



BUILT TO LAST

*Giving is
Worship*



**FAMILY
CHURCH**

Giving is Worship

A Study of the Book of Malachi

Introduction

In our journey of faith, it is easy to drift away from God without even realizing it. We become consumed by the blessings He has given us rather than focusing on the relationship He desires with us. The book of Malachi serves as a powerful call to return to God, reminding us that He remains the same yesterday, today, and forever.

This book captures a critical moment in history—God’s final message to His people before 400 years of silence leading up to the New Testament. Through Malachi, God calls His people back to a life of obedience, worship, and faithfulness.

As we walk through this study, let’s examine how Malachi’s message applies to our lives today. We will explore three essential principles:

1. **Prioritizing our relationship with God over His blessings**
2. **Understanding the role of stewardship in our faith**
3. **Recognizing that blessings flow from obedience**

Let’s dive in and rediscover what it means to live a life built to last.

Chapter 1: Understanding the Context of Malachi

The Historical Background

Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament, written approximately 400 years before the coming of Jesus. At this time, Israel had already experienced exile due to their disobedience. The northern kingdom had been destroyed by the Assyrians, and the southern kingdom (Judah) had been taken into captivity by Babylon.

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After 70 years in exile, God fulfilled His promise by allowing His people to return to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the temple under Ezra, and Nehemiah restored the city walls. However, even after these miraculous restorations, the people quickly drifted away from God.

By the time of Malachi, Judah had become a spiritually apathetic nation. The priests were corrupt, the people were compromising in their faith, and their worship had become empty. Instead of honoring God, they questioned Him with arrogance, asking:

- **"How have You loved us?"** (Malachi 1:2)
- **"How have we despised Your name?"** (Malachi 1:6)
- **"How have we robbed You?"** (Malachi 3:8)

Their attitude reveals a heart that had grown distant from God.

Parallels to Our World Today

In the early 20th century, nearly **60% of Americans** attended church regularly. Today, that number has dropped to just **25%**. The decline of faith in our culture mirrors the drift that happened in Judah.

Just like in Malachi's time, many people today want God's blessings without submitting to His authority. They want His provision but not His presence. This book challenges us to examine our own hearts and see if we, too, have wandered away.

Chapter 2: Returning to God – A Call to Repentance

God's Plea: "Return to Me"

In Malachi 3:7, God gives a direct command:

"Return to Me, and I will return to you."

God is not distant because He abandoned His people—He is distant because *they* walked away. The same is true today. If we feel far from God, we must ask ourselves if we have neglected our relationship with Him.

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When the people of Judah heard this command, they responded with arrogance:

"How can we return?"

God's answer was surprising. Instead of focusing on prayer or fasting, He pointed directly to their **giving**:

"Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! You ask, 'How have we robbed You?' By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions." (Malachi 3:8)

The Heart of Giving

Why did God focus on giving as a sign of returning to Him? Because our **wallets reflect our worship**. When we hold tightly to money and resources, it shows that we trust in material things more than we trust in God.

Jesus reinforced this idea in Matthew 6:19-21:

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy... but store up treasures in heaven... for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Our generosity is an indicator of our **spiritual health**. When we give to God first, it shows that He is our true priority.

Chapter 3: Thinking Like a Steward, Not an Owner

God Owns Everything

One of the biggest misunderstandings about money is believing that **we own what we have**. In reality, everything belongs to God:

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." (Psalm 24:1)

We are merely stewards—temporary managers of His resources. God entrusts us with finances, time, and talents, and He expects us to use them for His glory.

The Two Ways We Can Rob God

We can rob God in two ways:

1. **Taking what belongs to Him** (spending everything on ourselves)
2. **Keeping what He has asked us to give** (withholding our tithe and offerings)

A modern example would be depositing money into a bank. Imagine you put \$1,000 into a savings account. If you go to withdraw \$500 and the bank refuses, claiming the money is *theirs*, you would feel robbed!

This is exactly what Judah was doing—they were keeping the resources that **belonged to God**.

The Blessing of Obedience

Malachi 3:10 contains one of the most remarkable promises in the Bible:

"Bring the full tenth into the storehouse... and see if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure."

God invites us to **test Him** in this area. It is the only time in Scripture where He allows His people to put Him to the test!

When we honor God with our finances, He promises to provide for our needs. However, His blessings go beyond money—they include **peace, joy, and purpose**.

Chapter 4: Living a Life Built to Last

Three Key Lessons from Malachi

1. **Prioritize Your Relationship with God Over His Resources**
 - Seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

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- Don't just chase blessings—chase *the Blessor*.

2. **Think Like a Steward, Not an Owner**

- Everything you have is a gift from God.
- Use your time, talents, and finances for His glory.

3. **Blessings Flow from Obedience**

- God does not promise riches, but He promises **eternal rewards**.
- Our faithfulness determines our treasure in heaven.

A Final Challenge

At the end of Malachi, God promises to send **Elijah** before the coming of the Lord. This prophecy was fulfilled in **John the Baptist**, who prepared the way for Jesus.

Now, we await Christ's **second coming**. Are we living in a way that reflects His return?

The time we have on earth is short. Let's not waste it chasing temporary things. Instead, let's **return to God**, walk in obedience, and build a life that will last for eternity.

Conclusion

God's call in Malachi is the same call He gives us today:

"Return to Me, and I will return to you."

If you've drifted from God, today is the day to come back. He is waiting with open arms.

May we be a people who live for **eternal treasures**, invest in God's kingdom, and experience the joy of walking in faithful obedience.

Let's be a generation that is built to last..

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