

Malachi #5
7 questions of the backslider
HOW ARE WE TO RETURN?

Mal. 3 “I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’ NIV

I. THE NATURE OF GOD

A. Immutable

1. Immutable simply means **unchangeable**.
2. For something to change or be **capable of change it must be imperfect**.
3. Because God is immutable **every generation can experience the same God**.

Heb. “Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever”.

4. To have a relationship with God means that we must **change**.

Billy Sunday once said, “If the cat doesn’t like the way I am rubbing his fur, the cat can turn around”

God is never going to change. It is us who must do the changing.

5. God will not change.

- a. His **Word** will never change
- b. His **love** will never change
- c. His **laws** of morality do not change

B. God cannot lie.

Titus 1² a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which **God, who does not lie**, promised before the beginning of time,

Heb. 6¹⁷ Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he **confirmed it with an oath**.¹⁸ God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we who have fled take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

Therefore God's unchangeableness is what kept them from being destroyed. God will keep his word to you. He cannot lie.

II. THE NATURE OF MAN

⁷ Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them.

A. Man has always attempted to make God in his own image.
If he is like us then he has flaws and is imperfect like us.

B. God invites them to look at how their forefathers attempted to remake God into their own image.

1. The golden calf
2. Moloch- sacrifice of children
3. Ashtoreth-sensual love
4. Baal- farm god

They followed after many other foreign Gods.

C. God invites them to look at what happened to their forefathers in history.

1. tragic loss of life
2. a nation taken into captivity
3. families broken
4. plagues

D. Any nation that turns from God will suffer the consequences of rejecting God.

E. It is obvious that Israel could not be blessed because they had turned away from God, yet they thought God should bless them.

God is not going to change. We must change!
“Stubbornness is as the sin of idolatry.” Pride places us above God and thus we become our own God.

III. THE NATURE OF GOD’S GRACE

.... Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

A. God wasn’t the one who left.

B. He is forgiving and faithful to those who call upon Him.

John 6³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

Ill. The **prodigal** son- Restores to full sonship.

David said, “I cried unto the Lord and he heard me.

Jonah – prayed toward the temple and God spared him.

C. The way we are to return

1. **Repent**

2. **Accept God for who he is** not as we would like for Him to be.

3. Change our **behavior to obedience** of His Word.

4. **Take the opportunity**, but know that God does not force us.