

# **MALACHI**

or

## **WILL A MAN ROB GOD?**

by

S. Franklin Logsdon

Copyright @ 1961

### **CHAPTER FIVE**

#### **THE LORD GOD'S TREASURY ROBBED**

**“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings”** (Malachi 3:8).

FOUR DIVISIONS in this text are at once discoverable:

- (1) Interrogation,
- (2) indictment,
- (3) contradiction,
- (4) explanation.

It is not to be construed that this is the only way in which they robbed God. They had robbed Him of love, honor and obedience. Nor is it to be thought that tithes were more desired by the Lord than these. There is not the least hint of comparative value in this text. Neither is the chief concern of the Lord due to a lack of tithes and offerings, thus causing a deficient treasury. No, the point is deeper than this, more basic, more spiritual.

#### **THE ROOT OF THE MATTER**

**“The love of money is the root of all evil”** (I Timothy 6:10).

Not necessarily the money itself, but the love of it; the love of what it can bring in the way of personal satisfaction. People love money for what they can get with it, for where they can go with it, for what they can do with it. The love of money underlies every professional contest, prompts every holdup or break-in, and figures in every bribery.

People, for the sake of money, will risk their reputations, endanger their lives and prostitute their morals. They will sacrifice principles to the point of lying and killing.

The love of money may influence a marriage, compromise a position and divert devotion from the Lord. A minimum of investigation would produce irrefutable proof that this was the basic cause of all the indignities toward the Lord God as recorded in Malachi.

Unlike Job, they questioned God's love because of personal material losses and the possibility of their enemy's gain.

- They disesteemed the Lord God's name because its holy character restricted the outreach of their desires.
- They corrupted His worship by offering the worthless and marketing the good.
- They refused His entreaty to return for, said they, we have more provisions and see less trouble when we worship the queen of heaven (Jeremiah 44:17).
- They robbed God by withholding for their own gain.

Invariably the love for money becomes stronger with its increasing supply. This type of love deafens the ear of God's people: **“I spoke unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear”** (Jeremiah 22:21). The love of money diverts the heart from God: **“As they were increased [prospered], so they sinned against me”** (Hosea 4:7), **saith the Lord.**” This then is the indictment of the verse.

## **THE THRALLDOM OF MONEY**

### *The Case of Achan.*

**“When I saw among the spoils . . . two hundred shekels of silver, then I coveted them and took them”** (Joshua 7:21). So reads the confession of Achan.

This was not a sin of ignorance. The gravity of the offense was well known to the offender. The penalty was death by stoning. But the propelling urge overpowered his judgment and plunged him into serious difficulty. He troubled Israel, angered the Lord God and forfeited his life.

In the lovely pasture land in the valley of Achor (Isaiah 65:10), a heap of stones (Joshua 7:26) marked the grave in which lay the body of a man who became frenzied with avarice for money; violated the law to get it; then, like most such people, never got to enjoy it.

### *The Case of Judas*

**“He cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself”** (Matthew 27:5).

This was his last visit to the temple. However, he went not as a worshiper but as a betrayer of His Lord.

The contract was made, signed and sealed. It called for the party of the second part to identify the Saviour by a kiss and to receive from the party of the first part the sum of thirty pieces of silver for services rendered. The contract was dramatically fulfilled in the Garden of Gethsemane. The disillusioned perpetrator of this evil deed surrendered the money without spending one piece, was filled with remorse and finally committed suicide.

## *The Case of Ananias and Sapphira*

When the record states that they “**kept back part of the price**” (Acts 5:2), it reveals many underlying psychological, moral and spiritual factors. It suggests collusion, deception, falsification, fraudulency, pretense, misrepresentation—all because of the love of money. In this case, as in the two preceding ones, those who coveted money and stooped to immoral practices to possess it never benefited therefrom. These reports reflect the admonitory aspect of the Scriptures on the subject.

### **THE OBJECTION**

More freely verse 8 would read: “*Is it conceivable that finite man would rob the infinite God? Men say they do not, but in reality they do.*”

Here, of course, it is God's own people in view, but they disclaimed all guilt in this regard. The deceitfulness of the human heart has reached its worst display when man questions the veracity of God's Word or doubts the accuracy of His judgment. It is a matter of knowing to do good but doing it not. This of course is sin, but the heart has a way of consoling itself with the thought that God will overlook its selfishness, then feels no compunction in withholding from Him. Indeed, to be so charged, in this instance, meets with an innocent-appearing objection.

It was not necessarily a matter of pilfering from the treasury as it was not putting into it.

- They were not absconding, they were abstaining.
- They were not taking what was not theirs; they were withholding what was rightfully His.

It is a judicial decision which the unsundered mind hands down to govern one's selfish activities. The reasoning is thus: “*The cattle on a thousand hills and all the gold and silver are the Lord's. He surely will not object if I keep for the satisfaction of crying needs what I otherwise would give to him.*”

A Christian couple, caught in a traffic violation in one of our cities and summoned before the court, prayed with much earnestness that the Lord would intervene in their behalf. The heavy fine which might have been imposed was suspended because it was their first offense. Greatly relieved, they left the courtroom and then compared notes.

“I promised the Lord,” said the husband, “that if He would spare us the embarrassment of conviction, we would give to Him the full amount of the cost of such an offense.”

“But,” said the wife, “I told the Lord if He would intervene, we would give Him half the amount.”

The wife's decision was honored. The flesh (the selfish self) always favors itself. And so man's devotion to God suffers.

Total commitment to the Lord is not a prominent thought in the minds of backsliders. It is not too conspicuous in the thinking of those who purport to be dedicated. This is what occasioned Paul's animated surprise in saying, "**What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost . . . ye are not your own?**" (I Corinthians 6:19).

The attitudes and actions of present-day believers form a poor corollary to this truth. They "sell out" to Christ in a decision of faith and repentance but do not deliver themselves in a dedication through faith and obedience. Salvation is professed but service is not produced. Thus as it was in that day before our Lord's first advent, so is it in this day before His second coming.

## THE COMMAND

**"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse"** (3: 10).

This one statement—a definite command—speaks of the giver, the gift, the procedure and the place. It becomes an obligation, a privilege, a blessing, an investment, a ministry and a necessity.

"**Ye**" refers to God's own people. He has no instruction for the unbelieving world, and no promise. To them he has but one word, a blessed word, a word of invitation: "**Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth**" (Isaiah 45:22).

His own, however; must be taught a deep sense of responsibility, an attitude of generosity, and the art of sharing.

*What were they commanded to bring? Tithes.*

This was obligatory. One-tenth of their income belonged to the Lord. The offerings were optional, albeit the Lord desired them. The tithe was a responsibility; the offerings, a privilege.

The former was said to be a measure of their honesty; the latter an evidence of their love.

And let it be remembered that the Lord specifically takes note of the gift which reflects the presence or lack of heart sincerity and devotion. The widow who gave her mite was divinely commended. The one who sows sparingly reaps sparingly.

Perhaps the chief reason why the Lord loves a cheerful giver is that it affords Him opportunity to give liberally in return.

The tithe made for proportionate giving—a fair and reasonable plan for all alike—while the offering permitted a personal test of appreciation with a latitude to accommodate any prompted liberality on the part of the offerer.

It provided an incentive to lay up treasures increasingly where rust and moth do not corrupt and where thieves cannot break through and steal.

## THE STOREHOUSE

The storehouse could scarcely be termed a treasury.

- It was **“in the field”** (I Chronicles 27:25).
- It was a storage for the fruit of the land which was given to the Lord.
- It was equally the distributing center.

Because of its purpose, it was sacred both to the Lord and to the people. With what pleasure must the sincere have brought their gifts to this place. And with what meticulous care it must have been attended there. So, whether in a storehouse for the fruit of the ground or a treasury for gold and silver, God tests the love of His people in giving as well as living.

## THE CURSE

**“Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation”** (3:9).

If we are justified in believing that the mention of being robbed of tithes and offerings in verse 8 is an illustration in point and not the whole gamut of indignities (and we believe we are), then **“robbed”** in verse 9 has a larger application than in verse 8. This thought is supported by this statement: **“They consider not in their hearts that I remember ALL [emphasis ours] their wickedness”** (Hosea 7:2).

God's plans for His people called for a benediction, not a malediction; a blessing, not a blight; kindness not a curse.

**“The blessing of the Lord maketh rich and he addeth no sorrow with it.”**

God is not the author of heartaches or the designer of difficulties or the architect of disaster. Tragedy is the chasm at the end of the road of unbelief and disobedience.

As for instance, **“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. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways”** (Haggai 1:6, 7).

Questioning His love, profaning His name, corrupting His worship, refusing his entreaties and robbing Him were indignities that had to cease or chastisement must be imposed. Those **“whom the Lord loveth he correcteth”** (Proverbs 3:12). And the Lord loved these people (Jeremiah 31:3).

In dealing with His people, the Lord sought to make them prosperous. This accounts for such questions as **“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness”** (Isaiah 55:2).

The order of divine dealing with His own is

- (1) instruction,
- (2) reproof
- (3) correction.

- When disobedience leads away from His will, reproof is registered.
- When reproof is disregarded (Proverbs 1:25), correction becomes necessary.

- Instruction is the highway to spiritual blessing and success.
- Reproof is the “red light” of divine warning.

Correction is designed to restore to the main route those who have gotten on a dangerous detour.

Reproof is preventative; correction remedial. Reproof is intended to keep one in the orbit of God's will. Correction is an agent of recovery—the hand of love to turn wayward feet back into the path of obedience.

It is to be concluded and appreciated, therefore, that cursing is a last resort with the Lord, a requirement which persistent rebellion makes necessary, a discipline demanded. The whole nation was due to come under the rod (3:9).

## **THE CHALLENGE**

**“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”** (3:10).

**Nothing is so apparent as the fact that there was an alternative to the curse. What was it? Blessing! Abundant blessing! Overwhelming blessing! It could come through proving the Lord. What does it mean to prove Him? Simply to obey Him; to take Him at His Word; to do what He commands.**

God was not bribing them. That would be beneath the dignity of Deity. It is rather parental pleading with a desire to lavishly reward demonstrated love and willing obedience. It is never a risk to step where the overflowing water obscures the terra firma—that is, when God commands one to do so. This is why the Holy Spirit moved upon Mary to say, **“Whatever he saith to you, do it”** (John 2:5). Yes, one moves with safety and assurance in obeying His Word.

*Then comes the promise, “I will open the windows of heaven.”*

We know that God opens closed eyes, stopped ears, hardened hearts and mouth of the dumb. We know he opens graves, the gates of righteousness, the doors of privilege and the rivers of refreshing.

But what does it mean to open the windows of heaven?

*First of all, there are windows in heaven* (Genesis 7:11). It means that God moves in favor toward man. It bespeaks His pleasure. It announces His bestowment. During the wilderness journey, the Lord God **“rained bread from heaven”** (Exodus 16:4).

The windows of heaven opened to deliver Noah, while the fountains of the great deep were broken up to engulf the wicked (Genesis 7:21).

The windows of heaven opened when Jesus was baptized of John in the Jordan that the threefold manifestation of Deity might be witnessed in heaven as on earth (Luke 3:21, 22).

The windows of heaven opened to give courage to Stephen in his martyrdom by letting him see his Lord in this great hour of trial (Acts 7:55).

Heaven opened to show Peter the need of the Gentiles and to make known that salvation was also for Gentiles (Acts 10:11).

But here in Malachi 3:10 is the only recorded instance where God gives to man the stated opportunity of causing the windows of heaven to open. The key was available, but the privilege was refused through indifference, unconcern and disobedience.

### **THE ABUNDANT BLESSING**

What amount of blessing was it that would overtax their capacity to receive it? This is the lavishness of heaven's favor.

- **“I will love them freely”** (Hosea 14:4).
- **“Out of his belly [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water”** (John 7: 38).
- **“Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over”** (Luke 6:38).

God is never in one's debt. He giveth and giveth and giveth again. And all His gifts are good and perfect and come from above (James 1:17).

### **ADDED REWARD**

**“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground”** (3:11a).

**“Rebuke”** means *“to chide,” “to restrain.”* God is here telling them He will give special protection to their producing acreage, preventing loss by thievery. He would repulse any who, with malicious intent, turned toward their fields. How wonderful that the Holy One of Israel would make these matters His concern when His desire becomes the devoted interest of His people!

The Lord God laid down a simple principle of profound import in stating, **“When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him”** (Proverbs 16:7). Or, as was stated to Jehoshaphat, **“The battle is not yours, but God's”** (II Chronicles 20:15). The One high and lifted up makes Himself the Representative of man to care for his every need when, in turn, man makes Him the singular heart interest of his life.

Nor was this all of the promised blessing for those who, through obedience in bringing all the tithes into the storehouse, would prove the Lord. **“Neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts”** (3:11c).

Many things can happen to fruit—a blight can prevent budding; a frost or a freeze can destroy blossoms; hail can scar; severe wind and violent rain can cast it down before ripening or when ripe to injury; disease can disfigure; insects and worms can ravage. But none of these, or any other agent, can touch a single piece if God hedges them in with His protection. This He promised to do if they would bring their tithe and offerings.

### **TESTIMONY TO OTHERS**

**“And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts”** (3:12). Here is still another added blessing for obedience—the blessing of testifying to others of the goodness of the Lord. We are so many times reminded that no man liveth unto himself or dieth unto himself. **“Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's”** (Romans 14:8). And what we do affects the Lord favorably or unfavorably.

However, because they did not lay matters of godly import to heart, the Lord God was forced to say, **“I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already”** (2:2). **“Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof . . . and I will destroy her vines and her fig trees”** (Hosea 2:9, 12).

Instead of the nations witnessing a **“delightful land”**, they viewed a desolate land.

In the meanwhile, the Lord God is restless about this condition (Isaiah 62:1). While there is currently a degree of restoration in national Israel, it is not what it will be until the Jewish people get right with God. Then will they be called **“Hephzibah”** (*in whom I delight*), and the nations will acclaim them **“The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord”** (Isaiah 62:4, 12).

But for these approximately 2,500 years of dispersion they have been deprived of the blessings of the Lord and of being a blessing to the nations, all because they robbed God.

**~ end of chapter 6 ~**

**<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>**

**\*\*\***