

Will A Man Rob God?

Malachi 3:8-10

I. Introduction: I

I. 2 What is a robber?

- A. One who takes something by force; common today.
 - B. One who steals: The thief is as much a robber as the one who use a gun and a mask.
 - C. One who defrauds/cheats (white-collar crime, “creative accounting,” cheating on taxes).
 - D. One who withholds what belongs to another (e.g., failure to pay a debt when payable).
2. We can’t rob God according to the first definition, but we can with the others (**Matt. 6:21**: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”).

3. Discuss the background of the text: **Mal. 3:8-10**:

*“Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
‘In what way have we robbed You?’
In tithes and offerings.
9 You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.
10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,*

*That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,”
Says the LORD of hosts,
“If I will not open for you the windows of
heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to
receive it.”*

4. 3 Let’s explore some of the ways we may rob God.

II. Discussion:

We can rob God by...

I. 4 Stealing His words: **Jeremiah 23:25-32**

A. This can be done in many ways:

- (1) Substitution: substituted our words (e.g., dreams, visions, teachings) for God’s word (Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen G. White, Jimmy Swaggart, Benny Hinn, denominational preachers/pastors, some brethren, etc.; Jn. 16:13; Jude 3).
- (2) Creeds and catechisms: Every denomination has a creed, catechism, or statement of faith (Matt. 15:8-9; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- (3) Failure to warn: God demands us to be a “watchman”; to warn others of the judgment to come (Ezek. 3:17-21).
- (4) Not teaching all of God’s Word: i.e., failing to teach the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27; Jn. 6:68).
 - ✓ Brethren can be very good at teaching the truth on subjects like authority, church (oneness, work, worship, organization), plan of salvation...GOOD!!!
 - ✓ An entirely different matter when it comes to some matters of personal morality (e.g., immodest apparel, dancing, mixed swimming, social drinking, coarse language, care for the less fortunate).

- ✓ An entirely different matter when it comes to the application of truth (e.g., work of church, church vs. individual benevolence, social gospel aiding to evangelism, etc.).
- (5) Wresting the scripture: i.e., claim the scripture means something other than what it says (2 Pet. 3:16).
- ✓ Justin Lee, executive director of the *Gay Christian Network* claims God approves of homosexuality as long as it is in a “committed relationship” (see Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9).
- ✓ Brethren claim instrumental music is scriptural based on a perverted meaning of “making melody” in Eph. 5:19 (i.e., the *psallo* argument).

We can rob God by...

2. 5 Withholding honor to God as Creator:

- A. Romans 1:20-21: *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*
- B. Evolution (Gen. 1 & 2; Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; Psalms 33:6; 102:25; 19:1).
 - (1) Consider the case of Dr. George Wald.
 - (2) The late Dr. Wald was an ardent evolutionist and no scientific “light weight.”
 - (3) He was a professor of neurobiology at Harvard and received the Nobel Prize in Physiology for work in the neurophysiology of vision. Here’s what he said about the origin of life: **

“There are only two possible explanations as to how life arose: Spontaneous generation arising to evolution or a supernatural creative act of God...There is no other possibility. Spontaneous generation was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others, but that just leaves us with only one other possibility...that life came as a supernatural act of creation by God, but I can’t accept that philosophy because I do not want to believe in God. Therefore, I choose to believe in that which I know is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation leading to evolution.” (“Origin, Life and Evolution” in *Scientific American*, 1978)
- C. ** Ungodly living:

Rom. 1:20-32; vv. 21-22: *“although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,”*

Psa. 150:1-2, 6: *“Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!”*

Psa. 112:1: *“Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, Who delights greatly in His commandments.”*

We can rob God by...

3. 6 Withholding service to God:

- A. **Malachi 1:6-14**

- B. We are not our own (**1 Cor. 6:19-20**: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”).
- C. We should give ourselves entirely to Him (**2 Cor. 8:5**: “And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”).
- (1) Simplest matter is our attendance (e.g., every service, gospel meetings):
- Heb. 2:1-3**: “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,
- Gal. 6:9**: “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”).
- (2) Grave error by misusing our talents (must realize **Eccl. 12:13-14**: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.” → Matt. 25:24-30).
- D. Can you look at yourself in a mirror and say you're giving God your **ALL**?! 2 Cor. 13:5

We can rob God by...

4. **7** Withholding gratitude to God:

- A. Gratitude is a rare virtue:

Lk. 17:11-19: vv. 17-19: “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?’”

Rom. 1:21: “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

2 Tim. 3:1-5: “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”

- B. We have so much to be thankful for!

1 Thess. 5:16-18: “Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Eph. 5:20: “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

Phil. 4:6: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”

Heb. 13:15: “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”

- ✓ All spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3; Psalms 100:4-5; **2 Cor. 9:15**: “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”).

- ✓ Faithful brethren (2 Thess. 1:3-5; Acts 20:36-38).
 - ✓ Material blessings (Acts 14:17; Jas. 1:17).
- C. We should express thankfulness in “words” and in “deeds” (**Dan. 5:23**: “...God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.”; **Psa. 107:21-22**: “Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! 22 Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing.”).

We can rob God by...

5. 8 Defrauding the poor:

- A. God condemns such (Mal. 3:5; Jas. 5:4; taking advantage of low wage workers).
- B. As we treat our fellow man we treat the Lord (Matt. 25:35-45).
- C. Must realize we can “defraud the poor” without being a villainous person; can do so merely through apathy and/or disproportionate giving; a prominent theme in prophets!
Ezek. 22:29: “The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger.”
Prov. 22:22-23: “Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate; 23 For the LORD will plead their cause, And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.”
- D. We need to realize we are “rich” here in the U.S. in comparison to our brethren in places like the Philippines, India, Zimbabwe, etc.
1 Jn. 3:17: “But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”
Heb. 13:16: “But do not forget to do good and to share , for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

We can rob God by...

6. 9 Withholding our means:

- A. All we have really belongs to God (**1 Cor. 10:26**: “for ‘the earth is the LORD’S, and all its fullness.’”; **Psa. 24:1**: “The earth is the LORD’S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.”).
- B. That’s why wealth is “deceitful” (Mk. 4:19); wealth deceives us into thinking it all belongs to us; that what we’ve accumulated it purely due to our own ingenuity and hard work (God gave us those tools too!!).
Prov. 23:5: “Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.”
Eccl. 4:8: “There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors, Nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, ‘For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?’ This also is vanity and a grave misfortune.”
Eccl. 5:13: “There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.”
1 Tim. 6:9-10: “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness,

and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. I 7 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”).

- C. We are stewards having charge of another’s possessions (Matt. 24:45).
 - (1) Must be faithful (**1 Cor. 4:2**: “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”; talk about what it’s like to hire an unfaithful employee, one who steals material things, time, sloppiness, etc.).
 - (2) Must not waste goods (Lk. 16:1; wasteful steward stripped of his responsibilities).
 - (3) Must provide for honest things; must not spend the Lord’s part on pleasures (**2 Cor. 8:21**: “providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”).
 - (4) Must put the spiritual ahead of the material; must not leave the Lord’s business till the last (Matt. 6:33).
 - (5) When gathering the building materials for the temple, David said all they gave for the house of God was already His (**1 Chron. 29:14**: “But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.”).
- D. Must give proportionately as God has prospered us (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:12).
- E. We will reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7-8; 2 Cor. 9:6); first scandal in the church was over a financial matter (Acts 5:1-11).
- F. A covetous man is very unlike Christ (**2 Cor. 8:9**: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”). A covetous man is like a sponge; it absorbs everything, but gives back hardly anything.
- G. Our attitude towards material things betrays the state of our heart (Matt. 6:19-21; Do we drive new cars, possess the latest electronic gadgets, take expensive vacations and then give just a small amount on the Lord’s Day?).
- H. Or perhaps our budget is stretched to the limit; do we still not have the obligation to give back to the Lord? Lk. 21:1-4: widow’s two mites represented “all the livelihood that she had.”

III. Conclusion: 10

- 1. When we rob God we fatally rob ourselves (Matt. 25:25-28; wicked and lazy servant... “cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”).
- 2. A story is told of a dying millionaire who sent for a preacher to read the Bible to him during his last minutes.
 - A. The preacher read: Matt. 6:19-21; Lk. 16:19-31; **1 Tim. 6:17**: “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”
 - B. The millionaires response was simply: “Why haven’t you told me these things before?”
- 3. We will never be able to utter such an excuse.

Adapted from a sermon, “Will A Man Rob God?,” by W. Curtis Porter in *Porter Sermon Outlines* (pp.112-113).