

THE COVENANT OF TITHING

The seal of God's perfect authority over our lives

Malachi 3:10 *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

The only time God invites his people to test, examine or prove him (*bāḥan*) is in the scripture above which relates to tithing. Tithing is a covenant between God and the Christian who is born again, according to the command in Acts 2:38. The covenant of tithing was only for the children of Abraham, not the unsaved. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). Tithing is a test: God tests the Christian's ability to trust him with his or her material wealth. The foundation of tithing is the belief that God is the creator of everything, hence the owner of all things. It is the Abrahamic declaration of faith that says *'ēlōhīm rā'ā* – God will see to it, "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together" (Genesis 22:8). We see how *testing* and *tithes* go together in the life of Daniel and his three friends in Babylon.

Daniel 1:12 *Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, **ten** days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.*

Daniel 1:14 *So he consented to them in this matter, and **proved them ten days.***

Daniel 1:15 *And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.*

At the end of 10 days of fasting and testing, Daniel and his friends' health improved (increased like the tithe); they lost nothing. Those who tithe unto God lose nothing – at the end of their testing and tithing, *they actually increase*. The Lord informed the church of Smyrna that it would be tested and tried for 10 days. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). There is always a marvelous reward waiting for those who enter into the covenant of the tithe with God who is faithful.

Faith in God's providence is converted into the concrete act of giving God 10% of all our material increase; today, the most convenient way of executing this is in the form of money which is to be brought into the house of the Lord, according to Malachi 3:10.

Deuteronomy 14:22 *Thou shalt truly tithe all the **increase** of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.*

Deuteronomy 14:28 *At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine **increase** the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates.*

Deuteronomy 26:12 *When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine **increase** the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled.*

Let us first consider the divine meaning behind the number 10 in the Bible as it relates to tithing. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether” (Exodus 11:1). God knew that the tenth plague upon Pharaoh’s Egypt would break his hold on the children of Israel. Father Abraham was a man who always paid his tithes to God. After receiving the blessing of “possessor of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:19), Abraham went on to give tithes to Melchizedek who was a manifestation of God. “And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all” (Genesis 14:20).

Could it be that Lot was not a tither which was why he was taken captive and lost everything he had later? Because Abraham was a faithful tither, God’s seal of authority was on him and his children. Ten Plagues signifies God’s total authority over his people with whom he has the covenant of tithing. God was confident that upon unleashing Plague number ten on Pharaoh, Abraham’s children will be set free to serve their God. If we do not pay our tithes, the devourer, Satan, will have the right to rob our hard-earned wages. Consider how many centuries of the labor of Israel Pharaoh robbed! The covenant of tithing gives God the authority to break Satan’s yoke over the labor of our lives.

Malachi 3:11 *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, had an ambivalent relationship with tithing. Rather than trust God and pay his tithes like his father and grandfather, Jacob resorted to scheming and deception perversely thinking this was the way to access the blessings of God. The result was the loss of everything – family, friends, security, food and even shelter. It was at this critical juncture in his life – when he had a stone for a pillow – and slept on the hard, merciless desert floor with no food, that he remembered the covenant of tithing.

Gen 28:20 *And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,*

Gen 28:21 *So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:*

Gen 28:22 *And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*

Notice that he mentions security, food, clothes and peace in connection with tithing. Where did he learn this? Surely, Abraham taught the blessings of the covenant of tithing to Isaac who in turn shared it with Jacob! We do not read, however, that Jacob kept his promise in Haran. God blessed him and he was fruitful – his flocks and children multiplied, but he did not honor God with this increase. What was the result of this? The devourer began to eat and waste Jacob's labor. "And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me" (Genesis 31: 6&7). The clue that this was on account of the devourer and tithing is in the number 10 – 10 times Laban played with his wages. This was a reminder to Jacob about his vow in Bethel. The great mercy of God is demonstrated in the fact that whatever Jacob touched was fruitful despite his neglect of the covenant of tithing. May God both make us fruitful and rebuke the devourer so we may not lose the wages of our labor! Amen!

To tithe is to invite the Lord Jesus to have perfect authority in our lives. The divine implication of the number 10 is evident in the building of the tabernacle and Temple of Solomon both of which were constructed with divine dimensions. In I Kings chapter 7, we are told that several of the items were 10 cubits (5 meters). For example: the cherubim, costly stones for the foundation, the molten sea and lavers or washbasins were all 10 cubits ('ešer 'ammâ). The house of God on earth had to be constructed according to the number of divine perfection and authority. Once constructed accordingly, the glory could descend and bless.

1Kings 8:10 *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD,*

1Kings 8:11 *So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.*

May the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ fall upon and crown your tithing! May Jesus have perfect authority over your life, as he did in father Abraham's life who was the model of tithing! Not only in connection with his Temple, but also with his Law, God wrote down 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai for his people. "And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the

midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me” (Deuteronomy 10:4). We witness the importance of all ten in that breaking one of the Ten Commandments was tantamount to breaking all ten.

James 2:10 *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

This is why the minimum number of righteous people required in the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was 10 souls. Ten righteous souls would have covered up for the transgressions of the cities. “And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake” (Genesis 18:32). Ten represents divine security; it acts as a buffer against the destructive power of the devourer. Ten is sufficient in the sight of God to represent the entire community or city.

We must understand that tithing was not introduced with the Law, it preceded the Law, as Abraham himself tithed before the Law. In fact, the continuation of this principle is also seen in the Lord Jesus’ rebuke of the Pharisees who were commended for tithing but forgot mercy and faith. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Mathew 23:23).

Finally, God has revealed to us that the antichrist will appear on the world stage at a time when the world will have 10 rulers/kings who agree to give their power over to the antichrist.

Rev 17:12 *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.*

Rev 17:13 *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*

Sodom and Gomorrah failed to produce 10 righteous people, but this evil world will soon appoint 10 evil kings to represent it. Once this is done, perfect evil will reign with indescribable efficiency until the Lord returns. We should never neglect or underestimate the power of 10. I pray the good Lord Jesus grants us the knowledge and grace to be lifelong tithers who, like father Abraham, enjoy the peace, security, provision of food, clothing etc. that is triggered by tithing. May the Lord Jesus set the seal of his perfect authority over our

lives! “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”
(Phil 4:19).