



# Esteeming His Name

Priority Check

## The Structure

1. God's Love 1:2-5
2. Denunciation of the Clergy 1:6-2:9
3. Idolatry and Intermarriage 2:10-16
4. The God of Justice 2:17-3:5
5. **Withholding Tithes 3:6-12**
6. The Righteous and the Wicked 3:13-18
7. Day of the Lord 4:1-6

# Withholding Tithes

Malachi 3:6 -12

## The Disputation Speech

- A disputation speech form has four elements: assertion, questioning, response, and implication.
  1. Assertion (LORD) The people that have turned away must return (v. 6-7a).
  2. Questioning (Israel) → “How shall we return?” (v. 7b)
  3. Assertion (LORD) “You are certainly robbing me!” (v. 8a).
  4. Questioning (Israel) → “How are we robbing you?” (v. 8a)
  5. Response (LORD) → “Tithes and offerings!” (v. 8b)
  6. Implication → The robbery takes the form of shortchanging tithes. But if God receives his due he will in turn grant such abundance that Israel will be blessed and famous for it. (v. 9-12)

## Call to Repentance

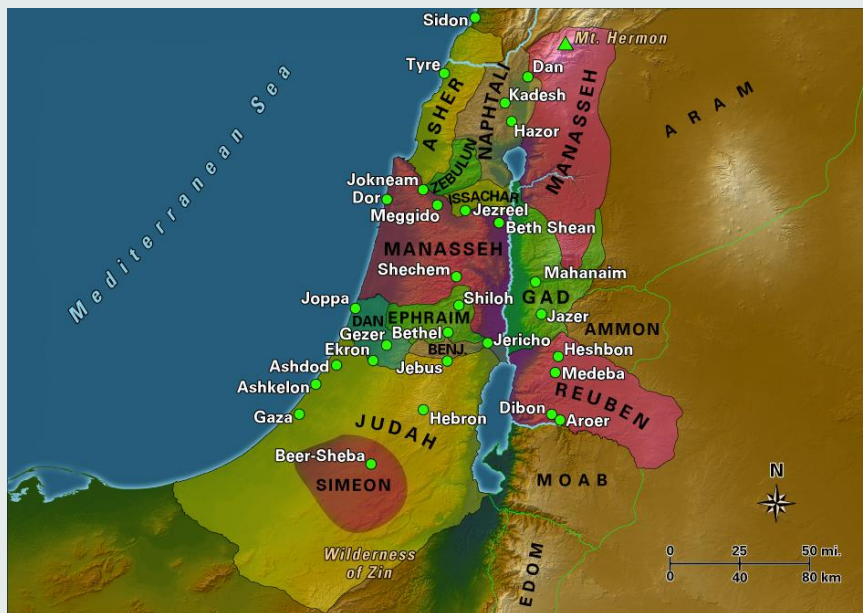
- <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 3:6** "For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. <sup>7</sup> "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.
- <sup>ESV</sup> **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
- <sup>NIV</sup> **Hebrews 13:8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
- <sup>NAS</sup> **James 4:8** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

## The Tithe

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Leviticus 27:30** 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD.
- <sup>NAS</sup> **Deuteronomy 12:5** "But you shall seek the Lord at the place which the LORD your God shall choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come. <sup>6</sup> "And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the first-born of your herd and of your flock.

## Division of the Land

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Joshua 11:23** So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Thus the land had rest from war.



## Levite's Inheritance

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Numbers 18:8** Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, I have given them to you as a portion, and to your sons as a perpetual allotment. ... <sup>19</sup> "All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD to you and your descendants with you." <sup>20</sup> Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. <sup>21</sup> "And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.



## Distribution of Tithes – Step 1

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Deuteronomy 14:22** "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. <sup>23</sup> "And you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. <sup>24</sup> "And if the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, <sup>25</sup> then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. <sup>26</sup> "And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. <sup>27</sup> "Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.

## Distribution of Tithes – Step 2

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Numbers 18:25** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>26</sup> "Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, 'When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe. <sup>27</sup> 'And your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat. <sup>28</sup> 'So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD's offering to Aaron the priest. <sup>29</sup> 'Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them.' <sup>30</sup> "And you shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor, and as the product of the wine vat. <sup>31</sup> 'And you may eat it anywhere, you and your households, for it is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting.

## The Math

- 11 out of the 12 tribes got all of the land
  - $\frac{1}{12}$  out of each tribal allotment out of fairness should have belonged to the tribe of Levi (8.3%)
- The LORD claimed ownership of the tithe (10%).
- The LORD deeded the full tithe to the Levites from whom he then required the best tithe of the tithe.
  - 90% of all tithes went to the Levites
    - 9% of total produced by the land.
  - 10% of all tithes went to the LORD
    - 1% of total produced by the land.

## The Problems

1. This was disobedience and robbery of God.
  - <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 3:8** "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.
2. Satisfying self was a higher priority than worshipping God.
  - <sup>NAS</sup> **Haggai 1:4** "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?"...<sup>6</sup> "You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes."<sup>7</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!"<sup>8</sup> "Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the LORD.

## The Curse

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 2:1** "And now, this commandment is for you, O priests. <sup>2</sup> "If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says the LORD of hosts, "then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them already, because you are not taking it to heart.
- <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 3:9** "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation!"
  - Agriculture had not adequately rebounded after the exile.
  - Drought, pests, and blight had long hampered economic recovery.
  - Poverty was widespread.

## The Blessing

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 3:10** "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. <sup>11</sup> "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts. <sup>12</sup> "And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.
- *It does not constitute a promise that individual believers become prosperous if they tithe. The actual kind of blessing promised is a combination of abundant rain and freedom from crop pests, used as a synecdoche for restoration blessings of all sorts. There is an eschatological overtone to the promise.*
  - Douglas Stuart

# Applications

## NT Giving - Similarities

- <sup>NAS</sup> **2 Corinthians 9:6** Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;
- *Tithing per se is not a Christian requirement, not a stipulation of the New Covenant. But financial giving positively is. And there is a connection between generosity and reward, says the apostle, just as Malachi 3:8–12 also implies. Giving is one of the five aspects of Christian worship (prayer, praise, giving, hearing the word and communion), and Christian worship is the basic, initial, and permanent response of the believer to God.*
  - *Douglas Stuart*



## NT Giving - Differences

1. Israel ≠ Local church; Israel ≈ The Church
  - Local church, parachurch ministries, missions, teaching ministries, aid and relief ministries, ministry self-support, etc.
  
2. <sup>NAS</sup> **1 Peter 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
  - <sup>NAS</sup> **Romans 12:1** I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship... <sup>6</sup> And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

# Conclusions

## Priority Check

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 3:6** "For I, the LORD, do not change... <sup>7</sup> ... Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts.
- <sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 10:37** "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.
- <sup>NIV</sup> **1 Corinthians 10:31** So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

## Blessed with Peace

- <sup>NAS</sup> **Malachi 3:12** "And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.
- <sup>NAS</sup> **John 14:1** "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me ... <sup>21</sup> "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him." ... <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him... <sup>27</sup> "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.