

Lesson 4:

Will A Man Rob God?



Around 539 BC, the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great allowed a company of Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple and city walls. But as time went on, the people lost interest in spiritual things and used their newfound freedom – as well as their time and money – to improve their own situation.



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Freedom is meaningless if it isn't properly used.

The prophet Malachi blasted the Jews for returning to their old habits of forsaking God and his laws.

Malachi 3:7a

⁷ Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances,
and have not kept *them*.



He called on them to return to their first love.

Malachi 3:7b

⁷ Return unto me,
and I will return unto you,
saith the LORD of hosts.



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Malachi 3:7b

⁷ Return unto me,
and I will return unto you,
saith the LORD of hosts.

God only forsakes man after man has forsaken him.



They were defensive, and denied any wrongdoing.

Malachi 3:7b

⁷ Return unto me,
and I will return unto you,
saith the LORD of hosts.

But ye said,
Wherein shall we return?



The LORD said they were stealing
from him.

Malachi 3:8

8 **Will a man rob God?**
Yet ye have robbed me.



Again, they denied the accusation.

Malachi 3:8

⁸ Will a man rob God?
Yet ye have robbed me.

But ye say,

Wherein have we robbed thee?



God's answer came back clearly and without apology.

Malachi 3:8

⁸ Will a man rob God?
Yet ye have robbed me.

But ye say,
Wherein have we robbed thee?

In tithes and offerings.



To rob someone is to keep for yourself something that belongs to him.

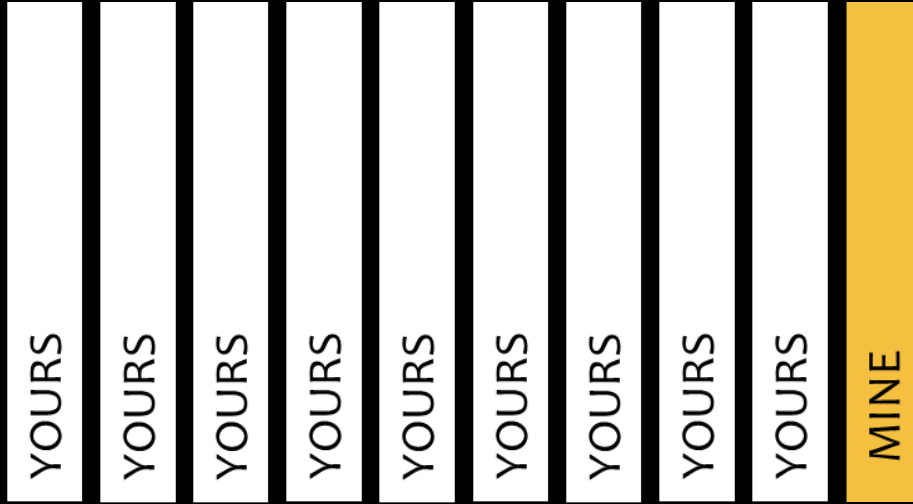
The tithe belongs to the Lord.

Leviticus 27:30, 32:

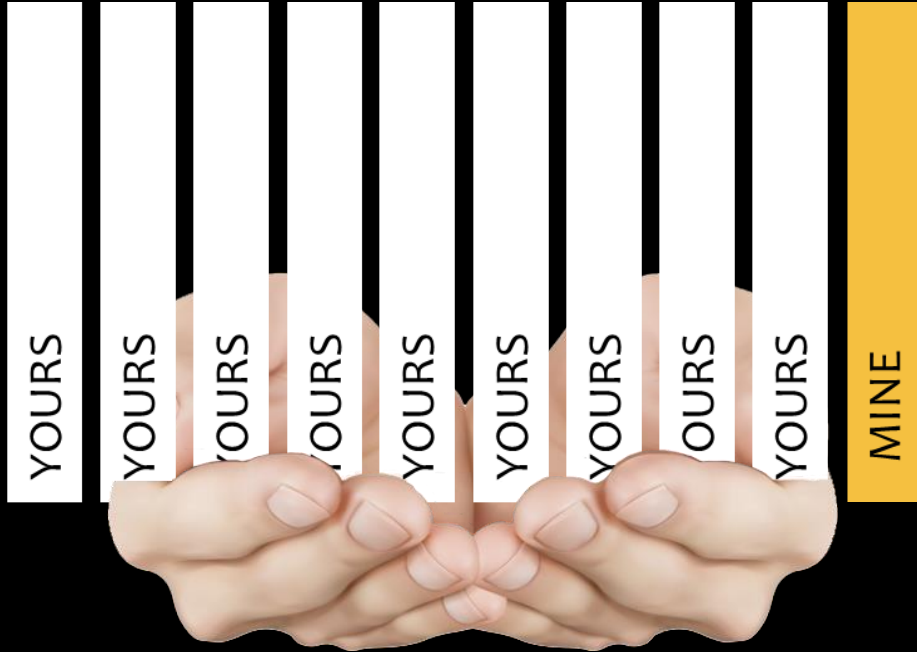
³⁰ And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, **is the LORD'S:** it is holy unto the LORD.

³² And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, **the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.**



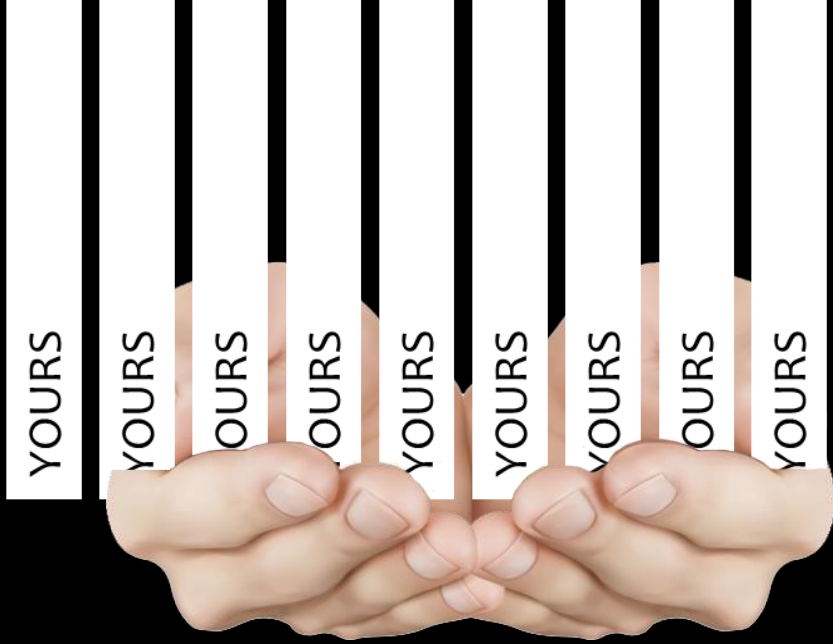


It is as though the LORD distributes our sustenance in portions of TEN.



It is as though the LORD distributes
our sustenance in portions of TEN.

He gives us all 10 portions at once.



MINE

He then waits to see if we will honor him as our provider by returning the part that belongs to him,



He then waits to see if we will honor him as our provider by returning the part that belongs to him,

or if we will deny that he helped us, and keep it all for ourselves.

The Jews argued that there was no personal benefit to carrying out this ordinance of God.

Malachi 3:13-14

- ¹³ Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD.
Yet ye say, What have we spoken so *much* against thee?
- ¹⁴ Ye have said,
It is vain to serve God:
and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance,
and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?



Malachi declared their insolence was not without consequence.

Malachi 3:9

9 *Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*



This curse did not come from the powers of darkness. This was the self-imposed curse of self-reliance.

Jeremiah 17:5-6

- ⁵ Thus saith the LORD;
Cursed *be* the man that trusteth
in man, and maketh flesh his
arm, and whose heart departeth
from the LORD.
- ⁶ For he shall be like the heath in
the desert, and shall not see
when good cometh;
but shall inhabit the parched
places in the wilderness, *in* a salt
land and not inhabited.



Paying your tithe shows you where you put your trust.

2 Corinthians 3:5

- 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves;
but our sufficiency is of God;



We demonstrate that God's blessing is more essential to our success than 1/10 of our income.

Proverbs 11:28

²⁸ He that trusteth in his riches shall fall:
but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.



Tithing gives God the opportunity to prove himself to his people.

Malachi 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, **and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts,** if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*
- ¹¹ And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Here is the only place this promise is recorded.

Malachi 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*
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A close-up photograph of a burlap sack with a hole, spilling a large number of gold coins onto a wooden surface. The sack is on the left side of the frame, and the coins are scattered across the right side. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the texture of the sack and the metallic sheen of the coins.

It is the devourer that eats away at your moneybag.

Haggai 1:6

⁶ Ye have sown much, and bring in little;
ye eat, but ye have not enough;
ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink;
ye clothe you, but there is none warm;
and he that earneth wages
earneth wages *to put it into a bag with holes.*

We pay our tithe to God. Of course, the money we give is not collected by the angels and whisked off to heaven. But God sees the intent of our hearts.

Consider the Lord's commendation of the widow who brought her last two mites to the temple treasury:

Luke 21:1-4

- ¹ And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.
- ² And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.
- ³ And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:
- ⁴ For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.



Jesus knew this widow's offering was not going to be used in a godly manner. It was he who condemned the scribes for their extravagant ways, and for taking advantage of the generosity of poor widows.

Luke 20:45-47

- ⁴⁵ Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,
⁴⁶ Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;
⁴⁷ Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.



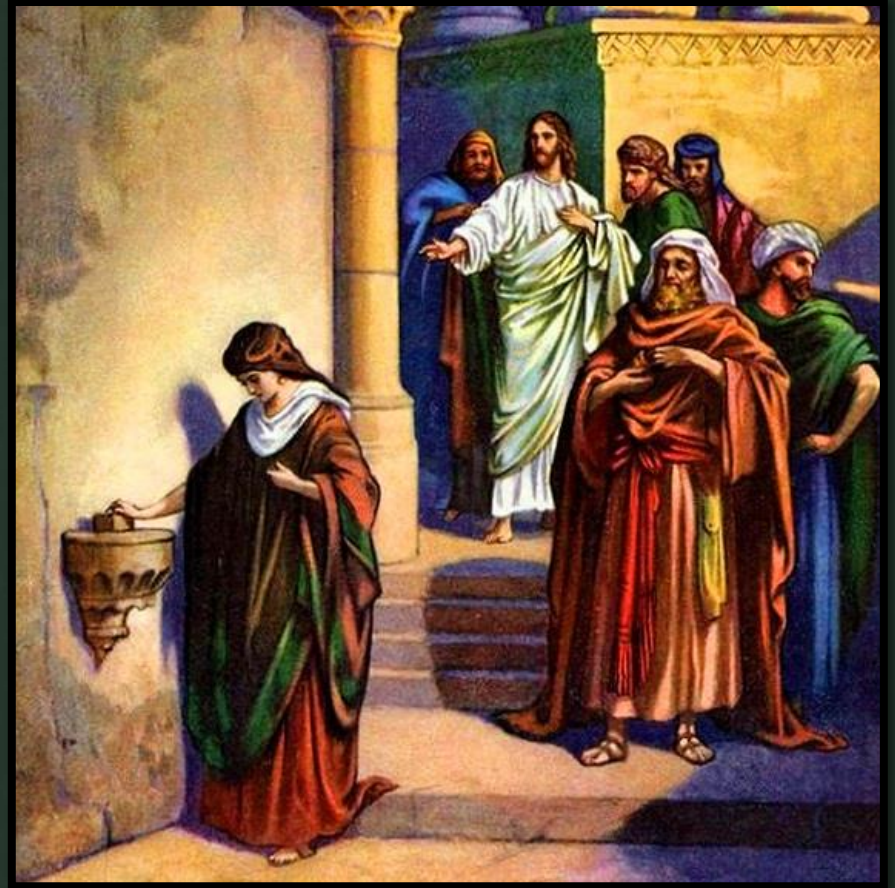
Those who misuse funds given for the work of God will answer to God for their dishonesty.

Luke 20:45-47

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- ⁴⁷ Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: **the same shall receive greater damnation.**



You may think Jesus should have stopped this woman from giving her money to the temple and directed her elsewhere. But Jesus knew her offering was to God, not the scribes. She knew those coins could not sustain her. She was entrusting her future to God.



In the next lesson, we will learn the proper use of the tithe.





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