

THE TITHING CONTRACT





“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’” (Malachi 3:10)



In Malachi 3:10, God proposed a contract with His people: “Bring me the tithes, and I will bless you.”

Is this a contract for the people of Israel only?

Are Christians excluded from the benefits of that contract? We are not! Therefore, we must thoroughly study how to fulfill our part of the contract.



What is the tithe?



How should it be given?



How should it be used?



What must be tithed?



Faithful tithing



WHAT IS THE TITHE?

"[...] for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities." (Nehemiah 10:37)

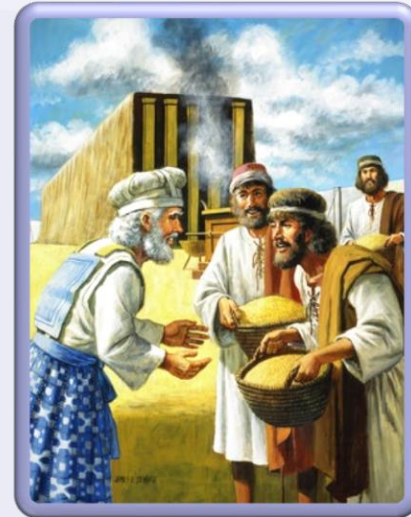


Tithe is the tenth (10%) of something. For example, the tithe of \$340 is \$34. It's that simple.

The tithe is mentioned for the first time when Abraham and his allies defeated the kings who had taken the people of Sodom as prisoners (Gn. 14:17-20).

Jacob mentioned it for the second time in the Bible (Gn. 28:20-22). Paul explained that Levi—whose tribe would receive the tithe eventually—also "paid tithes" (Hebrews 7:9).

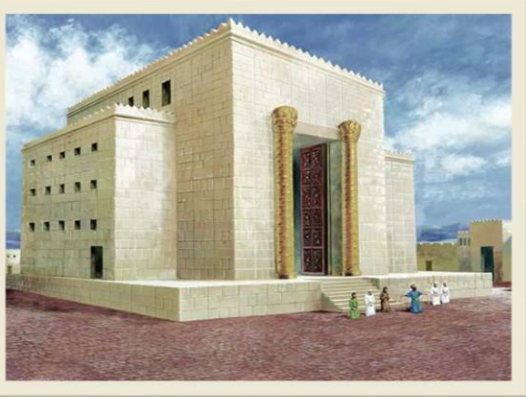
Giving God the tenth of everything we get is a law that was established long before the Sinai laws. Therefore, it's valid for believers of all times, not just the Hebrews.



HOW SHOULD IT BE GIVEN?

"Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there [...]" (Malachi 3:10 GNT)

The Bible talks about multi-year *special* tithes that had to be given to the poor (Dt. 14:28-29). However, the *regular* tithe had to be given ALWAYS to the Temple treasury (Mal. 3:10; Neh. 12:44).



The treasury or storehouse was a special room attached to the temple where tithes were stored (2Chr 31:11-12). When people lived too far away to carry the tithe of their sheep, grain, or fruits, they gave the equivalent cost instead (Dt. 14:24-25).

Nowadays, the tithe is given in the local churches. Then, it is sent to the treasury of their Conference, Union, or Mission.



HOW SHOULD IT BE USED?

"For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance;" (Numbers 18:24)

The tithes were meant to support the Levites. They also gave the tithe of those tithes to the priests (Nm. 18:23-26).

The Levites and priests were in charge of the religious services full-time. This is the reason why the tithes are currently used to support the pastors and lay workers who are employed by the church.

Besides, our trust in God is strengthened when we give the 10% of our income, as we believe that He will bless the remaining 90%.



WHAT MUST BE TITHED?

"[...] and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." (Genesis 28:22)

The "goods" that Abraham tithed (Gn. 14:16, 22) applies to animals; food; and such valuable items as gold, silver, and clothes. These were goods he did not possess before, thus indicating an increase. Therefore, tithe should be calculated on all financial and asset gains.

We must set our tithe aside as soon as we receive our income. It is God's, and He must be first in our lives. We shouldn't use our income until we've fulfilled our commitment with God.



The widow of Zarephath took care of God's prophet first, and she always had enough food (1K. 17:13-16).



FAITHFUL TITHING

"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2)



Let's review the contract of the tithe:

1

The amount: The exact 10% of all our income. No more and no less

2

Set that amount aside before using our income for other purposes

3

Bring it to the treasury of the church, indicating that it's a tithe and not an offering

4

Using it for its rightful purpose: supporting the workers employed by the church

We show our faithfulness to God by fulfilling the first three requirements. The fourth depends on the faithfulness of the church administrators.

Being a steward of the Lord is a privilege and a responsibility that brings blessings.

“God's plan in the tithing system is beautiful in its simplicity and equality... All may feel that they can act a part in carrying forward the precious work of salvation. Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury [...]

Let each regularly examine his income, which is all a blessing from God, and set apart the tithe as a separate fund, to be sacredly the Lord's. This fund should not in any case be devoted to any other use; it is to be devoted solely to support the ministry of the gospel.”

E. G. W. (The Faith I Live By, August 26)