

THE PURPOSE FOR TITHING

The purpose for tithing is to support God's work through His church: that is, supplying the needs for ministers and their families, missions, widows, and orphans, etc. The saints of God are called upon to give for the Kingdom's sake. God is not in the junk business. The church should not get involved in bake sales, car washes, yard and rummage sales to raise funds for the ministry. In the Old Testament, the people of God supplied the needs for the building and maintenance of the Tabernacle and Temple (**Exodus 25:1-8,22, 35:20-22, 36:5-7, I Chronicles 29**).

The Promise of Tithing

There are temporal and eternal rewards promised to the faithful giver. According to **Proverbs 3:9-10**, we are to give to God first, "*Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*" By putting God first in our finances we are promised to be blessed by Him. Not only are we to give God our first, but according to **Malachi 1:6-8, 13-14**, we are to give God our best. God condemned the Israelites for offering sick, blind, and lame sacrifices. They were only giving to God what they did not want. The question is asked by the Lord in **Malachi 3:8**, "Will a man rob God?" In **verse 9**, He accuses Israel of robbing Him in tithes and offerings. Then in **verse 10**, God challenges them to "prove" Him, that is, if they would tithe, He would open the windows of Heaven and bless them, "*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.*" The blessing continues to be described in **verse 11**. The Bible says in **Proverbs 11:25**, "*The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that*

watereth shall be watered also himself." The verse is saying, those who give to others will receive. The tithe is simply a heavenly investment according to **Matthew 6:20-21**. The Lord Jesus Christ said in **Luke 6:29-30**, "*And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.*" The imagery is of a container that is filled to the top with grain and running over the edge. He is saying, "I will use the same measure that you use, but I am going to give you much more back."

Last of all, in **II Corinthians 9:6-15**, we see again God's promise to us if we give. Please consider **verse 8**, "*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*" Tithing is a spiritual test of our integrity, character, faith, and stewardship.

Amen

***"Only one life, 'twill soon be past;
Only what's done for Christ will last."***



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***"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
Acts 16:31***

The RICHES

OF GRACE

Robert W. Reed
May 2003

"hath appeared to all men." Titus 2:11

TITHING

(The Believer's Responsibility)

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD."

Leviticus 27:30

+ Tipping or Tithing +

The English word "tithe" means a tenth. Both the Hebrew and Greek words so translated also mean the same. The tithe is the first ten percent of our income. It belongs to the Lord, it is not ours. It is God who sets the standard for giving and not man. This plan, giving ten percent of one's increase, originated in heaven, thereby, is not left to man's opinion. So giving begins with the tithe, not less. As I have heard it so adequately put, "The spiritual test of our stewardship is not how much of your money you give to God, but how much of God's money you dare to keep for yourselves."

"God demands the tithe, deserves the offering, defends the savings, and directs the expenses." -Stephen Olford

"If God gave you ten times as much as you give him could you live on it?"

- Anonymous

When the Apostle Paul in **Acts 20** addressed the elders of the church at Ephesus on his last visit to them, he gave them a quotation from Christ not recorded in the gospels, **verse 35**, “. . .and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” He who gives is more blessed (happier) than he who receives. The Lord knows more about giving than anyone else. May we take heed to His words.

THE PRINCIPLE OF TITHING

The principle of tithing is seen as early as **Genesis 14:20**, where Abraham blessed the Most High God by giving his tithes to Melchizedik, King of Salem, “*And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*” This happened about 500 years before the law was given by Moses to the children of Israel. So, the first recorded incident of paying tithes predated Israel. According to **verses 17-20**, Abraham gave to Melchizedek ten percent of the spoils from war. The question must be asked, “Why did he give ten percent?” He could have easily given any other percentage between one and one hundred. The answer is very obvious, the Lord instructed him to do so. Maybe Melchizedek taught Abraham to tithe. According to **Hebrews 7:1-3**, Melchisedec, King of Salem, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, “*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*” According to Hebrews, the tithing law predates Israel and the Levitical priesthood. Abraham is the father of all who are saved. He is our example of faith in the New Testament in matters of giving as well as of faith. So, the first type of giving we find in the

Holy Scriptures is tithing.

The second example of tithing we see is in **Genesis 28:19-22**, where Jacob is fleeing from his brother Esau. While sleeping he had a vision. He made a vow, saying he would give a tenth of his income to God.

According to **Leviticus 27:30-34**, the tithe was incorporated into the Mosaic Law. According to **verse 30**, the tithe is called holy unto the Lord, “*And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.*” That means it belongs to God, it is not ours, we are to keep our hands off it. Then in **verse 34**, we see clearly that the tithe was commanded by God and became a part of the law, “*These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai.*” In **Numbers 18:25-26**, the priests were to take the tithe from the children of Israel to support themselves and their families. Other references to tithing under the law are: **Deuteronomy 12:6-8,11, 14:22-25, 26:12**. Every time Israel experienced revival, the tithe was one of the first things that is mentioned as being restored (**II Chronicles 31:4-6, Nehemiah 10:34-37, Malachi 3:7-8**). Many times the tithe stopped when they were in a backslidden condition.

The New Testament did not repeal, supercede, or replace the tithe. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself placed His approval on the tithe. He often commended people for giving more than a tenth but never for giving less (**Mark 12:41-44**). In **Matthew 23:23**, Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees for hypocrisy, “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*” They had been serious about tithing but had neglected other parts of the law, such as, judgment, mercy, and faith, which are more weighty (more important). Please notice that He commanded the tithe by saying, “*These ought ye to have*

done and not to leave the other undone.” In other words, they should have done both.

In **Luke 18:9-14**, a parable is given by the Lord about two men who prayed, a Pharisee and a publican. When pointing out the virtues of a good man, the Lord said, “He tithed and fasted.” Please notice He commended him for tithing. It is a good thing but it will not save us. Proportionate giving is taught in **I Corinthians 16:2**, “*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*” Please note, he said, “*Let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him.*” This signifies a definite portion of our income which would be ten percent as taught elsewhere. Even in **I Corinthians 9**, a chapter dealing with the ministry, the tithe is alluded to, even though the word tithe does not appear in the text. In **verse 13**, it was the tithe that supported the minister in the Old Testament dispensation, “*Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?*” Then **verse 14** begins with the words, *even so*, showing the New Testament ministers are supported by the same method, “*Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*” Keep in mind, the tithe is not a dispensational issue. Also, in **II Corinthians 8:14**, a verse occurring in the middle of a chapter devoted to giving, is the word, “equality” used twice, “*But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: . . .*” The word equality means that all Christians are to give the same amount of their income. Again, this amount has already been specified in the Scriptures as the tithe or tenth. Tithing is the only just and fair way of giving. Both the rich and the poor give the same percentage. Tithing is proportionate giving according to one’s means. The tithe makes everyone equal in God’s eyes and all will be blessed equally at the Judgment Seat.