

First

October 16, 2022

Malachi 3:6-12, NLT

Introduction

How many have concerns about rising costs? God promises to take care of us, but based on conditions. First: coming before all others in time, order, importance, position.

Main Idea

Give to God first. Why? Here are three reasons.

- 1) First, God emphasized the principle in the OT. Shows trust
 - a) through the Firstborn

Exodus 13:2, 12-13, NLT: 2 “Dedicate to me every firstborn among the Israelites. The first offspring to be born, of both humans and animals, belongs to me....” 12 you must present all firstborn sons and firstborn male animals to the LORD, for they belong to him. 13 A firstborn donkey may be bought back from the LORD by presenting a lamb or young goat in its place. But if you do not buy it back, you must break its neck. However, you must buy back every firstborn son.

 - i) God required His people to “give” their firstborn to Him
 - ii) Clean animals killed, unclean redeemed by sacrifice of a clean 1
 - iii) It took faith in God to sacrifice the 1 st ... Any more coming?
 - b) through the First fruits

Exodus 23:19, NLT: “As you harvest your crops, bring the very best of the first harvest to the house of the LORD your God.

 - i) God required the 1st & best.
 - ii) Consider Cain & Abel

Gen. 4:3-4, 7, NLT: 3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock.... 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right.

c) through the Tithe (offerings to be discussed at a later date)

Tithe: a tenth part to be given to God, the 1st 10%

EX: pre-Law (Genesis: Abraham to Melchizedek, Jacob to God)

- i) It belongs to God & is holy. (Leviticus 27:30; a law Deut. 14:22)
- ii) Used by priests for their needs, the house of the Lord, the needy (widows, orphans, strangers –Deut. 14:28-29)

2) Second, Jesus reinforced the principle in the NT.

a) by His teaching

- i) **Matt. 23:23-24**, tithe, and do greater things (justice, mercy, faith)
- ii) **Matthew 6:28-33** seek first His kingdom...
- iii) **Matthew 6:19-21** store up treasure in heaven...where heart is

b) by His sacrifice (1Cor. 6:20, we are bought at a price)

- i) He is the firstborn
Rom. 8:29, NLT: For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. Clean Lamb of God sacrificed to redeem us who are not clean.
- ii) He is the first fruits (1Cor 15:20)—the first & best
1 Cor. 15:20, MEV: But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

c) He is the tithe: In a sense, Jesus is God's tithe—His first & best, used to redeem the rest (us) that He may bless us. (Robert Morris)

3) Finally, God uses the principle to test us (Mal. 3:10-11)

a) Do we trust God to supply our needs?

b) What will we choose: blessing or curse? (Mal. 3: 9-10)

Blessed (12): to be successful, to prosper, to guide, to lead straight

Cursed (9): to bind, hem in with obstacles, render powerless, resist

Conclusion

Altar

Come forward if you choose to put God first in your life, in all ways including financially.