



Truth For These Times



18. TITHING

We may not all be preachers or missionaries, but we can all support this soul saving work by means of the tithes and offerings we give. In actual fact, the tithing plan as outlined in the Bible, was divinely appointed by God for this very purpose. By following this plan of systematic giving, we become actual partners together with God in His gospel work.

1 Timothy 6:7,10 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. For **THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL**, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The world has a materialistic outlook on life, and success is often gauged by the abundance of one's possessions and wealth. But here we see that at death we can take nothing with us. The love of money has ruined the Christian experience of many.

Psalms 24:1 **THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S**, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

God rightfully claims our income and possessions, for in fact, everything belongs to Him. We are merely stewards of His gifts.

Psalms 50:10-12 For **EVERY BEAST OF THE FOREST IS MINE**, *and* the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field *are* Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world *is* Mine, and all its fullness.

Haggai 2:8 'The silver *is* Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts.

God's possessions include the animals, birds and precious materials. As Creator He is the rightful owner.

Deuteronomy 8:17,18 Then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.' And you shall remember the LORD your God, for **IT IS HE WHO GIVES YOU POWER TO GET WEALTH**, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

So many reason that because of their hard work, they take credit to self for their riches. What they fail to realise is that without God's gift of life and strength they could do nothing. Therefore, what they earn is in fact, rightfully God's.



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 THE LORD'S**. It *is* holy to the LORD.

Although all belongs to God, He does not require us to return all – just the tithe or 10%. When we examine the situation; God is most generous. He does most of the work, and we get most of the pay. A good partnership, if such were a business deal. To return tithe, simply means giving God 10% of our increase. If wages are \$100 the tithe is \$10. In the case of a businessman, tithe is deducted after expenses incurred in his business have been accounted for. For e.g. if his profit is \$1,000 – expenses for materials, wages, rent, power etc. come to \$400. Increase is \$600 therefore tithe is \$60.

Genesis 14:18-20 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him 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 GAVE HIM A TITHE OF ALL.



Abraham bringing tithes to the King of Salem.

Some feel tithing was only for the Jews, but here we see Abraham giving tithe Priest Melchizedek. The Israelite laws had not been given at this stage, but apparently Abraham was well aware of the tithing system. In Genesis 28:22 Jacob promised to give his tithe to God. The book of Genesis covers more than 2,000 years, it only contains 50 chapters. It deals with broad principles, and highlights, but not with minute details. However, it shows plainly that tithing was practised at this time.

Matthew 23:23 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For YOU PAY TITHE of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. THESE YOU OUGHT TO HAVE DONE, without leaving the others undone.**

Did Jesus agree with tithe paying? Here He condemns the scribes and Pharisees for being so particular in paying tithe even on garden herbs, yet omitting matters of far greater importance – judgment, mercy and faith. He said, “These ought ye to have done.” In other words, “You should pay tithe, but not neglect other more important issues”. Jesus was in favour of returning tithe.

WHAT WAS TITHE USED FOR?

Numbers 18:20,21 Then the LORD said to Aaron: “You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel. Behold, I HAVE GIVEN THE CHILDREN OF LEVI ALL THE TITHES in Israel as an inheritance IN RETURN FOR THE WORK WHICH THEY PERFORM, THE WORK OF THE TABERNACLE of meeting.”



Tithe was used to support the priests attending to the Sanctuary service.

The Levites possessed no land, ran no businesses, and did not work for wages. They were the ministers of the people and worked for God in caring for the temple and its services. God regarded this phase of Israel’s life as most important, and the Levites were to do this work on a full time basis. Their income was derived from the tithe, given by the other eleven tribes.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT?

1 Corinthians 9:13,14 Do you not know that **THOSE WHO MINISTER THE HOLY THINGS EAT OF THE THINGS OF THE TEMPLE**, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of the altar*? Even so the Lord has commanded that **THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL SHOULD LIVE FROM THE GOSPEL**.

Verse 13 speaks of those who minister in the temple. These are none other than the Levites mentioned in our previous verse who “live on the things of the temple”, or whose income was derived from tithe. Paul compares them with the gospel ministers saying, “Those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel”. In other words, they derive their income from the tithe, even as the Levites did in Old Testament times. This is God’s ordained method of supporting the work of spreading the gospel message. While



in Corinth Paul worked at his trade as a tent maker to supply his needs, but this was not so in other places. The critical attitude of the Corinthians concerning money made him do this, in order that he would be above criticism. Even his work in Corinth was made possible because of the church in other places. See 2 Corinthians 11:8. The workers of the gospel had every right to be fully supported by the church. The disciples were thus supported. Matthew 10:9,10. Paul did not demand his rights in Corinth because of their wrong outlook.

Hebrews 7:1,2 For this **MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM, PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD**, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **TO WHOM ALSO ABRAHAM GAVE A TENTH PART OF ALL**, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace”.

TO WHOM SHOULD THE TITHE BE GIVEN?

Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek, who was God’s representative on earth. Today God’s representative is the church. The church uses the tithe to pay ministers, and support evangelistic programs.

Malachi 3:8-11 “**WILL A MAN ROB GOD? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘IN WHAT WAY HAVE WE ROBBED YOU?’ IN TITHES AND**



OFFERINGS. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, *even this whole nation*. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and **POUR OUT FOR YOU SUCH BLESSING** that *there will not be room enough to receive it*. And I **WILL REBUKE THE DEVOURER** for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” says the LORD of hosts.

To rob our fellow man is very bad, to rob God is infinitely worse, yet this is the case if we refuse to return the tithe. The result of such action is to be cursed.

Notice how tithes and offerings are separate. The tithe is 10%, whereas the offerings are freewill. These are to be given as we are able.

God promises to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing if we faithfully return the tithe – a blessing so great as to overflow. Some people say they cannot afford to pay tithe. Friend, you cannot afford not to. It is better to have nine tenths blessed than to have our whole income cursed. With the Lord's blessing on the remaining nine tenths, many have testified that it goes further than when they selfishly kept it all to themselves.



Notice too, the promise of the rebuke of the devourer. The great Devourer first of all is the devil. When we return our tithe it does something for us. It takes away the selfishness which dominates the carnal nature. In one way, God asks us to give for our own good. It helps develop Christian character. Also, the devourer is the pest responsible for destroying crops etc. Stories could be related by the score of God's special blessing, of protection of crops and business interests. Hail storms have been held back, locusts have gone around the property of tithe payers. Fires have died out at boundary fences. Every tithe payer could relate stories of the blessing, of God.

Tithe envelopes are available and can be placed in the offering bag at the church service. The church treasurer will issue a receipt. Because there is extra tithe coming in, the minister does not get a higher pay. As the tithe increases, more ministers can be employed, or more evangelistic outreaches can be planned. A minister's wage is not large, but adequate to meet his needs.

Some ask the question, "What about the years I have not returned tithe? Must I repay?" The answer is NO. At the time of our ignorance, God winks at, but when we know, we have a responsibility to do what we know is right.

Psalms 37:25 I have been young, and *now* am old; yet I HAVE NOT SEEN THE RIGHTEOUS FORSAKEN, nor his descendants begging bread.

We have no need to fear for our financial security when we return all our tithe. God promises to supply our needs.

Proverbs 3:9,10 Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR INCREASE; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.



When we are faithful to God –
God is faithful to us.

The tithe is the firstfruits. It is our first responsibility when we receive our income. If we faithfully give our tithe, the promise is "our barns shall be filled with plenty".

2 Corinthians 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER.

God has done so much for us, we should be cheerful in doing what He asks of us. Tithing is not a burden. It is a happy privilege. A partnership with God.

Matthew 6:33 **BUT SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

We have no need to worry about our temporal needs such as food, drink and shelter. God's promises are sure. We will receive them. All He asks is that we put Him first.

It may require faith to take this step, but God is asking you to put Him to the test. "Try Me now in this", He says. My friend, you have a great blessing to lose if you do not take Him at His word, but if you believe Him the windows of heaven will pour out a blessing upon you.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL ON TITHING

There are many great businessmen who have ascribed their prosperity to being faithful in returning to God the tithe. John D. Rockefeller began tithing when he was earning only \$3.50 a week. H.J. Heinz of "57 varieties", H.P. Crowell of Quaker Oats, J.L. Kraft of Kraft cheese, F.W. Woolworth of the well known Woolworth stores, William Wrigley of chewing gum, William Colgate of toothpaste fame all put God first in their finances and found themselves on the highway to prosperity.

There are times when God fulfils His promise and "rebukes the devourer" by caring for a faithful Christian's harvest. One of countless examples occurred in California. A farmer there had beautiful crops but was in despair when he saw that the dreaded army beetle had settled into a corner of his property. He was struck with the fearful realisation that in a matter of hours his entire farm would be bare.

His little girl spoke with encouragement. "Daddy", she said, "You pay your tithe don't you? Then why not ask God to keep His promise and drive the beetles away?" They knelt together in prayer, and claimed the promise of Malachi 3:11.

As they looked up, they saw a number of blackbirds alighting on the field where the beetles were. More and more kept coming, remained on the ground for a few minutes, then flew away. There wasn't a beetle left. The blackbirds had devoured them all. The crops were saved.

A Christian African was confronted with advancing locusts which devoured every green thing. He prayed to God in faith and when the locusts passed by, the garden of this humble Christian was untouched – green and beautiful like an oasis amid the desolation. People came from miles around to see the amazing sight, wondering how it could have happened.

A faithful Christian farmer in Western Australia saw a tremendous hail storm destroy the whole crop in the whole district – except on his land. The destruction came to his fence line all around his property. When the amazed neighbours asked why, he told them of the promise of Malachi 3. Similar occurrences have taken place all around the world. God is still keeping His promise.

Why not put Him to the test? He invites you to do so. If you lovingly and gratefully bring your tithe into the storehouse, not with the motive of protection of money, but with a thankful heart, you too may open the windows of heaven. Into your life may flow blessings so great and so many that there will not be room enough to receive them.

Review Sheet – Tithing

Assignment: Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. What does the Bible say is the root of all evil? 1 Timothy 6:7,10.
For the _____.
 2. To whom does the earth belong? Psalms 24:1.
The earth _____.
 3. Who is the rightful owner of the silver and gold? Haggai 2:8
The silver is _____;
 4. To whom are we indebted for our possessions? Deuteronomy 8:17,18
Remember the Lord your God, for _____,
 5. What portion of our increase does God claim? Leviticus 27:30
And all _____ is the _____.
 6. What is the earliest indication of tithing (i.e. 10% of increase) in the Bible? Genesis 14:18-20
Melchizedek king of Salem ... priest of God Most High ... said, “Blessed be Abram ...” and he gave _____.
 7. Did Jesus indicate tithing was correct? Matthew 23:23
For you _____ ... these _____,
 8. What was tithe used for in Old Testament times? Numbers 18:20,21
I have given the children of _____ ... in return for _____,
 9. Is tithing necessary in New Testament times? 1 Corinthians 9:13,14
Those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple? (i.e. the Levites) those who preach _____.
 10. How can a man rob God? Malachi 3:8-11
In what way have we robbed you? _____.
 11. Will a person be reduced to poverty when he gives 10% of his income to God? Psalms 37:5 Matthew 6:33
I have been young, and now am old, yet _____,
_____. Seek first the _____ ... and
all _____.
 12. Should we give to God grudgingly? 2 Corinthians 9:7
For God _____.
- God says, “Prove me now”. Is it your plan to step out in faith and return God’s tithe? _____.