too strong against Me," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken so *strongly* against You?' (14) You have said, 'It *is* vain to serve God; and, what profit *is it* that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? (15) And now we *are* calling the arrogant blessed. Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered.' " (16) Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name.

A Faithful Version

Malachi wrote in Judea between the return from Babylon and [Christ's birth](#). During that period God's people had grown lackadaisical in their worship, yet a faithful few remained.

"Your words have been harsh against Me," says the LORD. " [God](#) accuses them of calling Him into account for what was happening within the nation. They were experiencing difficult times, just as the people of God have frequently endured difficult times. These are times when we cry out to God, "Why, God? Why are you allowing this to happen? When are you going to intervene?" but He does not seem to be listening.

"Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'" They did not feel that their accusations were against God, but He gives them an example (verses 14-15).

The faithful can see that these others are not very godly. Maybe they see that "the proud" are sinning openly, breaking the commandments of God. Maybe the proud do not have a submissive, quiet, and gentle spirit. Maybe they are aggressive and assertive, and they maneuvered themselves to the head of the group. And they seemed to be getting away with it!

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Notice what these faithful people did in response to the difficult times they were enduring as part of the *ekklesia* (verse 16). All of God's faithful people should do these things:

1). **They feared God.** They respected and revered Him. They stood in awe of Him. Some may have even felt an appropriate measure of terror.

2). **They thought on His name.** They meditated on it. It can suggest that they esteemed His name. They spoke highly of it. They honored Him. They looked to Him, though they were complaining for leadership and guidance. His name, of course, stands for everything that He is. He does not have just one name, He has many names. They show, or advertise, what He is, what He will do, and what He requires.

3). **They fellowshiped with one another.** No doubt they spoke of their trials and their blessings, about the things that were going on in the *ekklesia* of that day, of their studies into God's Word, of their plans, of their expectations of the [Kingdom of God](#). God heard! God watched and responded, maybe not when they would have liked Him to respond, but God did respond in His time, when it was right for His purposes.

So will He respond to us!

Then God makes a wonderful promise to those who fear Him: "'They shall be Mine,' says the LORD of hosts, 'on that day that I make them My jewels [*special treasure—margin*]. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him'" (verse 17). In [Isaiah 49:15-16](#), God says, "Yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands...." He is watching! He is aware of what is going on, and He will act!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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