

Malachi 3:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and 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.

Analysis

God's challenge to Israel regarding tithes represents one of Scripture's boldest invitations to test His faithfulness. The command "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (havi'u et-kol-hama'aser el-beyt ha'otsar, אל-בֵּית הַאֲוֹצָר) addresses Israel's robbery of God (v. 8) by withholding tithes and offerings. The "storehouse" (beyt ha'otsar, בית האוצר) refers to temple storerooms where grain, wine, and oil were kept to support Levites, priests, and temple service (Nehemiah 13:12-13).

The purpose clause "that there may be meat in mine house" (vihayah teref beveyti, וְבַיִתִי טְרֵף בְּבַיִתִי) indicates the tithe's practical function—sustaining those who serve God's house. The term teref (טרף) literally means "food" or "prey," emphasizing the necessity of provision for temple personnel who depended on tithes for survival. When Israel withheld tithes, they undermined worship infrastructure and violated covenant obligations (Leviticus 27:30-32, Numbers 18:21-24).

Most remarkably, God issues a unique invitation: "prove me now herewith" (bechanun na-vazot, בְּחַנּוּנִי נָא-בְּזַעַת). The verb bachan (בחן) means to test, try, or examine. This is the only place in Scripture where God explicitly invites people to test Him. Normally, testing God demonstrates faithlessness (Deuteronomy 6:16,

Matthew 4:7), but here God confidently challenges Israel to test whether He keeps His promises. The promised blessing is extravagant: "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." The imagery of heavenly windows opening (arubot hashamayim, אַרְבָּות הַשָּׁמַיִם) recalls Noah's flood (Genesis 7:11), but here pouring blessing rather than judgment. The phrase "not room enough" (ad-beli-day, עַד-בְּלִי-יְהִי) means "until no more need"—abundance beyond capacity.

Historical Context

Malachi prophesied during the post-exilic period (approximately 450-400 BC), after Jews returned from Babylonian captivity and rebuilt the temple (516 BC). Initial spiritual enthusiasm had declined into apathy, moral compromise, and religious corruption. The economic situation was difficult, possibly including drought and poor harvests (Haggai 1:6-11, Malachi 3:11). In these circumstances, the people rationalized withholding tithes, questioning whether serving God brought benefit (Malachi 3:14-15).

The tithe system was central to Israel's covenant economy. God designated the tithe (ten percent of crops and livestock) to support the Levites, who received no land inheritance (Numbers 18:21-24). Levites in turn gave a tenth of what they received to support the priests (Numbers 18:26-28). When people withheld tithes, the entire religious infrastructure collapsed. Nehemiah encountered this problem when he returned to Jerusalem and found the temple storerooms empty, Levites and singers forced to return to their fields because support had ceased (Nehemiah 13:10-12).

The historical context reveals that Israel's failure to tithe wasn't merely economic selfishness but theological doubt. They questioned God's justice and faithfulness (Malachi 2:17, 3:14-15), concluding that serving God was unprofitable. God's challenge addresses this doubt head-on: test Me and see if I don't provide abundantly. The promised blessing includes both agricultural abundance (v. 11-12) and restored reputation among nations—Israel would be called a "delightsome land."

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage address the relationship between obedience and blessing in the covenant community?
2. What does God's invitation to 'test' Him reveal about His confidence in His own faithfulness?
3. How should Christians apply principles of proportional giving and supporting ministry from this Old Testament tithe command?
4. In what ways does withholding from God's work reflect doubt about His provision and faithfulness?
5. How does the promise of blessing 'poured out' challenge prosperity gospel distortions while affirming God's genuine desire to bless obedient giving?

Interlinear Text

בָּאֹזֶץ ר	בְּבִית	אֶל	פְּמַעַשׂ ר	כָּל	אֶת	בְּבִית	בְּבִית	בְּבִית
Bring	H853	H3605	ye all the tithes	H413		in mine house	into the storehouse	
	H935			H4643		H1004		H214
וְיַהְיֶה			בְּבִית	בְּבִית	בְּבִית	וְבָנֶה וְנִי	נָא	בְּזַעַם
H1961			that there may be meat	H1004		and prove	H4994	me now herewith
	H2964			H1004		H974		H2063
אָמַר			אָמַר יְהִי הָאָמָר		לֹא אָמַר	אָפַת ח	לֹא כְּמַה	אָתָּה
saith			the LORD of hosts	H518	H3808	if I will not open	H0	H853
H559		H3068	H6635			H6605		
בְּלִי	עַד	בְּרָכָה	לֹא כְּמַה					
אָרֶב וְתַ		וְתַפְרִיקָת	וְתַפְרִיקָת					
you the windows		of heaven	and pour you out	H7324	H0	a blessing	H5704	H1097
H699	H8064					H1293		
תִּהְיֶה								
that there shall not be room enough	H1767							

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:33 (Parallel theme): But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Psalms 37:3 (References Lord): Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Deuteronomy 28:12 (Blessing): The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

Leviticus 27:30 (References Lord): And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Nehemiah 12:44 (Parallel theme): And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.

Numbers 18:21 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Leviticus 26:10 (Parallel theme): And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

2 Kings 7:2 (References Lord): Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

Nehemiah 12:47 (Sin): And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.

Nehemiah 13:5 (Sin): And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.