

# Tithes and Offerings

Topics to be discussed:

- A. What is a Tithe?
- B. How did the concept of tithing and giving offerings begin?
- C. Was it something that was conceived by mankind or God?
- D. When did it begin?
- E. Why should I give tithes and offerings, and why is tithing not considered optional?
- F. Is God really so concerned about your money?
- G. But I thought that, "tithing" only applied to Old Testament giving?
- H. How can I assure God's abundant blessing for me and my family?
- I. Where do I give my tithes?
- J. Where do I give my offerings?

In the Bible we find that God clearly outlines for us what it means to be good stewards of our resources. [Colossians 1:18](#) states that Jesus wants to come to have, 1st place in every area of our lives, and this includes our finances. What is a "tithe?" Literally, a tithe means, "one tenth." ["Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...and test me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts..." -Malachi 3:10](#)

Throughout the Bible, God tells us that we are to give Him one tenth of our income ([Genesis 28:22](#); [Malachi 3:10](#); [Matthew 23:23](#); [Hebrews 7:2](#)). Is there a difference between a "tithe, and an "offering?" Yes, there clearly is. In addition to tithing, the Bible mentions offerings such as, "freewill offerings," "personal contributions," and "sacrificial giving" as other means by which we can worship the Lord ([Deuteronomy 12:17](#); [Mark 12:42](#)). The difference between tithes and offerings is that offerings are intended to be a personal, private ([Matthew 6:1](#)), transaction between the giver and the Lord, according to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast, the tithe is not optional. Jesus said, "You should tithe" ([Matthew 23:23](#); [Luke 11:42](#)). God said, "Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce so that your barns may be filled with plenty, and your vats overflowing..." - [Proverbs 3:9-10](#)

Many assume that tithing was started at Mt. Sinai as a form of taxation under the Old Covenant. Some believe that tithing was started only to support the work of the Levitical Priesthood. Is tithing only required from crops and livestock, or any increase in you wealth?

Can tithes of crops and livestock be sold and turned into money? Are offerings only animal sacrifices for forgiveness of sin? Or were all offerings abolished with the sacrifice of Jesus? What about offerings of crops and drinks? Can money be an acceptable offering to God?

If the principle of giving tithes and offerings is Christian, then who is to receive them, and for what are they to be used? Is tithing and giving offerings a part of the New Covenant a Christian enters into with God, or did it end with the fall of the Levitical Priesthood?

As Christians, our walk with God and our Lord and Savior Jesus, must be in truth. Jesus told the woman at the well in [John 4](#), that the Heavenly Father is “[seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and truth.](#)” Jesus then goes on to say that God must be worshiped in truth. Look closely at Verse 24 – “[God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and TRUTH.](#)”

In [John 17](#), Jesus states that God’s “[WORD IS TRUTH.](#)” If you are holding a Bible in your hands, then you are holding the truths of your heavenly Father.

The earliest record of the principle of tithing is found in [Genesis 14](#). About 4,000 years ago, and ancient patriarch named Abram (*Abraham*) learned that his nephew Lot had captured by an invading army. Abram gathered his servants and pursued them. When he overtook them, he defeated them and rescued Lot and others. Abram also took possession of the spoils and took back all the possessions stolen by the attackers. Then he thankfully gave a tithe (*tenth*) of ALL to Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High.

[Genesis 14:17-20](#) – Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him (Abram) at the Valley of Shaveh. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him (Abram) and said, - “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he (Abram) gave a tenth of all.”

Notice that Abram not only gave a tithe of food and livestock, but of ALL. There were no doubt spoils of clothing, silver and gold, precious stones and coins as well. Abram gave a tithe of all. And he gave the tithe to Melchizedek, King Salem. This Melchizedek was both King and Priest.

[Hebrews 7:1-4](#), - “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, 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. WITHOUT FATHER, WITHOUT MOTHER, WITHOUT GENEALOGY, HAVING NEITHER BEGINNING OF DAYS NOR END OF LIFE, but made like the SON OF GOD, He abides a priest perpetually. Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth (tithe) of the CHOICEST spoils.”

Notice carefully that Abraham gave of the choicest spoils, not what was left after he had picked over the lot for himself. This is the principle of putting God first and trusting God to provide for you. This occurred over four hundred years before God gave Moses the Law at Mt. Sinai.

Years later, Abraham's grandson, Jacob (later named Israel), also determined to walk in the entire Lord's ways and serve Him with tithes. Notice [Genesis 28:22](#), - "And this stone (Bethel stone), which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house; and of ALL that Thou dost give me I will surely give a TENTH (tithe) to Thee." The book of Genesis records that Jacob became a prosperous man, BLESSED by the God of heaven and earth.

In [Exodus 19:5](#), at the end of the verse we find an interesting phrase, Notice - "*Now then, IF YOU WILL INDEED OBEY MY COVENANT, then you shall be my own possession among all the peoples, for ALL THE EARTH IS MINE.*" Everything belongs to God, He owns everything. Man is only a sojourner (wanderer) on the earth and does not own anything permanently. Since God really owns everything, how does man have anything? Isn't it only because he receives it from God? All we have ultimately comes from God.

### **TITHES GIVEN TO TRIBE OF LEVI**

[Numbers 18:20-24](#), - "Then the Lord said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor own any portion among them (other tribes of Israel); I AM YOUR PORTION and YOUR INHERITANCE among the sons of Israel. And to the sons of LEVI, behold I HAVE GIVEN ALL THE TITHE OF ISRAEL for an inheritance, in return for their SERVICE which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. And the sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, lest they bear sin and die. Only the LEVITES shall perform the SERVICE of the tent of meeting." Notice that it is God that is doing the giving. And also that it is the tithe of Israel that He is giving to the Levites. If God is giving then it stands to reason that He is giving what is rightfully His, doesn't it? As we read in [Exodus 19:5](#), "all the earth is mine". And [Job 41:11](#), - "Everything under heaven is Mine." And [Psalm 50:12](#), - "The world is Mine, and all its fullness." But notice also, God was only commanding that each household give 10% of their income to support the Priests in their service of the Tabernacle. The children of Israel were allowed to keep 90% for themselves.

Notice this quote from the "GOOD NEWS" Magazine June/July 1986, - "*The mind of man is selfish, and thus swayed by covetousness, not to believe that one should give anybody -even God- a tenth of one's income. Most often this selfishness is framed by the argument that says: "I've worked hard for my paycheck and the money is mine!" Why should anybody be able to tell me what to do with it?" But this argument is fallacious. We make money with talents God gives us, with a life He gives us, with elements from the earth He created and owns..... We are mere guests blessed with the privilege of living here and using God's beautiful earth. So our money is not really ours. And why should it seem wrong for God to command that we tithe our income to Him? Even the governments of this world make prior demands on our income in the form of taxes, and we quickly agree with their right to do so, if not with their means or amounts.*" (Article, "The Blessing of Tithing")

"Government" is just a modern word for "Kingdom", although the latter is usually governed by a King rather than an elected President and Senate. Those who live in America actually reside in the Kingdom of the United States and are subject to the laws, statutes and ordinances the government or kingdom places on them including the many

taxes. Christians are citizens of the Kingdom of God, ([Philippians 3:20](#)) and are His Ambassadors while on earth. ([Ephesians 6:20](#)) Our job is to further the interests of the "Government", or Kingdom of God by witnessing, ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)) teaching, ([Romans 10:14](#)) providing a place for assembly with a shepherd, ([Titus 1:5](#)) providing literature or other items which may help others grow unto Christ and provide for the hungry and needy. ([Galatians 2:10](#)) The Government of God is coming in its fullness soon, but is operating in *embryo* now. And as with any government or kingdom, it takes money to operate. God's chosen people are Ambassadors of God's coming Kingdom while on earth now. As an American Ambassador to a foreign kingdom would have an Embassy there, -God in like manner provides His Embassies in every city, which are the places of assembly for His citizens. And as an Embassy in a foreign kingdom, the local Church promotes the interests of God's Kingdom wherever God has placed them. Remember, Christians are as foreigners while on earth. ([Hebrews 11:8-10](#)) God provides that income through tithes and offerings from the citizens of the Kingdom of God.

### **TITHE IS HOLY TO THE LORD**

Leviticus 27:28-31, -"Nevertheless, any proscribed thing which a man sets apart to the Lord out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Every proscribed thing is MOST HOLY to the Lord. No proscribed person who may have been set apart among men shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death. Thus the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree is THE LORD'S; it is HOLY to the Lord. If therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe (under the rules of redemption as stated in verses 9-13), he shall add to it one-fifth to it."

God states that not only is the tithe His, but it is HOLY to Him, and is specifically set apart by Him for HOLY USE. In Hebrew this word rendered *HOLY* in English, is "*QADASH*", which means "*SEPARATE*" or "*WITHDRAWAL*". God commands that His tenth be "*withdrawn*" from each increase of our wealth first, and "*separated*" from income designated for fleshly or personal use. The tithe is HOLY and only for *HOLY USE*.

Concerning [Verse 29](#) Notice this quote from KD Pentateuch, II, page 485, - "*In certain instances persons could be placed under a BAN, and such individuals were to be put to death. It is not likely that his devoting was done at the pleasure of just any man. Most probably it was done officially and was used against those persons who obviously RESISTED THAT SANCTIFICATION of life which was binding upon them.*"

### **BLESSINGS AND CURSES REGARDING TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

The Almighty promises BLESSINGS to those who are faithful and CURSES to those who are not. Notice [Malachi 3:6-10](#), -" For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have TURNED ASIDE from MY STATUTES, and have NOT KEPT THEM. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But YOU SAY, -"How shall we return?" WILL A MAN ROB GOD? Yet you are ROBBING ME! But YOU SAY, -"How have we robbed Thee?" In

TITHES and CONTRIBUTIONS. You are CURSED with a CURSE, for you are ROBBING ME, the whole nation of you! Bring the WHOLE TITHE into the STOREHOUSE (of God), so that there may be FOOD in MY HOUSE, and TEST 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 A BLESSING until there is NO MORE NEED.

Did you notice that God is saying that this conduct *deserves* punishment? That if it weren't for the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *who were faithful*, that He would literally *consume these* because of their unfaithfulness? The Lord reveals Himself as a "consuming fire" or a "refiner's fire" as **Malachi** says in **verse 2**. The only thing standing in the way of the wrath of God on these people was God's own faithfulness to the promises He had made to their faithful forefathers. But although God refrained from pouring out His wrath on them, there were consequences, weren't there? God was no longer CLOSE TO THEM. Notice He says, "RETURN TO ME, AND I WILL RETURN TO YOU"

Because of this sin a breach had occurred between God and His Chosen people. Because they had not faithfully "withdrawn" and "separated" (Heb."qadash") what was HOLY to the Lord, and had not taken their tithes and offerings to the HOUSE OF GOD, there was NO FOOD or PROVISIONS for the PRIESTS, and the people became CURSED. Because of this disobedience, (1) God and His people were separated by sin and suffered in their special relationship, (2) The people became cursed because of it, (3) The Priests suffered as needy men because the people did not provide for them the tithes and offerings God had commanded be given to them. Now notice when the people asked, "**HOW SHALL WE RETURN?**" *God said, "BRING THE WHOLE TITHE INTO THE STOREHOUSE, SO THAT THERE MAY BE FOOD (or provisions) IN MY HOUSE."* The people were obviously putting their own needs and desires ahead of God's and His Priests. The end result of disobedience is being cut-off from God, which unrepented of means cut-off from our only source of life, ultimately. The result of obeying God in this matter is:

- (1) Having their relationship with God restored...What's that worth?
- (2) Receiving the BLESSINGS from heaven being poured out upon them until there is no more room...What's that worth?
- (3) And seeing the Priests who were doing the Lord's service for the people provided for, and no longer living as one in need...What's that worth?

Out of all those which heard this message from God through the Prophet **Malachi**, some were convicted and repented. Notice the account and end-result of their repentance, **Verses 16-18** - "Then THOSE WHO FEARED the Lord spoke to one another, and the LORD GAVE ATTENTION and HEARD IT, and a BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE WAS WRITTEN before Him for THOSE who FEAR THE LORD and who esteem His name. "And THEY WILL BE MINE" says the Lord of hosts, "on the day I prepare my own possession and I WILL SPARE THEM as a man spares his own son who serves him. So you will again DISTINGUISH between the RIGHTEOUS and the WICKED, between ONE WHO SERVES God and ONE who DOES NOT serve Him."

Notice that the Lord was watching to see how and who would react to His message from Malachi, and He "gave attention" and listed the repentant in a special "Book of Remembrance". He goes on to say that He will claim THEM as His own special "possession", and will "spare them as a father spares a son that SERVES him." What about the others? Does this mean they are not in the "Book of Remembrance", and will not be "spared"? God also says that how each one reacted to Malachi's message "distinguished between the righteous and the wicked". God does not say how the wicked reacted, but we can assume it was with unacceptable excuses since they were unrepentant. The righteous, those that "feared God", - "spoke to one another" not with excuses, but with words from a contrite and convicted heart, and were determined to right the wrong. My friends, by our WORDS and ACTIONS we always make an impression upon God, either good or bad.

The Apostle Paul wrote a young Evangelist named Timothy about the snare of lusting after money. Notice 1 Timothy 6:6-12, - "But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought NOTHING INTO THE WORLD, so we CANNOT TAKE ANYTHING OUT OF IT either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to GET RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION and a SNARE and many foolish and HARMFUL DESIRES which plunge men into RUIN and DESTRUCTION. For the LOVE OF MONEY is a ROOT of all SORTS OF EVIL, and some by longing for it have WANDERED AWAY from the FAITH, and PIERCED THEMSELVES with many a pang. But FLEE from THESE THINGS, you man of God; and pursue RIGHTEOUSNESS, godliness, faith, love perseverance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of FAITH; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. To COVET the riches of money leads to "all sorts of evil", - How much worse is it to COVET the Lord's tithe for one's own personal use?

This happened in Israel, notice God's response through the Prophet Haggai, Chapter 1:4-11, -Is it time for YOU YOURSELVES to DWELL IN PANELED HOUSES, while THIS HOUSE (Temple) LIES DESOLATE? Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, "CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!" You have SOWN MUCH, but HARVEST LITTLE; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a PURSE WITH HOLES. Thus says the Lord of hosts, "CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!" Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified, says the Lord. You LOOK FOR MUCH, but behold it COMES TO LITTLE; when you bring it home, I BLOW IT AWAY, -WHY? Declares the Lord of hosts, "Because of MY HOUSE WHICH LIES DESOLATE, while EACH ONE OF YOU runs to his OWN HOUSE. Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce. And I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on ALL THE LABOR OF YOUR HANDS." As we learned in Malachi 3, withholding God's tithes and offerings from the HOUSE OF GOD brings curses. Here again, sadly we find people putting their "own houses" before the Lord's.

### **OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES REGARDING THE LORD'S TITHE**

In the Book of Nehemiah we find an example of some faithful people dedicating themselves in the service of the Lord, His House and His Priests. The story speaks for itself, and there can be little doubt that God took notice of their charitable acts as He did to those He recorded in the "Book of Remembrance" in Malachi 3.

Nehemiah 10:32-39, -"We also placed ourselves under obligation to contribute yearly ONE THIRD OF A SHEKEL for the SERVICE of the HOUSE OF OUR GOD; for the showbread, for the continual grain offering, for the continual burnt offering, the Sabbaths, the new moon, for the appointed times (Holy Festivals), for the HOLY THINGS and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the WORK OF THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD. Likewise we cast lots for the supply of wood among the Priests, the Levites, and the people in order that they might BRING IT TO THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD, according to our fathers' households, at fixed times annually, to burn on the altar of the Lord our God as it is written in the law; and in order that they might bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all the fruit of every tree TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD annually, and BRING TO THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, and the first-born of our herds and our flocks as it is written in the law, FOR THE PRIESTS WHO ARE MINISTERING IN THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD. We will also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree; the new wine and the oil TO THE PRIESTS at the chambers of the HOUSE OF OUR GOD, and the TITHE of our ground to the Levites, for the Levites are THEY WHO RECEIVE THE TITHES in all the rural towns. And the Priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes, and the Levites shall bring up the tenth of the tithes to the HOUSE OF OUR GOD, to the chambers of the STOREHOUSE. For the sons of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of the grain, the new wine and the oil, TO THE CHAMBERS; there are the utensils of the sanctuary, the Priests who are ministering, the gatekeepers, and the singers. **THUS WE WILL NOT NEGLECT THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD.**" Here are a people determined to trust in God and put Him and the needs of His House first. They not only are giving to God what the Tithe He commanded to be set aside for the service of the House of God, but actually devoted much more.

The children of Israel periodically found themselves lusting after the Lord's tithe, and withholding what was made holy for their own personal use. In **2 Chronicles** we find a story of a righteous King who desired to put his people back into the grace, protection and blessing of God. Part of what he had to do was command the unpopular message of restoring the principle of tithing which the people had drifted away from. His name was Hezekiah, King of Judah.

**2 Chronicles 31:4-5, -"Also he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the PORTION DUE TO THE PRIESTS and the Levites, THAT THEY MIGHT DEVOTE THEMSELVES to the law of the Lord. And as soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel PROVIDED IN ABUNDANCE the FIRST FRUITS of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly THE TITHE OF ALL."**

Because of Hezekiah's willingness to right what was wrong in Judah, God greatly prospered him and his administration. Shortly after this, Sennacherib, King of Assyria

invaded the land of Judah, but when Hezekiah cried out to God, God answered because of his faithfulness and sent a mighty war angel that devastated the camp of the Assyrians so that the survivors fled. (Chapter 32) Now Notice the final two verses of Chapter 31, - "And thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah; and he did what was GOOD, RIGHT, and TRUE before the Lord his God. And every work which he began in the SERVICE OF THE HOUSE OF GOD in law and in commandment, SEEKING HIS GOD, HE DID WITH ALL HIS HEART AND PROSPERED." This is how I would like to be thought of by my Lord and be remembered in this way by my family and Brethren.

### **TITHES, OFFERINGS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Although Jesus Christ found many faults with the Jewish religious establishment, He upheld the principle of giving tithes and offerings. One is reminded of Him taking notice of a poor widow faithfully giving all she had to the Temple treasury in [Luke 21:2-4](#).

[Matthew 23:23](#), -"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you TITHE mint and dill and cummin, and have NEGLECTED the WEIGHTIER PROVISIONS OF THE LAW; justice, mercy and faithfulness; but these are things you should have done WITHOUT NEGLECTING THE OTHERS." Jesus said they were wrong in that they did not exercise "judgment, mercy and faith", which are more important principles of God, but were right in not neglecting the "others". What were the "others" Jesus was referring to? Certainly, it was what He has just mentioned earlier in the verse, -"tithing".

[Matthew 6:19-21](#), -"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. One of the ways one can insure a better inheritance is explained to Timothy by the Apostle Paul. Notice the next Scriptural reference.

[1 Timothy 6:17-19](#), -"Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich IN GOOD WORKS, to be GENEROUS ready to SHARE, STORING UP FOR THEMSELVES THE TREASURE of a GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE, so that they may TAKE HOLD of that which IS LIFE indeed." As Paul told the Brethren in Ephesus, "It is more blessed to GIVE than to RECEIVE." ([Acts 20:35](#))

When Jesus was asked whether it was good to pay the taxes Caesar had placed on the Jews notice how He answered, [Matthew 22:21](#), -"Render to Caesar the things that ARE CAESAR'S; and to GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S."

The Book of [Luke](#) records a saying of Jesus that will always be a divine principle of giving. Notice [Chapter 6:38](#), -"GIVE, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into you lap. For

WHATEVER MEASURE YOU DEAL out to others, it WILL BE DEALT TO YOU IN RETURN." Remember it is God that does the rewarding.

1 Corinthians 9:4-14, -"Do we not have a right to eat and drink? Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife (Be able to afford to), even as the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? (Peter) Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? (Work outside of God's service) Who at any time serves as a soldier AT HIS OWN EXPENSE? Who plants a vineyard, and DOES NOT EAT THE FRUIT OF IT? Or who TENDS A FLOCK and DOES NOT USE THE MILK OF THE FLOCK? I am speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? (He was referring to God's workers) Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? YES, FOR OUR SAKE IT WAS WRITTEN, because the PLOWMAN OUGHT TO PLOW IN HOPE, and the THRESHER to THRESH in hope of SHARING THE CROPS. If WE SOWED SPIRITUAL THINGS IN YOU, is it TOO MUCH if we should REAP MATERIAL THINGS FROM YOU? If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we DID NOT USE THIS RIGHT, but we endure all things, that we may cause NO HINDRANCE to the GOSPEL of CHRIST. Do you not know that THOSE WHO PERFORM SACRED SERVICES eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have THEIR SHARE WITH THE ALTAR? So also the LORD DIRECTED those who proclaim the gospel to GET THEIR LIVING FROM THE GOSPEL."

Paul was not receiving financial support from the Church of God at Corinth and was not demanding any for a couple of reasons:

- (1) *"we did not use this RIGHT, but we endure all things (financial hardships) that we may cause NO HINDRANCE to the GOSPEL of Christ."*
- (2) *Out of love he did not want to burden them as they were a weak church, and he lived off other churches while he ministered to them as we will see in Chapter 11 of his second letter to them.*

Notice Paul's second letter to Corinth, 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, "Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself(financially) that you might be exalted, because I PREACHED the gospel of God to you WITHOUT CHARGE? I ROBBED OTHER CHURCHES, taking WAGES FROM THEM to SERVE YOU; and when I was present with you and was IN NEED, I was NOT A BURDEN TO ANYONE; for when the brethren came from Macedonia, THEY fully SUPPLIED MY NEED, and in everything I kept myself from being a BURDEN TO YOU, and will continue to do so." The Apostle Paul still had financial needs, but would not burden this weak church at this time. Possibly, he wanted to show that he was not serving them with the Word of God for the *sake of money*. As in his first letter to Corinth, he was clearly defending himself of any improper motivation, but wanted them to understand that he had a right to be supported for his work though he was not exercising that right at the time. He could have remained in Macedonia or a number of other areas where he was well supported, but out of his love for the church at

Corinth and his devotion in the service of God, he suffered financially for their sake, and also for the sake of the gospel of Christ. Certainly Paul was a living example of someone storing up their treasures in heaven rather than on earth.

Earlier we saw that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, King of Salem and Priest of the Most High, which we found was in fact the same divine personage that later came as Jesus Christ. About 400 years after Abraham, God established the Levitical Priesthood and commanded His tithes be given to the sons of Levi. But in [Hebrews Chapter 7](#) we find that the Church that Christ founded is not subject to the Levitical Priesthood, but of the superior Priesthood of Melchizedek that predated Levi.

[Galatians 6:6-10](#), - "And let the ONE who IS TAUGHT the Word SHARE ALL GOOD THINGS with HIM who TEACHES. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man SOWS, this he will also REAP. For the one who SOWS to HIS OWN FLESH shall from the flesh REAP CORRUPTION, but the one who SOWS to THE SPIRIT shall from the spirit REAP ETERNAL LIFE. And let us not lose heart in DOING (this) GOOD, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do GOOD TO ALL MEN, and ESPECIALLY to THOSE who are of the HOUSEHOLD OF THE FAITH."

Notice the response to this passage from the Wycliffe Bible Commentary page 1297, - *"Here the thought returns to bearing one another's burdens, but in the specific area of giving for the support of Christian work. "Share" means to participate in something along with someone else. The one who is "taught in the word" shares his material goods with the one who teaches him. In this way he participates in the work of the Lord. This is the divine plan. Beware lest any try to set it aside. "God is not mocked" The word for mockery is "turning up the nose". No man can successfully snub God or evade his decree that, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" - the immutable law of life. A selfish man "sows to his own flesh", spending his resources to gratify his own personal desires. He may expect to "reap corruption". That which might have brought reward by being invested in the Lord's work will be nothing but a decayed mass, a complete loss in terms of eternity. On the other hand, by responding to the spirit in love and kindness, and gladly participating in the extension of the Gospel by supporting Christian workers, believers will be adding interest to the capital of eternal life."*(End)

Paul to the brethren at Corinth. [2 Corinthians 9:3-9](#), - "But I have sent the brethren, that our boasting about you may not be made EMPTY in this case, that, as I was saying, you MAY BE PREPARED; lest if any Macedonians come with me and find you UNPREPARED, we (not to speak of you) should be PUT TO SHAME by this confidence." Remember, the Macedonian Church financed Paul's Ministry to the Corinthians for a time. They had proved their love and faithfulness by their willingness to "be robbed for the sake of the brethren at Corinth" (2Cor. 11:8) "So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your PREVIOUSLY PROMISED BOUNTIFUL GIFT, that the same might BE READY as a BOUNTIFUL GIFT, and NOT AFFECTED by COVETOUSNESS. Now I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall

also reap bountifully. Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart;(but remember what Jesus said, "where your treasure is, there lies your heart also") NOT GRUDGINGLY or UNDER COMPULSION; for God LOVES a CHEERFUL GIVER. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything; you may have AN ABUNDANCE FOR EVERY GOOD DEED; as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ABIDES FOREVER." This "promised bountiful gift" were probably not tithes, but a love offering for the brethren in Jerusalem who were suffering a famine. But the principle of giving in the service of God, His people and His work is clearly defined.

Notice also Romans 15:26-27, -"For Macedonia and Achaia have been PLEASED to MAKE A CONTRIBUTION for the POOR among the saints in Jerusalem. Yes, THEY WERE INDEBTED TO THEM. For if the Gentiles (Macedonia and Achaia were Gentile) have shared in their SPIRITUAL THINGS, they are INDEBTED to MINISTER TO THEM (Jewish brethren) also in their MATERIAL THINGS." Notice 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 as well.

These Gentile converts to Christianity felt so appreciative and even indebted to the Apostles and brethren in Jerusalem because they had been served the spiritual teachings and ways of God by them. They were happy that they could give something to them, even if it were only material goods.

Paul writing to the Church at Philippi. Philippians 4:10-19, -"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now AT LAST you have REVIVED YOUR CONCERN FOR ME; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from WANT; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with HUMBLE MEANS, and I also know how to LIVE IN PROSPERITY; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and GOING HUNGRY, both of having abundance and SUFFERING NEED. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have DONE WELL TO SHARE WITH ME in my AFFLICTION. And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, NO CHURCH SHARED WITH ME in the matter of GIVING and RECEIVING but YOU ALONE; for even in Thessalonica you SENT A GIFT MORE THAN ONCE for my NEEDS. Not that I SEEK THE GIFT itself, but I seek for the PROFIT which INCREASES in YOUR ACCOUNT. But I have received everything in full, and have abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, A FRAGRANT AROMA, an ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE, WELL-PLEASING TO GOD. And my God shall supply all YOUR NEEDS according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

The Philippians had no doubt expenses of their own locally, so this was truly a "gift" which went beyond God's required ten percent. But isn't it striking and even a shame that this great man of God suffered "going hungry" and "affliction" while those was being served spiritually lived in abundance fleshly? Not only did many take of Paul's spiritual teachings leading to eternal life, but many through covetousness denied him a share of their material things. Paul did not complain, but simply learned to live without.

His only concern was for them who were not adding to their account in heaven by giving today.

1 Timothy 5:17-18, -"Let the Elders (Pastors) who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who WORK hard at PREACHING and TEACHING. For the Scripture says, -"You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing" and "The Laborer is worthy of his wages." An ox laboring in the harvest is entitled to eat of it as he labors, but if a muzzle were placed over his mouth he could not feed himself as he works. Paul's point here is similar to his argument that the priests that serve in the Temple were worthy to partake of the provisions in it. God who owns all things had specifically set those provisions aside for them. Although the tithes and offerings were brought to the Temple by the people, it was never actually theirs to give, or to keep for them, -it was simply put into their hands first in order to test their faithfulness and teach them to be faithful stewards of what belongs to God.

Titus 3:13-14, -"DILIGENTLY HELP Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that NOTHING IS LACKING for them. And let OUR PEOPLE also LEARN to engage in good deeds to MEET PRESSING NEEDS, (of others) that they may NOT BE UNFRUITFUL." Again the local Churches of God had their own expenses which were probably covered by their tithes and offerings. It is sure that many practiced the "pure religion" of helping the poor and needy in the household of God and in their community. (James 1:27) But they were to learn to gladly help "meet pressing needs" of others, or God would consider them "UNFRUITFUL"!

### **TEACHES US TO BE FAITHFUL**

Paul said in Galatians 3:11 that *the "righteous man shall live by FAITH."* And in Hebrews 11:6, he says *"Without FAITH it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God MUST BELIEVE that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."*

*Hebrews 11:1* gives us God's definition of FAITH, "FAITH is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

God PROMISES to BLESS all of us who will prove ourselves wise and worthy stewards of the Lord's tithes and offerings, but also PROMISES to CURSE those who will "ROB GOD" (Malachi 3) by not faithfully bringing them into the storehouse of God.

Those that will be worthy to meet the Lord in the air at His return will be "Called, Chosen and Faithful". (Rev.17) It takes FAITH to let go and trust God to fulfill His promises, but without it one *cannot please Him* nor stand with Christ at His return. Remember the admonition from James 2 -"Faith without WORKS is dead." *We must have WORKS of FAITH.*

If we are truly faithful with the Lord's tithes and offerings, acknowledging them as *HOLY to the Lord*, just think what can be accomplished in our community. How many others will be served and benefit from our good deeds. There are so many to be reached,

and they must be led and taught in God's wonderful way of life. IT IS OUR MOST HOLY COMMISSION.

We must be willing to give all we have if need be, just as Christ did, -to give up all we are today, in order to become all we can become in the Lord, tomorrow. Praise God and His Christ for this marvelous calling!

### **Why should I give tithes and offerings, and why is tithing not considered optional?**

The first reason is, JESUS SAID WE SHOULD! ([Matthew 23:23](#)). The second and most practical reason might best be described by another question: “Do you want your finances under the authority of the “Devourer,” or the “Abundant giver?” ([Malachi 3:10-11](#)).

You see, the Bible clearly teaches that if you “bring the WHOLE tithe to the Lord, He will, “[rebuke the devourer!](#)” Further, the Bible says that as a result of honoring the Lord with our finances, “...[my God shall supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.](#)” ([Philippians 4:19](#)). However, if we don’t honor the Lord with our finances then we give authority over to the devourer, who then has permission to destroy and steal from us ([John 10:10](#)).

### **Is God really so concerned about your money?**

No, He’s concerned about your heart.

“...[For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.](#)”

-[Matthew 6:19-21](#)

### **But I thought that, “tithing” only applied to Old Testament giving?**

As we have seen, this is not the case. Tithing is specifically mentioned three times in the New Testament. ([Matthew 23:23](#); [Luke 11:42](#); [Hebrews 7:2](#)). Additionally, Jesus specifically affirmed tithing as something that should be done. Beyond that, [Colossians 1:18](#) challenges us to place Jesus FIRST, above all else, in EVERYTHING that we do. [Romans 15:4](#) tell us that the Old Testament was written for our instruction. Jesus told us that He did not come to take away the Law or the prophets, but to fulfill ([Matthew 5:17-20](#)). Jesus brought clarification, correction and adjustment to many things... but not to tithing.

### **How can I assure God’s abundant blessing for me and my family?**

1. God says, “[Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce](#)” ([Proverbs 3:9](#)). A big question among Christians today is whether or not we should tithe based on our gross or net income. Well, according to the Bible, God is to be honored first, even ahead of the government. This means we tithe on our gross income.

2. God says, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse” (Malachi 3:9). To assure God’s abundant blessing in the area of finances we must bring the WHOLE tithe. Not 9%, not a tithe on the net income...but the WHOLE tithe. In reference to this Nehemiah further states, “The first fruits of all the fruit of every tree to the house of the Lord” (Nehemiah 10:35). This means that we tithe on ALL income that we receive. This includes not only the money which we make on our jobs, but things such as inheritances, alimony checks, honorariums, financial gifts and profits made from such things as stocks and the sales of our homes and property. Tithing on all income literally means that we tithe on all that comes in!

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully, for God loves a CHEERFUL GIVER.” -2 Corinthians 9:7-8

### **Where do I give my tithes?**

You should present your tithes to wherever your, “storehouse,” is. Whatever you consider to be, “The house of the Lord.”(Nehemiah 10:35). For most, this will be the local church in which they worship. However, it cannot be definitively concluded that tithes must solely go to the local church. What we do know for sure is that the, “tithe” is the vehicle that God has chosen by which to support his, “priests,” those whom God has chosen to, “labor in the word” as an occupation. When Paul said, “The Lord has directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:14), he was commenting on the way in which the Levitical priesthood was sustained. 1 Corinthians 9:9 is a quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” Paul also used Deuteronomy 25:4 in support of his claim that they who labor in the word are worthy of, “double honor” (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Perhaps most significantly is, “How” you give the tithe. It is to be presented as, “unto the Lord” with no strings attached, expecting no tangible benefit.

### **Where do I give my offerings?**

Wherever the Lord directs you to give. This is between you and the Lord, and the individual, church or organization to which you contribute.

“Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit that that increases to your account.” -Philippians 4:19