

TITHING?

An Understanding of Giving from a Biblical Perspective



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PREFACE

This book is about Tithing in the Church. It is meant to be an understanding of giving from a Biblical perspective. Is the so called "10% tithe" Biblical? Is it for New Testament believers? What should Christians do concerning giving to the Church or ministries? Let us examine this and answer these questions.

In today's world money plays a huge part in our lives. We're conditioned to depend on it for almost everything. Money is the identifier and mark that sets nations apart as individualistic. The use of money has been in existence for a very long time; developing as we progress in time. We must remember we are to use the money, but not be used of it. God said, through Paul, "**for the love of money is the root of all evil...**" (1 Timothy 6:10a).

In this article, we want to focus on "tithing" and giving to God. Let me state this clearly we are not against giving to God. There is much misunderstanding and confusion about this subject today; which needs to be corrected and brought into the proper perspective. The goal of this article is twofold. (1) to correct misunderstandings of this doctrine. (2) to provide instruction on the proper action of this doctrine.

Many are uncomfortable with the discussion of tithing or money. Many denominations today haven't helped matters in their witness to the world regarding money. The Church of our Lord Jesus is not a bank, lending institution, casino, or a "good" place to make money! God does not "need" money.

The Church is to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and walk in a manner that pleases God. Money does play a part in providing resources to proclaim that Gospel. However, the use of sleazy fund raising techniques is unacceptable and creates a debase witness to the world.

If we get back to the operation of the Church as they did in the first century we understand that they met in houses, not buildings. And offerings were taken to be obedient to the Lord and to help other Christians in need, not fill the pastors pockets.

The obvious question would be where do I give? You give firstly, to the poor brothers and sisters in the Lord, to missions for the advancement of the gospel, and then to your local body or assembly in which you gather. Anything n regards to giving outside of that, is between you and the Lord Jesus.

THE WORDS

Tithe, Tithes, Tithing [Hebrew *ma`aser, mah-as-ayr'*] means **tenth part or tenth**. These words appear in the Old Testament twenty-eight times. The word means simply a **tenth**.

Tithe, Tithes [Greek *dekato, dek-at-o'-o*] means **receive tithes, pay tithes, to exact or receive the tenth part**. These words are used seven times in the New Testament. The actual word tithing is not found in the New Testament.

Money [Hebrew *keceph, keh'-sef*] means **silver, shekels, or talents**. In Greek *argurion* [*ar-goo'-ree-on*] means **a silver coin, silver piece, or a shekel**. The word money is found 123 times in both Old and New Testaments.

Tithe: Function: noun Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *teogotha* tenth; akin to Middle Low German *tegede* tenth, Old English *tlen* ten Date: before 12th century 1 : a tenth part of something paid as a voluntary contribution or as a tax especially for the support of a religious establishment

Money: Pronunciation: 'm&-nE Function: noun Inflected Form(s): plural moneys or mon-ies /'m&-nEz/ Usage: often attributive Etymology: Middle English *moneye*, from Middle French *moneie*, from Latin *moneta* mint, money. Date: 14th century 1 : something generally accepted as a medium of exchange, a measure of value, or a means of payment: as a : officially coined or stamped metal currency b 2 a : an amount of money c plural : sums of money : 3 : a form or denomination of coin or paper money

As always we must start from the beginning to fully understand the originality, amount, and practice of the tithe. We need to understand that the custom of tithes did not originate in the Mosaic Law. The first

instance of the word tithe in the Scriptures is in Genesis fourteen. Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings near Damascus, approaches ...**the valley of Shaveh, which [is] the king's dale** (Genesis 14:17) and is approached by Melchizedek.

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he [was] the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed [be] Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he[Abraham] gave him tithes of all." (Genesis 14:18-20)

It's clear that there was no "law," at this point, that Abraham was following that would have compelled him to give a tithe. He gives because ...**blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand** (v.20).

Abraham was grateful of what the Lord had done for him. Abraham's action of giving was compelled, not of the law, but of love for God. He gave because he was very grateful. Other ancient peoples practiced tithing as well. The custom of tithing was done with goats, sheep or whatever one was going to give was brought before him. He would then count up to the tenth one and pick it then start again, in other words, every tenth item was chosen.

The next place we notice a tithe is in Genesis twenty-eight. Jacob sees the vision of the ladder to heaven.

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Genesis 28:12)

In this dream God comes to him and tells him of the blessing He is going to bless Jacob with.

"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I [am] the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I [am] with thee, and will keep thee in all [places] whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done [that] which I have spoken to thee of." (Genesis 28:13-15)

God tells him, **"the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed... and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed... behold, I [am] with thee, and will keep thee in all [places] whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee."**

God is passing down the covenant He made with Abraham to Jacob. In response to this blessed gift of grace bestowed upon him by God Jacob says.

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 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." (Genesis 28:20-22)

So as with Abraham the offering of a tithe, or in this case a tenth, was given in response to something God had and was going to do. The response of gratefulness in the heart to the grace of God was to give Him something. Offering or giving to the Lord was practiced as far back as Abel in Genesis four and Noah Genesis eight.

Giving to God for gratefulness of a promise or act by Him is exhibited in a number of passages (Exodus 25:2; 35:5,21,22,29; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:5; Ezra 1:6; 3:5; 7:16; Acts 4:34,35).

Let me say again we are not against giving to God. We believe the believer in Christ must give purely out of his heart to God for it is commanded and a boon. Giving is commanded in both Old and New Testaments.

It's true the tithe was commanded in the Old Testament (Leviticus 27:30-34; Deuteronomy 12:6,11; 14:22; Hebrews 7:5). In the New Testament giving is commanded with no specific amount attached to it (Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 6:38; 20:25; 2 Corinthians 9:7). The practice of giving the tithe was still done by Jews of Jesus' day (Luke 18:12).

In all the Old Testament passages we read of various items and ways to give the tithe. We can deduce that the "principle of giving" is exhibited in those passages. Going back to the Old Testament we come across some questions that need to be answered in giving a tithe.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

What was to be offered?

- Food (Leviticus 27:30; Deuteronomy 14:22,23; 12:6; 2 Chronicles 24:8-11; 31:5; Nehemiah 10:37; 13:11)
- Money (Leviticus 27:31; Exodus 25:3; 1 Chronicles 29:7; Ezra 1:5; 7:6; 2 Kings 12:10)
- Wine/Oil (Deuteronomy 14:23; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Nehemiah 13:5,11)
- Flocks (Leviticus 27:32; Deuteronomy 14:23; 2 Chronicles 31:5)
- Mint/ Anise/ Cummin/ Rue (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42)

Who and what was it for?

- The House of God (the temple) this was where much of the tithe went (Exodus 25:2-8; 35:5-19,21,22,24,29; 2 Kings 12:9-11; 1 Chronicles 29:6,7,9; 2 Chronicles 24:12; 31:12; Nehemiah 10:38,39; 12:44; 13:5,11; Malachi 10:10)
- God (Leviticus 23:20; 27:28,32; Numbers 18:11; 1 Chronicles 29:5,17; 2 Chronicles 31:6; Ezra 1:5; Proverbs 3:9,10; Ezekiel 20:40; 48:14; Malachi 10:8)
- The Levites/priests (Leviticus 17:20; 23:10,23; Numbers 18:12,21,24,26; Nehemiah 10:37,38; 12:44; Ezekiel 44:30)
- The stranger, fatherless, widow this was done in the third year (Deuteronomy 26:10,12; Amos 4:4)

When the Levites and priests received tithes from the people they were, in turn, to give a tithe (a tenth) of the tithe (tenth) to God. (Numbers 18:26). The reason the Levites and priests were given tithes is that they had no inheritance from the Lord in terms of land. They were appointed to minister to the Lord without any other means of living (Leviticus 23:20; Numbers 18:21,24,26; Nehemiah 10:37,38; 12:44).

This was needed because of the physical temple built in the land which always needed attention and the duty of the priests for administration for the people. But now in the Church Jesus, our high priest has made one sacrifice for sin and sat down the service of priests is no longer needed. Amen!

The people were to bring their offering (tithe) to the place God said He would put His name. All items except for food was given to the priests or the temple. When they offered food they would bring it to the tabernacle or temple, give it to the priest, the priest would then offer it to God thus cleansing it.

Then a tenth, the tithe, was given to the priest and the remainder was eaten by the family there at that place where it was offered. Why? because God is Spirit and does not consume food (Deuteronomy 12:6,17; 14:26). God was very clear in reminding them that it must not be eaten anywhere else other than where it was offered. This giving of the offering was done year by year (Deuteronomy 14:22; Nehemiah 10:35).

If certain people lived very far away, from the place God had chosen to put His name, they were allowed to turn the offerings, other than money, into money and travel to the temple. Once there they were to buy the offering they could and offer it then and eat (Deuteronomy 14:24,25,26). All this was done to be obedient and fear the Lord (Deuteronomy 14:23). There was the year-end offering of the first fruits (Exodus 23:16,19; 34:22,26; Leviticus 23:10).

In summary of the Old Testament, we find the following. Tithing was a long-held custom of ancient peoples and was in practice before the law. Abel, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob did not need a law to instruct them in giving to God for what He did for them; neither did they need to be told how much to offer.

It was commanded of the children of Israel. The items varied from money to flocks. It was to be done year by year at the end of the year and every third year.

It's clear that the majority of the texts concerning the tithe speak about giving to the priests and the house of God. Why? Because remember in the Old Testament the Levites/priests had no inheritance (Numbers 18:21,22,24,26; Leviticus 23:10; Nehemiah 10:37-39; 12:44; Ezekiel 44:30) they depended on the faithfulness and obedience of the people to support them and the temple (Exodus 35:5-19,21,22,24,29; 2 Kings 12:9-11; 2 Chronicles 31:12; Malachi 10:10).

This was necessary to maintain ministering to the Lord and the place God said He would dwell. In the Old Testament, it was vital that the priests and the temple be maintained. For the temple symbolized the "physical" dwelling place of God coupled with the promise of His presence.

In A.D.70 when the temple was destroyed there was no longer priests or a place to bring offerings. God allowed this and thus was indicating that the dwelling place was no longer in Jerusalem at that temple. We can fully understand that the custom of tithes was discontinued because of this and that God now is dwelling in believers of His son Jesus (Luke 11:13; John 7:39; 14:16; Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:19,20; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

Certainly, the custom of the tithe was made law at Sinai in which the people were to observe it; however, as believers in Christ we are not under the law, (Romans 4:10) that is to please God for our salvation, but under grace (Romans 3:23; 6:14; 10:4).

God tells us very clearly without any shadow or confusion that WE His people, if we are born again in Jesus are not under the law which would include any form of a tithe.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Romans 4:10)

THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament, by Jesus' time, paying the tithe had become an empty observance with little care for God (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12).

The New Testament makes no mention of believers in Christ "tithing" neither is there any command to give 10%!

I say this for two reasons. One, because it's true. Two, because it must NOT be put upon the believers as a burden. Let's remember the tithe, in the Old Testament, was given mainly for the Levite priests and the temple.

John the Baptist did not give to the priests of his day, nor is it recorded that he received money for his ministering. In Matthew five Jesus speaks about bringing a "gift" to the altar.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 5:23,24)

Notice He says "gift" why not tithe? It's accepted that He is speaking about being in right standing before giving can be truly from a good conscience. In Matthew chapter six we are instructed on the proper way of giving.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:1-4)

Notice Jesus says, **take heed** [Greek *prosecho*, *pros-ekh'-o*] means beware, give heed unto, attend to be attentive, give attention to. He uses that very strong interjection about giving. What is it we are to take heed to? That ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them... this is sadly what unsuspecting believers are doing today in many Churches.

When you receive a slip telling you how much money you donated in the year; how many people do you think saw that before it reached you? There are many on television that have these fundraising telethons and openly speak out over the air how much so and so just donated. Has that ever happened to you? If so you are doing your giving before men. What is the real danger if this kind of giving is practiced? Otherwise, ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Jesus says when you do your giving do not sound a trumpet before thee...this is simply making a noise or drawing attention to yourself. In so doing we become like the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.

Jesus goes on to say when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. This is simply being cautious about how much you give and in front of who you give. Giving, He says, should be so common and natural we should not even give it a second thought.

It's recommended that cash is given and not checks. Why? because checks, with your name brazen across the top and bottom, draws attention to the one giving it. If you're asked to prove how much you gave one can "show" those canceled checks to whomever; thus drawing attention to one's self.

Give cash because no one but God will know who gave it and how much was given. Giving to God should be from the heart and not for a tax return. If you give to God because you can take it off on your taxes you have not really given to God! You're a thief and a swindler! God is not the government. We must give to God for nothing in return. That is true giving.

Jesus says, that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. As we have said giving to God should be done in secret no one but you and God should know what and how you gave.

Our Lord Jesus gives the admonition of the proper perspective on what it is we are to be working for, and where those resources should be going (Matthew 6:19-23) it is the first and greatest work of the believer to give of his resources to the spread of the gospel (Luke 22:35,36; Matthew 25:14-30) Jesus says that our money must not be so important to us.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24)

We are to trust God for everything to provide for the spread of the gospel and obey Him at all cost.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not

much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day [is] the evil thereof." (Matthew 6:25-34)

Jesus uses the narrative of the poor widow to show us the unselfish generosity that must be exhibited in true giving.

"And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." (Luke 21:1-4)

Jesus saw - this is His Omniscience He sees what amount you give; moreover, He knows the reason for your giving - the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. This was such a ritualistic thing that it meant nothing to them. There was no joy in giving only hypocrisy. He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. Two mites did not even equal two cents in our money. Yet it was "all" she had.

She give more than a tenth of what she had she give it all could you? She loved God that much do you? Could you part with everything offering it to God? In terms of money she cast in nothing, in terms of faith and love for God she cast in more that they all.

Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury[poverty] hath cast in all the living that she had. All the living means all her resources, wealth, goods! Does Jesus begin to condemn her for not offering the tithe? No. Does God care for the tithe? He cares more for the willing heart that loves Him and gives to Him and His work out of a pure heart. Did the widow receive anything? Yes, a commendation of our Lord Jesus! Did she get a tax write off? No. Think about these things when you're about to give.

Paul, through the Holy Spirit, said.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

- We are commanded to give to God: (Matthew 6:1-4; 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 6:38; 20:25; 2 Corinthians 9:7).
- We should be giving to the spread of the gospel: (Matthew 25:14-30; John 12:6; 1 Corinthians 9:5-14)
- We should give to those that are faithful, and are teaching God's Word truthfully: (Matthew 20:8; Luke 10:7; John 16:6; 1 Corinthians 9:5-14; Romans 15:27; Galatians 6:6,10; 1 Timothy 5:17,18)
- We are to give to the poor: (Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 11:41; 12:33; 19:8; Romans 12:20; Ephesians 4:28)
- We are to give to the needy and poor brothers and sisters of our Lord: (Acts 4:32-37; 11:29; Romans 12:13; 15:26,27)

Paul speaks about giving to him, and others, that have taught believers the truth.

"Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and [as] the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he [it] altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, [this] is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, [is it] a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of [this] power over you, [are] not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. 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? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:5-14)

He bases his argument on (1) Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges the gospel is free; however, the reality is - in our modern society - it does take gifts to keep the gospel spread. (2) Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Those that preach the gospel and spend all their energy doing so should have some benefit from it. (3) Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? (4) Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Those faithful and hardworking brothers should be compensated for the efforts. (5) If we have sown unto you spiritual things, [is it] a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Paul says here that

he gave them spiritual food, and asks is it a big deal that those receiving that teaching give for that teaching? The answer is no. (6) If others be partakers of [this] power over you, [are] not we rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. He says others were really up front and demanding them to give them something. He says he and the other apostles could do the same but won't.

Instead, he says they suffer all things why? Lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. It's a faithful believer, like Paul, that needs not to "beg" for funds; they trust God will provide. It's true those faithful and obedient men of God should be provided for by the family of God, why? Because 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? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." These passages are a carryover from the Old Testament structure of providing for the Levites. This idea is now set up for those over the things of God in this dispensation. Understand giving is an axiom.

The question is asked, "How much should I give?" First, let me say one should not give anything to false, heretical, phony, disobedient, wordily, greedy, proud, in debt preacher/pastors, million dollar TV evangelists, plastic preachers, baby talk Bible teachers and the like!

God has given the true believer discernment along with a brain; we should learn to use both. If you attend a Church (and I would hope by now you've come out of those IC DCs*) that is teaching false doctrine, running the church like the world, and condones ecumenicalism you should, first, leave get out!

Never give to those that continue in those things, and if you know they do and still give you will give an account to Christ! How much should we give? everything we have if possible. Paul, speaking through the Holy Spirit, gives us a paradigm in 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. 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."

He says, now concerning the collection for the saints... collection means a gathering, a gathering of money. We're given the subject of his teaching in those words. He then says as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. This was something God wanted us to practice.

Understand the tithe (ten percent) was set up in the Old Testament, and practiced before the law, but made law to the Jew. If the law was not given to the gentiles and Gentiles come into the kingdom not by works of the law (Galatians 2:16) how is it that an aspect of the law (tithing) is demanded when the law has passed? (Romans 10:4; Galatians 2:21; 5:18; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 10:1).

He goes on, upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store...the first day of the week for them, just as for us, is when a collection was done when we gather for fellowship. Let every one of you[everybody] lay[that is put aside something] by him in store [to reserve, gather up]. According to the rule of tithe? No, as [God] hath prospered him...why? that there be no gatherings when I come. They were to lay up in reserve as God had so prospered them; then when Paul came he would take that offering to those saints or churches in need. How are we to give? "...not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7b).

We're given another paradigm in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 as to the giving of the work of the gospel and the Church (which is always the true born-again believers, the elect, the called out ones). In first Corinthians nine, Paul gives a beautiful lesson on giving and the purpose of it. At one point he says.

"But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (1 Corinthians 9:6,7)

In verse six he says, ...he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. What's he saying? Is he saying that we are under a strict rule of a tithe? No, he says if you give little you will receive little if you largely you will receive largely. The great boon of giving to the true work of God, His true people, and the gospel is a great reward of knowing you helped promote a worthy cause in obedience to God.

He repeats the idea of 1 Corinthians 16:2, every man according[even as] as he purposeth[chooses for one's self] in his heart[what he feels], [so let him give]...In what way? ...not grudgingly, or of necessity...why? For God loveth a cheerful giver. Did you catch that? How many of us give out of necessity because "the pastor" has conned us into believing that the new multimillion dollar building is a real necessity? Beloved, the preaching of Peter on the Day of Pentecost saw 3000 saved they had no 25,000 seat building. How many of us give grudgingly because the burden of a tithe has been placed upon us? Let us be careful. "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:5-10)

Being under a better covenant is living by faith, not compulsion. Nor living under condemnation and obligation. Tithing like using the out of context Malachi chapter three as a guilt trip, or a club to strong-arm people into giving. You'll be under that curse if you fail to come up with the cash this Sunday morning. Isn't it to do with doing justly, and loving mercy, and walking humbly with thy God?

Today, it's taught by many churches as a New Testament requirement, and is always to do money as it's used for paying the minister's wages. Even though Paul mentioned five times that elders were to feed the flock, not by constraint, but willingly; and not for filthy lucre (1 Timothy 3:3,8; Titus 1:7,11; 1 Peter 5:2).

Giving was an individual choice/heart thing; not a crowd being forced en mass because of damnable consequences. Or being fleeced because they thought it was their duty to provide for and sustain the "pastor" over them.

When it comes to the New Covenant the Lord requires all just like the illustration of a certain poor widow giving up the only couple of mites in Luke 21:2-3 (ever tried tithing 10% of two pennies?). We do not give out of compulsion because "God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Which basically means the LORD does not demand a "spiritual tax" but a whole heart of giving.

We are to give to teaching and to the brothers and sisters.

"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things... As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:6,10)

Paul speaks to the Philippians about giving.

"Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:15-19)

He says to them no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. Was he very angry at the others churches for not giving? Surely, if he had put all the Churches under the tithe he would have (1) been very upset that they were not following that commandment, and (2) he would have mentioned tithe to the Church of the Philippians.

However, he is not angry, disappointed maybe, but not angry at the others lack of giving. Why is he not angry? Because, as we learned earlier, giving is from the heart as one so purposes. He concludes that whether we give or not ...God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

True servants of God and who are in love with Jesus and are committed to serving Him are not greedy for money (1 Timothy 3:3; 5:17,18; 6:17,18; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2; 3 John 7,8).

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Let me give you a summary of this message.

- The "tithe" means 10% it was practiced in ancient times as well as before the law (Genesis 14:18-20; 28:20-22).
- Giving is commanded in both Old and New Testaments.
- It was for the house of God, God, the Levites/priests, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.
- It was given year by year, and every three years.
- There was the end of the year "first-fruits" offering.
- The New Testament makes NO mention of giving 10% tithe.
- We are to give "secretly" to God and His work (Matthew 6:1-4).
- Giving should be from the heart expecting nothing in return that's true giving.
- Let's remember the poor widow she gave "all she had" not just 10%.
- We should be giving to spread the Gospel (Matthew 25:14-30; John 12:6).
- We should give to those that are faithful, and are teaching God's Word truthfully: (Matthew 20:8; Luke 10:7; John 16:6; 1 Corinthians 9:5-14; Romans 15:27; Galatians 6:6,10; 1 Timothy 5:17,18).
- We're to give to the needy and poor brothers and sisters of our Lord first (Acts 4:32-37; 11:29; Romans 12:13; 15:26,27).

- We're to give to the poor (Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 11:41; 12:33; 19:8; Romans 12:20; Ephesians 4:28).
- We must not give anything to false, heretical, phony, disobedient, wordily, greedy, proud, in debt preacher/pastors, million dollar TV evangelists, plastic preachers, baby talk Bible teachers and the like.
- We should give "**...not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.**" (2 Corinthians 9:7b)

We should give as much as possible "...not grudgingly, or of necessity." To missions and the Brothers and Sisters in the Lord first. Because "**...God loveth a cheerful giver.**" :)

I pray this message has informative and helpful to you. We pray God would open the eyes of those that have lost sight of the purpose of giving, and restore to you a spirit of giving to God.

April 15, 2001