

**MALACHI: CALL TO OVERCOME SPIRITUAL APATHY**  
**VI: Overcoming The Mishandling Of Material Blessings**  
**(Malachi 3:7-12)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. About 100 years after the Hebrew exiles had returned from Babylon and rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple, their “initial enthusiasm had worn off,” with life and worship becoming mere routines. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, “Introduction to the Book of Malachi: The Times,” p. 1325)
- B. God raised up Malachi to call the people to repentance from spiritual apathy, and Malachi 3:7-12 addressed the issue of mishandling God’s material blessings. We view the passage for our insight and application:

**II. Overcoming The Mishandling Of Material Blessings, Malachi 3:7-12.**

- A. God announced that Israel had gone astray from His ordinances since the days of their fathers, so he urged Malachi’s generation in Israel to return to Him that He might return to them with blessing, Malachi 3:7a,b.
- B. Israel responded to the Lord by claiming she was ignorant of her waywardness so as to ask God how she was to return to Him, Malachi 3:7c.
- C. God replied that they had robbed Him, and the people of Israel questioned how they had robbed Him, v. 8a.
- D. The Lord answered that they had robbed Him in their tithes and offerings, so God had cursed them, and this curse is revealed in Malachi 3:11 as a famine due to locusts eating the vegetation and their vines not producing grapes, Malachi 3:8b-9. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1584-1585)
- E. The tithes and offerings to which God referred were specifically required under the Mosaic Law (as follows):
  - 1. The people of Israel were to “tithes,” that is, to give a tenth “of all produce and livestock” which they possessed, Leviticus 27:30, 32; Ibid., p. 1585.
  - 2. This tithe was to be given to the Levites who in turn were to give a tenth of the tithe that they had received to the priests for their livelihood needs, Numbers 18:21-32; Ibid.
  - 3. The people of Israel were also to bring a tenth of their produced crops and animals and eat them with the Levites before the Lord in Jerusalem “as an act of festal worship (Deut. 12:5-18; 14:22-26),” Ibid.
  - 4. In addition, every third year a tenth of Israel’s agricultural production was to be stored up in the towns throughout Israel for the Levites, the foreigners, the widows and the orphans, people groups who were vulnerable to material shortages or loneliness due to social seclusion, Deuteronomy 14:27-29, Ibid.
  - 5. The word “offerings” may refer to offerings in general,” but “it seems to refer here (Mal. 3:8c) to those portions of the offerings (as well as those portions of the tithes) designated for the priests (*Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, s. v. “*terumah*,” 2:838),” Ibid.
- F. If the Levites and priests would not receive the tithes and offerings, they would have to seek other means to support themselves, causing the temple ministry to suffer, Ibid.
- G. God then called the people to bring all the tithes they were required of the Lord to give and put them in the storehouse in the temple that held grain brought in payment of tithes for the priests, that if they did this, He would figuratively open up the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing in agricultural production that was so great that they would not be able to handle it all, Malachi 3:10. (Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Malachi 3:10)
- H. In addition, the Lord would stop the loss of Israel’s agricultural production to pests and fruitlessness, and the Gentile nations would call them blessed as Israel would be respected by the Gentile world, Malachi 3:11-12.

***Lesson:*** *God charged the people of Israel with robbing Him of His required tithes and offerings, noting that He had thus put a curse on their agricultural production. However, were they to bring all of the required tithes to the Lord, He would abundantly bless their agricultural production and make them respected by Gentile nations.*

***Application:*** *(1) Since the Mosaic Covenant’s requirements of tithes and offerings is no longer in force in the dispensation of the Church, we do not apply God’s directives on them, Ephesians 2:14-15; Romans 10:4; Hebrews 8:13. (2) However, Scriptures directed to the Church do “speak of God’s blessing on those who give generously to the needs of the church especially to those who labor in the Word (Acts 4:31-35; 2 Cor. 9:6-12; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:14-19).” (Ibid.) (3) Also, God calls us to use our financial resources as heads of households to provide materially for the dependents in our homes (cf. 1 Timothy 5:8) and (4) for parents to save up for their children (2 Corinthians 12:14). (5) The Church should also be prepared financially to support needy elderly, godly widows with long-term ministry records who have no family available to support them (1 Timothy 5:9-10) (6) On the other hand, local church leaders should not pressure people in the pew to give in obedience to 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 and 1 Peter 5:1-3.*