

Give to God First

TEXT: Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 23:23-28; Luke 11:42

KEY VERSE: 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. — Malachi 3:10

RESOURCE MATERIAL: Tract 31 — Tithing — God's Plan of Financing; Booklet No. 237 — Tithing

The Lord does not need anything that man has accumulated. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10), the silver and gold (Haggai 2:8), the earth and everything in it (Psalm 24:1). However, He expects us to be good stewards of what He permits us to acquire. From Abraham's time on, God has blessed those who have given tithes and freewill offerings to the Lord. The tithe and certain offerings were required under the Old Testament Law of Moses. Tithing is not dwelt upon in the New Testament, but it was still approved of by Jesus. At one point, as He was giving a warning to the scribes and Pharisees, He called them hypocrites. They did tithe, but neglected more important matters like justice, mercy, and faithfulness. If the plan of tithing were to be done away with, Jesus would not have told them they should do these vital things *as well as* give tithes. See Matthew 23:23.

1. Shortly after their deliverance from Egypt, the Children of Israel were told by God to be prompt in offering the first part of all their increase (Exodus 22:29). What do you think this meant?

2. The first written record we have of anyone's paying tithes was when Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20). To whom do our tithes belong and why? See Leviticus 27:30.

3. The Israelites could not give their tithes to the Lord in person, but God had a plan for the tithes. In reading Numbers 18:21, what do you feel that plan was?

4. Since we are not Israelites with a priesthood to support, where should our tithes and offerings go?

5. What do you think is meant by Malachi 3:8?

6. What was God's promise to those who did bring in their tithes?

7. Do you think the "poor widow" mentioned in Luke 21:2 was foolish to do what she did? Give a reason for your answer.

8. How do you relate Matthew 25:35-40 with the thought of the title of this lesson?