

Tithing or Tribute

The Surplus Test

When a Commandment Becomes a Gate

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How to Use This Book (Quick Start)

This is a field manual. It is written to be absorbed in passes, not swallowed in one sitting.

If you only read three sections first: Chapters 2–5 (text + gate), Chapter 8–10 (infrastructure + safety), and Chapter 15–16 (a sandals model).

One-line summary:

Love thy neighbor.

Any system of giving that increases burdens on the poor fails the test—no matter how righteous it sounds.

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Prologue — The Surplus Test

This book asks a simple question: when does tithing stop functioning as an act of faith and start functioning as tribute—a required payment that buys access, protects the institution, and increases burdens on those least able to carry them?

I am not writing this to mock believers or to sneer at sacrifice. I am writing it because sacrifice is holy, and holy things get weaponized.

Tribute Logic (The Unifying Frame)

Tribute is anything the system can demand as a price of access. Money is just the cleanest form.

Tribute has three common currencies:

- 1) Money tribute (tithing).
- 2) Appetite/sex/body tribute (Word of Wisdom, chastity, garments).
- 3) Speech/identity tribute (confession, “honesty,” loyalty/sustaining, conformity).

When any of these become the admission price to ordinances, community standing, or dignity—especially for the poor—the gospel stops functioning as rest and starts functioning as revenue and control.

Tribute systems predictably select for optimizers (confident liars who learn the script) and punish the tender (the honest, scrupulous, traumatized, and poor).

The Surplus Test is straightforward: a Christlike system of giving must be calibrated to the poor. It must not demand the last mite. It must produce rest, not shame. It must never turn hunger and housing into leverage.

And if a wealthy institution claims the name of Christ while its financial gatekeeping lands hardest on the poor, then repentance is required—not from the poor, but from the institution.

Appendix — Cards & Tools

Sources referenced (Church-hosted): Doctrine and Covenants 119; General Handbook 34.3.1 (Finances and Audits); Revelations in Context “The Tithing of My People”; Church Newsroom feature on President Lorenzo Snow’s renewed emphasis on tithing.

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Prologue — The Surplus Test

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The Burden Test is not complicated: does a commandment reduce burdens on the weary, or does it add new burdens in the name of righteousness?

Money reveals this quickly because money is time, food, rent, medicine, childcare, transportation, and survival. A system that treats money as “just faith” while ignoring survival has drifted into the Chair—spiritual language from a high place.

A sandals-facing doctrine of giving has three features:

- 1) It is calibrated to capacity (surplus, not starvation).
- 2) It produces real-time relief (food, shelter, safety), not merely institutional stability.
- 3) It cannot be used as leverage (no pay-to-play gates, no retaliation, no shame).

Where tithing becomes dangerous is not that people give. It is when giving becomes a test of belonging, a condition of access, and a mechanism of control—especially when the institution is already wealthy enough that it is no longer about survival.

This book argues that any system claiming Christ must treat the poor as the calibration point, not the revenue base.

Chapter 2 — D&C 119: Surplus, Interest, and the Original Shape

The revelation commonly cited as the foundation for modern tithing is Doctrine and Covenants 119. The language matters, because it sets the original moral shape.

Two phrases stand out: “surplus property” and “one-tenth of all their interest annually.” Whatever else we argue, that is the textual frame: surplus and interest.

Surplus is not rent money. Surplus is what remains after real needs are met. Interest (as commonly used in older English) can mean increase—what rises above subsistence.

Even if later leaders interpret “interest” as “income,” the original language still raises a question: why did the revelation not simply say “gross wages”? Why did it use surplus/interest language at all?

A sandals reading treats that wording as a safeguard: it prevents the widow’s last loaf from being treated as obedience currency.

If the Church wants to claim the revelation as divine and binding, it must also claim the revelation’s concern for calibration—that giving is tied to increase, not to deprivation.

Chapter 3 — When “Interest” Becomes “Income”: The Drift of Interpretation

Most members are taught a simple rule: tithing is 10% of income. In practice, that becomes 10% of gross for many poor families because gross is easier to measure—and fear prefers clarity.

Here is the drift pattern: a text with elasticity (“interest”) becomes standardized by administration (“income”), and then enforced by culture (“gross or you’re not safe”).

You can see the Chair here: administration prefers rules that are easy to audit. But discipleship requires judgment, mercy, and local knowledge. A flat tax is administratively clean; it is morally dangerous.

The moment a system says, “We will not define it further,” the culture defines it anyway—often in the harshest possible way—because no one wants to be the person who ‘cheated God.’

So the poor pay first, and then the poor explain themselves. The wealthy pay later, or optimize, or reinterpret, and no one interrogates them. That is not faith; that is asymmetric enforcement.

The Burden Test asks: when your interpretation lands, who becomes more free—and who becomes more trapped?

Chapter 4 — The Emergency That Never Ended

Institutions often adopt emergency postures that create revenue and stability. The danger is that emergency measures rarely end, because stability feels like righteousness.

Church-Source History: Surplus → Income (and the Emergency That Never Ended)

Start with the text. Doctrine and Covenants 119 describes an initial contribution of “surplus property,” followed by “one-tenth of ... interest annually,” and it explicitly names institutional debt among the purposes (“for the debts of the Presidency”).

That means the original shape of the law is not framed as a flat survival-tax on the poor; it is framed as surplus-first, then an annual proportion of increase. (Doctrine and Covenants 119:1–4.)

Now notice the administrative clarification. The Church’s General Handbook defines tithing as “one-tenth of one’s income” and states that “interest is understood to mean income.” That single interpretive move effectively standardizes the elastic word “interest” into a modern payroll rule. (General Handbook 34.3.1.)

Finally, place that interpretive drift in historical context from Church sources. Church history and Church Newsroom materials describe financial strain and debt in the Lorenzo Snow era and his renewed emphasis on full tithing as part of stabilizing the Church. That was a reasonable emergency response for institutional survival.

But the point of an emergency measure is that it ends. Once an institution reaches stability, the law should be re-aligned to its surplus-protecting form—especially if the current interpretation burdens the poor.

The Emergency Authority Pattern (How Institutions Keep Power)

In moments of crisis, institutions expand authority for stability. That can be wise. The recurring sin is not emergency action—it is emergency authority becoming permanent authority.

When emergency tools become permanent gates, the poor fund stability they don’t benefit from.

Consider the mirror in civil government: income taxation appeared in American history first as a wartime measure, disappeared, and later returned with permanent constitutional footing. Over time, crisis-era collection tools and standardized withholding helped normalize what was once framed as temporary necessity.

The point is not that taxation is inherently evil. The point is that once an institution learns it can fund itself through a standardized, invisible gate, it rarely volunteers to roll it back.

The federal government will not reliably repent of this pattern; most governments do not. But the Church can. And if the Church labels rollback as repentance—publicly and explicitly—it provides a living footprint that other institutions might one day step into.

Once the crisis passes, the institution discovers that the emergency tool also secures compliance, revenue, and narrative control. Rolling it back feels risky, so the measure never sunsets. The burden is normalized, the gate becomes moralized, and dissent is framed as danger, disloyalty, or ingratitude.

This is a common government pattern: temporary taxes and fees that never sunset; emergency regulations that become normal rules; surveillance introduced “for safety” and kept “for efficiency”; extraordinary powers lingering after the original threat fades. The same mechanism can appear anywhere authority must fund itself and protect legitimacy.

If the Church is to be different, it must have the courage to do what governments rarely do: sunset emergency authority and restore surplus-protecting law once stability returns. Repentance here is not shame—it is rollback.

When giving is framed as survival of the institution, the poor become the easiest funding source—not because leaders are cruel, but because the poor are obedient, visible, and easy to pressure.

This mirrors a broader American pattern: emergency powers that never fully unwind. The system learns that crisis language produces compliance, and compliance produces resources, and resources produce insulation.

The Church may sincerely believe it is protecting the Kingdom. But the Burden Test does not ask about intent; it asks about fruit.

If a survival posture becomes permanent, the institution should be able to say out loud what the money is for and when the burden eases. If it cannot—or will not—then the emergency is functioning as a revenue narrative.

In later chapters we’ll ask the sharper question: why does a wealthy church still need a gate that weighs heaviest on the poor?

Chapter 5 — The Temple Gate: Full-Tithe Payer as Access Control

This chapter widens the lens: tithing is money tribute, but the same tribute logic appears in other gates (appetite, sex, body, speech, and loyalty).

The common mechanism is access control: what you must pay, disclose, or perform to remain “worthy.”

Temple Access: Covenant, Not Certification

Admission to the temple should be based on informed consent to the temple’s covenants and rules—not on a pretense of “worthiness certification.”

A thing can be sacred to many and still be structurally weaponized by the gates built around it.

People lie and get in all the time. So the current gate does not accomplish what it claims; it mainly produces fear, shame, and leverage.

It is good to recommend boundaries and higher standards of living. It is not good to enforce them through invasive gatekeeping, because the institution will inevitably commit the greater sin: it will turn standards into currency, confession into admission price, and vulnerability into control.

A sandals model replaces surveillance with covenant: “Do you understand what you are entering, and will you abide by the rules here?”

No-Gotcha Disclosure Sheet (Plain Language)

If admission is based on agreement to abide by covenants, then informed consent requires disclosure. The covenant list must be explicit, stable, and portable—so it cannot become a gotcha.

Recommended structure for a pre-entry Temple Covenant Disclosure Sheet:

- Purpose: what the temple is for (worship/ordinances/covenants) and what it is not for (worthiness policing, surveillance, social ranking).
- Covenant categories in plain language (devotion to God/Christ; moral integrity and repair; marital/sexual integrity defined clearly; wisdom/sobriety defined clearly; reverence and conduct inside the temple; service/charity).
- What these covenants are not (no private-history interrogation; no confession-as-admission-price; no culture traps; no retaliation).
- Consent & exit: “You may pause, ask questions, or decline without penalty or shame.”

- Enforcement philosophy: access based on consent; violations handled pastorally and proportionately—no public shaming, no leverage.

Future Blessing Capture (A Common Gotcha)

One of the most coercive gotchas is any covenant language that functions like a lien on your future—an open-ended claim on “everything you have” and “everything you may be blessed with.”

When a covenant feels like signing over your future, your conscience isn’t “being weak”—it’s detecting an ownership clause.

In practice, that kind of totalizing pledge doesn’t simply invite consecration; it trains members to consent to future capture routed through the institution.

That is tribute logic at the covenant level: open-ended, institutional, and made under spiritual and social pressure.

Sandals alternative (same spiritual intent, no coercion):

“I dedicate my surplus—time, talents, and resources—to God’s work of lifting the poor and relieving suffering. I will give freely, without compulsion. No leader may threaten my standing, my welfare help, or my access to worship based on money or disclosure. I may pause or change my giving without shame.”

No-gotcha rule: covenants cannot create open-ended institutional claims on future blessings. Consecration is devotion to God and neighbor—not a transferable ownership clause.

Sacred ≠ Undisclosed (Ritual Consent Rule)

If a covenant includes gestures, signs, oaths, or symbolic language with historical roots that reasonably change a person’s willingness to consent, then the institution has a moral duty to disclose those roots and meanings in plain language before entry.

Keeping such elements in vague mysticism—especially in a high-pressure setting—can function as gaslighting-by-omission: members feel alarm, and then are told the alarm is their weakness because the system refuses to name what is happening.

A sandals model offers only two honest paths:

- Transparency path: disclose origin and present meaning, state explicitly what has changed, and include an opt-out without penalty or shame.
- Redesign path: remove or replace elements that require vagueness to operate, so consent can be fully informed and freely given.

Either way, sacredness is preserved by clarity and consent—not by concealment.

At some point, a voluntary act of faith can become a gate. When that happens, the moral meaning changes—even if the words stay the same.

In Latter-day Saint practice, tithing is not simply counsel; it functions as a temple recommend requirement. The question is blunt: are you a full-tithe payer?

This is where the Surplus Test becomes unavoidable. If the poor must pay 10% of income to access the highest ordinances, then the poor are asked to buy belonging with survival money.

Some will answer: “It’s the same requirement for everyone.” But equal rules do not produce equal burdens. Ten percent of a wealthy household is margin. Ten percent of a poor household is rent, food, medicine, and transportation.

So the gate does not land equally. It lands hardest where Christ’s attention is supposed to be most tender.

A sandals-facing church can still teach sacrifice. But it cannot use sacrifice as an access credential. The moment it does, tithing drifts from faith to tribute.

Collateral Laws: Chastity and Wisdom as Worthiness Currency

The same gate pattern appears beyond money. The Church’s worthiness economy often turns “lower laws” into admission currency—especially through interviews that probe private life.

The Law of Chastity and the Word of Wisdom are not inherently evil. They can be protective, stabilizing, and wise. The issue is what happens when they are used as institutional weapons inside a gatekeeping system.

When entrance to the temple depends on an interview where leaders ask intimate questions—and where the cost of an ‘incorrect’ answer can be shame, exclusion, and social pressure—the system produces two predictable harvests:

- 1) Confident liars (those who learn to say the right words to keep access).

2) Crushed innocents (the anxious, scrupulous, abused, and vulnerable who tell the truth and get punished for it).

This is how polarity is manufactured: the bold learn to game the system; the tender learn to fear God. That is not sanctification. It is selection pressure.

A sandals church does not abolish standards. It abolishes interrogation-as-gate. It moves worthiness interviews into welfare checks, and it treats repentance as repair—not disclosure for access.

Other soft gates often operate the same way—not always intentionally, but structurally:

- Loyalty/sustaining as access control (doubt or critique treated as disqualifying).
- “Honesty” as a catch-all gate (broad enough to pressure the anxious and spare the confident).
- Sabbath/commandment “culture compliance” as a belonging test (local norms masquerading as holiness).
- Garment / covenant compliance as conformity currency (especially when policed socially).
- Confession as admission price (repentance reduced to disclosure-for-access rather than repair).
- Family/obligation questions as leverage (good intent, but still a gate when handled without mercy).

These are not proof that leaders are evil. They are proof that a worthiness economy creates unrighteous dominion when access is conditioned on compliance signals instead of burdens lifted.

Chapter 6 — Pay-to-Play vs Faith-to-Feed

Pay-to-play is not always explicit. Often it is spiritualized: “This is about faith.” But the functional reality is the same: access requires payment—whether the payment is money, disclosure, or conformity.

Faith-to-feed is different. Faith-to-feed means your giving produces direct relief and protection for the vulnerable—especially in real time. It builds a culture where people are safer because the community is responsive.

A wealthy institution can claim it is preparing for future disasters. But the poor live in present disasters. If the system is designed for distant resilience while the poor bleed now, then the system is inverted.

Christ's pattern is immediate: he feeds people. He heals. He refuses to treat hunger as a teaching prop. He does not say, "Pay first and then I will comfort you."

This is why the gate matters. If tithing (and worthiness signaling) is required for temple access, then the temple becomes the symbol of pay-to-play, even if that was never the intent.

The Surplus Test asks: does our giving system primarily feed people, or primarily fund a structure that claims to represent feeding?

Chapter 7 — The Poor Cannot Budget Their Way Out of Structural Extraction

One of the most persistent Church mistakes is to treat poverty as a budgeting problem rather than a structural weight problem.

Modern families face a dense stack of costs: housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, debt, and instability. The poor do not lack virtue; they lack margin.

When a wealthy institution insists on a flat percentage of income, it often pretends that percentage is "small." But on the ground, the poor are already paying a poverty tax: higher interest, higher fees, worse access, and more time lost to friction.

So a ten percent demand is not ten percent. It is ten percent plus the friction stack—the penalties of being poor in a system designed for those with margin.

The result is predictable: the poor pay first, and then they are told to have faith that God will provide. But God's provision is often supposed to be the community's provision.

A sandals-facing doctrine does not remove agency from the poor by demanding tribute. It expands agency by reducing burdens and increasing safety.

Chapter 8 — Fast Offerings vs Tithing: What Actually Handles Real Need

Fast offerings were designed to meet immediate need. They are closer to the sandals than tithing because they are explicitly tied to food and relief.

Tithing, by contrast, is easily absorbed into institutional budgets, reserves, land, buildings, and long-term programs. That does not make it evil. It makes it slow.

The poor do not need slow. They need safe, fast, local response—food, shelter, protection, and dignity.

This creates a practical question: why is the Church's strongest worthiness gate tied to the slower fund (tithing) instead of the faster relief channel (fast offerings and direct service)?

A refocus toward fast offerings, local relief, and direct neighbor-to-neighbor support would match the Surplus Test better: the poor would feel the gospel as rest, not as a bill.

And if a church has massive reserves, then the moral requirement shifts: the burden should lighten for the poor, and accountability should rise for the institution.

Chapter 9 — The Infrastructure Gap

A wealthy institution can still feel absent at the street level. This is not always because it is unwilling to help. Often it is because the help is routed through channels that are slow, gated, and reputation-protective.

Centralization creates stability but reduces responsiveness. Money can be stored, invested, and planned, while urgent need arrives on a Tuesday night.

Local bishops and relief leaders can do remarkable work, but they are also volunteers with limited bandwidth, limited information, and limited authority. They are asked to triage poverty with forms, interviews, and constraints—often while protecting the institution from being “taken advantage of.”

That structure produces a predictable result: the safest kind of need is the kind that is quiet, compliant, and non-controversial. The most urgent kinds of need—legal chaos, eviction, domestic crisis, public conflict—often feel too risky to bring into the system.

So the church can be generous and still not be a reliable emergency shelter network. The funds exist, but the mechanism is not built for speed, safety, and dignity under conflict.

This is why the Surplus Test includes infrastructure. It is not enough to have reserves. A Christlike system must also have a safe way for the poor to receive immediate help without leverage, stigma, or retaliation.

Chapter 10 — Safe to Ask: Why People Stay Silent

This is the most painful part of the analysis: sometimes the poor do not ask for help because they do not trust what asking will cost them.

Silence is often framed as pride. But silence can also be self-protection: fear of stigma, fear of being judged unworthy, fear of gossip, fear that help will come with control, and fear that speaking up will trigger retaliation or loss of standing.

A system that requires gatekeeping interviews for survival needs teaches the poor a lesson: your crisis is also your worthiness exam.

When tithing is tied to temple access, the same logic expands: payment becomes proof of belonging, and belonging becomes leverage. The poor learn to keep their head down to stay safe.

Proof Object (Covid Shelter Gap): During Covid, when my hostel was being destroyed and residents were being forced toward the street without due process, neither I nor any of my residents felt safe involving the Church. This is not an accusation—we did not tell them. But that silence is the signal. In a crisis of basic shelter and food, we did not experience the Church as a safe emergency channel to activate.

That is the gap: not just money, but mechanism. A church can have immense reserves and still fail the sandals test if the poor do not feel safe asking for help in real time.

So the repentance call is not “pay more.” The repentance call is: build doctrine and infrastructure that makes asking safe—without leverage, stigma, or retaliation.

Chapter 11 — The Widow’s Mite: Admiration and Indictment

Many people read the widow’s mite as a simple lesson: the widow is faithful because she gives all she has.

That is true—and it is also incomplete.

In the Gospel account, the widow’s offering is placed next to a condemnation of religious leaders who “devour widows’ houses.” The story is not only admiration for the widow; it is an indictment of the system that receives her last coins while congratulating itself as holy.

Christ’s attention is not primarily on the donation amount. It is on the moral inversion: a religious system that consumes the vulnerable and calls it righteousness.

This is why the Surplus Test matters. A sandals-facing church does not require the widow’s last mite as proof of faith. It honors her heart and then changes the system so widows are protected, not harvested.

When a modern institution ties temple access to a flat percentage payment, it risks recreating the same moral inversion: the vulnerable give beyond capacity while leaders praise sacrifice and remain insulated from the consequences.

Chapter 12 — What Christ Actually Commands: Rest, Food, Shelter

Christ’s invitation to the weary is not primarily a demand for more spiritual performance. It is a promise of rest.

Rest is not abstract. Rest looks like safety. It looks like food and shelter. It looks like protection from exploitation. It looks like burdens being lifted, not merely explained.

In Matthew 25, Christ identifies himself with the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. The judgment is not about how well people defended an institution. It is about whether they fed and sheltered the vulnerable.

So a church that claims Christ must be able to answer a simple question: when the poor are in crisis, does our doctrine function like rest—or like a bill?

If tithing has become a worthiness gate that loads pressure onto the poor, then the commandment has drifted. The sandals test is not: “Did you pay?” The sandals test is: “Did your giving produce shelter and safety for the least of these?”

This book is not asking for the end of sacrifice. It is asking for sacrifice to be re-ordered: fast offerings, direct neighbor care, and real-time infrastructure should be the first fruits—not the last.

What follows is a constructive replacement: a sandals model that keeps standards and devotion, but removes tribute logic, coercion, and gotchas.

Chapter 13 — A Sandals Model of Giving

A sandals model does not abolish sacrifice. It abolishes extraction.

It begins with calibration: needs first, surplus second. The poor are never asked to prove belonging by starving themselves.

It prioritizes proximity: local, real-time aid that preserves dignity. When a neighbor is hungry, the answer is not a spreadsheet—it is food.

It separates giving from access. Ordinances and community standing cannot be purchased. Any system that ties spiritual access to payment has drifted into tribute logic.

It builds redundancy: multiple safe channels (fast offerings, direct member-to-member support, local funds, emergency shelter partnerships) so that no one is trapped behind a single gatekeeper.

And it treats transparency as a moral requirement where money touches the poor: not to satisfy curiosity, but to prevent the devouring of widows’ houses under religious language.

Chapter 14 — Non-Retaliation Doctrine for the Poor

If the poor do not feel safe asking for help, the gospel has become an unsafe room.

Non-retaliation must be explicit doctrine, not implied kindness. It must include welfare, reputation, calling access, recommend access, and social standing.

A sandals church says: you can report harm, ask for help, and speak truth without fear of punishment. No one will be threatened with loss of support, whispers, or worthiness labels for telling the truth.

Mechanism matters. The doctrine should come with concrete protections:

- Help requests are not worthiness interviews.
- Aid is never conditioned on silence or compliance.
- Reports of harm trigger independent review, not tone policing.
- Leaders who retaliate lose authority to adjudicate the matter.

This is not permissiveness. It is the minimum safety condition for a Christlike relief system.

Chapter 15 — A New Standard: Surplus-Based Giving + Local Relief

If we want to keep tithing as a sacred discipline without making it tribute, we need a standard that is both scriptural and humane.

A surplus-based standard does three things:

- 1) It honors the original revelation language by treating giving as tied to increase rather than deprivation.
- 2) It removes the flat-tax burden from the poor while preserving voluntary generosity from those with margin.
- 3) It shifts the Church's moral center of gravity back toward fast offerings and local relief.

Under this standard, temple access is never conditioned on payments that would compromise survival needs. A poor member's faith is not measured by whether they paid rent first or tithing first.

The institution's role also changes. If reserves are massive, the burden should lighten for the poor. The question becomes: how quickly can the Church convert stored strength into real-time rest?

Practical reforms could include:

- Teach surplus/interest calibration explicitly from the pulpit.
- Separate temple worthiness from payment status for the poor (and for anyone in crisis).
- Treat fast offerings and direct relief as first fruits, not a side channel.
- Build a safe emergency shelter network in every stake/region (partnerships count).

- Publish aggregate outcomes of relief: how many housed, fed, stabilized—without violating privacy.

The goal is not to weaken faith. The goal is to keep faith from being turned into leverage against the vulnerable.

Chapter 16 — Invitation and Repentance Upward

I am not writing this to condemn believers. I am writing this to protect them—and to protect the poor from being harvested by righteous language.

The invitation is simple: turn toward the sandals. Let giving be calibrated to survival. Let access be free. Let relief be fast and safe. Let leaders repent upward instead of pressing downward.

If you are poor, this book is not here to shame you. Your worth is not measured in percentages. Christ does not ask you to buy belonging.

If you are wealthy, your opportunity is not to demand more sacrifice from the poor. Your opportunity is to carry more weight so others can breathe.

If you are a leader, your test is not whether the institution stays clean. Your test is whether the weary leave lighter. And if they do not, then repentance is required.

The Surplus Test is not an attack. It is a path back to rest: the gospel as shelter, not tribute.

Appendix Card: No-Gotcha Covenant Sheet

Principle: Access is based on informed consent to abide by covenants—not on private disclosure or purity certification.

Disclosure (given before entry): purpose, covenant categories in plain language, what they are not, consent/exit clause, enforcement philosophy.

Safety: declining or pausing carries no penalty; welfare aid and belonging cannot be threatened; no retaliation.

Outcome: removes tribute logic, reduces shame, preserves standards, and makes the temple a place of rest rather than fear.

Have We Built a Rameumptom?

The Book of Mormon gives us a diagnostic that is painfully relevant: the Rameumptom—a designed platform for public holiness, status, and separation.

So the question is not, “Are temples beautiful?” The question is: have we built a Rameumptom—an architecture of holiness where access is governed by tribute currency and belonging becomes a rank?

A temple becomes a Rameumptom when the covenant is less about worship and more about who gets to stand inside.

And have temples begun to function like great and spacious buildings—not in appearance, but in fruit—impressive, expensive, and meaningful to many, yet structurally inverted from Christ’s rest?

If the poor feel pressure instead of shelter, if secrecy becomes gotcha consent, if doubt becomes disloyalty, and if leaders remain insulated while burdens increase downward, then the system is drifting toward Rameumptom economics.

The repentance call is not to despise the temple. It is to purge tribute logic so the temple becomes what it claims to be: a house of worship that makes the weary lighter.

- Fast-offering-first relief infrastructure: real-time food, shelter, and dignity at the local level.
- Enforce Safe-to-Ask + Non-Retaliatio doctrine (retaliation disqualifies authority).
- Standard No-Gotcha Disclosure Sheet before entry (plain language, opt-out without penalty).
- Temple access based on covenant consent (not worthiness certification).
- Return to surplus-based giving (not survival-tithe) and teach the Surplus Test openly.

Repentance Upward: Five Concrete Moves

Appendix — Cards & Tools

Card 1 — Tribute Logic (3 Currencies)

Tribute is anything the system can demand as a price of access.

- Money tribute (tithing)
- Body tribute (appetite/sex/garments)
- Speech tribute (confession/loyalty/conformity)

Signal: if access depends on payment, disclosure, or compliance scripts, you're in tribute logic.

Card 2 — The Surplus Test

Question: Does our giving system reduce burdens on the poor—or increase them?

Pass = needs protected, surplus invited, relief fast, asking safe.

Fail = gates, gotchas, shame, leverage, slow relief, selection pressure.

Card 3 — Gatekeeping Detector

If any of these are required for belonging or ordinances, the gate is active:

- Payment status
- Private disclosure
- Culture compliance
- Loyalty scripting

Result: confident liars rise, tender people break.

Card 4 — Safe-to-Ask Doctrine

A Christlike relief system must be safe to activate.

Rules:

- Help requests are not worthiness interviews.
- Aid is never conditioned on silence or compliance.
- Reporting harm triggers independent review.
- Retaliation disqualifies the retaliator from authority in the matter.

Card 5 — No-Gotcha Covenant Sheet

Before entry: plain-language covenant categories, what they are NOT, consent/exit clause, and enforcement philosophy.

No surprises. No social-pressure gotchas.

Card 6 — Future Blessing Capture (Lien Detector)

Any covenant that claims ‘everything you have and everything you may be blessed with’ functions like a lien.

If it feels like signing over your future, your conscience is detecting an ownership clause.

Sandals alternative: dedicate surplus to lifting the poor—freely, without leverage.

Card 7 — Temple Access: Covenant, Not Certification

Replace ‘worthiness certification’ with informed consent:

- Do you understand what you’re entering?
- Will you abide by the rules here?

No interrogation-as-gate. Standards without coercion.

Card 8 — Ritual Consent Rule (Sacred ≠ Undisclosed)

Rule: If a covenant uses symbols/gestures/oaths with historical roots that would materially affect consent, disclose those roots and present meaning in plain language before entry—or replace the element.

No gotchas. No vague mysticism as control. Opt-out without penalty. Sacredness is maintained by consent and clarity.

Card 9 — Rameumptom Test

Question: Has worship become a designed status platform?

Rameumptom signals:

- Access governed by tribute currency (money, body, speech).
- Holiness measured by compliance scripts and social proof.
- Secrecy used as gotcha consent rather than protection.

- Questions treated as disloyalty; critique punished as ‘contention.’
- Poor and tender people carry the heaviest fear and shame.

Sandals signals:

- Access based on informed consent (covenant, not certification).
- Standards taught without interrogation-as-gate.
- Asking is safe; burdens are lifted first for the least of these.
- Leaders accountable upward; retaliation disqualifies authority.
- Fruit is rest: shelter, food, dignity, and repair.

Card 10 — Emergency Authority Pattern (The Emergency That Never Ended)

Sequence: Crisis → Expanded authority → Normalization → Moralization → Permanence.

Signals:

- Mirror example: wartime/temporary measures become permanent funding machinery (income tax is a familiar case).
- The sandals difference: a Church can model repentance by publishing rollback criteria and actually reversing the gate once stability returns.
- No sunset date, no rollback criteria, no public accounting of when the emergency ends.
- Burdens shift downward while authority becomes insulated upward.
- Compliance becomes proof of righteousness; critique becomes “danger” or “contention.”
- Tools introduced for safety persist for efficiency and revenue.

Sandals fix:

- Publish sunset criteria for emergency measures.
- Restore surplus-protecting law once stability returns.
- Decouple worship access from tribute currencies.
- Make asking safe; punish retaliation.