



The Blessings and Curses of Tithing

By Pete Wierzbicki

Former Pastor, San Francisco, California

A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CONSEQUENCES
OF TITHING IN THE APOSTOLIC ONENESS PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
AND
WHAT ALL TITHE-TAKERS AND TITHE PAYERS MUST CONSIDER
WITH REGARDS TO SALVATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS

Is IT WORTH IT?

Preface

This work does not oppose voluntary giving or Spirit-led generosity. Rather, it exposes the serious misuse of Malachi 3 in the New Testament church—a misuse that amounts to financial manipulation disguised as divine command. It is a call to return the church of Jesus Christ to its rightful authority, its Apostolic foundation, and the true Gospel of Grace for which He suffered and died. The Apostolic churches can no longer excuse authoritarian leadership or financial exploitation in the house of God.

Introduction

Generally speaking, ministers today in the Oneness Apostolic churches often teach that tithing is “not a commandment, *but...*”. Then they cite Malachi 3 and its blessings and the cursings to demonstrate God’s view of the matter and the potential consequences upon the individual “should-be” tithe payer. Whether they realize it or not, they have just committed **extortion** upon the blood-bought people of God. Consider the seriousness of this.

Ministers must resort to Malachi 3 to support tithing because they have no New Covenant, Apostolic text to validate the practice. It reveals a deep doctrinal error—if tithing were truly Apostolic, Acts through Revelation would make some mention of it—but they don’t—except **one time** to say the Old Covenant commandment to tithe has been **disannulled** (Hebrews 7:8-23). So instead of rightly dividing the Word, ministers invoke Old Testament, fear-based curses (and blessings) to produce New Testament compliance. It is a desperate misuse of Scripture—one that weaponizes obsolete, divine threats and blessings to sustain a tradition that has no foundation in the Gospel of Grace.

Apostle Paul actually said a lot about giving and had great opportunity to remind us to pay our tithes, as pastors frequently do today. However, Paul never once took tithes, paid tithes, or asked anyone to pay tithes. Never. This forces pro-tithers into extreme measures to dig up and manufacture anything they can use to support their agenda. Thus, Old Testament, Malachi 3:8-10 has become a staple “Apostolic” passage that most saints know well, right along with many of the verses our churches frequently quote about the nature of God and salvation.

The tithing command in Malachi 3 was given specifically to the **nation of Israel** under the Old Covenant. It was not directed at the New Testament Church but rather at the **priests and people of Judah**, who had failed to uphold the requirements of the **Levitical law**. The tithe was a tenth of Israel's **agricultural produce and livestock**—not money—and it was commanded as part of the **Mosaic Law** to support the **Levites**, who had no land inheritance and served in the temple (Numbers 18:21–24). In Malachi’s rebuke, God accused Israel of robbing Him by withholding tithes and offerings, which were needed to “bring meat in mine house”—that is, provisions for temple service and the priesthood.

The tithe was never a general church tax or a universal command for all people in all times. It was **ceremonial**, **tribally specific**, and **land-based**, tied to Israel's covenant in a theocratic system. The blessing and curse in Malachi 3—open windows of heaven or devouring locusts—were **agricultural promises and judgments** directly linked to Israel’s obedience under the Law. To apply this to the Church today—especially under the Gospel of grace, without temple, priesthood, or Levitical covenant—is a distortion of Scripture and **imposes legalism where there should be liberty**.

Some argue that tithing predates the Law by pointing to Abraham’s tithe to Melchizedek in Genesis 14. However, this example **cannot be used as a binding precedent or principle** for Church giving. Abraham’s tithe was a **one-time, voluntary act**, not a recurring obligation. He gave **a tenth of the spoils of war**, not his income or produce, and he **never tithed again** in Scripture. Just like Abraham’s **circumcision** later became part of the Mosaic Law and was later **done away with** under the New Covenant (Galatians 5:6), so too was tithing incorporated into the Law and has **no authority over believers in Christ**. Using Abraham’s singular act to enforce systematic tithing today is **selective and inconsistent**, especially since New Testament giving is described as **freewill, Spirit-led, and cheerful** (2 Corinthians 9:7), not a tax imposed through Old Covenant “shadows.”

Extortion in the House of God

Anyone who carelessly invoke curses upon others without understanding the devastating consequences of their actions are in danger of judgement. Money lies at the center of this issue, and the majority of Apostolic believers remain blinded to its implications. The Bible addresses this directly and categorically calls it what it is: **extortion**. This is a serious charge, and for those unwilling to listen, the consequences have eternal ramifications.

Legal Definition of Extortion: *The act of obtaining something—especially money, property, or services—through coercion, threats, force, or abuse of authority. (We will note that extortion is often accompanied by an empty, counter-promise of protection, safety, monetary provisions, or other benefits to the victim for compliance.)*

Normally we think of extortion in terms of secular crime; the mob, gangs, or corrupt organizations or individuals. However, extortion can also be spiritual. By definition, this includes:

- Threatening or implying harm (physical, reputational, financial, or spiritual) unless certain demands are met
- Abusing a position of power to pressure someone into doing something they might not otherwise do
- Coercing compliance by instilling fear of divine punishment or loss, contrasted with benefits for submission
- Falling into a bad standing with authority, God, and other members, as well as financial hardship
- Expectations of beneficial return including good standing with authority, God, and other members, as well as financial and material gains.

Unlike theft, extortion involves the victim giving the item under duress or threat—whether implied or explicit. Herein lies the issue: any pastor or minister who has ever used Malachi chapter 3 in a sermon or study on tithing has committed two spiritually catastrophic errors - **invoking the Law and exercising extortion**.

1. Introducing Law into Grace: Galatians chapter 1 unequivocally states that anyone who introduces another gospel is accursed. The moment a minister references Malachi to support a teaching on tithing—regardless of whether they say it is required or optional—they have introduced Law into the covenant of Grace. This is not just doctrinal error; it is a salvational curse as proclaimed explicitly by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians.

I have covered this point extensively in another ¹study, so I will not elaborate further here. Rather, it is sufficient to note that tithing was not practiced by the early church, nor taught by the Apostles. It was first institutionalized around ²600 AD by the Roman Catholic Church, which enforced it through ecclesiastical authority and civil power. For over 1,200 years it remained a distinctly Catholic tradition, until ³Ellen G. White of the Seventh-day Adventist movement introduced it into modern Protestantism in the 19th century (while admitting there is *no* New Testament support for it—“...it is assumed”). From there, tithing spread rapidly throughout 20th-century denominational Christianity. Tragically, the Oneness Pentecostal churches—despite their biblical clarity on Christology and salvation—adopted this anti-scriptural practice shortly after the rebirth of the Oneness movement in America in the early 1900s; joining what can only be described as widespread and systemic financial corruption.

2. Introducing Extortion into the Body of Christ: Even if a preacher insists that his version of tithing is neither of the Law nor mandatory, the use of Malachi chapter 3 still carries the implication that a curse rests upon those who do not pay tithes faithfully on all of their income (as well as empty promises to those who tithe). This manipulation, regardless of intent, falls squarely under the biblical and legal definition of extortion. The preacher has now associated divine favor with monetary giving, having presented the fear of a curse to compel action. This is different from simply introducing Law into Grace. It is introducing a curse from another covenant for another group of people (Jewish Levitical priests) into the church for whom it was never intended. At this point, it is *not* about giving, but rather, taking. This is the classic example of extortion.

Many sincere but naive believers claim they give "willingly," while at the same time claiming that failure to do so would constitute "robbing God of what is rightfully His." This reveals that their so-called willingness *is* effectively **obligatory** and potentially driven by fear instilled by ministers who misuse and manipulate Scripture for personal gain. Malachi's curse was directed at the Levitical priesthood under the Old Covenant, not the blood-bought Church of Jesus Christ. The implication here is that favor (and disfavor) with God rests on paying tithes.

In this, we have the evidence that the extortion has been executed successfully. The moment someone believes that the possibility of blessings or curses hinge on monetary giving, and this belief was formed through the teaching of a minister using Malachi out of context, **extortion has occurred**. The preacher is now responsible for implanting **fear-based obedience rooted in Law rather than love-driven giving inspired by the Spirit**. There can be no claim of ignorance here for the tithe-takers, for they know full well the Scripture explicitly declares a curse upon those who do not adequately pay tithes. They know they are accusing the hearers of "robbing God" if they have been less than stellar tithe-payers, simply by reading the passage in the context of church tithing. This is flagrant manipulation of the Scripture and abuse of God's people. How is this any different from the methodology of the popular Trinitarian television preachers and the prosperity gospel they promote?

A Modern "Spiritual Tax"

This situation parallels what is seen in organized crime: the "protection tax." People are not directly forced to pay, but they are told that harm may come if they don't. Likewise, ministers using Malachi may not say tithing is required, but the fear they instill becomes the motivation. The Apostles never did this. They preached the Gospel free of charge and worked with their own hands to avoid being a financial burden. They **never once** took, paid, or taught tithing in the church. **They certainly never invoked Malachi chapter 3.**

It is unthinkable that agricultural tithing under the Mosaic law—tied to a system of land inheritance and animal sacrifice—would be converted into a monetary obligation for the New Testament Church, then upheld by out-of-context Scriptures from a different covenant. To do so, and to connect it to divine blessing and cursing, is the very essence of extortion. Newfangled tithing is a tax on the Gospel, church fellowship, and good standing with God Himself.

Even without referencing Malachi 3, tithing should be considered a *tax* on goods and services rendered. One should not expect to joyfully (if at all) partake of hearing the preached word of God, worship, and the fellowship of the saints in the assembly if they are unwilling or unable to pay tithes.

The Origins Of "Apostolic" Tithing

As partially stated earlier, there is no historical evidence of any true Apostolic movement practicing tithing over the past 2,000 years—until the early 1900s, when the Pentecostal revival in America emerged. It was during this time that a segment of Oneness believers, having separated from their Trinitarian counterparts, carried over the doctrine of tithing into their teachings. This adoption was not based on Apostolic tradition or Scripture, but rather borrowed from modern religious systems, marking a significant departure from New Testament giving as practiced by the early Church. This alone should be a red flag for tithe-takers and tithe-payers alike.

The Curse of the Cursers

Psalms 109 contains one of the most graphic and sobering imprecatory prayers in all of Scripture. We are not introducing Law into Grace as the pro-tithers do; rather, we are rightly dividing Spirit-inspired Scripture. Imprecatory Psalms must be handled with reverence, as they remain valid expressions of divine justice and reveal God's sovereign perspective on mercy and judgment. This Psalm is a heartfelt cry of David against those who acted with cruelty, deception, and spiritual abuse—particularly extortion. These verses unveil the depth of God's disdain for those who persecute the poor and exploit others for personal gain.

Psalms 109:11-22 (KJV) *(11) Let the **extortioner** catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. (12) Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. (13) Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. (14) Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. (15) Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. (16) Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. (17) As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. (18) As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. (19) Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually. (20) Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul. (21) But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. (22) For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.*

Breakdown of Psalm 109:11–22 – ‘The Curse of the Extortioner’

Verse 11: "Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour." – This speaks of complete loss. The one who uses extortion will be overtaken by the very tactics he employed. Strangers will plunder his work, symbolizing divine retribution.

Verse 12: "Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children." – The consequences extend beyond the individual. The plea is not only for judgment upon the offender but that no mercy be shown even to his descendants, indicating the far-reaching gravity of extortion.

Verse 13–15: The curse extends to total erasure: his posterity cut off, his family name blotted out, and his ancestors' iniquity remembered before God. These verses show a generational consequence, highlighting the seriousness of spiritual crimes such as extortion.

Verse 16: The justification—he persecuted the poor and needy. He attacked the brokenhearted. This clearly links the sin to abuse of the vulnerable, aligning perfectly with spiritual leaders who use Scripture to pressure the faithful into giving.

Verse 17–19: The curses are to envelop him entirely—like clothing or water absorbed into the body. The metaphor portrays inescapable judgment for the one who weaponizes spiritual authority.

Verse 20–22: David distinguishes between himself—the wounded, humble servant—and the extortioner, placing final trust in God for deliverance and judgment. These verses not only comfort the afflicted, but serve as a terrifying warning to those who exploit the innocent.

These are the consequences for those who manipulate the poor, who slay the broken in heart, and who weaponize cursing instead of proclaiming blessing. Ministers who use Scripture to invoke curses or fear-driven giving are in danger of eternal judgment themselves. **Tithing is a salvational issue and a damnable act — but not due to failure to pay them, but rather, for taking them.** Those who take tithes have become the **cursers**, yet the Scripture says **they shall be the accursed**.

In fact, tithe-takers are actually invoking two Biblical curses upon themselves: one for mixing Law and Grace, which Paul declared to be a perverted gospel worthy of a curse (Galatians 1:6–9), and another for extortion (Psalm 109:11-22) by manipulating Scripture—taking a command given specifically to the Levite priests under the Law and applying it to the New Testament Church in order to garner 10% of every member’s paycheck for life. Now, **Consider the math:** if a minister has just 10 ‘faithful’ tithe-payers, each giving 10%, he’s already collecting the equivalent of one member’s full income—100%—equal to the average tithe-payer’s earnings. If he has 100 tithe-payers, he’s receiving the equivalent of 1,000% of the average tithe-payer’s income. That gives him ten times the spending power of the average tithe-payer. The entire system is corrupt, and God will not let this go unpunished.

In Summary

The act of referencing Malachi 3 in a New Testament church to impose a sense of obligation—even subtly—places the speaker in a position of spiritual extortion. This is not merely poor theology; it is a perversion of the Gospel. David’s imprecatory prayer in Psalm 109 is a grave warning to anyone who dares to misuse spiritual authority to manipulate God’s people under fear, guilt, or false promises of blessing.

We are called to preach Christ crucified, not to recycle the abolished ordinances of a former covenant. Those who teach tithing through Malachi—even without openly requiring it—have overstepped the boundary of grace, and they stand in danger of eternal consequences. Let the modern church take heed. Let us return to Apostolic doctrine, free from manipulation, rooted in generosity, and governed by the liberty of the Spirit.

Scripture is clear that obedience matters, and those who willfully or ignorantly corrupt the Gospel—whether through false teaching, compromise, or spiritual deception—will not escape judgment. Paul warned that those who preach another gospel are “accursed” (Galatians 1:9), and no amount of ignorance will exempt someone from the consequences of spreading deception and manipulation. God has entrusted His truth to His people, and it is their responsibility to seek it diligently, rightly divide it, and walk in it. Apostolic truth must not be diluted by tradition, comfort, or fear.

It is a sobering indictment that many Apostolic pastors today not only justify tithing through misapplied Old Testament law and man-made philosophy, but do so while enjoying lives of relative comfort—even affluence—while the saints they shepherd quietly struggle to make ends meet. The Gospel, once freely preached by apostles who labored with their own hands, has now been monetized in most of our churches without serious consideration of its validity. It has been repackaged into a ministry model where financial gain is disguised as divine order. This inversion of Christlike servanthood reflects not the humility of the early church, but the corruption that emerges when spiritual authority is used for material advantage. To extract money from struggling saints under the guise of “obedience” or “honor” using a system never once taught by Jesus or the apostles is not only unjust—it is a betrayal of the very Gospel that was meant to set the captives free.

“And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” | Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.

Bibliography

¹ For my comprehensive exposé, “**The Apostolic View Of Tithing**”, email a request to me at petewierzbicki@msn.com

² **The Roman Catholic Church introduces tithing** | ([CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Tithes](#))

“The earliest positive legislation on the subject seems to be contained in the letter of the [bishops](#) assembled at [Tours](#) in 567 and the [canons](#) of the Council of Maçon in 585. In course of time, we find the payment of tithes made [obligatory](#) by ecclesiastical enactments in all the countries of [christendom](#).”

³ **SDA modern introduction of tithing** | White, Ellen G., [Tithing Principles and Guidelines \(1893\)](#) | 7. **The tithe is holy even as the Sabbath is holy** *“The very same language is used concerning the Sabbath as in the law of the tithe: ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.’ Man has no right nor power to substitute the first day for the seventh... In like manner a tithe of our income is ‘holy unto the Lord.’ The New Testament does not reenact the law of the tithe, as it does not that of the Sabbath; for the validity of both is assumed, and their deep spiritual import explained.”* *Counsels on Stewardship*, 66.