

Covenant Tribute in Christ's Kingdom
Malachi 3:7 – 12
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I. Introduction

II. Return to Me (3:7)

God's opening accusation vs. Israel is that they have consistently repudiated his ordinances. Remember that the context of Malachi is God's covenant with Israel. God had established His covenant with Israel and the central element of the covenant is the section entitled "Ethics" or the "Stipulations of the Covenant." God always has expectations for His people.

III. Cease Robbing Me (3:8 – 10a)

A. History of the Tithe

1. Immemorial Statute (cf. Gen 14:18 – 20; 28:22)

The tithe, like the Sabbath, is an institution whose practice is assumed and reflected even before it is expressly mandated. In the opening chapters of Genesis we find Cain & Abel offering "tribute" to God – the amount is not specified but later when such tribute is mentioned, the amount is specified.

2. God's Property (cf. Lev 27:30-33 with Lev 6:1ff; Ex 22:4)

God has from the beginning laid claim to the tithe as the Covenant Lord, as the Lord of Creation. The tithe does not belong to us and we give it to God; the tithe belongs to God and we return it to Him. The tithe is not a voluntary thing for us as Christians; it is compulsory. Our Covenant Lord claims the tenth as His own.

B. Purpose of the Tithe (cf. Num 18:21-32; Dt 14:22-29)

On the theological level, the purpose of the tithe is to recognize God as covenant Lord – all that we have and are comes from his hand.

IV. Test Me Now (3:10b – 11)

A. Trusting God's Word (cf. Mt. 6:33,34)

B. Death & Resurrection (cf. Mt 16:24 – 27)

What Malachi teaches us is that he who saves the _____ will lose it; but that he who loses the _____ for Christ's sake will save it.

V. Conclusion (Pr 22:22-23)