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Malachi 1:8, "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts."

As we draw near to the end of 2016 and closer to the beginning of 2017, there will be countless of people who vow to themselves to do something different in the upcoming year in comparison to the previous. In the verse previously cited, we read about the Children of Israel who, after returning from the Babylonian captivity, have fallen back into the same errors and sins as they had committed in years past. When we examine the verse, it's almost as though they learned nothing from their past experiences. The Lord asked them, through Malachi the prophet, to consider their actions and what they were offering to Him in their effort of service. The Lord asks if they were to "offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?"

Brothers and sisters, this verse has application to us today. When we ponder back on the year 2016, we are all able to see how we have failed to give unto God what we should have in our service to Him. I'm very thankful to know that "His mercy endureth forever" (Psalms 136:1) upon sinners like us, otherwise we would have no hope for another chance in His service in this world. Yet there is no question, we have many areas where we need to get better. In the upcoming year I want to be a better pastor, Church member, husband, father, friend, and student of God's Holy Word. My prayer is that God will give me strength and conviction of heart to show more respect to His Kingdom than ever before and to earnestly seek His

fellowship, for it is there that I will find true peace and contentment (Phil 4:6-7; Phil 4:11-13). Amen!