

May 23, 2020

## WHEN OFFERINGS ARE ACCEPTED

Can God be bribed by our tithe and Promise (regular and systematic offerings), ever granting special protection, blessings, and answering prayers of those who faithfully give to Him?

Although the Bible teaches that unfaithfulness to God in tithes and offerings brings a curse (Mal. 3:8-10), it is also clear that He cannot bless those who give them while disregarding other known aspects of His will. "If I regard iniquity in my heart [any iniquity], the Lord will not hear" (Ps. 66:18), said David. Solomon also says that the "one who turns away his ear from hearing the law [in all its points], even his prayer is an abomination" (Prov. 28:9). God is not moved by religious exercises, including returning tithe and giving Promise, while the giver harbors a haughty heart or is stubbornly breaking any other aspect of His will (Isa. 1:11-15). But because the Bible says that "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23) and deserve death (Rom. 6:23), how can a sinner have their offerings and tithes accepted by God?

The answer is that Christ died to pay for our sins (Rom. 6:23); and to those who confess their sins, recognizing that they cannot

change themselves (Jer. 13:23), "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Cleansing is a work of the Holy Spirit that changes the heart (Eze. 36:26), and should precede any act of worship. It is as important as forgiveness, for without it a forgiven sinner would keep sinning again and again. Cleansing is so critical that in the book of Malachi it is said that it is only after that experience that "the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the Lord" (Mal. 3:2-4). God accepts tithes and offerings only from those who accept Jesus' death on their behalf, confess their sins, and keep asking for the Holy Spirit to change their hearts.

**APPEAL:** While you return your tithe and give your Promise today, take time to confess your sins and to ask for a new, purified heart. It is only when we confess our sins, placing them on the divine Sin-bearer, that our offerings can please Him and be accepted by Him.

**PRAYER:** Lord, as we bring our tithes and offerings, please accept the offering of our whole heart. Take it, cleanse it, and heal its unfaithfulness!

21

