

Recap of 11/27/16 (Malachi 3:8-12):

1. Once again the Israelites had a problem in the presentation of offerings. In Mal. 1:6-14, the people offered unacceptable sacrifices. Now in Mal. 3:7-12, the problem is unacceptable tithes and offerings.
2. "Tithes and contributions had been instituted in the time of Moses and were often a barometer of the nation's spiritual condition." (Charles C. Ryrie)
3. The Law called for two annual tithes; the Levite's Tithes (Num. 18:21-32) and the Festival Tithes (Deuteronomy 12:6-17; 14:22-26). In addition a third tithe was collected every three years called the Poor Tithe (Deut. 14:28-29). In addition to these required offerings, voluntary offerings, such as freewill offerings and first fruits were to be given.
4. The bottom line is that the temple ministry would suffer if the priest and Levites were not supported by the people. Giving was central to the people of God.
5. "People who care deeply about pleasing God are recognized by the lives they live, not by the words they speak." (Lawrence Richards)
6. In accord with the blessings (for obedience) and the cursings (for disobedience) in the Law, the people of Israel would experience either famine, drought, and wasting insects or they would experience abundance. Robbing God led to famine and drought, which led to impoverishment, which led to more withholding from God; and a vicious cycle, was begun. God was waiting to bless them abundantly if they would just return to Him. He challenges the people to test Him in this.
7. A warning is essential here, for except in very general principles this passage does not apply to the church today. Blaising sounds the warning: "One must be careful in applying these promises to believers today. The Mosaic Covenant, with its promise of material blessings to Israel for her obedience, is no longer in force (Eph. 2:14,15; Rom. 10:4; Heb. 8:13). However, the New Testament speaks about generosity and giving. While not requiring a tithe of believers today, the New Testament does speak of God's blessing on those who give generously to the needs of the church and especially to those who labor in the Word (Acts. 4:31-35; 2 Cor. 9:6-12; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:14-19)."