



BETHEL
PRESBYTERIAN

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Volume 20 Issue 45

November 21, 2021

Earthbound Christianity

Malachi 3:6-12

Living as servants of God in a fallen world with a fallen nature will bring with it struggle! NOT ONLY will there be conflict when it comes to our desires, objectives, and goals, BUT a massive source of conflict will arise on account of mixed motives! For example, on a day-to-day basis:

- Whose kingdom will we labor to build? Ours or the Lord's?
- Whose agenda will we advance?

- Will we live unto the Lord's pleasure or our own?

AND will we be sober enough to realize the difference?

This is one of the many struggles we are going to have as Christians in this life. Recall Paul's warning when it came to marriage:

1 Corinthians 7:32b-34a, "...One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided."

It is this "divided interest" — not only in marriage, but in most of life — that makes Christian living so difficult. For the temptation will be to engage in Kingdom service unto the benefit of self! And so when I engage in religious activity, am I doing it to be noticed by men?¹ When I read or study the word of God, is it to satisfy a fleshly desire for knowledge, pride, or prominence? Or is it the overflow of a longing to fellowship with God? Or is it both?

You will need to understand that in this age, the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Self are NOT mutually exclusive. I can engage in Kingdom activity in order to advance earthly objectives! listen to the warning Paul gave to Timothy:

2 Timothy 2:3-4, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No [faithful] soldier in active service entangles himself [or enmeshes himself] in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

The word for "entangle" is the key here. What would it look like if a soldier "entangled himself in the affairs of everyday life"? He would NOT go AWOL. RATHER, he would do his soldierly duty to advance a personal objective. That is what I mean by the title earthbound Christianity. It is Christianity lived unto the service of self!

Earthbound Christianity is what Malachi 3:6-12 is about! The focus is NOT outright apostasy, BUT the subtle confusion that can occur when it comes to the object, goal, or telos of our service. That is the struggle God's people faced in Malachi's day. The longer they lived under the strain of being a vassal people, the more their love for the Lord waned.

Now from the example of their fathers which ended in exile, they did NOT dare reject the Lord. Their rebellion was more subtle. They retooled the calling, duties, and responsibilities of Christianity unto the advancement of their personal, earthbound agenda!

Accordingly, God tasked Malachi to address this compromise. Notice the problem with earthbound Christianity.

Malachi 3:6b, “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”

Notice how God referred to His people here, “O sons of Jacob.” In a marked departure from the way He has referred to His people throughout Malachi (~“Israel” which is a covenant name expressing their value to the Lord, Malachi 1:1, 5; 2:11, 16; 4:4), God here addressed them as “Jacobites”²- literally “deceivers.” In this case, their deception did NOT involve another person, BUT themselves! They thought they had been serving the Lord because they were engaging in religious activity! Never mind their unacceptable offerings, their neglect of the covenant community, or their divorces! In their mind they had been faithful to the Lord only to have Him be unfaithful to them.³ They truly were self-deceived. We see this further in verse 7.

Malachi 3:7a, “From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes⁴, and have not kept them...”

“Statutes” refer to the covenant obligations placed upon any people in a relationship with God. It is important to see that the keeping of these “statutes” did NOT maintain the relationship BUT reflected their hearts devotion and love for the Lord. In the words of Christ, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (John 14:15) That no doubt is why the example that Malachi used to illustrate this defection was their “giving” — which in the Bible is representative of one’s heart toward God. Iain Duguid puts it this way:

The main point of the text, though, is that our giving is a window into how we view God. If we see God as the gracious giver of good gifts, then we will desire to excel in the grace of giving... If, on the other hand, we view him as a hard taskmaster who isn’t fair and just and whose service is a great weariness to us, then this will become visible in our reluctant giving. The question is attitude, not amount. (Duguid, 2010, p. 233)

And that is what we see here.

Malachi 3:8a, “Will a man rob⁵ God? Yet you are robbing Me!...”

As Duguid just put it, the focus here is NOT on how much they gave or even their giving, BUT the people’s relationship with God in which they drew back in their service. God is worthy of our entire lives. BUT the people of God in Malachi’s day had withdrawn when it came to their love and devotion. They felt gipped by God, and it became manifested in their giving! Yet notice, their rebellion was subtle...

Malachi 3:10a, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse^{6,7}...”

The implication here is that it wasn’t that God’s people were NOT giving toward this

offering. Clearly, they were. The issue is that they were NOT giving “the WHOLE tithe.” That indicates that they were giving of their resources when it came to the “tithe and offerings.” When “the plate was passed” they put money in it. Yet what they gave was well below what God commanded. That means a portion of the resources claimed by God was used unto their own end and means!

That is the problem Malachi here is addressing. The people were not in all disobedience, BUT partial obedience, misdirected obedience, an obedience mitigated by the circumstances of life again, earthbound Christianity. Iain Duguid describes it this way:

This passage is often viewed as a proof text for tithing, but in reality it addresses the broader problem of a lack of Godward-orientation in our lives, of which our failure to give freely and generously to his service is symptomatic. (Duguid, 2010, p. 228)

James Montgomery Boice goes further:

The end of this matter is that not merely our money or time, but our whole selves — body, soul, and spirit — are God’s, and therefore we are to honor God wholly with all we are. Paul wrote, ‘You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body’ (1 Corinthians 6:19–20)... That is the essence of it. So long as we are thinking legalistically in terms of financial percentages and portions of the week, we will be exactly like the self-righteous sinners of Malachi’s day. We will do little and think it much. We will resent God who, in our judgment, should do more for us. (Boice, 2006, pp. 604-605)

We see it in the would-be disciple Christ deals with:

Luke 9:59-60a, “And He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Permit me first to go and bury my father.’ [which was a colloquialism in Christ’s day to describe the process of securing one’s inheritance] But He said to him, ‘Allow the dead to bury their own dead...’”

This disciple wanted to serve God and mammon —and God is quite clear: you can’t serve both! Yet how many of us are doing just that on a day-to-day basis? We want security on earth AND in heaven. And so, we do what is necessary with God to secure His good blessing (these are the religious boxes that we mark off in our lives), BUT then we spend the rest of our time laboring for earthly security. We want to be rich toward God AND earth. And so, we do what is necessary toward our obligation to God (again, checking the right boxes) BUT spend the remainder of our lives laboring toward earthly wealth. Listen to the Mark describe the encounter of a would-be disciple who paraded his self-righteousness before Christ:

Mark 10:21-22, “And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, ‘One

thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property.”

The disciple here no doubt fancied himself a servant of God. But Christ called him out as He demonstrated to the would-be disciple that all that he had done in the context of his religious service was NOT out of love for the Lord, BUT out of the love of self! Bryan Chapell describes this accurately when he wrote this:

All along, the goal of the man’s devotion was the expansion of his own affluence – wealth on earth *and* in heaven. That’s why he cannot engage in devotion that would threaten his bank account. (Chapell, 2021, p. 11/16/21)

That is where the people of God were in our passage. Again, it was NOT that they weren’t serving the Lord. RATHER, it is that their service was bound by earthly objectives, goals, and desires.⁸

That being said, let’s address the issue of “tithes and offerings” rather briefly, for it is here that the problem manifested.

Malachi 3:8b, “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed Thee?’ In tithes^{9,10,11} and offerings.^{12”}

In the Old Testament, there are many different monetary offerings referenced. Totaling these offerings, the typical Jew gave twenty-three percent of their income for the purpose of maintaining the temple of God and the priests who served within it (this does not include the tax given to the king during the theocracy). Most of these offerings were voluntary. However, under Moses, God instituted a national tithe of ten percent — which is what the word “tithe” means. The purpose of this tithe was threefold. It was given:

1. To provide for the support of those in full-time ministry, the priests and Levites (Numbers 18:21).
2. To meet the needs of the poor in the community (Deuteronomy 14:28–29).
3. To supply the resources for God’s people to celebrate together in God’s presence (Deuteronomy 14:23).

Now there is significant discussion as to whether or not the obligation of the giving of these “tithes and offerings” rests upon Christians of the New Covenant. There are solid scholars on both sides of the argument.¹³ Some say that we are still bound by the Old Testament prescription of ten percent. Others say that the tithe-mandate was bound to the theocracy and so is no longer applicable. As the issue is a massive question which would be a sermon series in its own right, I will leave it for another day!

That being said, we should recognize that regardless of your position, under the New Covenant, grace always goes beyond the requirements of the law. We see this in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:21-22, “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you [this is the teaching of grace] that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.”

The Sermon on the Mount constitutes the marching orders of God’s people as Kingdom citizens. And what is the calling? What does grace do? It goes beyond the teaching of the law!

Matthew 5:27-28, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you [once again, the teaching of grace], that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

These are two of the many passages we could reference which demonstrate that grace goes beyond the letter of the law to the point where we become men and women who are “zealous for good deeds.” (Titus 2:11-14) In light of this Fries, Rummage, and Gallaty wrote this:

Therefore, grace never expects less; it always demands more. If we are not required to give a tenth based on the OT law, since we are not under the law, then, should we give any less than the OT saints did now that we are under grace? The answer is No! We should give more, as a spiritual act of worship. (Micah Fries, 2015, pp. Malachi 3:7-10a)¹⁴

Now I think I can guess what you are thinking about now, if grace calls for us to go beyond the law, then the standard for what I should give must be more than ten percent. Yet that is your performance inclination coming out which if adopted will make us just like our brothers and sisters in Malachi’s day.

What is God after here? It is NOT that we give more. RATHER, God is after a life of service that is the overflow of a heart in love with Christ. Regardless of your view on tithing, that is what God is after! As Paul wrote in relation to giving to the Corinthian church:

2 Corinthians 9:7, “Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

And so, we are dealing here with a community of believers who again were NOT

rejecting the service of God. RATHER, they were engaging in God's service for their own benefit.

- They spent time in the word.
- They went to church.
- They sang the hymns.
- They prayed.
- They participated when it came time for their tithes and offerings.

BUT it was unto their personal benefit rather than the praise, honor, and glory of God!

The Consequence, vv. 9a, 11.

Malachi 3:9a, "You are cursed with a curse..."

Once again, this is Covenant Language which does NOT convey any notion of wrath or condemnation toward God's people. As we have seen, it describes the place of dryness, emptiness in one's walk, and so leanness of soul (cf. Psalms 106:15; Hosea 2:6-7).

What an apt description of the people of God at this time. We know their walk with God had become perfunctory/heartless/mechanical. This led them to compromise their service of God unto the service of self. And this led to an even colder relationship with God.

Christian, are you cold toward the Lord this day? Could it possibly be because you are using the things of the Lord to promote yourself — your agenda, your will, your well-being? Don't be deceived,

- Medication when it comes to the struggles of life can just as well be found in a church as in a bottle, a medicine cabinet, or the gym.
- Accordingly, it is possible to engage in all types of Christian activity- like reading of the word, praying, fellowshiping, worshipping- to further the religion of self. When we do this, our love for the Lord most certainly will grow stale.
- Take a hard look at yourself today... why do you engage in religious activity? Is it to secure God's blessing? Is it to earn God's favor? God wants it to be because you love Him and so long to fellowship with Him via the means He has given for us to grow in grace!

There is another consequence that accompanies earthbound Christianity.

Malachi 3:11, "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy

the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,' says the LORD of hosts."

This is speaking of the famine that held a firm grip on the land at this time. The reference here to "the devourer" refers to any number of critters which could destroy a harvest- whether that be locusts (cf. Joel 1:4) or worms (Deuteronomy 28:39).

This is a significant statement as it indicates that in spite of the destruction of the Old Testament Theocracy, the corporate people of God still were bound by the stipulations which accompanied covenant disobedience during the Theocracy. Recall, in the Covenant Grace of God, the Lord promised to deliver His people through the work of the Messiah! This ultimately referencing the cross, Genesis 3:15 tells us that Satan would bruise Christ on the heel, YET in the process, Christ would deal him a head wound which would be fatal! The result of this was a UNILATERAL (one sided) relationship with God in which redeemed man is accepted before God solely on the basis of the performance of Christ on the cross! And so, in the midst of trial, the Psalmist wrote this:

Psalms 118:1-6, "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Oh let Israel say, 'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' Oh let the house of Aaron say, 'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' Oh let those who fear the LORD say, 'His lovingkindness is everlasting.' [Now if you and I will accept this, notice what will happen when we go through trial...] 5 From my distress I called upon the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a large place. The LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

This is the glory of the redemption we have in Christ. No matter what we have done or do, God's lovingkindness is our confidence, boast, and joy! It is that which will hold us up in the midst of trial and difficulty (Psalms 94;18)! Yet in the outworking of God's Redemptive program, we know that under Moses the Lord organized His people into a nation — a Theocracy. Now in addition to the UNILATERAL relationship they enjoyed with God on account of Christ, the people of God as a corporate body/a nation entered a BILATERAL relationship with God which was based on their performance. And so, God would protect the nation provided the nation remained loyal/faithful to God. When the Theocracy was established, God gave this warning:

Deuteronomy 28:15, "But it shall come about, if you [as a nation] will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you."

Individually, many throughout the Kingdom years were faithful servants of God. Yet that did NOT stop them from suffering on account of the corporate rebellion of God's people. With that, notice an element of the curse promised here (as I read it, consider Malachi 3:11):

Deuteronomy 28:38-40, “You shall bring out much seed to the field but you shall gather in little, for the locust [the ‘devourer’] shall consume it. You shall plant and cultivate vineyards, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall devour them. You shall have olive trees throughout your territory but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives shall drop off.”

In light of passages like these, we know WHY the nation of Israel and Judah were destroyed and brought into exile... as a nation they violated God’s Covenant stipulations.¹⁵

And yet, 140 years after the destruction of the Theocratic Nation, we read in our text that the current plague of locusts and worms was on account of the national rebellion of God’s people.

Malachi 3:9, “You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!”

And what was that curse? It is exactly what God promised in the text we just read in Deuteronomy 28! How could this be? Didn’t the corporate nature of God’s people end with the exile? This is something you and I must understand. It did NOT! While the Civil Nation came to an end in 586 BC, nevertheless God’s people remained a religious nation (which today is called the church) whose infidelity still results in a curse upon the land in which it dwells — which is what happened in Malachi’s day!

There is much to take from this passage by way of application. Yes, it is still true that the health and vitality of any secular nation depends upon the health and vitality of the church within its borders. Why is the US as a nation sick? Because the church within its borders is sick!

What do you do if you find that your service in Christ’s Kingdom is in fact earthbound? Hopefully from the structure of this book, you know the answer, it is to remember your first love.

Malachi 1:2a, “‘I have loved you,’ says the LORD....”

This is your first love, the fact that God has first loved you (John 14:15)! Start here in your walk today and never leave it!

- Gaze upon the glory of God’s grace in Christ. Meditate upon it and let the fact of God’s love pervade your life, thinking, and motives!
- Then, let it be the security/assurance upon which you approach God and lay before Him your selfishness, pride, and disbelief. Hold nothing back!
- Then pray for God to open your eyes to any act or service you do for the Lord that is Earthbound.

- Lastly pray for God to forgive you, cleanse you, restore you, and grow you in grace.

As we'll see more fully when we get to Malachi 3:17, the Lord wants you, NOT your money! So, allow this passage to "secure undistracted devotion" in your service of the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:35)! In closing, listen to the Boice:

So long as we are thinking legalistically in terms of financial percentages and portions of the week, we will be exactly like the self-righteous sinners of Malachi's day. We will do little and think it much. We will resent God who, in our judgment, should do more for us. On the other hand, if we give God ourselves as living sacrifices, then the most we give will seem to be little and we will be overwhelmed that God is willing to use us in his service. (Boice, 2006, pp. 604-605)

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End Note(s)

¹ The Pharisees struggled with this (Matthew 23:5)!

² "Most of the time, when the Israelites are referred to as the children of Jacob, it's a rebuke for their disobedience. It's a reference to the name of their forefather before the divine blessing was bestowed. Yet, even though they were faithless, God would remain faithful to them, as He was to their father, Jacob. Their rebellion has led them far from God, but restoration is still possible if they desire change." (Micah Fries, 2015, p. Malachi 3:6)

³ "According to the prophet, the people were guilty of many serious sins. The priests were offering blemished animals in a formal but insincere religious ritualism. Many were divorcing their wives to marry unbelieving women. Most had been disobeying God's laws by withholding tithes of their harvest. And they were all accusing God of loving them only halfheartedly and of being unjust in his dealings with them—because he had not prospered them adequately. If they could have put their feelings into words other than those recorded by Malachi, they might have said, 'We have been utterly faithful in fulfilling our responsibilities toward God. Never mind the divorces and mixed marriages. Never mind the tithes. We keep our side of the bargain through many things that seem important to us. The problem is that

God has not kept his side of the bargain. We have been faithful; he is unfaithful. In short, obedience to God does not work. God has not prospered us as we think he should, and the fault is God's alone.” (Boice, 2006, p. 600)

⁴ Specifically, the laws given to Israel in the days of Moses.

⁵ “The verb translated ‘rob’ (Heb. *qāba*) is rare in the Old Testament, though it is well established in the Talmudic literature to mean ‘to take forcibly’.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 268)

⁶ “If God’s larders are empty his people are to blame; at the same time they are depriving themselves of one of the joyful rights of his servants, a share in his work.” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 269)

⁷ “The tithe had to be brought into the temple ‘storehouse’, from where it could be dispensed as required to the priests and Levites and to the poor of the community.” (Duguid, 2010, p. 231)

⁸ I love the words of Fries, Rummage, and Gallaty at this point, “If we minimize the importance of this section by saying, ‘It’s really not about money,’ then we stumble. It is unequivocally about money! God is showing that you can always determine the pulse of a believer by putting a finger on their pocketbook. You can always determine where a person’s heart is by evaluating their bank account statements. We may not like to talk about money, but money talks a lot about us.” (Micah Fries, 2015, pp. Malachi 3:7-10a)

⁹ “The law decreed that a tenth of all produce was ‘holy to the Lord’ (Lev. 27:30) and was intended for the Levites (Numbers 18:24), who themselves gave a tithe to the priests (Numbers 18:28). From the legislation in Deuteronomy, it is clear that others benefited also, and that every three years a community feast was held at the time of offering the tithes, to which the needy were invited as well as the Levites (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29). When tithes went unpaid, the widow, the fatherless and the sojourner were amongst those who suffered (cf. verse 5).” (Baldwin, 1972, p. 268)

¹⁰ “These were not voluntary gifts, but specific payments that were mandated by the Sinai covenant, debts that were owed by the vassal to the Great King. Failure to bring them therefore constituted robbing God. The Lord retained the fundamental ownership of the promised land of Canaan even when he gave it to the Israelites. They were sharecroppers on land that they did not own. Because of this fact, a tithe—ten per cent of the fruits it produced (whether animal or vegetable)—belonged to him, as a mark of their vassal status. A similar motivation lay behind the year of jubilee, in which human rights over the land were radically redistributed every fifty years. This required tithe should not be confused with voluntary vows to tithe, such as that given to Melchizedek by Abraham after a victory in battle (Genesis 14), or the vow made by Jacob to tithe everything he received during his time away from home (Genesis 28). These could be made at any time and for any reason. ¶ The compulsory tithe belongs distinctively to the period of Israel’s history when the Mosaic covenant was in force, the period when Israel occupied the land of Canaan (see Numbers 18; Deuteronomy 14:22–29). It is sometimes suggested that the tithe in the Old Testament functioned rather like taxation in the present economy. This is not strictly accurate. Other taxes were levied to support the civil economy (the king, the army, state officials etc.). The tithe was intended to meet the tribute requirements of the Great King and the divine economy, rather than the needs of the earthly king and his government. Specifically, it provided for the support of those involved in full-time ministry, the priests and Levites (Numbers 18:21); however, a separate tax covered the costs of the temple itself (2 Chr. 24:5). The tithe was also intended to provide for the needs of the poor in the community (Deuteronomy 14:28–29) and to give an opportunity for regular celebration for the family of God’s people in God’s presence (Deuteronomy 14:23).” (Iain M. Duguid, *A Study Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, EPSC, pp. 229-230)

¹¹ “The word ‘tithe’ means ‘tenth.’ It refers to that tenth of the people’s produce or income that was owed to God for the temple service and other social obligations. The basic tenth was paid to the Levites for their maintenance (Lev. 27:30–33), and from this tenth the Levites themselves paid a tenth to the ministering priests (Numbers 18:25–32). Additional tenths may have been paid on other occasions (cf. Deuteronomy 14:28–29). That is what the people had not done. They had undoubtedly made some small contributions to the Levites and temple service as part of their ritualistic practice of religion. But they had not given the ‘whole tithe’ (Malachi 3:10), and they had certainly not presented even what they did give with a willing and thankful heart. They had to change in this area. ¶ Sometimes in question-and-answer periods I

am asked whether Christians today are obliged to tithe. I suspect the questioner wants to know how little he must give to Christian causes and how much he can keep for himself. I reply with what I believe to be a proper statement of the case, namely, that the tithe was an Old Testament regulation designed for the support of a particular class of people. It was not carried over into the New Testament. Nowhere in the New Testament are believers instructed to give a specific tenth or any other proportion of their income to Christian projects.

On the other hand, I also point out that although the tithe is not mentioned, the giving of weekly offerings is (1 Corinthians 16:2). And more importantly, it is generally the case that in the New Testament the obligations of the Old Testament legislation are heightened rather than lessened.

That is, the law is interpreted in the fullest measure. So while we are not required to give a specific tenth of our income, it is hard to think of a normal Christian, blessed with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, doing less. Under reasonable circumstances any true believer in Christ should give more than the tenth, for all we have is the Lord's." (Boice, 2006, pp. 601-062)

¹² "Offerings were the portions of sacrifices set apart for the priests (Exod. 29:27, 28; Lev. 7:32; Numbers 5:9) and the voluntary gifts for a special purpose (Exod. 25:2-7)." (Baldwin, 1972, p. 269)

¹³ "I have heard people suggest that believers are mandated to contribute a tenth of their goods, and that the local Church is considered the storehouse, a replacement for the temple. Against this assertion, there are those who claim that we are not required to give a tenth of our income; rather, we have no financial obligations since we are under grace. This reasoning states that because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are liberated from offering a tenth of anything and free to give as the Spirit leads (see MacArthur, 'Thoughts on Tithing,' Cappocia, 'The Truth about Tithing,' and Johnston, Lie of the Tithe). Walter Kaiser and Lloyd Ogilvie state, 'Christians are not governed by any law that commands us to give a tenth of our earnings to God; however, it must be noted that the practice of tithing antedates any provision of the Law of Moses.'" (Kaiser and Ogilvie, 499, emphasis mine)." (Micah Fries, 2015, pp. Malachi 3:7-10)

¹⁴ "...it is generally the case that in the New Testament the obligations of the Old Testament legislation are heightened rather than lessened. That is, the law is interpreted in the fullest measure. So while we are not required to give a specific tenth of our income, it is hard to think of a normal Christian, blessed with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, doing less. Under reasonable circumstances any true believer in Christ should give more than the tenth, for all we have is the Lord's." (Boice, 2006, p. 602)

¹⁵ So when the nation fell, did this mean God forsook the individual child of God? Absolutely not! They remained the apple of His eye... Again, it was the nation He forsook! Listen to Leviticus 26:44-45. After detailing the curses which would come upon the nation unto its total destruction, God directed this promise to the individual, "Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God. But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD."