

The Sacred Duty of Giving God His Tithe

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I. THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR TITHING

A. *The Context of the Lord's Exhortation to Israel*

1. **Malachi(jah): Jehovah's final messenger to a backsliding & unfaithful people**

2. **The sins prevalent among the returned exiles:**

- **The priests were marrying alien wives**
- **God's temple and service were neglected & dishonored**
- **Sabbath desecration**
- **Unlawful divorces**
- ***Withholding of the full tithe God required***

3. **The common denominator: No genuine regard for God & His service**

Mal 1:13 *Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.*

4. **God's assessment of the withholding of the full tithe: Ye have robbed ME!**
(vss. 8-9)

5. **God's judgment upon this sin: Ye are cursed with a curse!**

Mal 1:14 *But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts*

6. **The amazing truth of our text: God offers abundant mercy to His disobedient people who have robbed Him.**

B. *The Duty of Tithing: Rooted in Genesis*

1. **Tithe = The old English word for 1/10**

2. **The number 10: Symbolic of God's perfect demand upon man**

3. **The theology of tithing: All that I am I owe to Thee**

4. **The duty of returning 1/10 (or more) of my blessings to the God who gave them:**

- **Understood from the dawn of time--even by heathens**
- **Practiced by Abraham**

Gen 14:18-20 *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. {19} And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: {20} And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

- **Practiced by Jacob**

Gen 28:22 *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.*

5. **Tithing:**

- **Instituted *before* the ceremonial law was given**
- **A moral principle and duty**

- **The abiding duty of man toward His Maker!**

C. The Divine Exposition of this Duty in the Levitical Law

1. The Levitical Law: God's detailed exposition of *existing* precepts!

2. Key passages: Lev. 27:30-32; Deu. 26:12-13

Lev 27:30,32 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 unto the LORD. {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 the LORD.

Deu 26:12-13 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; {13} Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them:

3. Significant truths emphasized in these passages:

- **God requires a tithe of ALL our increase**
- **The tithe is the Lord's--it does not belong to us!**
- **Most importantly: The tithe is *holy unto the LORD!***

4. Tithing: The holy duty of *love* of God's redeemed people

D. The Performance of this Duty by the NT Christian

1. The significant silence of the New T. on this subject!

2. The NT Christian is bound by the same moral principle

3. The stress of the NT:

- **Cheerful & generous giving (tithe *PLUS*)**

2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

- **Rooted in Old Testament practice**

2 Chr 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 field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.

4. The *sacred* duty of the Christian: To honor God with the firstfruits of ALL his substance

Prov 3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

5. Tithing: The Christian's expression of love for & trust in God

II. THE SACRED PURPOSE OF TITHING

A. To Provide the Financial Resources for God's Service

1. "...that there may be meat in mine house": That there may be provision for My house & the service I have ordained

2. Clearly spelled out by the Levitical Law

Num 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the

congregation.

3. Reinforced by Hezekiah during his great reformation

2 Chr 31:4 Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

4. Clearly spelled out by the apostle Paul

1 Cor 9:13-14 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? {14} Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

5. The faithful giving of the tithe

- yields the financial resources for the service of the Lord -- for the ministry of redemption
- even required from the Levites who lived from the tithe
Neh 10:38 And the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.
- a gift of gratitude for God's unspeakable Gift of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

B. To Provide for the Needs of the Needy and Destitute

1. The Levites had to use part of the tithe for the stranger, the fatherless, & the widows

Deu 14:28-29 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: {29} And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied

2. Tithing yields the resources for the ministry of mercy

3. Our sacred duty: To provide the deacons with the resources to minister mercy to the needy

C. To Provide an Antidote Against Covetousness

1. The Christian needs continually to be reminded that the purpose of his life is to love God & his neighbor

2. The inclination of the flesh: to covet the goods & riches of this present world

3. The giving of the tithe: An ongoing reminder

- that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world
- that we cannot serve two masters--God & mammon

Mat 6:24 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.

- that we must *first* seek the Kingdom of God & His righteousness!

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

III. THE DIVINE BLESSING PROMISED UPON TITHING

A. *Jehovah Issues a Challenge to Israel*

1. **The Lord challenges Israel to put Him to the test!**
2. **This challenge: Given by the LORD of Hosts**
3. **The Levitical law:**

- **indicated that God would bless those who would honor Him with His firstfruits**

Deu 14:22,29 Thou shalt truly tithes all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year....that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

Deu 28:12 The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand

- **directed Israel, by God's direction, to ask for this blessing!**

Deu 26:13,15 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me...Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

4. **God's blessing: experienced during Hezekiah's reformation**

2 Chr 31:10 And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store.

B. *Jehovah Promises Abundant Blessing to Israel*

1. **The God who has cursed is ready to bless abundantly!**

Gen 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life...the windows of heaven were opened.

2. **"Open the windows of heaven": A phrase well understood**

3. **God here promises to bless them with far more than they give**

4. **The forcefulness of the language: I will empty out my reservoirs of mercy!**

Deu 11:14 That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

Zec 8:12 For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.

5. **The essence of this promise: Jehovah is very gracious and delights in mercy**

6. **The bottom line: God will abundantly bless those who honor & obey His precepts**

Prov 3:9-10 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: {10} So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

IV. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING OUR TITHING

A. Specific Applications for our Present Situation

- 1. 10% of our income is holy unto the LORD!**
- 2. God requires that we give at least 10% of our personal and business income (of our profit!)**

1 Cor 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him
Neh 10:35 And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:
Neh 13:12 Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.
- 3. The tithe must be paid from our GROSS income--before taxes**

1 Sam 8:15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.
1 Sam 8:17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.
Mat 22:21 Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.
- 4. The tithe must be paid before all other financial obligations are met--it is the Lord's money!**
- 5. Payment of tuition for Christian education is NOT part of our tithe**
- 6. Real giving begins AFTER we have paid our tithe!**

2 Cor 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
- 7. We must pay our tithe with a cheerful & thankful heart**

B. Failure to Tithe: A Robbing of God

- 1. A question for all of us: Will a man rob God?**
- 2. To rob God = to defraud God, Possessor of Heaven & Earth!**
- 3. Anything less than a full tithe is robbery in God's sight**
- 4. Robbing God: A sin of unfathomable proportions toward the God who daily loads us with benefits**
- 5. The result of robbing God: God's disfavor will rest upon us.**

Amos 4:9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.
Mal 2:2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

C. The Duty of a Guilty People: To Repent of our Sin of Ignorance

- 1. A sin of ignorance: A sin worthy of divine judgment**
- 2. The proof of this assertion: God required a bloody sacrifice to atone for it**

Lev 5:15-16 If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the

LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: {16} And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him.

- 3. A blessed gospel for transgressors of God's law: There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared**
- 4. Our duty today: Repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**
- 5. A necessary component of this repentance: Our tithing may require a rearrangement of financial priorities**

D. Conclusion

- 1. After considering the clear teaching of Scripture on this subject, our failure to give God His full tithe will no longer be a sin of ignorance!**
- 2. Therefore, trust and obey, for there is no other way!**

1 Ki 17:13,16 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

- 3. Our attitude toward Giving God His tithe: A barometer of our heart & spiritual life**

Deu 15:10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

Rom 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- 4. A truth also applicable toward tithing: If you love me, keep my commandments**
- 5. Therefore:**

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD 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.