

Malachi 2:17-3:12

**A Contemporary Awakening from an Ancient Prophet
“Integrity in Our Stewardship”**

Introduction: Malachi’s third major message to the people of Judah-call to spiritual transformation-not merely brick and mortar.

- ✓ First-a call to sincerity in worship
- ✓ Second-a call to purity in marriage
- ✓ Third-a call to INTEGRITY in STEWARDSHIP

Profound impact of Christian stewardship could change the world/our community

(ILL)

Tithing Christians Would Meet Global Need

A husband and wife team of researchers, the founders of Empty Tomb, Inc., in Champaign, Illinois, have tracked American and American Christian expenditures as well as global needs. John and Sylvia Ronsvalle have estimated that \$70-\$80 billion a year could meet the most essential human needs around the world.

"Projects for clean water and sanitation, prenatal and infant/ maternal care, basic education, immunizations, and long-term development efforts are among the activities that could help overcome the poverty conditions that now kill and maim so many children and adults."

The Ronsvalles go on to write, "That figure of \$70-\$80 billion may sound like anything but good news. God may be generous, you may agree, but has he been that generous? Consider this: If church members in the United States would increase their giving to 10 percent of their income, there could be an additional \$86 billion available for overseas missions."

Malachi’s context-Interpreting the text

- ✓ Indictment of God’s people-you have robbed God (v. 8) Rob-“qaba” to seize, take away

For the LORD will plead their cause, and plunder the soul of those who plunder them.

Proverbs 22:23 NKJV

- ✓ Will a man rob God? Ludicrous! But had become a reality with the people of Judah
- ✓ Ignorance of God’s people-How do we rob You? (v. 8)

- In Malachi 2:6, 8-priests had failed to teach the law
- Hosea 4:6-My people perish for a lack of knowledge
- Failure to teach today doesn’t help people-destroys them

✓ Specific failure of God's people in tithing and offerings (v. 8)

- Tithe—"ma-a-ser" a tenth part
- Common with Canaanites, Phoenecians, Greeks, Romans
- First seen in Genesis 14 (Abraham), Genesis 28 (Jacob)
- Leviticus 27:30-as part of the law-a tithe holy to the Lord and intended for the Levites
- Annual tithe-triennial tithe

I also realized that the portions for the Levites had not been given them; for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to his field. Nehemiah 13:10 NKJV

NOTE: Levites had to stop priestly duties and go back to their field because of the neglect.

- Offerings (for temple maintenance, provided needs for the priests)
- Accusation of Malachi referred to their failure to give the required contributions prescribed by the law

✓ Curse on God's people (v. 9, 11)

- Crops had failed
- Drought and locusts

✓ Restoration of God's people

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3:10 NKJV

- Bring all the tithe to the storehouse (they can't do what they want)
- Whole tithe-in its entirety
- Storehouse-house of supplies
- Test me in this
- Heavens open, rain, drought is over, curse removed

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"Says the LORD of hosts; 12 And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:11-12 NKJV

Lesson for us? 2500 years later?

- ✓ Compels us to tithe
- ✓ Storehouse, devourer
- ✓ What does this text say to us about specific transformation in regard to stewardship?

I. The Sincerity of Our Worship will be Scrutinized by a Holy and Unchanging God

"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, "Says the LORD of hosts. 2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderers' soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness. 4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem Will be pleasant to the LORD, As in the days of old, As in former years. 5 And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien — Because they do not fear Me, "Says the LORD of hosts. 6 "For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. Malachi 3:1-6 NKJV

Prophecy 400 years before Christ

- A. He comes to His temple
- B. Sits as a judge
- C. He cleanses, refines, and judges
- D. So that the offering may be righteous
- E. He is unchanging

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood." Mark 12:41-44 NKJV

- ✓ 13 collection bins (temple ministries, poor, etc.)
- ✓ Bronze, mouth shaped like trumpets
- ✓ Bigger the coin, the louder
- ✓ He watched the heart, the worship, the sacrifice

Giving needs to again be worship-sacrifice to a God who is holy, unchanging, and who watches our giving!

II. The Integrity of Our Stewardship will Greatly Affect our Level of Blessing

- A. Cursed with a curse
- B. Windows of heaven opened
- C. How integrity in stewardship affects our blessing

1. Supernatural provision will follow integrity in stewardship

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38 NKJV

Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; Proverbs 3:9 NKJV

2. Bountiful blessing follows generous giving

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 NKJV

The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself. Proverbs 11:25 NKJV

3. Strength and preservation follow the faithful giver

Blessed is he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, And he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. 3 The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed. Psalms 41:1-3 NKJV

III. The Integrity of our Stewardship is Measured not by Amount or Percentage but by Full Surrender of all we Possess

A. Tithing in Malachi clearly belonged to the Old Testament Covenant-whole system of giving and offering

1. Shadow of what is to come
2. Didn't seem to be prevalent in the New Testament Church
3. Law was a shadow of the things to come (Colossians 2:17/Hebrews 10:1)

B. Examples

- ✓ Law-first day is holy-Spirit sanctifies all seven
- ✓ Law-set apart one tribe to be priests, the Spirit says we are all a royal priesthood
- ✓ Law demands a tenth of our possessions, the Spirit makes us to become God's possession with all we have
- ✓ Everything belongs to God. We are but stewards who will have to give an account

Conclusion:

He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' 3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' 5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. 10 He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? 13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. "Luke 16:1-13 NKJV

Are we stewards of integrity?