

# The Truth about Tithing

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## **The First Tithe**

The first recorded tithe in the Bible was given by Abraham to Melchizedek<sup>1</sup>. Melchizedek is a mysterious person. He is only mentioned three places in Scripture. He is mentioned in Genesis when Abraham paid a tithe to him. He is mentioned in Psalms 110:4 where it is prophesied that Yahushua (Jesus) is forever a High Priest after his order. He is most mentioned in Hebrews where more details are given about his Priesthood. Melchizedek is continually mentioned as the King of Salem Priest of the most high Elohim (God). It is striking that Yahushua is continually called the Prince of Peace and is also a Priest. Salem is simply another word for peace. Could it be that Melchizedek and Yahushua are one in the same?

Whoever this mysterious Priest of old, he impressed Abraham to the point that he gave him ten percent of everything that he owned. Ten percent of all is a large commitment. This is ten percent of his lands, his sheep, his gold, his money, his oil, and on and on. No place in the Bible was a tithe of all required nor was it required here by Melchizedek. This tithe was not given by Abraham because of mandate. It was given because of love.

## **The Threefold Tithe**

Yet for the hardness of the hearts of men YHWH gave to Moses the law and with the law the mandate to tithe. The tithe served three purposes and was a threefold tithe. One tithe was a tenth of the increase to be paid yearly for the upkeep of the temple and the livelihood of the Levitical Priests<sup>2</sup>. This tithe served the very practical purpose of ensuring that the Priests could be free to dedicate their lives to the work of YHWH without the disruptions of this present world.

Another tithe was a tenth of the increase to be enjoyed in jubilant celebration of YHWH's goodness in His presence<sup>3</sup>. Once a year a party was thrown in a place where YHWH chose. All of Israel was to travel to this place and celebrate YHWH's faithfulness and goodness together. This was a statement of faith or a form of praise and worship. By eating and enjoying a tenth of all the increase Israel was declaring before YHWH that He was all sufficient and not only would He supply all of their needs but there would be enough left over to party!

A third tithe was only to be given every three years<sup>4</sup>. This tithe was used for the provision of the poor and widows. Every three years a tenth of the increase was to be laid at the gates where it would be available to the needy. The Levites were also permitted to eat of this tithe.

Nehemiah 13:5 And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.

Nehemiah 13:12 Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.

Amos 4:4 Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years:

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob Elohim? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith YHWH of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

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

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Hebrews 7:5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

Hebrews 7:6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

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

Hebrews 7:9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

Deuteronomy 14:23 And thou shalt eat before YHWH thy Elohim, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear YHWH thy Elohim always.

Deuteronomy 14:28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:

Deuteronomy 26:12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled

II Chronicles 31:5 And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the fields; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.

II Chronicles 31:6 And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto YHWH their Elohim, and laid them by heaps.

II Chronicles 31:12 And brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully: over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next.

Nehemiah 10:37 And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our Elohim; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

Nehemiah 10:38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our Elohim, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

Nehemiah 12:44 And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.

## Acceptable Tithes

In as much as the Law specified very rigid guidelines for the distribution of the tithe it also defined rigorously what constituted an acceptable tithe<sup>5</sup>. An acceptable tithe was to be the first fruits of the seed of the land. That meant that whatever was the first tenth produced was to be given as a tithe. There was not to be any thought given as to whether it was good or bad. The common misconception is that you are to give your best to YHWH. This is simply not according to scripture in fact you were to give your first to Him. You were to give the first of whatever you have to him whether good or bad with faith.

Furthermore; this tithe was to be of the fruit of the land, the fruit of the tree, and the fruit of the herd. The implication here is that the tithe came from some sort of harvest. These are all things that grow and are living, given by YHWH. They are not in the realm of the inanimate such as cold and unfeeling money. Quite literally money does not grow on trees. Quite frankly money is the invention of man for the purpose of controlling other men and not even really wealth. It was never the intention of YHWH for working class people such as servants or slaves to pay a tithe. This responsibility fell to those who owned land and produced a crop from it.

Later; the tithe-able commodities are explicitly listed as: corn, wine, oil, honey, the increase of the fields, oxen, sheep, and holy things consecrated unto YHWH<sup>6</sup>. A tithe of money is not mentioned explicitly nor implicitly, nor is it ever mentioned in scripture. It was not the will of YHWH to take the few pennies of available on the shoe string budgets of servants, slaves, or widows. This will be shown further. His plan will be further explained.

It is naïve to teach that money was not used during old testament times as it is in modern times, because money is mentioned as early as Genesis in scripture<sup>7</sup>. It is also without biblical basis to teach that money should be converted into tithe-able commodities because there is no scripture stating this. Only during the time of the tithe meant for jubilant celebration tithe-able commodities could be converted into money for ease of transport and converted back at the party's location. Those with a crop were not required to convert it into money as a tithe nor were wage owners required to tithe from their wages or convert their wages into a tithe-able commodity.

## Malachi's Curse

So, it was well said by the Apostle Peter that there would be false teachers who would make merchandise of YHWH's people. They have done so by, promising greedy people with itching ears, that they could obtain worldly prosperity through tithing. No scripture is taken out of context more often than that of Malachi's curse and accompanying blessing<sup>8</sup>. Verse 5 nicely frames the true context of the scripture by specifying that there were those oppressing the

wage earners and widows. It was expected of YHWH that those whom he had entrusted with land and with its harvest should care for the wage earners, the widows, and the Levites by keeping the threefold tithe. Because they refused to do this the land was smitten with a curse.

### **Where are the Priests?**

So tithes were to be collected by priests and therefore the statute to collect tithes vanished with the priests<sup>9</sup>. Of the priesthood there are two orders. There is that of descent of which are the descendants of Levi and the priest's of faith which consisted of Melchizedek and Yahushua who may be the same person.

It is clear that no one is able to claim to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek other than Messiah himself. If one claims to be so then he had better be able to offer himself as a pure and spotless sacrifice for the ransom of all of the sins of the world because a priest's sole reason of existing is to offer sacrifices for the redemption of sin<sup>10</sup>. If the scripture proclaiming us as a royal priesthood makes us eligible to collect tithes then this tithe would be due to all of the household of faith and if it is to be collected by all then it must also be paid by all. How can all the Body both collect the tithe and pay it? YHWH is not the author of confusion.

Furthermore a servant is not above his master and there is no record of Yahushua ever collecting a tithe from his followers nor did any of the apostles. The Apostle Paul is recorded on several occasions requesting money of the Children of YHWH for the purpose of the ministry either on his own behalf or for that of others<sup>11</sup>. In doing so he never once alluded to Malachi, mentioned the tithe, or even suggested that such giving was compulsory. Instead rather, the Great Father of the Faith and Apostle Paul emphasized the quality rather than the quantity of our giving<sup>12</sup>.

So if there is anyone still due a tithe it would be those Levitical Priests of the seed of Levi<sup>13</sup>. It is not known for sure who is of the household Levi at this present time. Yet they should be recognized by their unmistakable separation from the world. The Levitical priest had no inheritance of worldly wealth<sup>14</sup>. They were to live and work wholly in the tabernacle<sup>15</sup>. They offered sacrifices and entered into the Holy of Holies<sup>16</sup>. They could only marry virgins or widows of other priests<sup>17</sup>. They are also bound to many other such ordinances. So anyone desiring to collect a tithe under the context of being a Levitical priest had better meet all of these criteria or they are perpetrating priesthood which is an offense that YHWH does not take lightly<sup>18</sup>.

## **Appendix 2 Scriptures on Tithing**

Genesis 14:20 And blessed be El-Elyon, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is YHWH's: it is holy unto YHWH.

Leviticus 27:31 And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.

Leviticus 27:32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto YHWH.

Numbers 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto YHWH, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

Numbers 18:26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for YHWH, even a tenth part of the tithe

Numbers 18:28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto YHWH of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof YHWH's heave offering to Aaron the priest.

Deuteronomy 12:6 And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:

Deuteronomy 12:11 Then there shall be a place which YHWH your Elohim shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto YHWH:

Deuteronomy 12:17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:

Deuteronomy 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

## **Appendix 1 Bibliography**

1. Genesis 14:20
2. Leviticus 27:30-33
3. Deuteronomy 14:22-27
4. Deuteronomy 14:27-29
5. Leviticus 27:30-33
6. Deuteronomy 12:17, II Chronicles 31:5-6
7. Genesis 17:12
8. Malachi 3:8-10
9. Hebrews 7:5-6
10. I Timothy 2:5-6
11. I Corinthians 9:3-18
12. II Corinthians 9
13. Hebrews 7:5
14. Numbers 18:24,26,28
15. Numbers 1:49-51
16. Hebrews 9:3-7
17. Leviticus 21:13-14
18. Numbers 1:51
19. Luke 20:24-25
20. Col 2:14
21. I Corinthians 6:20
22. II Corinthians 9:7

## **All things in Common**

So with tithing, I am reminded of the words of Paul in I Corinthians in reference to spiritual gifts, "Yet I show you a more excellent way." If love is more excellent than spiritual gifts then how much more it exceeds the capacity of gifts of money which is a creation of Babylon<sup>19</sup>. The more excellent way is simply that described in Acts 4:32 which describes a church of one accord who had all things in common. This is the only way which satisfies the commandment which was from the beginning to Love.

To have a collection point, which imposes a "tax" upon the people in the form of a tithe, based on legalistic fear of curses is no different than a government or other human social organization taxing it's members or imposing dues upon them. Where is the more excellent way? Malachi's curse like all others was nailed to the cross of Christ blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which were written against us<sup>20</sup>.

Contrariwise if the saints hold all things in common then they regard nothing as their own but all things as the Messiah's and held in trust for His use upon His request<sup>21</sup>. This Biblical model is different from worldly socialism, no central governing body forcefully takes of the possessions and wealth for redistribution as it sees fit, instead each believer is entrusted with a degree of wealth according as YHWH sees fit and should be relinquished upon his request in freewill with cheerful giving and love.

## **Cheerful Giver**

So there is one way and one way alone that we are to give and that is in faith, love, and cheerfulness<sup>22</sup>. For if the work of the Cross frees us and gives us liberty to overcome the curses of the law of tithing and supersedes the requirements of the priesthood replacing all its sacrifices, how much more does it require us to give not the gift which is born of fear but of love! For what will we say in the face of him, who, "Spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and will also freely with it give us all things."

## **All You are for All He is**

Despite the years of indoctrination into the teaching that tithing would make us all rich beyond our wildest dreams, one sees quite the contrary. For there are those worldly people who do not tithe at all, and yet live in exceeding wealth; and those who tithe religiously and give liberal offerings besides, who seem to continually live in near abject poverty. So one can not dismiss the reality that flies in the face of our "sacred cows" and dogmas. The biblical reality is that tithing, has been misunderstood from the beginning, is no longer a commandment under the new covenant of Grace and Love, and is no more than a cherished fable in the minds of well meaning or not so well meaning teachers.

In fact Yahushua our Messiah is not interested in our money but in our all. There is but one price that is satisfactory and that is: "All that you are, for all that He is". For what would one pay for the salvation of their child or a community that is safe from rape and abuse? What is the value of a saved marriage or a baby saved from abortion?

How will we explain to Yahushua why we could not afford to pay for such things or why we left one of His creation hungry in the street without the price of a \$1 cheeseburger? What answer will we give when our pastors and teachers suffer for the work of the Gospel while we live in comfort and security? When they sow their spiritual wealth, is it too great to ask a little of our carnal wealth? What could equal the worth of the lost or the cost to have the Word of YHWH proclaimed to the nations? What is the value of that which YHWH thought was worth all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily crucified? Are these things not as in the words of a popular television commercial? Priceless.

### **After Thoughts**

No doubt many people will have read this paper with greedy motivations. In saying this I am not addressing the wolves in sheep's clothing warned of by Peter who make merchandise of YHWH's chosen. Such as these are more aware of the falsehood of the Doctrine of Tithing than am I. Instead I am speaking of such greedy motivations as take the form of tightfisted individuals looking for an excuse to withhold giving, or Nicolaitians seeking a materialistic Santa Claus style ten fold return on their every offering.

This is exactly the mentality which has led to the misunderstanding of the Biblical teachings on tithing. The deeper issue in understanding the meaning of this paper is understanding the nature of money itself and the differences between money, wealth, and love. Perhaps, no where on earth are we more deluded than in the United States of America to believe that money is all powerful. Indeed, it is even called the Almighty Dollar.

Money, especially in it's modern fiat form, is no more than a note from the government authorizing a certain level of power. Such power trickles down from the rich to the poor in a pyramid fashion seeking to enslave all in its pathway. I say, all, not by accident but by observation. The rich are no less enslaved to it than the poor with all of their fear of losing it. The poor are no better off than the rich with all of their fears of being unable to obtain it.

Wealth is an entirely different concept. Wealth may be had without money and money may be had without wealth. The wealth of this world consists in our people, land, ideas, and resources. Though it may be possible to accomplish things without money it is impossible to accomplish much of anything without these.

So then money is a means by which we may force others to share this world's wealth, yet in forcing them to do so there is nothing learned. Instead when we resort to such coercions we take part in the Mystery Whore religion that enslaves us all from the beginning, complete with its pyramidal power structure and unyielding hatred, covetousness, and greed. Since 33 AD a new and awesome force has entered into the scene of this world. It is a force described by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 13, as that which never fails. It is a force that comes as a fruit of the Ruach HaQedosh (Holy Spirit). It is a force that promises to cast out fear.

So it is that only those who begin to understand what it is to, "Come out of her my people", will understand the difference between the mark that is always on the hands and the minds of the wicked and those who obey from the heart the command of I Corinthians 14:1 and "Follow after Love."