



## STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, February 1, 2026

**Teaching Title:** Kingdom Builders 1

**Key Scripture:** Malachi 3:6–10

# CEDAR VALLEY

### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** Malachi 1

**Tuesday:** Malachi 2

**Wednesday:** Malachi 3

**Thursday:** Malachi 4

**Friday:** Genesis 14:17–24; Matthew 23:23–24

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

### MEMORY VERSE:

Malachi 3:10 NLT

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in My Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!

### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### Introduction:

The Bible talks a lot about money. Money can be an uncomfortable and difficult topic for us to talk about, but God seems to care about it a lot. It is natural for us to hold money tightly for a variety of reasons. However, when the love of money takes root in our hearts, it becomes an idol and leads to chaos in our lives. But when it comes to your money, it's not about what God wants *from* you; it's about what God wants *for* you. Generosity is a test of our hearts, not of our wallets.

Malachi was most likely written after 515 BC, during what is known as the Persian period (or postexilic period). Prior to this, the temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed in 586 BC, and the people of God were in exile (they had to move away from their home country). After many years in exile under Babylonian rule, the Persian king Cyrus defeated Babylon, released the Israelites from exile, and told them they could return to Jerusalem. The Israelites then rebuilt the temple (see the books of Ezra and Nehemiah), which was completed around 516 BC.

However, the rebuilding of the temple did not usher in the Kingdom of God as they had expected. As a result, the Israelites grew apathetic and even hostile toward God. In Malachi, there are six disputes or arguments between God and His people. Each dispute centers on pointing out Israel's rebellion (which they seem completely clueless about) as well as correcting their view of the character of God. Malachi 3:6–10 is the fifth dispute—the theme here is that tithing is evidence of their repentance.

#### Questions:

Ice Breaker: If you could recommend anything, what could you recommend?

1. Read Malachi 3:6–10 together as a group. What do we learn about God's character in this passage? Why is this important, especially with how He relates to His people despite their disobedience?

2. According to 3:7, what has been the long-term pattern of Israel's relationship with God? In this passage, how does God define "turning away"? What does it look like?
3. How would you define "tithe" and what is the tithe's purpose? (See Notes and Digging Deeper for help)
4. Why do you think God frames this tithing issue as "cheating" or "robbing" God?
5. What does the "curse" represent in this context? Do you think it's connected to the people's collective disobedience or just individual actions? Why?
6. What stands out to you about God's promise and His invitation to "test" Him?
7. In our culture today that values materialism (getting the next new iPhone, getting a bigger house, etc.), what changes can you make in your life to make it easier to tithe?

## NOTES

Question 3—

Tithe: The Hebrew word for TITHE is "maaser" (ma-ah-ser). It comes from the root ah-SEHR = a tenth part, 10%, one tenth.

## DIGGING DEEPER

Question 3—

"The tithe, or a tenth part, from the produce of the land (including grain, fruit, and flocks and herds) was required by Mosaic Law (Lev 27:30-33; Dt 12:6, 11). The tithes were given to support the Levites 'as their inheritance in return for the work they [did] while serving at the tent of meeting (Nu 18:21; Dt 14:22-29). The 'offerings' may refer to the 'tithe of the tithe' or the tithe-tax that the Levites were required to present as the Lord's offering (Nu 18:26). In effect, Malachi upbraids the people for not bringing their tithes to the temple and rebukes the Levitical corps for not presenting the tithe-tax to Yahweh on what they did receive. The prophet's promise of rainfall yielding an abundance of food is contingent not upon the ritual of tithing but upon the posture of repentance that motivates the act of giving (v. 7)."

-Walton, John. *The Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2016. Page 1575.

"The tithes and offering were the way in which they provided financial support for the temple, the priests and Levites, the services of the temple, and the poor and needy in the community. Robbing the temple, and robbing the poor and needy, was robbing God.

The idea of robbing God also shows that the people had the wrong idea about their property and possessions. They thought that they owned what they had, whereas in fact they were God's stewards of all their 'possessions', as indeed we are God's stewards of our 'possessions'."

-Adam, Peter. *The Message of Malachi*. IVP: Downers Grove, 2013. Pgs 104-105.