

TITHING

Fact or Fiction? - According to Malachi 3:8-10, if New Testament believers do not tithe today, they are under a curse.

1. **Fiction:** The book of Malachi was written to the Nation of Israel, not the New Testament Church. Israel was under the Law of Moses and therefore commanded to tithe. In the Old Covenant, Israel was under a system of blessings and curses. (*Deut.28, Lev.26*) They were blessed if they obeyed God's laws or cursed for their disobedience. Whenever ministers teach this portion of scripture as proof that New Testament believers are to tithe or they will be under a curse, believers should read beyond this usual quote to read the entire third chapter.

In verse 11, God speaks through the prophet Malachi to remind His people Israel of the blessings and curses of *Deuteronomy 28*. In doing so God was rebuking them for their rebellion against His Laws. Simple obedience would bring them back under His blessings once again and they would no longer be punished. *This curse was a divine curse that originated from God, not the devil as some teach.* When Israel was under the curse for not obeying God, He was sending His wrath or punishment upon them. This is why in *Romans 4:15* says, "Because the law worketh wrath..." The Apostle Paul makes it clear in *Galatians 3:10-11* that only those who are under the works of the law are under a curse, not those who live by faith. The law is of works, not faith. (*Galatians 3:12*) *Since God imposed the curse, only He could lift it.* Jesus as God in the flesh, lifted the curse of the law when he died on the cross by becoming a curse for us. (*Galatians 3: 13*) The curse that he delivered us from was the curse mentioned back in Malachi and this was the curse that was imposed under the Mosaic Law.

Sin separates people from God. Under the Mosaic Law, sin brought God's wrath (anger) upon His people when they broke it. Jesus has delivered us from God's wrath! He took the punishment for our sins on the cross and paid the penalty of death required by the law. Now we are no longer under God's wrath (anger) but are now under His grace (unmerited pardon and forgiveness). God's wrath is not for those who are in Christ. (*1 Thessalonians 5:9*) Jesus took God's wrath and punishment for our sins on the cross; we are not under wrath, but grace.

Just as Jesus shed his blood to atone for our sins, he also delivered us from the curse of the law. Christ did this in order that the blessings of Abraham could come by faith. Are you in Christ? Do you live by faith? Have you been delivered from the law? Then Malachi 3 does not apply to you. Since the New Covenant has been established, believers are not required to tithe and are not under the Law of Moses because there has been a change in the law. (*Hebrews 7: 12*) (*Romans 7:6, Galatians 5: 18*) The New Testament scriptures teach believers how we are to give now and it is by grace. Believers in Christ are not under the Law of Moses but grace in Christ. (*11 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9. Romans 7: 4-6, Galatians 2:16-21, 5:18*) For a more in-depth teaching about the difference between grace giving and tithing read *Grace Giving – (Why Tithing Is Not Taught In the New Testament)* – By Denise Bostic

2. **Fiction:** Christians are not under a curse if they don't tithe. The fact is that they are bringing themselves under a curse if they do. How is that possible? Tithing is an **ordinance** of the Law (of Moses). If we place ourselves back under this Law and try to justify ourselves by keeping these laws, we are in effect agreeing to all the Law says. This includes the curses of God as well as the blessings. But what does the word of God say? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is ever one that hangeth on a tree." (*Galatians 3:13 KJV*) What does this word *redeemed* mean in this particular passage? In the Greek it means, *of Christ freeing men from the dominion of the Mosaic Law at the price of his vicarious death.* [*Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*] Believers now

are not under the dominion of the Mosaic Law and its ordinances because Christ freed us from that when He died on the cross.

Jesus became our substitute on the Cross and literally fulfilled the Law for you and me. When He died to the Law, so did we. (*Galatians 2:19-20, Colossians 2:20, 3:3, II Timothy 2:11*) * (The scriptures prove that tithing was an ordinance instituted under the Law of Moses and is not a New Testament ordinance. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find the Church teaching or practicing tithing.) In *Malachi 3:7-9*, God says through the prophet, “yet from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from my ordinances and have not kept them. Return to me and I will return to you, says the Lord of Hosts. But you said, in what way shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me! But you say, in what way have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse (or broke the law) for you have robbed me even this whole nation” (Israel). Continuing in *Malachi 3:14*, “You have said, it is useless to serve God what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance”... These Old Testament ordinances of the law were blotted out through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Jesus had fulfilled the entire law for us because we could not do it ourselves. The law was then removed out of the way when the New Testament was ratified. *Colossians 2:14* says, “having wiped out (or blotted out KJV) the handwriting of **ordinances** (or requirements) that was against us, which was contrary to us and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” The law was against us, not for us. It only could condemn us to death. Jesus defeated death on the cross so that we might have eternal life. The Law of Moses was taken out of the way because it could only accuse us of sin, it could not save us from our sins. Only the blood of the perfect, spotless Lamb of God could do that. For more proof of this we can look at *Ephesians 2:15*. “Having abolished in his flesh (through the cross) the enmity, even the law of commandments (Mosaic Law) contained in **ordinances**; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” Through Jesus’ atoning work on the cross, he made peace between us and God and one another!

These Old Testament ordinances were fleshly as the book of Hebrews teaches us. “Then indeed even the first covenant (Old Covenant) had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.” (*Hebrews 9:1*) This worldly sanctuary was “concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come.” (*Hebrews 9:10-11*) and “How much ore shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works (of the Law) to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the mediator of the New Covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant (Old Covenant), that those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance For where there is a testament there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.” (*Hebrews 9:14-16* all scriptures are NKJV unless otherwise noted) *Hebrews 8:13* says, “In that he says a new covenant, he has made the first one obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” Clearly, the Old Testament Law has been made obsolete and is no longer in force or effect. Believers today are under the New Testament and this is what we are to follow. – By Ollie Bostic

Fact or Fiction? - When Malachi 3:10 says to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, the storehouse is interpreted as being the local church today.

Fiction: Those that teach that the storehouse is the local church today are lacking in knowledge of the differences between the Old and New Covenants. There is no evidence in the scriptures that the storehouse is the local church today. At the time that God spoke this through the prophet Malachi, the New Testament Church was not yet in existence, but the Temple at Jerusalem was. Under the Old Covenant, the Temple was where Israel went to worship God and the Levitical priesthood officiated in the temple. Under the Law of Moses, each tribe was given an inheritance from God except the tribe of Levi. God made special provision for this tribe, however. Their portion and inheritance would be the tithe from their brethren. (*Numbers 18:20-21, Hebrews 7:5*)

The nation of Israel was commanded by God to bring the tithes to the Levitical Priesthood and because Israel was an agricultural society, their tithe was brought in the form of harvested crops and livestock. Of

course there had to be storage space for all of these things, such as corn, wine, oil, wheat, fruit and livestock. (*Leviticus 27:30-34, II Chronicles 31:5-6, Nehemiah 10:35-39*) In scripture sometimes this storage space was called chambers or the storehouse. This was a literal room or building that stored all of the tenth or tithe of Israel for the Levites. This is how they were financially supported so that they could work in the Temple day and night. According to the New Testament though, the priesthood has been changed because there has been a change in the law. (*Hebrews 7:11-12*) The Levitical priesthood is no longer in effect because of its inability to perfect believers in Christ. There is now a new priesthood after the order of Melchisedek with all believers being kings and priests under Jesus Christ, our High Priest. (*Hebrews 7:11-28, I Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:10*)

Yes, God has established a new order of priesthood in the New Covenant with Jesus as our High Priest, a Church government made up of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers and also all believers are now made priests. (*Ephesians 4:11-12, I Peter 2:9*) The Old Testament Temple was a physical building made of man's hands, the New Testament Church is a house not made with man's hands. (*II Corinthians 5:1*) The Church is not a physical building, but made up of a body of believers that house the Spirit of God.

Many times the tithes that are taken in by Churches today are spent on the physical buildings and the spiritual building (the people) is neglected. You may ask, "If believers do not tithe, how are we to support the local Church and the preaching of the Gospel?" The answer is, the same way the Church has always supported God's work-by grace giving. New Testament scriptural examples of giving are by grace only. Money and material provisions given to the Church are to be distributed amongst all of the newly formed priesthood and are usually given to churches (brethren) in need, for the work of the ministers/ministries that preach the Gospel and the poor (widows and orphans) in order to build up the Kingdom of God. (*II Corinthians 8 & 9*)

We are to obey the New Testament pattern of giving. In the Church today we are no longer commanded to tithe but to give by grace. (*II Corinthians chapters 8 & 9*) We are free to give liberally or free from condemnation if we do not have anything to give. We are to each give according to our ability. (*II Corinthians 8:12-14*) We are to share in all things so that no one has too much or others do not do without. As a matter of fact, when the Church was first birthed, many gave far beyond a mere ten percent; they shared everything they had for the sake of the Church and the Gospel of Christ. I wonder when we in the Church today will make those same kinds of sacrifices? Bottom line, tithing is an Old Covenant ordinance, not a New Testament one. You are not under law, but grace. -By Denise Bostic