THE TRUTH ABOUT TITHES AND OFFERINGS

The tithe belongs to God — and it establishes covenant order
The offerings are generosity due to surrender, obedience, and abundance
Key Texts:
Leviticus 27:30 — "And all the tithe of the land… is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD."
Malachi 3:10–11 — "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse… And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes."
Mark 4:14–15 — "The sower soweth the word… Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown."

INTRODUCTION — YOU CAN'T GIVE SOMEONE WHAT ALREADY BELONGS TO THEM

Imagine I hand you your own wallet that contains with $1,000.
I didn't give you $1,000.
I returned $1,000 that already belonged to you.
I didn't make you richer.
I simply gave back what was already yours.
That's the principle of the tithe.
The tithe is not something we give God as though we are making a generous contribution to Him.
The tithe is not generosity.
The tithe is not yours to give.
The tithe already belongs to God.
Leviticus 27:30 says:
"The tithe… is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD."
So when I bring my tithe, I'm not saying:
"God, look what I'm giving You."
I'm saying:
"God, I'm returning to You what already belongs to You."
That's why the tithe is different from an offering.
The tithe is obedience.
The offering is generosity.
An offering is generosity expressed through surrender and obedience.
When I bring an offering, I am willingly surrendering something that is mine and choosing to place it into God's hands.
The tithe, however, is not mine to surrender.
It already belongs to Him.
I don't give God His tithe because I'm generous.
I return God's tithe because I'm obedient.

Then, when I give beyond the tithe, that offering becomes an expression of generosity, surrender, worship, and faith.

1. THE TITHE IS NOT SEED — THE OFFERING IS SEED

We need to understand the difference.
The tithe belongs to God.
The offering is what I sow.
The tithe is not my seed.
The tithe is God's.
When I receive an increase, the first tenth is not mine to decide what to do with.
I don't give God ten percent because I'm generous.
I return the ten percent because it already belongs to Him. (There is a difference in giving, and returning).
But after I have honored God with what belongs to Him, I can bring an offering.
The offering is my seed.
That's what Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 9:
"He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."
Seed is something you sow.
You don't sow what belongs to somebody else.
You return what belongs to God.
Then you sow your offering.

2. THE TITHE IS THE FIRST TENTH

Why does God call it a tenth?
A tenth is 10%.
And ten is significant as a biblical picture of completeness or the whole.
When you count:
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
you have reached the complete set of ten.
The first ten represent the whole number you're counting from.
So when God claims the tenth, He is teaching us something deeper:
"The whole belongs to Me."
The tithe is God's way of reminding us that everything we have ultimately came from Him.
Psalm 24:1 says:
"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof."
The tithe isn't God trying to take something from you.
The tithe is God teaching you who owns everything.

3. THE TITHE IS ABOUT OWNERSHIP — NOT TIPPING GOD

Here's where we have to be careful.
An offering can be generous.
An offering can be sacrificial.
An offering can be abundant.
But an offering does not replace the tithe.
If I owe you $100 and I give you $20 as a gift, I haven't paid what I owe you.
I've given you an additional $20.
An offering doesn't turn God's portion into mine.
The tithe is about ownership and obedience.
The offering is about generosity and sowing.

4. MALACHI CONNECTS THE TITHE TO THE DEVOURER

Now we come to Malachi 3.
God says:
"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse…"
And then:
"I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes."
Notice what God does not say.
He doesn't say:
"Bring Me your offerings and I'll rebuke the devourer."
The specific command in this passage concerns the tithe.
And the specific promise follows:
"I will rebuke the devourer."
This is why we cannot treat the tithe like an offering.
The tithe establishes the issue of covenant obedience.
The offering establishes the principle of sowing and reaping.

5. YOU CAN SOW SEED WITHOUT HONORING THE TITHE

This is where many people get confused.
Someone can give offerings.
They can sow financially.
They can bless ministries.
They can give generously.
But if they are knowingly withholding what Scripture identifies as belonging to God, they should not assume that their offerings have replaced the tithe.
You can have seed in the ground while being out of order concerning what belongs to God.
And when you are sowing offerings while withholding the tithe, you can feel like:
"Lord, why am I giving and not seeing the return?"

Because we're trying to operate the principle of seed and harvest while ignoring the principle of ownership and obedience.
You don't want to just sow seed.
You want to sow seed under God's order.

6. DON'T CONFUSE AN OFFERING WITH A TIP

A tip is something extra you give because you appreciate a service.
But God isn't your waiter.
The tithe isn't a tip.
You don't look at your paycheck and say:
"God, I'll give You something if I feel like it."
The tithe isn't determined by how good your week was.
It isn't determined by whether you have extra money.
It isn't determined by whether the bills are paid.
The tithe is God's portion before it becomes your portion.
That's why Proverbs 3:9 says:
"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase."
God is teaching us to put Him first.

7. THE DEVOURER WANTS THE SEED — BUT GOD WANTS THE HARVEST

Now connect this to Jesus' teaching in Mark 4.
Jesus says the seed is the Word.
And when the seed is sown:
"Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown."
Why does the enemy attack the seed?
Because seed contains potential.
The enemy understands that if the seed survives, it can produce a harvest.
The same principle applies to our stewardship.
We don't want to be careless with what God has entrusted to us.
The enemy wants to devour.
God wants to bless and produce.
Malachi says:
"I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes."
That is God's promise in the context of the tithe.

8. DON'T ASK GOD TO BLESS WHAT YOU REFUSE TO PUT IN ORDER

Sometimes we pray:
"God, bless my finances."

But God is asking:
“Have you put My portion first?”
We ask:
“God, protect my harvest.”
And God says:
“Have you honored Me with what already belongs to Me?”
We ask:
“God, rebuke the devourer.”
And God has already told us:
“Bring ye all the tithes…”
Covenant begins with obedience.
We’re not buying God’s protection.
We’re not purchasing miracles.
We’re not manipulating God with money.
We are responding to His covenant instruction with faith and obedience.

9. THE TITHE SAYS, “GOD, YOU ARE MY SOURCE”

When I tithe, I am declaring:
My paycheck is not my source.
My business is not my source.
My employer is not my source.
My ability is not my source.
God is my source.
The money came through my job.
The increase came through my business.
The opportunity came through a person.
But ultimately:
“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.” (James 1:17)
The tithe reminds me:
“God gave it to me, and God owns it.”

10. THE TITHE IS RETURNED — THE OFFERING IS SOWN

This is the statement I want you to remember:
I don’t sow my tithe.
I return my tithe.
I don’t return my offering.
I sow my offering.
The tithe says:

“God, this is Yours.”
The offering says:
“God, I’m trusting You with my seed.”
The tithe establishes obedience and honor.
The offering expresses generosity and faith.
And Malachi gives us God’s promise concerning the tithe:
“I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes.”

CLOSING — PUT GOD’S PORTION FIRST
Don’t eat God’s portion.
Don’t spend God’s portion.
Don’t negotiate God’s portion.
Don’t treat God’s portion like an optional tip.
The tithe is holy unto the Lord.
When the increase comes, remember:
The first tenth isn’t yours to give.
It already belongs to God.
Then, after honoring God with what belongs to Him, take the seed God has placed in your hands and ask:
“Lord, where do You want me to sow?”
Because the question isn’t merely:
“How much can I give?”
The question is:
“Have I honored God with what already belongs to Him?”
And then:
“What seed is God asking me to sow?”
Return the tithe. Sow the offering. Trust the Provider. And let God deal with the devourer.

DECLARATION:

- I recognize that everything I have belongs to God.
- The tithe is holy unto the Lord.
- The tithe is not mine to give; it already belongs to Him.
- I will not confuse the tithe with my offering.
- I will return what belongs to God, and I will sow my offerings in faith.
- My offerings are expressions of generosity through surrender and obedience.
- I trust God as my source and provider.

- I will walk in obedience, honor God with my increase, and trust His promise to rebuke the devourer.

- My finances belong under God's order, and my life belongs to Him. In Jesus' name, Amen.