

Bring the Whole Tithe Into The Storehouse, That There May Be Food In My House

Some feel the topic of money, tithing and giving within the Church is controversial to say the least. The most used arguments against tithing and giving are:

- The Old Testament does not apply to us in this day and age
- I don't have a good enough reason to give
- It's not my responsibility to make the pastor rich
- I don't have enough to pay my own bills and tithe at the same time

Establishment For Tithing & Offerings: (the story is in Genesis 14)

The very first person God gave his promise to, the Father of our Faith, the Father of all believers, the one to whom God said "...**Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them. And He said to him, So shall your descendants be.**" Before the Levitical Priesthood was ever established. At the very inception of our faith, the tithe was being practiced when Abram gave a tenth of his spoils of battle to Melchizedek.

The story is revisited in the New Testament book of Hebrews 7:1-10 "*For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all {the spoils,} was first of all, by the translation {of his name,} king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. 3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually. 4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. 6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. 7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.*

Key Point To Consider Why Melchizedek was the greater priest:

- Because Abram paid tithes to him, remember the lesser is blessed by the greater without any dispute. The point is that the levitical priesthood was lesser because their pedigree was traced through Abram. In like manner when scriptures says in Romans 5:12 "*....just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned*". The levitical priesthood was in the bosom of Abram, in other words his descendents. Therefore, when Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek all the levitical priesthood was represented through Abram which is known

as the principal of federal representation. Based upon this principal of federal representation, in reality even the priest who received tithes from their brothers paid tithes to the greater priesthood thru the tithes Abram paid to Melchizedek.

As a result, the practice of giving tithes and offerings preceded the levitical priesthood, and the command given by the Law to tithe. The Law **did not** supersede or replace what God almost certainly would have had to reveal in antiquity (though not recorded for us).

We have to understand that there were twenty-five centuries from Adam until the time the Law was given at Sinai. It would be a huge mistake to think that God did not communicate to his people what their service to Him was to be. We cannot assign a chapter and a verse giving the command to Abram to tithe one tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek. The presumption is that he acted according to the known will of God. The words of Jacob suggest the same thing in Genesis 28:22 *"This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."*

It's clear that from what was recorded in Genesis, a clear understanding was made between God and his people that a definite portion of one's income should be devoted to Him who is the Giver of all things, even from the very beginning when Cain and Able gave offerings to God this principal was understood. The thought could be linked to what the Holy Scriptures says in Micah 6:8 *"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you"*

However, I think the most compelling Scripture related to the paying of the tithe is spoken by Jesus himself when he stated in Matthew 23:23 *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! **For you pay tithe** of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, **without leaving the others undone**".* The tithe is specifically mentioned by Jesus as a thing that should continue.

The Principal For Tithing & Offerings is Perpetual:

It would be unwise to believe that the practice of giving tithes and offerings was terminated when the New Testament was established. The Law of God has not been canceled. It still is the standard by which God wants his people to live by. We have to remember that the Law is spiritual and good as stated in Romans 7:12 *"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."*

I admit that there are a few scriptures that seem to declare that the Law was voided when the New Testament was instituted.

Colossians 2:14 says *"having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross".(NIV)*

Ephesians 2:15 says *"having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances," (NKJ)*

The word of God does not contradict itself. Although two varying statements **to us**, may seem to contradict one another doesn't mean it's so. You can rest assured that the contradiction only lies within our inability to fully comprehend all aspects of biblical truth completely.

Paul, when speaking to the Colossian Church, he was combating false teaching regarding heresies (opinion contrary to the word of God) in particular "**syncretism**" which is the blending or combining of elements or philosophies from different religions and cultures. They were trying to be justified by observing cultural rituals, and the like that denied the all-sufficiency and pre-eminence of Christ. Paul was directing their attention to the pre-eminence of Christ and the effectual work of the Cross.

Paul elaborates on his pre-eminence in Colossians 1:15-20 *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell. 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross"*.

The pre-eminences of Christ as stated above was absent from their belief and practices. Paul was only trying to establish that Christ is above all things!!! The references regarding "having cancelled the written code", and "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances" relates to the effectual work of the Cross as depicted in Hebrews chapters 9 & 10. (all of Scriptures for the matter)

In short, Hebrews 10:8-10 capsulizes the thought by saying *"....Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"*.

The truth of the matter regarding whether or not the Law was null and void by the New Testament is found in the following scriptures:

JESUS said in Matthew 5:17-19 *"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others {to do} the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches {them,} he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven"*.

Romans 3:28,30 says *"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law"*.

The point is this:

- The words of Jesus himself testified that "*He did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law*". And likewise, Romans 3 tells us that "*the Law is not nullified, but we uphold the Law*".
- In addition, we've established that the tithe preceded the Law and the tithe that was paid to the levitical priesthood was inferior to the tithe Abram paid to Melchizedek (a type of Christ) whose priesthood is **without end**. For it stated in Hebrews 7:7 "... *without any dispute* *the lesser is blessed by the greater*".

Reasons For Tithing/Giving

There are many various reason given in scripture as to why we should tithe. 1 The tithe brings **honor and glory** to God. 2 The tithe allows for the **storehouse and your barns to be filled with plenty**. 3 The tithe allows for the church to provide for the less fortunate. 4 The tithe allows for the church to **adequately** provide for the pastor.

To Give Honor & Glory to God:

Proverbs 3:9 states "**Honor** the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase". On the contrary Matthew 15:8 states "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And **honor** Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me". To put it in laymen's terms "**put your money where your mouth is**" is an appropriate way to assess the matter.

2nd Corinthians 9:12-13 states "*For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also **overflowing through many thanks offerings to God**. 13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, **they will glorify God** for {your} obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all"*

Please understand that God is glorified through our tithes and offerings. The beneficiaries of the tithes and offerings glorify God and not man for the provisions received from the church. There's an **overflow of thanks offerings directly pointing towards God** because of the needs that have met through tithes and offerings. As an example, I once gave a seemingly homeless person a sizable monetary gift while walking the streets of Washington, DC. Upon receipt of the gift, the individual immediately looked skyward and began to praise the Lord of Heaven without giving me a second thought.

The fact that the giving of tithes & offerings glorifies God is mentioned 3 times in verses 11, 12 and 13 of chapter 9 in 2nd Corinthians indicates how important of a reason it is. This reason alone should be sufficient motivation for us to give solely for the Glory of God. In reality, it should be the dominate reason or even the sole reason; **TO BRING GLORY TO GOD**.

So Your Barns (your household) & The Storehouse (the Church) Will Be Filled With Plenty:

Proverbs 3:9-10 says " *Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will **overflow** with new wine*".

Malachi 3:10-11 says " *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts*".

The message here is obvious and crystal-clear. There is no need for embellishment, exposition, interpretation, explanation, or the like. In other words, the verses speak for themselves and they can stand alone.

The point is this:

- As stated previously in Proverbs 3:9-10, If you honor God with your wealth, then He will respond by providing for you to such a degree that your capacity to accommodate the provisions will be compromised.
- He emphatically states that He will " *open for you the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it*". ANY QUESTIONS!!!
- He will not allow the devourer (Satan) from robbing you of your blessings, and will make your endeavors fruitful.
- Psalms 1:3 states " *He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper*".

How can anyone ignore such a proposition. The only explanation for rejecting such an offer is a lack of trust with Him who issued us a **written guarantee** in the form of His Holy Scriptures. One could say that The Lord put these promises in writing.

Please understand what Numbers 23:19 says " *God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*

It all boils down to exhibiting faith and trust in his promises. Which is probably why Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5 " *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding*".

These provisions of the Lord are likened to a fairy tale. Because of the application of His promises, I actually feel my life is a fairy tale because His realized promises as states above have wildly exceeded anything I could have ever imagined regarding my life.

Provides For The Less Fortunate:

Deuteronomy 15:7-8,10-11 states "*If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, 8 but you shall open your hand wide to him and **willingly** lend him **sufficient** for his need, whatever he needs. 10 You shall surely give to him, and your heart **should not be grieved when you give to him**, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand. 11 For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land'.*"

Having the right motivation is the most important element of giving. The scriptures I just quoted commanded us to give "willingly" and that "your heart should not be grieved when you give".

2nd Corinthians 9:7 states "*You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully. (NLT)*"

The three points Paul is making in the verse are:

- The believer must decide within his own heart whether to give or not. That's not to say there can't be any encouragement or inspiring, or motivating . The ultimate decision must come from an willing heart.
- The believer must not give grudgingly. The giver can't be reluctant or regretful and one who mulls over his offering
- The believer must not give in response to pressure or coercion. He should not give because he fears what others may think, or even just to please others.

The giver must be a cheerful giver if he wants God to be pleased with his giving. The giver must be **delighted** to give, the giving must be a **joyful** experience to the believer. If the believer possesses an attitude contrary to being a cheerful giver, then God will render the offering utterly unacceptable.

2nd Corinthians 8:12 states "*For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have".* In other words, don't worry about what you don't have, give according to what you have.

Providing for the Pastor:

1st Corinthians 9:7-11,14 states "*Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? 8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.' Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt,*"

*this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? 14 Even so the Lord has **commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.***

The scriptures leave no doubt that the Church is unquestionably responsible for the support of the Pastor and ministers. In these passages, Paul justifies the ministers right to be supported by the church congregation by using the following comparisons.

- The rights of the soldier: The minister is a soldier, a leader in the Army of Christ Jesus leading the congregation in the spiritual war that we are all participating in whether you know it or not. He is therefore to be supported under the rights and privileges of being a good soldier leading us in our spiritual battle with darkness.
- The rights of the farmer: The minister is a farmer, the one who sows the seed (the word of God). He plants and harvests the fruit for the Lord and for the Church. As a result, the Church is responsible for making sure the minister reaps of the harvest and eats of the fruit of his labor. *"who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit"*
- The rights of the shepherd: The minister is a shepherd of God's flock feeding and nurturing the congregation of the righteous. *"What shepherd who tends the flock does not drink of the milk"*. Therefore, the minister is to be fed and supported by the flock.
- The right to be supported under God's decree: Paul told us that the ministers right to be supported by the Church was not just his theology, he points out that God's word says the same thing.

It is also implied in scripture that the minister has the right to be the first person supported by the Church . If others have the right to be supported, shouldn't the minister have the first right? Keep in mind that our supreme authority the Lord, *"has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel"*. The implication here is that the wage the minister receives should be sufficient to meet all his needs and the needs of his families. He shouldn't have to get a part time job to supplement.

The Example of Cheerful & Sacrificial Giving:

2nd Corinthians 8:1-9 states *"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. **Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 6 So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7 But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the***

earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

The churches of Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea) give us an example of the nature of giving that pleases and is acceptable to God. The following are some of the characteristics that the churches of Macedonia possessed that made them the benchmark for our giving:

- They gave despite terrible trials and great poverty: They gave to help others and they gave liberally even when they themselves suffered heavy afflictions and deep persecutions
- They gave beyond their ability: They gave freely and readily. They did not give according to their ability, they went beyond what they were able to give.
- They gave without coercion and insistently: They actually begged for the privilege to share what they possessed for service to God. They insisted on giving for the purpose of helping others and bringing glory to God.
- They gave themselves first to the Lord: They gave all that they had and all that they were to the Lord first and foremost. They dedicated their lives to Christ, they dedicated their possessions to Christ, and they dedicated their lives to the ministry of Christ.

The challenge to the Church today is to excel in giving in the same manner that the churches at Macedonia excelled. Just like we aim to excel in **faith**, in **speech**, in **knowledge**, in **earnestness**, and in **love our** we ought to also strive to excel in giving.

Store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven:

Philippians 4:15-17 states "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. 17 Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account."

What account you say? The account "...where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:20-21)