Tithe vs Offering in Scripture: Two Words, Two Directions

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Bible Study · Tithe vs Offering

Tithe vs Offering in Scripture: *Two Words, Two Directions*

Scripture uses two different words where English often says only “giving”: a fixed tenth (ma’aser) and a voluntary offering (terumah / korban).

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Reading guide: Use the jump links below · expand any ▸ card for full KJV text · Tithe and Offering badges mark each passage · **gold highlights** mark load-bearing words.

At a glance

Scripture uses two different words where English often says only “giving”: a fixed **tenth** (*ma'aser*) and a voluntary **offering** (*minchah*, *nedavah*, *terumah*).

Key points

- Tithe — fixed 10%, increase already in hand (Leviticus 27:30).
- Offering — variable, voluntary, often forward-looking in faith (Hebrews 11:4; 2 Corinthians 9:6–7).

- Tithe + Offering — Malachi 3:8 names both as separate things withheld.
- Each verse block shows its category badge before the full KJV text.

> Tithe + Offering — **In tithes and offerings** — two words, one verse (Malachi 3:8).
>
> *Malachi 3:8 (KJV, abridged)*

Tithe vs offering: comparison

	Tithe	Offering
Hebrew / Greek	*ma’aser · dekatē*	*minchah, nedavah, terumah · charis, koinōnia*
Amount	Fixed — 10%	Variable — as purposed in the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7)
Required?	Commanded (Leviticus 27:30)	Freewill (Leviticus 22:18, 23)
Orientation	Backward — harvest already received	Forward — sown in faith (Galatians 6:7; 2 Corinthians 9:6)
Key example	Abram's tenth after victory (Genesis 14:20)	Abel offered by faith (Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:4)
Paired in	Malachi 3:8 — *tithes* and *offerings* named together	Same verse — distinct items

Tithe

Fixed 10%

Commanded — increase already in hand (Leviticus 27:30). Backward acknowledgment: “this tenth was already yours, Lord.”

Offering

Variable

Freewill — as purposed in the heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). Forward in faith: sowing toward what is not yet seen (Galatians 6:7).

Hebrew and Greek terms

Word list — tithe vs offering vocabulary

Word	Language	Meaning	Category
ma’aser	Hebrew	the tenth	Tithe
dekatē	Greek	a tenth	Tithe
minchah	Hebrew	gift / tribute offering	Offering
nedavah	Hebrew	freewill offering	Offering
terumah	Hebrew	contribution / uplifted gift	Offering
charis	Greek	grace-gift	Offering
koinōnia	Greek	fellowship contribution	Offering
logeia	Greek	collection	Offering

Word study — “ten” and “rich” share □ -□ -□ · Tithe

Category: Tithe

ma'aser (tithe) is built from *eser* (ten). *ashar* (to be rich) shares the same three consonants □ -□ -□ without vowel points — wordplay on the consonantal text, not proof of one root.

> “And he gave him **tithes** of all… lest thou shouldest say, **I have made Abram rich**.”
>
> **Genesis 14:20, 22–23 (KJV, abridged)**

Who gets what

Where tithe and offering go — flow and table

> *Tithe (fixed) → minister who sows the Word; offering (voluntary) → building, poor, missions.*

Expense / person	Funded by	Key texts
Minister who preaches and teaches	Tithe — direct	Numbers 18:21; Malachi 2:7; Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17–18
Building, utilities	Offering	Exodus 25:1–2; 35:4–29
Widows, orphans, poor	Offering (NT pattern)	Acts 6:1–6; 1 Timothy 5:9–16; cf. Deuteronomy 14:28–29
Missions, relief	Offering — collection	1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9

All verses

How to navigate: grouped by canon section. Each card expands to the full KJV text — badges show tithe, offering, or both. Use `Ctrl+F` / `?F` to search.

Section of canon	Passages (bar)
Law (Torah)	**12** ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓
Historical Books	**4** ▓▓▓▓
Prophets	**3** ▓▓▓
New Testament — Tithe	**5** ▓▓▓▓
New Testament — Minister support	**4** ▓▓▓▓
New Testament — Offering	**6** ▓▓▓▓▓

Law (Torah)

Historical Books

Prophets

New Testament — Tithe

New Testament — Minister support

New Testament — Offering

Side by side: tithe passage | offering passage

Genesis 14:18–23 | Genesis 4:4 — tenth to priest vs faith offering · Tithe + Offering

Category: Tithe

> *“And he gave him **tithes** of all… lest thou shouldest say, **I have made Abram rich**.”*
>
> **Genesis 14:20, 22–23 (KJV, abridged)**

Category: Offering

> *“And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his **offering**.”*
>
> **Genesis 4:4 (KJV)**

Leviticus 27:30 | Exodus 25:2 — LORD’s tenth vs willing heart · Tithe + Offering

Category: Tithe

> *“And all the **tithe** of the land… is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.”*
>
> **Leviticus 27:30 (KJV)**

Category: Offering

> *“…every man that giveth it **willingly** with his heart ye shall take my offering.”*
>
> **Exodus 25:2 (KJV)**

Malachi 3:10 | 2 Corinthians 9:6 — storehouse tithe vs sowing offering · Tithe + Offering

Category: Tithe

> *“Bring ye all the **tithes** into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house…”*
>
> **Malachi 3:10 (KJV)**

Category: Offering

> *“He which **soweth bountifully** shall reap also bountifully.”*
>
> **2 Corinthians 9:6 (KJV)**

Further study

Full tithe-verse list, Malachi 3 in depth, and recipient comparison: Malachi 3 and Every Tithe Verse.

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*Static view of the animated flow above. **tithe** (fixed) to the minister who sows the Word, **offering** (voluntary) to building, poor relief, and missions.*

Deuteronomy 14:28–29: The third-year tithe stored locally fed the stranger, orphan, and widow (landless Levites also eligible) — which can look like one combined fund. Usual reading: Numbers 18:21 (annual) and Deuteronomy 14:22–29 (third-year) are **two separate tithes**, not one. The NT keeps the same split — Acts 6 and the Corinthian collection (1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 8–9) run poor relief apart from direct teacher support. Poor relief stays the Offering stream, parallel to Tithe for the one who teaches.

*Under the Law, the **annual tithe** and the **every third-year welfare tithe** are separate streams — not one combined fund. Today, poor relief runs on the **offering** stream (Acts 6).*