

## WHERE IS MY FEAR?

*Nicolas Edwards*

*“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Ps. 89:7). The Lord asks the priests of Israel this question in Malachi 1:6. The priests and the people lack fear for God! The Lord says, “I have no pleasure in you” (Mal. 1:10). We learn a lot about fear for God from the book of Malachi.*

**GOD ONLY ACCEPTS THE BEST.** In Leviticus 22 the Lord said, *“ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein” (vv. 19-21).* The priests in Malachi were offering less than their best. Blemished offerings. They had better, but did not give better. God did not accept them. Too many fall below the line of acceptability before God.

**FEAR IS EXPRESSED OUTWARDLY.** The priests lacked fear for God. They despised His name, said the

table of the Lord is contemptible, and profaned His name (Mal. 1:6-7, 12). They did this through their actions, speech, and attitude (Mal. 1:6-7, 12-13). They had the wrong heart. They did not place God, His house, His Word at the highest place. It just wasn't that important, thus anything will do. Their actions, their words, their attitude brought down and disrespected the Great King (Mal. 1:14). Fear for God, or the lack thereof, is expressed outwardly! Malachi connects the inward and the outward together. A person who does not fear God outwardly, does not fear God in the heart. Our actions, speech, and attitude determine whether the Lord has pleasure in or accepts us!

**FEAR FOR GOD PUTS HIM FIRST.** God told the priests, *“offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?” (Mal. 1:8).* The governor would not accept these offerings and yet they offered them to the Lord expecting Him, the greatest person, to accept it. When we give better, or show more respect, for people and events of this world, than we do for God, we do not fear God as we ought and are unacceptable.

**FEAR FOR GOD HEARS AND OBEYS.** The Lord warns of a curse, *“If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to*

*give glory unto My name” (Mal. 2:2).* Their blessings were cursed because they did not lay it to heart. Those who do not hear and obey the commandments of God do not fear God and will reap severe consequences.

**FEAR FOR GOD SPEAKS AND WALKS IN TRUTH.** The priests had departed out of the way of the Lord. They need to return to the Lord and restore the fear for God Levi had when the covenant was given originally to the priestly tribe. *“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity” (Mal. 2:6).* Fear for God means I speak the truth and live in the truth.

**FEAR FOR GOD IS NOT PARTIAL.** The priests have not kept the ways of the Lord for they were *“partial in the law” (Mal. 2:9).* Partiality in the law means not keeping it! When we pick and choose, keep some things but not others, agree with this but not with that, we are partial with the law, are not keeping the ways of the Lord, and do not fear God!

Many members of the church will be lost because they do not fear God and live in such a way that shows contempt for the Lord.

## WHY I LEFT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

*Floyd A. Decker*

1) The Christian Church has women counselors, directors, and lecturers; the church of Christ does not (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34).

2) The Christian Church has educational directors, associate ministers, and youth directors; the church of Christ has elders, deacons, evangelists, and teachers (Eph. 4:11; Phil. 1:1).

3) The Christian Church has missionary, benevolent, and educational organizations to execute the work of the church; the church of Christ does not (Eph. 4:4; 3:10, 21).

4) The Christian Church celebrates days of heathen worship, such as Easter, Mother's Day and Christmas; the church of Christ does not (Gal. 4:10).

5) The Christian Church fellowships various denominations in their various activities, leaving the impression that all are brethren;

the church of Christ does not (2 Jn. 9-11; Gal. 1:6-10).

6) The Christian Church seeks to get crowds with youth meetings, campaigns for Christ, rallies, drives, and promotions; the church of Christ does not (Rom. 1:16; Rev. 22:18-19).

7) The Christian Church emphasizes society and the physical by appealing to the carnal nature, with church carnivals, bands, plays, choruses, dramatics, church kitchens, church camps, and elaborate fellowship halls; the church of Christ does not (1 Cor. 10:7; Rom. 14:17).

8) The Christian Church elevates its preachers above the rest of the members by using such titles as pastor, superintendent, president, and doctor; the church of Christ does not (Mt. 23:5-12; Job 32:21, 23).

9) The Christian Church uses the name "Christian," which is a noun, by speaking of "Christian nations," "Christian schools," and the "Christian Church;" the church of Christ does not (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16).

10) The Christian Church takes up collections at services other than the first day of the week, and uses unscriptural means such as suppers, property rentals and special collections to raise money for the church. The church of Christ follows 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 by having each member lay by in store on the first day of the week. This is the only way of raising money.

11) The Christian Church owns and operates publishing houses, radio stations, hospitals and other benevolent societies; churches of Christ build nothing but churches.

12) The Christian Church owns, supports and operates schools for secular education; the church of Christ does not (1 Tim. 3:15).

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**Note:** The above article was written in 1944. Today, Mr. Decker would have to leave some "churches of Christ" for the same reason he left the Christian Church years ago, as a lot of "churches of Christ" have more in common with the Christian Church than they do the Lord's church.

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