

**STEALING FROM GOD
MALACHI 3:6-10 / 6-3-18 / A.M.**

I. WHAT WAS GOD'S MESSAGE TO ISRAEL ABOUT STEALING FROM HIM?

A. First, we see the need for God's message.

1. Israel doubted God's love for them because they were experiencing financial hardship—1:2.

Malachi 1:2

"I have loved you," says the Lord. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'"

2. Israel responded to God and their hardship in several ways.
 - a. First, they offered less than their best to God in worship—1:6-8.
 - b. Second, their spiritual leaders were complicit in this unsatisfactory worship—2:1-2 and 7.
 - c. Third, many Israelites divorced their wives to marry idolatress woman—2:11 and 16.
 - d. Fourth, the Israelites convinced themselves that they weren't doing anything wrong—2:7.
 - e. Fifth, the Israelites stopped tithing—3:8.

B. After God listed Israel's unfaithfulness He challenged them to repent with an offer that they couldn't refuse—3:7

Malachi 3:7

.....Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty....

C. Finally God promised that if they demonstrated their repentance and return to Him with their tithes then he would bless them beyond their expectations—3:10.

II. NOW AFTER LOOKING AT GOD'S MESSAGE TO ISRAEL LETS CONSIDER HIS MESSAGE TO US TODAY.

A. Like Israel, many Christians today are guilty of stealing from God—3:8—"

Malachi 3:8

**"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'
"In tithes and offerings.**

1. The Hebrew word "rob" means "to take something by force."

2. The point is that robbing God is a conscious decision people make and not just an inadvertent mistake.
 3. Some Christians soothe their consciences about not tithing by saying its legalism or something only found in the Old Testament.
 4. Jesus, however, talked more about what Christians do with their money than any other subject including salvation.
- B. Many Christians today, not only steal from God but also from His church.
1. By withholding our tithe we are failing to fund the church's ministries both in and outside of the church.
 2. Also, by withholding our tithe we force other Christians who do tithe to make up the difference.
- C. Many Christians today not only steal from God and His church, but also from themselves.
1. How can you steal from yourself? By robbing yourself of God's blessings—3:10.

Malachi 3:10

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 that there will not be room enough to store it.

2. Somewhere we have been taught that it's wrong to test God. God, however invites us to test Him with our money.
3. Testing God actually means trusting God to meet our needs with only 90% of our income.
4. A test isn't something you can know with human reason alone, because human reason tells us we can't possibly do with 90% what we could do with 100%.
5. This is something, however, you will never know until you try it.