



Malachi 3: Pay out of respect

Malachi 3: ““Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ In tithes and offerings.”

I have written about this chapter several times. Each time I come back to the same conclusion. Why do people preach money with this chapter? Oh, because it mentions a tithe. Yet, this chapter mentions many things not related to money. Today, I will tie this chapter to money. Why? It’s because our heart is tied to money. This chapter does a masterful Job of pointing this out.

People give to God. Some call it a tithe (10%). I know people who look down on me for giving 10% of my net pay. They say I am not faithful giving of my gross pay. The rule in church is about 95% of the people do not tithe at all. Some numbers suggest about 20%of a congregation give regularly. What are the other 80% giving? I suspect that number reflects the heart of a church and its people.

I knew a lady who only gave money if the sermon was good. The point of this chapter is laid out in the first 5 verses. Many scholars link the first five verses to Jesus return. However, if you dig deeper these verses go well beyond that. Jesus remarks in Matthew 5:24 to leave your sacrifice or payment at the alter and go make amends with those you have wronged. Similarly, here in Malachi, the writer says to purify yourself before you give to the lord. Basically, come before the Lord with a gift that comes from a good heart.

Verse 5 says that he will come and put us on trial. For not paying 10% gross? Heavens no! We will be examined for how our heart gave. Some millionaires give 10%. Oh, good for them. My giving hurts because I'm not a millionaire. I give because I want to help God serve this earth. Some give for duty, tradition, or a command. Yet, possibly, none of those gave with their heart. The last verse of this chapter says there will be a distinction between the righteous and wicked. Again, it comes back to giving and the heart.

It's a rule of thumb that people don't give with their hearts. Many people dispute that. I know people who do give but don't believe in God. This chapter is saying to me that God will pay it forward to himself. He will send a refiner. He will change our hearts. Those changed hearts will give to the Lords work. God asks the people to return to him. he says to test him in his ability to bless us. There are ways that God would pay back out devotion to him. The lands would heal, other nations would be jealous. Overall, God would pour himself upon us.

The main point is us. We are changed. Our lives become rich. Yet, it goes deeper still. It's all about the heart. God is in the heart changing business. Yes, the wicked are blessed. Some of them give. The staple of a God person should be a changed heart. A heart that desires to give generously. A heart that cries for the poor and needy. In the beginning of this chapter it mentions a refiner of silver. Pure Silver is like a mirror. We will be refined to reflect the heart of God. That is how respect for God happens. That is how people change their heart. A purified soul. Then we will come before the Lord with a gift with hearts on fire for God. That pays says the Lord.