

## Will A Man Rob God?

How many times have you heard some preacher stand before a congregation and berate them for robbing God of tithes and offerings? Taking Malachi 3:8-10 out of context, today's denominational preachers are fleecing congregations around the world under the pretense of being cursed with a curse. Sadly, the reason so many people are abused by the practice of giving a compulsory 10% of their annual income, is because they are trusting in the scholarship of the preacher instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves (Acts 17:11).

This man-invented doctrine of tithing has developed a legion of covetous clergy, not to mention hordes of individuals whose minds have been soured by religion and giving to the Lord. The Word of God has warned us that, "...*there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:..*" (2 Peter 2:1-3). While it may be true that some preachers honestly believe what they have been taught concerning tithing, the fact remains that most are in it for the money and could care less what the Bible says about giving. John Hagee pleads for people to send him their tithes so that he can get himself out of the red. Then he offers his listeners his latest video-tape set for \$60 on "*How to Stay out of Debt.*"

The apostle Paul warns us of men and women who will use the gospel for their material gain: "*For we are not as many, which peddle the word of God: but of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ*" (2 Corinthians 2:17). The subject of Biblical giving is one that everyone must understand based upon the New Testament alone. Does God require people today to tithe? I believe the answers found in this tract will help you to better prepare yourself for giving only as the Lord has directed.

## The Truth about Tithing

On any given Lord's Day morning millions of gullible people grudgingly cast ten percent of their paychecks into a basket. After counting it, should the preacher not think it enough, the flock is shamed even further into giving more. Sound familiar?

Why is this phenomenon so prevalent in the religious world today? I believe the three most common reasons are: (1) Misuse of Scripture to defraud the flock for sordid gain; (2) Because there is no faith in God's system of giving; and (3) Because the average Church member is ignorant of what the Bible says about tithing vs. giving. The most often misapplied Scriptures thought to support the need to tithe are found in Malachi 3:8-10; Genesis 14:16-20; Hebrews 7:1-10 & Matthew 23:23.

It is sincerely believed that there is a valid argument for tithing since Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek long before the Law of Moses was given. Their argument says that because we are no longer under the Law of Moses (Colossians 2:14), Abraham's example proves that God requires people to tithe today. Hebrews chapter 7 is then given as a proof text. However the text of Genesis 14:20 and Hebrews 7:1-9 details the deep regard that Abraham held for Melchizedek as both king and priest of Jehovah. The record also informs us that Abraham's tithe was not the leftovers from the spoils of war, but instead it was ten percent of the very best. The patriarch gave tithes, not because it was required of him, but voluntarily and sacrificially.

Abraham's example of giving is only applicable to us today in the sense that it was voluntary and sacrificial. Not because it was a tithe, or tenth! Abraham's character is often used in the New Testament to demonstrate the character required of Christians. Abraham is the father of all them who by faith obey the will of God unto salvation (Romans 4:16-20).

The first time we find tithing mentioned as a requirement is in Leviticus 27:30-32. This book of the Old Testament sets forth laws and regulations

established at Mt. Sinai under the Law that was given by Moses to the Israelites (Exodus 20). Ten percent of the seed or fruit of the land, or ten percent of the herd or flock was to be holy unto the Lord. Not one thing is said about giving ten percent of one's paycheck to the church or preacher.

The book of Numbers encompasses the taking of a census, the inheritance of land for each tribe of Israel and the portion given to the Levites and priesthood. Because the Levites were to serve God, their inheritance became the tithe, instead of land. In Numbers 18:20-32 the command is given for the children of Israel to give a tithe (ten-percent) of their heave offering to the Levites. Then the Levites were commanded to give a tithe (ten percent) to the priests, of the herd, flock or seed of the land tithed to them by the people. The purpose of this tithe was to support the families of the priesthood for their service in the tabernacle. Of what did this tithe consist? Numbers 18:30 says it was a tenth of the increase of the threshing floor and winepress. Like the example set by Abraham, they were to tithe the very best of what they had received from the Lord, not their leftovers.

The book of Deuteronomy re-establishes the Law of Moses on a new generation of God's people after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. The generation that originally received the law had died off, now God prepares the next generation for service to Him before they enter the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy chapter 12, God instructs the people that they must observe His statutes and judgments all the days of their lives while living in the Promised Land. One thing they must obey is the giving of tithes (vs. 6). However one thing changed. No longer would they live around the tabernacle, which was close enough to bring their tithes of grain, fruit, cattle or sheep. Now they must come to a place of God's choosing (vs. 10-11). If they lived too far from the place (Jerusalem) they could sell their tithe, bring the money to Jerusalem and then purchase the best oxen, sheep, grain or fruit to be given to the Lord for their tithe (Deuteronomy 14:21-27).

Later in Nehemiah 10:35-39 as the people were restoring the Law of Moses and their service to

God; we discover that the tithes were to be given again to the Levites. Nehemiah records that the people brought out of their "*fields*" (not paychecks), offerings, and tithes for the priest and Levites (Nehemiah 12:44; 13:5).

The Israelites had assumed it was possible to pull the proverbial wool over God's eyes. The people were merely giving lip service in their worship to Jehovah, and were not humbly or submissively honoring the one who had made them His own. Jehovah asked them, "*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me...in tithes and offerings*" (Malachi 3:8). Not only had they not been giving their tithe to the Levites, which was the Lords, they were not tithing for the stranger, the widow, or the fatherless. Every third year God required the Israelites to give a tenth of their increase to fill storehouses that would help to feed the less fortunate (Deuteronomy 26:12-15). But again, the tenth of their increase was made up of food products, NOT MONEY.

In each passage of Scripture that speaks of tithing, we find several commonalities.

- 1) Only the Levites could collect tithes from the people
- 2) Their tithe was collected as payment for services rendered unto God in the Tabernacle and later the Temple
- 3) The Levites were required to tithe to the High Priest from the tithes given them
- 4) Only food products were tithable
- 5) Money was NEVER given as a tithe
- 6) The tithe was given to the children of Israel (the Jews) under the Law of Moses
- 7) Neither the tithe nor the Law of Moses was ever given to the Gentiles
- 8) All the statutes, judgments, & regulations, feasts of the Law of Moses have been done away – including tithes (Colossians 2:14)
- 9) Both Jew & Gentile are now required to obey the Law of Christ (Ephesians 2:13-16)

Does God require people today to give a tenth of their income? No! The command to tithe was required of the Israelites only.

## The Purpose of True Worship

The purpose of the Law of Moses was to teach the Israelites proper godly social, trading, religious, and governmental and health practices. They had lived 215 years in a pagan society who knew nothing of godliness. Therefore, the Law was meant to train the Israelites to become the perfect example of what true righteous living was all about (Galatians 3:23-25).

God was very clear that the only acceptable form of worship required conforming to His instructions alone: *“Ye shall,” “Ye shall not,” and “take heed”* (Deuteronomy 12:6, 8, 13). Not until men acknowledge God’s sovereignty will they obey His commands and express their gratitude for His goodness through sacrifice. The intent of the tithe was to teach men to recognize their duty as true worshippers of God. The Old Testament law of tithes, sacrifices and offerings were an expression of thanksgiving unto the Lord. Although tithing is no longer valid, living a sacrificial life is.

## Biblical Giving

Many, who have been burned with the false concept of tithing, have turned to the other extreme, thinking that God expects nothing from us at all. Although tithing was never required of all people (only the Jews), and has since the first century been nailed to the cross, sacrificial giving is still due God. Keep in mind what Paul said concerning the Law of Moses, *“....The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ....”* (Galatians 3:24). Paul also reminds us, *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning....”* (Romans 15:4). Therefore, the Law of tithing was meant to teach us how to express our gratitude to God for His goodness and mercy. In fact, Christianity itself was founded upon sacrifice: *“for ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9). *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye*

*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...”* (Romans 12:1).

To coerce men and women into giving back to God through unscriptural means is in itself robbery! For demeaning and fraudulent motives prevents the true child of God from spiritual growth, as God intended. God’s plan for giving is stated briefly but clearly: *“Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come”* (1 Corinthians 16:2). The Holy Spirit has given us every detail for our giving back to the Lord – when, who, and how much.

Some people say that Paul did not say *“every”* first day of the week. But God did not tell the Jews to keep *“every”* Sabbath day holy, yet we as well as they understood God to imply *“every”* Sabbath (Exodus 20:8). Therefore, Paul implies *“every”* first day of the week (Sunday) is when we are to sacrificially give back to God. *“Each one of you”* means every child of God. It is everyone’s duty to share in the burden of supplying money to the treasury so that the widows and fatherless may be fed and the bills of the church paid. As for how much we are to give, the Holy Spirit said, *“As he may prosper.”* Unlike the Old Covenant that required a tenth of ones increase be given to the Levites (food products that is), God has not so set a certain amount for us to give today. However, we must remember certain Bible principles that will help us determine how much.

*“He that giveth, let him do so with liberality”* (Romans 12:8). *“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”* (2 Corinthians 9:7-7). Keep in mind that God requires the first-fruits of our harvest, the very best that He has put into our care, since we are only managers of what we have, because everything belongs to God who gave it (1 Corinthians 10:26).

While it is true that God has not set any certain amount for us to give, it is our duty to work so that we are able to return a portion back to God so the

truth can be preached, and the needs of others met. Paul admonished all that are rich in this world’s material goods to give liberally (1 Timothy 6:6-19). Jesus called the rich young ruler a *“fool”* for trusting in his wealth and being unwilling to part with it (Luke 12:15-21). Giving as we have prospered lets our light shine (Matthew 5:16). Giving as we have prospered establishes treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).

The proper standard of giving is not the tithe, but voluntarily and sacrificially, as did Abraham. Making sure that we are cheerfully and willingly giving back to God who so richly blessed us with every spiritual blessing (Ephesian 1:3). As we grow spiritually mature, we will learn that it’s better to give than to receive, thereby giving more and more. Many have no faith whatsoever in God’s plan, so they depend upon the inventions of men (tithing) to support the works of the church. Remember that God loves the cheerful giver.

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***Tithing***



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