

Recap of 7/31/16 (Malachi 1:3-14):

1. The evidence of God's love for Israel was His choice of them and His watchcare over them, re-uniting them with the land of promise after the exile.
2. Of the doctrine of election, a doctrine meant to bring comfort to believers, some Christians are uncomfortable with the thought of God's choosing. One writer, commenting on Paul's teaching on election in Romans 9, puts it in perspective: "Paul is not saying that some people are worth more than others, but that the Creator has control over His creatures. Keeping this perspective removes any temptation to have pride in personal achievement. People wonder about God's control versus man's free choice. This isn't a new question. Paul understood the conundrum too. Many look for a resolution in this passage, but Paul doesn't exactly resolve it. Instead, he steps back and reminds us of our relationship to God: 'Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God?' In other words, a creature has no right to instruct its Creator." (One Year NLT Study Bible)
3. As with the Israelites: when we question God's love:
 - we forget His choice of us
 - we forget His involvement in our lives and His interventions on our behalf
 - we forget His greatness
4. God next, through Malachi, addresses the priests and their complicity in the tendency of the Israelites to offer half-hearted, shallow worship which resulted in worship repugnant to God. The people were offering defective animals in sacrifice, in direct violation of the law. Instead of offering the best they had to give, they offered the worst.
5. The central issue in the lives of the people of God is the glory of God and giving Him the best of our love and devotion. Going through the motions (of worship and service) doesn't please God or fool God. We cannot honor God while disobeying His Word.
6. As relates to our worship as Church Age believers, Herbert Wolf writes: "In New Testament terms, God is seeking living sacrifices that will be holy and acceptable to Him (Romans 12:1-2). All too often, Christians feel that anything is good enough for God. As long as a person or activity is even half-heartedly dedicated to God, we assume God will be delighted with us."