

Malachi 3.6-12

Who Moved?

BEST KNOWN SECTION OF MALACHI > Importance of Context > Meaning

MONEY gets our ATTENTION > Who wants to be a Millionaire? EVERYONE!

Christianity spread in Middle Ages > Barbarians in Europe heard GOSPEL

Baptized Warriors > RIGHT HAND held out of Water > SWORD Hand

THOUGHT: Keep on Killing and Plundering > Hand belongs to ME!

MODERN CHRISTIANS > Hold their Wallets > OUT OF WATER TODAY!

THEME not Money > God's Faithfulness > TITHING > Illust. of Teaching

1. Faithless Followers

2. Faithful God

Twin Towers of the Old Testament > Banner over Book of Malachi

1. Faithless Followers

a. Past : Turned from God

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

1000 years before > Moses WARNED > Unfaithful to Covenant > EXILED

LONGSUFFERING and Mercy of God reached LIMIT > Babylonians Came

1. City Destroyed 2. Temple Leveled 3. Population Exiled

Faithfulness of God > He would not let them go > Brought them back to Jerusalem

Nehemiah's LEADERSHIP > City Walls Rebuilt

Haggai's PREACHING > Temple was RECONSTRUCTED

Ezra's PRIESTHOOD > Worship and SACRIFICES RESUMED

NEW OPPORTUNITY > Same Rebellious OLD COVENANT Hearts

COVENANT GOD: Stay on this course, you'll bring down judgment on selves

b. Present: Robbed God

v. 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me..."In tithes and offerings"

Some People CAN ALWAYS FIND A REASON NOT TO GIVE TO GOD
Not a Good Day, Week, Month, Year > NEVER A GOOD TIME

UNDERLYING DISCONTENT among People > GOD LET THEM DOWN

- Never mind that their RELIGION had become EMPTY RITUAL
- Never mind that Marriage Covenant BROKEN thru Divorce & Remarriage
- Never mind the POOR, ALIEN, WIDOW, ORPHAN Ignored or Oppressed

GOD WAS NOT DOING HIS PART FOR THEM
PRAYERS NOT ANSWERED, SACRIFICES IGNORED, GOD IS UNJUST!

THEREFORE > Call Moratorium on Giving> STOP PAYMENT on their CHECK

“ROB GOD” > Steal from His Worship, Workers, and Widows

“He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD” Proverbs 19.17

Jesus to GOATS: “I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me...whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”
Matthew 25.42-45

Robert Thompson “Keeping what belongs to God makes us loose. No one ever lost anything by serving God with a whole heart, nor gained anything by serving him with a half a heart. If we want God’s blessings from His resources, then we must open ours.”

c. Future: Cursed by God

v 9 “You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me”

CURSE > Power to Effect Future // FEARSOME POWER > Balak sought Balaam

City of Jericho destroyed by God > CURSED is anyone who tries to REBUILD IT

Deuteronomy: “Moses ...commanded the... Levites (to) recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice: "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" 27.1-26

Met MANY in AFRICA> “how’d your brother die?” > CURSED by SOMEONE

v. 5 People DID MANY THINGS WRONG > WHY this Sin Brings Curse?

TITHE > Tenth > Ancient > ABE to Melchizedek. / JACOB promised at BETHEL OFFERING> Part of Sacrifice for Priests>VOLUNTARY Gift for Special Purpose

One TENTH of crops and livestock go TO TEMPLE. WHY?

1. God's COMMAND
2. PROVIDE for the WORK of TEMPLE
3. MEET the NEEDS of the POOR
4. SIGN of TOAL DEPENDENCE on God
5. ACKNOWLEDGE Everything WE HAVE BELONGS to God

ACT of FAITH in GOD THE PROVIDER > All BLESSINGS > Now and Future
NO GIVING > NO FAITH > NO FUTURE > ONLY CURSINGS

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”
2 Corinthians 9.6-11

UNDER GOD’S CURSE? Doom is Pronounced > ESCAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE

d. Foolish – question How? asked SEVEN TIMES in 4 chapter Book

SARCASM > Proud Defiance > AND FOOLISHNESS > they just don’t get it!

v. 7 Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

v. 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'

They CANNOT IMAGINE that they are AWAY from GOD or ROBBING HIM

BLINDING GRIP OF SIN > Jesus to Jews: "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." John 8.31-36

COULD NOT SEE > 2 Obvious Chains > 1. Sin (within) 2. Romans (without)

CHAINS ON US? > The GROWING GRIP of MATERIALISM

1. DISCOVERY: "I just found about it, now I cannot live without it!"

2. DESIRE: "I gotta have it now!"

STAND IN LINE and PAY TWICE AS MUCH > Be First to See this Movie!

3. DEJECTION: "I can no longer live with this OLD THING!"

THREE VERY RICH AMERICANS whom MANY PEOPLE ENVIED –

John D. Rockefeller: "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness."

Cornelius Vanderbilt: "The care of millions is too great a load... there is no pleasure in it."

John Jacob Astor: Called himself "the most miserable man on earth."

FORSAKING GOD'S AUTHORITY > Not Freedom but Foolishness

First Year Univ. Student > Free from Parental Authority

"I am so free, I have not brushed my teeth for a week!"

2. Faithful God

a. Constant - v. 6 "I the LORD do not change."

GOD'S RESPONSE to Unfaithful: "I have not changed" > God Cannot Change
CHANGE > Something gets BETTER OR WORSE > IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD

BETTER? Then NOT PERFECT, then NOT GOD > Sum of All Perfections
WORSE? Then BECOME IMPERFECT, which God CAN NEVER BE

v. 6 CLASSIC STATEMENT on God's IMMUTABILITY > Unchangeableness

Even an IMPOSTER like Balaam said to Balak: "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind." Numbers 23.19

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1.17

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13.8

v. 6 "...do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed."

NOT CHANGED > NOT CONSUMED > Faithful to His Covenant and Character

AWESOME REQUEST > Moses wanted SEE GOD > Hidden in Cleft of Rock
"The LORD came down in the cloud & stood there with him and proclaimed his name, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate & gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, & forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." Exodus 34.5-8

"SLOW TO ANGER" > thus, Not Consumed > 1000 years of Mercy

JUST BACK SIDE of God! > Saw MORE GLORY on Mt. Transfiguration
FACE OF GOD in JESUS CHRIST

ETERNITY OF GRACE IN JESUS

"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Colossians 3.4

b. Compassionate v. 7 “Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD
 Almighty
 NOTHING in God CHANGES > Justice, Holiness, Truth, Knowledge, Sovereignty

EMPHASIS on MERCY UNCHANGING 1.2 “I have loved you” > > Return!
 Unchanging in MERCY: “So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed”

GOD’S UNCHANGEABLENESS gives us a CHANCE TO CHANGE
 “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” James 4.8

HOW? SOME SAY MUST “Come Forward” in Church

SEPARATE ACTS > Salvation and Coming Forward > Not Always Go Together

SALVATION is GIFT > We do nothing to EARN or even to PROVE IT
 God hears Prayers from Back of Hall AND the Front > Public AND Private Prayer

SALVATION Received ANY TIME ANYWHERE > No Need Wait for Sunday

THEOLOGY of American Church > BUMPER STICKERS > Slogans of Faith
 ONE CAR: “If you Love Jesus, Honk your Horn!”
 ANOTHER CAR: “If you Love Jesus – TITHE – Anybody can Honk!”

c. Command v. 10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse”

PARENTS > Sometimes Children wear you down > “Go to Bed!”
 Crying > Demanding > Arguing > Comparing > Complaining > More Crying
 PARENT > “Oh its like that? Then you can stay up all night long!” > give OSCAR
 OR PARENT > “Make as much fuss as you want, you are going to bed!”

GOD IS LIKE THE 2nd PARENT > Love Unchanging and Law Unchanging
 v 10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house

STOREHOUSE – THEN > Reserves for Priests and the Poor

TODAY > God’s Primary Instrument to Bless the World is His Church

1. We SOMETIMES Boycott Church and Give Directly to what we think Best
2. COMMITMENT to do ministry REQUIRES FINANCES
3. INFORM the Church > Maybe we are all missing the mark
4. REFINED by Church > Consensus of Wisdom may IMPROVE GIVING

Uganda in 1980's > Many Requests > Desperate Situations > Collapsed, Civil War

SOME WHO seemed SO NEEDY > Not Honest > SILENT ONES Greatest Need
 MOST IMPT > Ask Local Pastors and Leaders > They knew own people BEST

WHEN GAVE > thru Church > Anonymously > LINK TO CHURCH, Not Us!

New Testament > Old Testament REQUIREMENTS are INCREASED

If Israel gave 10% in a Covenant ratified with the blood of animals, shall we do less when we belong to a New Covenant, redeemed by the Blood of Christ?

100% BELONGS TO GOD

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3.17

TREASURE, TIME, TALENTS, TISSUE

JAMES BOICE “So long as we are thinking legalistically in terms of financial percentages and portions of our time we will be exactly like the self-righteous sinners of Malachi's day. We will do little and think it much. We will resent God who, in our judgment, should do more for us. On the other hand, if we give God ourselves as living sacrifices, then the most we give will seem to be little and we will be overwhelmed that God is willing to use us in His service.”

Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20.35

d. Challenge

v. 10 “Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty.

QUICKLY CURSE turns to BLESSING > No generational curse if in Christ
 SOME BELIEVERS LIVING IN NEEDLESS FEAR > Grandpa was Bad Man

Old Passed Away > New Come > New Creation

TEST > Four Parts

1. Obedience “bring the tithe into the storehouse” (home church?)
2. Challenge “test me in this”
3. Promise “see what I will do...”
4. Result “God will be praised by the nations”

v. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

GOD ALWAYS HAS GLOBAL FOCUS > Nations He created will Give Praise

ISRAEL > Gazing at “belly button” > GOD’S gaze is GLOBAL, GALACTICAL
Need COPERNICAN REVOLUTION > God, NOT US, is Center of Universe

Promise to Israel > Apply to us? Yes, if we are believers in Jesus. Why?
“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ.”
2 Corinthians 1.20

STRANGE > What we don’t want to do > Draw Near to God > Source of Life
What we don’t want to do > Tithe > Source of Blessing

GOD’S GIFTS are FOR GIVING

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”
Luke 6.38

SIMPLE FORMULA: “Give God your heart, and He will manage your money”

AFRAID to Put God to the Test? Take Him at His Word? Maybe He will Fail??

GOD INVITES THE TEST > Let Him be your Certified Financial Planner

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Eph 3.20,21

Malachi 3.6-12

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8. "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, `How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings.
9. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me.
10. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.
11. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty.
12. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.