

Dear Friend,

I was recently asked if a person will go to hell if he does not pay tithes on his income? He said many preachers still say we are under the curse mentioned by the prophet Malachi if we do not tithe. Here is the passage in the Old Testament they are referring to:

**Malachi 3:8-9 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. (9) Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.**

In order to answer this question, a larger question must first be answered. That question is: Are New Testament Christians subject to any of the curses listed in the law of Moses? This was also a valid question in the first century church after the resurrection of Christ. Many Judaizers preached that Christians not only had to believe in Christ, but they also had to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. The apostle Paul was very bold in his rebuke of that false teaching when he wrote:

**Gal 5:1-6 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (4) Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (5) For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (6) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.**

The Judaizers had come to the churches of Galatia teaching from the law of Moses that Christians must be circumcised in order to be saved. What if they did not get circumcised? Those same teachers would have said, "If you are not circumcised you are not saved and if you are not saved you will wind up in hell." Paul says if the Christians fell for that false doctrine and chose to be saved by trying to keep any single part of the law, they would have to also keep all of the law. Well, let's see now, going back to the law of Moses ... should Christians offer the blood of a lamb today if they sin? Of course not. God will not accept the blood of an animal when the blood of His Son has already been shed for our sins. You cannot go back to the law of Moses, which was only a shadow of good things to come, and try to be justified by keeping those ordinances.

People today are making the same error regarding a curse still being in effect on those who do not tithe. Abraham tithed. Jacob tithed, but there is no record of a "curse" ever being associated with non-tithers until the law of Moses. The curse of Malachi was in effect because they were still under the Mosaic law at that time. Christ had not come yet to fulfill the law and justify us by faith. Paul is very clear about Christ becoming a curse for us so that we never have to fear being under any curse of the Mosaic law:

**Gal 3:10-14 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (11) But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. (12) And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might**

**come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

The writer of Hebrews is very clear that God did away with the first covenant (the Mosaic covenant of the law) and replaced it with the better covenant which is established upon better promises. He "taketh away the first" that He may "establish the second."

**Heb 10:4-10** For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. (5) Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (6) In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. (7) Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (8) Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; (9) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*.

It is simply not true that believers are in hell for not keeping the law of Moses. The Mosaic covenant has been "taken away." Paul taught that truth over and over again. The New Testament books all agree that the first covenant has been fulfilled and been replaced by the new covenant of faith in the finished work of Christ. You would have to tear out nearly half the pages of the New Testament to think believers are in hell for not keeping the law of Moses (after God has already taken it away and replaced it with a new and better covenant.) Christians will be judged by a different law ... James calls it the "law of liberty."

**Jas 2:12** So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

We will look more into the law of liberty next month. Sue and I love you and appreciate you. We thank God for your generous and giving heart. God bless you!

Your friend and co-laborer,

*GARY*