

TITHING

Why is tithing not limited to the Old Testament law?

- While admitting that tithing is commanded in Moses' Law, some erroneously believe that tithing was strictly an Old Testament practice no longer required of New Testament Christians, much like animal sacrifices. However, the principle of tithing, like marriage, is a moral principle that began prior to the law:

- Tithes were paid by Abraham to a high priest named Melchizedek *prior to* the giving of the law:

Genesis 14:20 *And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.* [The Law was not handed down until hundreds of years after Abraham]

- Jesus Christ is our high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6, 10, 6:20, 7:11, 15, 17, 21), not after the order of Aaron (the high priest under the Law)
- Since tithes were paid to Melchizedek prior to the law, these should be paid to Jesus Christ today, and His church is His body and bride

- Tithes were paid by Jacob (Abraham's grandson) prior to the law:

Genesis 28:22 *And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*

- Malachi chapter 3, which equates failure to pay tithes with robbery, is prophetic of the coming of the Messiah:

Malachi 3:1 *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Malachi 3:4 *Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.*

- When? When the messenger, the forerunner of the Messiah would come
- **Then** the offering of Judah and Jerusalem would be pleasant

- What offering? He goes on to detail it in this chapter

Malachi 3:7-11 ⁷ *Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?* ⁸ *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.* ¹⁰ *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. ¹¹ And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

- God commands tithing so that “there may be meat in mine house...” This emphasizes God’s understanding that ministry costs money. Ministry cost money under the law, and ministry still costs money today.
- Some erroneously suggest that Jesus never taught tithe-paying, but Matthew and Luke both show us that this is not true:

Mat 23:23 *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.***

Luke 11:42 *But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.***

- Paul spoke of tithe-paying in the present tense:

Heb 7:8 *And here men that die receive **tithes**; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

God ordained that those who minister should live of the things of the temple

1 Cor 9:13 *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?*

- God’s plan, both in the Old Testament and in the Church, was for ministers to be supported by the “things of the temple.”

1 Cor 9:14 *Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

- Notice that the Lord ordained it; not man, but the Lord.
- They which preach the gospel should be supported by the gospel

- The early Christian church was such a giving church that they were able to take care of the widows and the fatherless:

1 Tim 5:16 *If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.*

- One interesting point is that in the early church there were sufficient funds to not only pay the elders, but to *take care of the widows and fatherless!*
 - Why is this not true today? Because too many people do not follow the New Testament plan of giving!

- In many cases government has succeeded in muscling the church out of its God-ordained role
- Church elders (leaders) should be paid as the church is able, and according to merit

1 Tim 5:17-18 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.
- Jesus spoke of a unit of measure when talking about giving:

Luke 6:38 ³⁸ Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

 - There is no measuring stick for giving in the Bible other than the tithe. The principle of tithing teaches us what God considers reasonable with regards to giving. Without it we have no idea what is a “good” measure.

Proverbs 11:25 ²⁵ The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 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.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10 ⁶ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁷ Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 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: ⁹ (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. ¹⁰ Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)