

# CHALLENGE TO PROVE GOD

***“Return to me, and I will return to you,’ says the LORD Almighty. But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’ Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.” —MALACHI 3:7-8***

God issued a challenge through the prophet Malachi to prove Him. To prove God is to have truth translated into genuine spiritual experience. One of the symptoms of having lost touch with spiritual reality is that we become absorbed in self-preservation. With today’s increasing demands and pressures, life feels fraught with burdens and worries, so we tend to think of ourselves as the ones in need, and our giving is little, if any.

Under the Old Covenant, the people of God were to pay a tithe, which was one tenth of their income to God. “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord: it is holy to the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30). This also included one tenth of herds and flocks; all of which were paid into the temple treasury to support the priesthood and those in need. This was not a donation, but was mandatory, and to hold it back was to be guilty of robbing God.

The people, including priests, tried to get away with sacrificing crippled, blind and diseased animals. They surrendered as little as possible to God, and as a result, were reaping the consequences of spiritual barrenness, despite their token fulfillment of temple rituals. Throughout generations of depriving God of what was rightfully His, the Israelites claimed no knowledge, guilt or accountability.

God's final challenge to them and His final challenge of the Old Testament was to bring the tithe into the storehouse and to acknowledge His demands by giving to Him what already belongs to Him. "'Test me in this', says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing you will not have room enough for it'" (Malachi 3:10). The challenge is straightforward as is the promise. Give God humbly and fully what belongs to Him and never again would the Israelites have less than enough.

God challenges us in the same way today. Perhaps we need to come to another altar where Paul says, "offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship" (Romans 12:1). We are not our own. We were purchased with a price, paid by the blood of Jesus Christ. What we would be giving to God is what already belongs to Him – ourselves, so that He may use us to bring benefit and blessing to others. "Return to me," God says, and as we do so, He will open the floodgates of heaven upon us. This is still His challenge and invitation to us.

***PRAYER: I pray, Lord, for a deeper work of your Spirit in areas of my life that I know I need to submit more fully to You. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Has concern about not having enough kept me from giving?***