

# Exposing The Tithe Lie

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<http://www.lighthouseprophecy.com/prophecy/ExposingTheTitheLie.html>

*This is a collection of articles that address the Tithe Lie.  
If you read them with prayer, you will find freedom.*

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## **To Tithe or Not to Tithe: The \$earch For Truth**

Though I've always struggled with the tithe, I still shook my head in disgust when I heard about the preacher who's congregation quietly left the church during the prayer following a long sermon on tithing. He said "Amen", looked up and cried out "half my church is gone!" I laughed saying "they must have fled the conviction of the Holy Spirit".

What the Lord said took me completely by surprise: "They fled from error and guilt-based giving". "What?!?" - I've heard more sermons on the tithe than on any other topic except perhaps our need of Jesus for eternal life! After I picked up my jaw from the floor, the Lord prompted me to study tithing and giving. Throughout the Bible study I prayed for His guidance and in the end I reached the inescapable conclusion that **the "tithe" is to the modern church what the issue of "circumcision" was to the church in Paul's time.**

**NOTE:** Nothing in this article is intended as an excuse to stop giving as the Lord leads you to give.

The verse most often cited in support of the tithe is from the Old Testament, found in [Malachi 3:8-10](#):

8. "'Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, `How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings.  
9. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. 10. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Many preachers shorten [Malachi 3:8-10](#) to just "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse", and almost always with the inference that their church is the "storehouse". For purposes of this paper, the Lord had me concentrate on the passage: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house".

From that passage, the Lord had me research several questions:

1. What is the tithe?
2. What was the tithe for?
3. What is the storehouse?

**1. What is the tithe?** The tithe is 10% of the increase, established in [Leviticus 27:30-33](#) as an offering Holy to the Lord. The scripture identifies the tithe as grain and fruit, herd and flock. The tithe is food! An example of the tithe can be seen in a shepherd with a flock of 100 sheep who is blessed with the birth of 50 lambs in the spring. Five of the lambs must be offered to the Lord as a tithe. The tithe was brought to the temple in Jerusalem in acknowledgement and appreciation of God's provision for His people.

**2. What was the tithe for?** God doesn't need the food – God doesn't eat. God doesn't desire sacrifices or offerings ( [Psalm 40:6](#) and [Hosea 6:6](#) ) – He desires mercy. God doesn't need us to give Him a 10th of everything – when He already owns everything ( [Psalm 24:1](#) and [Job 41:11b](#) ). The tithe was used to feed the Levite priests (and their families) who were required to work in the temple day and night ministering to God on behalf of God's people ( [1 Chronicles 9:33](#) ). Without the tithe, the Levite priests would have needed to raise their own food, thereby taking them away from ministering before God. Hence the reference in [Malachi 3:10](#) "...that there may be food in my house". [Nehemiah 13:10-13](#) records a time when the Levite priests were not receiving the tithe wherein they abandoned their daily temple responsibilities to work the farms to feed their

families. The reference to 'robbing God' in [Malachi 3:8](#) is in fact robbing God of ministry and worship by failing to take care of God's priests through the tithe of food items. Unlike the other tribes of Israel who were given land as their inheritance, the Levites were not given any land – only a few cities in which to live. God was their inheritance ( [Numbers 18:20-21](#) ). Thus, the remaining tribes were obligated to provide the Levites with food since they had no land on which to grow their own.

**3. What is the storehouse?** [2 Chronicles 31](#) teaches that the storehouse is the Temple in Jerusalem. When the tithe was re-instituted under King Hezekiah, the king gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple to hold the tithe. Apparently the grain "tithe" was heaped up in the streets, which caused a traffic jam of sorts. King Hezekiah had the storehouse built to relieve a bad case of urban congestion in ancient Jerusalem.

Having established the original purpose of the tithe, the Lord prompted me with several more questions.

**Q: "What happened to the temple (storehouse)?"**

*A: It was destroyed in 70AD and has not been rebuilt.*

**Q: "Why?"**

*A: The old covenant system of animal sacrifice to atone for sin is finished. The new covenant is in the blood of Christ who is the final and everlasting sin sacrifice.*

**Q: "Where is the temple now?"**

*A: [1 Corinthians 6:19](#) says WE are the temple of the Holy Spirit. God no longer resides in a stone temple, but in the hearts of his children through the Holy Spirit.*

**Q: "What happened to the Levite priests?"**

*A: The Levite priesthood is no longer necessary as the old covenant system of animal sacrifice in the temple was superceded by the everlasting covenant of Christ's blood.*

**Q: "Who is the priesthood now?"**

*A: [1 Peter 2:5 and 9](#) says those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior are the priesthood.*

## **Come On Laity, Let's Do The Twist**

Burdening the Body of Christ with the Tithe requires several twists and reinterpretations of scripture.

- 1) The tithe must be imported from the OT law of Moses to the new covenant of grace by Christ's blood.
- 2) The tithe must be redefined from "flocks, herds, fruit and grain" to "money" and often "time".
- 3) The storehouse must be redefined from the temple in Jerusalem to the local church building.
- 4) The Body of Christ must buy into the ordained clergy as the new priesthood, thereby replacing the Levite priesthood as the rightful recipient of the tithe.
- 5) The Body of Christ must forfeit their own priesthood and buy into the notion that they are the "laity".

The tithe has been introduced to the Body of Christ using 2 tactics of the enemy.

**1) Sowing guilt and shame into the Body of Christ** by quoting [Malachi 3:8](#) "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings." What devoted Christian wants to rob God? The net effect of sowing guilt has been to extort money from the Body of Christ, thereby robbing the Body of the joy and blessing of giving as God leads. The practice ignores Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth: "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver ( [2 Corinthians 9:7](#) )."

**2) Blaming the "laity" for the financial troubles in the Body of Christ** , by telling the Body they are not blessed by God because they do not tithe. Often [Malachi 3:10](#) is emphasized "Test me in this, says the LORD Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." In so doing, believers are challenged to tithe, with the promise that God will bless them if they do. Such giving is not out of love for God, but out of selfishness. It implies a reward for works, which contradicts [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) , and completely ignores our status as sons of God by faith in Christ (

[Galatians 3:26](#) ) and joint heirs of God with Christ ( [Romans 8:17](#) ). The practice also ignores Christ's words in [Matthew 4:7](#) "Do not put the Lord your God to the test".

## The Apostles Did Not Teach Gentiles to Tithe

[Acts 15:1-31](#) records a dispute over circumcision that arose in the Gentile church at Antioch. Several false brothers had attempted to require Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians to be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas sharply opposed the false brothers and traveled to Jerusalem to discuss the issue of circumcision with the other apostles. In Jerusalem, they reported the miracles and conversions among the Gentiles. The apostles were filled with joy over God's work there, and they agreed that circumcision was not a requirement for salvation. Following the meeting, the apostles and elders in the church at Jerusalem sent Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch with a letter of welcome to the Gentile Christians. The essential text of the letter is found in [Acts 15:28-29](#). It reads: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell."

The apostles did not want to burden the Gentiles with Old Testament practices! The proof is in their letter to the Gentiles and the fact that the apostles did not impose the tithe on them.

## Come, Let Us Reason Together ( [Isaiah 1:18](#) )

Let's suppose for the sake of argument that Jesus had commanded us to continue tithing. It would be appropriate then to use the tithe to feed the priesthood as originally purposed. Who then is the priesthood? The apostle Peter writes in [1 Peter 2:5 and 9](#) that *every believer is a priest!* [Hebrews 5-8](#) also teaches us that *Jesus is the only priest that we need* . However the institutional church has borrowed from the Old Testament model of the Levitical Priesthood, thereby establishing a new priesthood (ordained clergy) that is separate from the rest of the Body of Christ. The division between the clergy, and the so-called "laity" is not Biblical (*Is this the doctrine of the Nicolaitans that Jesus says He hates in [Revelation 2:6](#)* )? In fact, Jesus did not establish the ordained clergy – He chose fishermen and tax collectors to preach His gospel. Neither did He establish division in His church, He desires unity ( [John 17:20-23](#) ). The apostles did not set up an ordained clergy – they chose men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom to serve the Body ( [Acts 6:3](#), [1 Timothy 3](#) ). This man-made division between "clergy" and "laity" has effectively served to divert the offerings of the Body of Christ away from the people it is intended to bless and the offerings are most often used in ways contrary to the will of God. The net result has been starvation and financial bondage for many believers, and the real priesthood – the whole Body of Christ – has not been prepared to carry out Christ's command to preach the gospel to all nations!

Jesus is the Word of God in the flesh ( [John 1:14](#) ). He knew that [Malachi 3:10](#) says "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse" when He instructed the rich man to sell everything and give the proceeds to the poor ( [Matthew 19:21](#) ). I imagine the Scribes and Pharisees about choked on what Jesus said as they were in the habit of devouring widow's houses for profit ( [Luke 20:47](#) ) and the rich man's possessions would have been a real feast for them. In [Matthew 25:31-46](#), Jesus reiterated His desire to help the poor in the parable of separating the sheep from goats, wherein at judgement Jesus will reward those who feed the hungry and clothe the poor. Since Jesus judges us for our care of the poor and hungry, and since He commands us to preach the gospel throughout the world, why is most of our giving used for church buildings and salaries with only a small percentage devoted to the poor, missions and evangelism?

Is the church *making goats out of us* by not feeding the hungry and clothing the poor with our offerings? Let's not wait until the Judgement of Christ to find out!

## Sins of the Church Against the Needy

The Lord has been trying to bring me to the truth about giving for years. On many occasions, He prompted me to take what I would have normally put in the offering plate at church and give it directly to someone in need. I love giving like that! Still, in the absence of specific giving instructions from the Lord, I never questioned the common practice of giving everything to the church, whereupon I trusted the church to administer my gifts. That is until the day the Lord had me witness an abomination that left me nauseous.

In the main office of a church I attended years ago, I was fixing a computer one Friday morning. Two young black women, with 3 adorable children dressed in their Sunday best, came into the office to ask for a food donation. The 3 secretaries of our all white upper middle class church stared at them, and finally one said nervously "our deacon of benevolence is in the office on Thursday afternoons – can I make an appointment for you next Thursday?" One of the women pleaded "We can't wait a week, we need food now". The secretary repeated her offer, and I became sick to my stomach. I left quickly and drove a mile up the road to a cash machine and came directly back to the church only to find that the 2 women and 3 children had left empty handed. The staff did not know where they had gone, and I returned to my car and wept. I felt as if I had failed but the Lord said "you did not fail son, the church failed".

Since that first eye-opening experience, the Lord has shown me many more sins of the church against the poor that have left me ill. One church considered installing an air conditioning system for which several members had pledged \$35,000 while another member of the church who was wheelchair bound from advanced multiple sclerosis didn't have enough money to buy food at the end of the month with what little state aid she received. Often she was forced to choose between food, medicine or heat in winter. For many months my wife and I gave to her anonymously and when she went to be with the Lord last winter, she was at peace – the kind of peace that only acts of love can bring ( [1 John 3:18](#), [James 1:22](#) ). As she was relieved of her financial stress, she blessed everyone around her with unquenchable joy. Most importantly, she taught us about right giving.

More recently, I attended a conference where the host appealed to the audience to give "an offering *for* the poor". I heard the Lord say "the poor are among you" ( [Mark 14:7](#) ) and immediately I thought of a dear friend in attendance who is experiencing financial difficulties and had recently lost her home. The next day I began a letter to the host saying "Last night you took *an offering from the poor*". I groaned at the error and started to rip the page from my notebook when the Lord said "that is not an error – last night's offering was taken *from* the poor".

The Lord then brought to mind the parable of the sheep and goats, specifically [Matthew 25:40](#) where it says "**whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me**". The words "**these brothers of mine**" had not made an impression on me before, and the Lord brought me to the understanding that our first obligation to the poor is to the poor within the Body of Christ. The Lord then brought [Matthew 15:26](#) to mind wherein Jesus said "**It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs**".

The early church had a much better understanding of Christ's intent to care for the needs of the Body of Christ than we do today. The proof of their caring for each other can be seen in [Acts 2:44-47](#) and [Acts 4:32-37](#) where the Body of Christ shared everything, and through their giving, they eliminated poverty and indebtedness. In fact, [Acts 4:34](#) says "**there were no needy persons among them!**" Taking up offerings to feed the Body of Christ was common in the early church. In [Acts 11:27-30](#), the Gentile church at Antioch took up an offering for the believers in Judea who were experiencing a time of famine. Can you imagine a church today taking up an offering for a cross-town rival?

How did the church get so far off course?

## Giving as Christ Intends

Though the tithe is not a requirement for the Body of Christ, we are still instructed to give. What changed from the Old Testament to the New is our motivation for giving. In the Old Testament, giving was compulsory – a tenth (tithe). In the New Testament we are to give with joy as we are led to give ( [2 Corinthians 9:7](#) ), not by compulsion.

Our attitude about giving should be like that of the poor widow who Jesus esteemed in [Mark 12:41-44](#). She put 2 small copper coins, worth a penny, into the temple treasury. They were all the widow had to live on. **She understood that God owns everything and was willing to give all that she had** with cheer as God had prompted her to do.

It is time to invest cheerfully in what is eternal, specifically in God's children for the completion of Kingdom work ( [Matthew 6:19-21](#) ). The children must be fed, clothed and equipped to carry Christ's gospel throughout the whole world and to make the Bride of Christ ready for her soon returning Savior. Imagine what it could be like if we resumed giving and sharing as Jesus intends. Surely we would rediscover the same abundant and powerful living as the early church enjoyed!

On the topic of giving, [John 8:36](#) might seem like a strange scripture to cite: "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed". While it is true that Jesus set us free from the curse of the law ( [Galatians 3:10-13](#) ), sin and death ( [Romans 8:2](#) ), **our failure to give as Jesus taught us has kept the Church in financial bondage**, and has prevented the Church from completing the work of Christ on earth. How many children of God fail to reach their full potential as ministers of the Gospel because they lack provision? It is through our giving and sharing that we equip the Church for service, eliminate hunger and poverty, and realize the fullness of our freedom in Christ.

We can no longer afford to misuse our offerings for church buildings, parsonages, conference centers, multi-purpose buildings, air conditioning, padded pews, pipe organs, and the like, all of which will soon be forgotten, while God's children go hungry, poor and ill equipped to minister the Gospel. Instead, like Abel, **we should give our best gifts to the true Church – the people – because we love God and want to see God's work accomplished on the earth.**

On concluding my study, the Lord asked one final question: *What building ever won a person to Christ?*

Ask the Lord to show you what to give and to whom, and remember that His words "Feed my sheep" ([John 21:17](#)) go much deeper than a pastor's sermon on a Sunday morning. His words are spiritual, and they are literal.

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### A 'Follow-Up' article.

I want to share briefly a few objections to the original article and address the points of objection. **As you exercise your freedom to give as the Lord leads, you'll no doubt hear these objections** and I feel led to share what the Lord has shown me. The Lord had me write the article around [Malachi 3:8-10](#) . The objections refer to a few other scriptures that are often twisted and manipulated to support the tithe.

#### The "Melchizedek" Argument ( [Genesis 14:18-20](#) )

Abraham gave a "tenth" (NIV) or "tithe" (KJV) to "Melchizedek" the King of 'Salem (Jerusalem), High Priest of God, in [Genesis 14:18-20](#) . **The "tenth/tithe" was given out of the spoils of war - plunder**, following Abraham's victory over King Kedorlaomer and those kings allied with him after they had captured Abraham's nephew Lot, Lot's family and possessions, and the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah ( [Genesis 14:11-12](#) ). The person who found fault with the tithe article notes the parallels between "Melchizedek" King of 'Salem who received Abraham's tithe of spoils ( [Genesis 14:18-20](#) ) and Jesus who is High Priest in the order of "Melchizedek" (several mentions in [Hebrews 5-7](#) ).

A close read of [Hebrews 7](#) reveals that **the author is NOT writing a defense of the “tenth/tithe”** though it is mentioned several times. Rather, the author makes a case for Jesus as our eternal high priest, by comparing Jesus to Melchizedek whom Abraham esteemed by a voluntary tithe. To help the Hebrew people understand Jesus, the author basically asks a rhetorical question: "if Melchizedek was great though he was just a man, how much greater then is Jesus who was raised from the dead, and lives forever". The author also discusses the end of the Levite priesthood and the effect Christ's death has on the practice of the Law ( [Hebrews 7:11-12](#) , [Hebrews 7:18-19](#) ). Hebrews explains that Christ is the final and everlasting sacrifice and that He is our High Priest before God forever ( [Hebrews 7:24](#) ) in the order of (like) Melchizedek ( [Genesis 14:18-20](#) , [Hebrews 7:11](#) ).

## **A Tenth of Everything? Define *Everything!***

Abraham lived near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite ( [Genesis 14:13](#) ) at Hebron ( [Genesis 13:18](#) ). Hebron is about 15 miles south of Jerusalem. The Genesis account says Abraham pursued Kedorlaomer north “as far as Dan” ( [Genesis 14:14](#) ) which is about 100 miles north of Jerusalem. When Abraham and his men caught up with Kedorlaomer at Dan, Abraham divided his men and attacked during the night, giving chase as far north as Hobah (north of Damascus) which is 30 miles north of Dan ( [Genesis 14:15-16](#) ). Abraham's pursuit took him about 145 miles north of his home in Hebron. Following his victory over Kedorlaomer, Melchizedek came out to meet Abraham in King's Valley (to the east of Jerusalem) as he returned from Hobah ( [Genesis 14:17-18](#) , [Hebrews 7:1](#) ). Abraham's home in Hebron was still another 15 miles to the south of King's Valley. **Unless Abraham carried his household possessions with him to Dan and back (about 290 miles round trip), Abraham gave to Melchizedek *only out of the spoils - plunder he carried back from his victory over Kedorlaomer* ( [Hebrews 7:2, 7:4](#) ). In that sense, it was Kedorlaomer, the enemy, who paid the tithe.**

There are important elements to consider in the story of Abraham's victory over Kedorlaomer. A map in my Bible suggests the location for Sodom and Gomorrah near Zoar ( [Genesis 13:10](#) ), SE of the Dead Sea, which is about 50 miles from Hebron where Abraham lived. News was spread by word of mouth. It took time for word of Kedorlaomer's conquest of Sodom and Gomorrah to reach Abraham in Hebron. It took time for Abraham to assemble an army of 318 trained men from his household ( [Genesis 14:14](#) ). All the while, Kedorlaomer was making his way north with Lot, his family, and the plunder of Sodom and Gomorrah, presumably making his way northward in the plains area east of the Jordan River, Dead Sea and Mt. Seir. The mileage figures I used in the paragraph above, assume Abraham and his men headed due north from Hebron, on the west side of the Jordan River and Dead Sea, converging on Kedorlaomer at Dan. If Abraham turned south from Hebron and went around the south end of the Dead Sea, through Zoar and Sodom and Gomorrah, it would be necessary to add at least 80 miles to the round trip figure above.

My point with all the discussion of mileage and geography, is that a small army of 318 men, in pursuit of a powerful army with a substantial 'head start', must travel light. I assume Abraham and his men pursued Kedorlaomer on foot, and carried only swords and shields, minimal food and water. A 'light infantry' going off to war, does NOT carry their household possessions with them, their silver and gold, nor did they drive their flocks and herds before them when in pursuit of Kedorlaomer. Undoubtedly Abraham and his men ran in marathon-like fashion to catch up with Kedorlaomer. Their northward pursuit was over 115 miles of hilly terrain west of the Jordan and Dead Sea. If they turned south and followed Kedorlaomer's tracks from Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham and his men would have run nearly 200 miles before catching up with Kedorlaomer.

That Abraham's home was still 15-20 miles south of when he met up with Melchizedek in the King's Valley, shows a clear distinction between giving a tenth out of the plunder of war that Abraham brought back with him from Dan, and Abraham's personal WEALTH and INCOME which remained at Abraham's household in Hebron. Interestingly, [Genesis 13](#) says Abraham was already wealthy with silver, gold, and livestock, before he even moved to Hebron. Abraham did NOT tithe out of his INCOME. There is a distinct difference between Abraham's one time voluntary thank offering out of the plunders of war, and what was later instituted by the Law of Moses as the ongoing tithe for the Levite priesthood. I believe that difference is the reason the NIV Bible translates the word "ma'aser" (Strong's Reference #4643) in Genesis 14:20 as "tenth" and not "tithe".

***It is a tremendous perversion of scripture*** to take a perpetual tithe from the wages of the sons of God – the Church – when the original tithe was a one time voluntary thank offering given by Abraham to Melchizedek from the plunder of an enemy! *It is shameful to treat the sons of God like the enemy!* How should the sons be treated? Consider Jesus response to the temple tax. **Jesus asked Peter “What thinkest thou, Simon? The kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? From their sons, or from strangers?” Peter answered “From strangers” and Jesus replied “Therefore the sons are free” . ( [Matthew 17:24-27](#) ) .**

Another point to ponder from [Genesis 14:18-20](#) is simply that **Melchizedek did not ask Abraham for a tenth** of the plunder. How is it that ministers can read [Genesis 14:18-20](#) and ask for a tenth, when Melchizedek did not ask for a tenth? Let's look at what really happened in [Genesis 14:18-20](#). **Melchizedek came out to King's Valley to GIVE TO Abraham, NOT to receive from Abraham! Melchizedek brought bread and wine for Abraham, they ate together, and Melchizedek pronounced a wonderful blessing over Abraham. This is the very picture of Jesus who said “I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many!” ( [Matthew 20:28](#) )** Abraham was apparently so moved that he voluntarily gave a tenth of the plunder to Melchizedek. Why is it that I have never heard a minister address the greater meaning of this passage, by relating Melchizedek who served bread and wine to Abraham, to Jesus who offered his flesh and blood that we might live in communion with the Father forever ( [John 6:33-63](#) )? Wasn't it bread and wine that Jesus served the disciples for the last supper ( [Luke 22:17-20](#) )? [Genesis 14:18-20](#) is of prophetic significance - a portrait of the new covenant of grace that would be implemented by the last Melchizedek priest: Jesus. Why then is it that so many ministers take [Genesis 14:18-20](#) and turn it into a binding law on the freed sons of God, when clearly it is a wonderful promise of our eternal communion with the Father through that flesh and blood sin offering of Christ?

## Gross Misrepresentation

[Genesis 14:18-20](#) has been broadly interpreted to impose the tithe on the Church. Obvious errors are:

- Reinterprets the “spoils of war” or “plunder” ( [Genesis 14:14-16](#) ) to “wages” or “time” .
- Overlooks that Abraham’s “tithe/tenth” to Melchizedek was voluntary, NOT compulsory.
- Assumes that Abraham’s “tithe/tenth” to Melchizedek was a continuing practice though there is no evidence to suggest that it was.
- Ignores that Melchizedek did not ask for a tithe.
- Ignores that it is the descendants of Levi who collect the tithe ( [Hebrews 7:5](#) ) .
- Ignores [Hebrews 9:9-10](#) which clearly states that the old way of gifts, sacrifices and offerings applied only until the “time of the new order” (NIV).

## The “God Changes Not” Argument

**“Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says ( [Galatians 4:21](#) )?”**

An objection made the statement “God changes not” . **While it is true God does not change, it is a poor argument to use on behalf of continuing the tithe.** If the argument “God changes not” is a valid reason to keep one part of the Law – the tithe – then it is a valid reason to keep ALL of the law ( [Galatians 5:3](#) ) . Consider the uproarious implications! Burnt offerings and sacrifices on the altar of every church! **“Come to our Sunday morning worship service and BBQ!”** Every church with it's own grain silo, winepress, and pasture / corral for the livestock people will be tithing! We'll need much bigger offering plates! Oh and the joys we'll all have practicing ceremonial cleanliness – women instructed to stay home from church 1 week per month ( [Leviticus 12:2](#) ) . **Pastors inspecting rashes and teens staying home from church and school because of a zit outbreak ( [Leviticus 13](#) )!** Undertakers! Poor undertakers! Every time they touch a deceased person they are unclean for a week ( [Numbers 19:16](#) )! **If business is brisk, don't expect to see the undertaker in church again! Yes Lord! We want to go back to the Law! Not!**

## Rebuke of the Scribes and Pharisees Argument

Jesus rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for meticulously giving a “tithe/tenth” of their “mint, dill and cummin”, while neglecting the more important matters of the law: “justice, mercy, faithfulness”. Jesus said “**these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone**” (KJV) and “**You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former**” (NIV) - [Matthew 23:23](#)

Once again, there are several problems with using this scripture to support the tithe as applicable to the Body of Christ.

- Reinterpretation of “mint, dill, and cummin” (food) to “money” and “time”.
- Jesus was addressing the Scribes and Pharisees – who are Jews – under the Law of Moses – and obligated by the Law to tithe. Jesus was NOT addressing gentiles (non-Jews).
- Jesus choice of words was different addressing this sin than when He addressed other sins. His choice of words is weak and in the **past tense**, as it would be from someone who understood that the **Law was about to be superceded by the new covenant in Christ’s blood: grace!** Strong’s Reference #4160 for the Romanized word “poieo” says it is a “less direct” form of a command – which is why it was rendered “ought to” or “should have”. Contrast Jesus words to the Scribes and Pharisees with His words to the woman caught in adultery: “**Go and sin no more**” (KJV) and “**Go now and leave your life of sin**” (NIV) - [John 8:11](#) . **His words to her are direct, emphatic, and they are in the future tense – because there is a continuing command against adultery, unlike the Law to tithe which ceased to apply with Christ’s death and resurrection.**

The complete text of [Matthew 23:23](#) reads:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

As I was meditating on the text above, the Lord showed me something I hadn't seen before. In the statement "**You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law**", Jesus makes it clear that the "tithe" is a "matter of the law", in that He refers to it along with "justice, mercy and faithfulness" which are also "matters of the law". In effect Jesus is saying 'the law requires you to tithe, and practice justice, mercy and faithfulness, and while you have meticulously kept the law concerning the tithe, you have failed to keep the law concerning justice, mercy and faithfulness'.

This clear identification of the "tithe" as a requirement of Old Testament law, dispenses with the "tithe" as applicable to Christians in as much as Jesus fulfilled the law ( [Matthew 5:17](#) ). Further, since we are IN Christ, and Christ is IN us, we too have fulfilled the law ( [Colossians 2:8-23](#) ). That the Law is NOT applicable to Christians is discussed further in the section "What About The Floodgates" (below).

## Receiving "A Living" From Preaching Gospel Argument

A pastor wrote to challenge me with [1st Corinthians 9:14](#). The following is my response:

"Pastor ..."

Since you asked for me to address [1st Corinthians 9:14](#) specifically, **I offer these comments of the scripture IN context of the whole chapter**, and common understanding of how the apostles of the day lived.

vs. 4 the context is "food and drink"

vs. 7 the context is food and drink

vs. 9 the context is food

vs 10 the context is food (grain from the harvest)

vs 11 the context is food (seed and harvest)

vs 13 the context is the food (meat, grain/fruit and drink) offered on the altar and so, in context, Paul is talking about food and drink - sustenance.



If Paul, who was imprisoned, beaten, stoned, and ultimately beheaded for the gospel sought nothing more for himself than food or drink, how is it that modern pastors expect to extract a full time salary for conducting services on a Sunday morning, and Wednesday evening? Especially in light of 1 Corinthians 9:15 where **Paul expresses pride that he did not use his "rights" to 'compensation'**. In verses 17-27 **Paul makes it very clear that he wants to offer the gospel 'free of charge'** so that the gospel is not hindered, and so that his reward is in heaven.

If Paul boasted about offering the gospel free of charge despite his 'entitlement' to food, **how is it pastors turn 1 Corinthians 9 into justification to draw a salary from preaching the gospel**, at least in the western culture's understanding of "salary"?

The Lord gave me new insight into the real, literal meaning of 1 Corinthians 9:14.

14. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (KJV)

14. In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. (NIV)

Based on the Strong's Literal Bible translation below, neither the KJV or NIV translations capture the real meaning. The literal meaning, according to Strong's, seems to be **"practice what you preach"**

14. [3779] So [2532] also [3588] the [2962] Lord [1299] ordained [3588] those [3588] of the [2098] Good News [2605] announcing, [1537] of [3588] the [2098] Good News [2198] to live.

In other words, if you preach 'set the captives free', then set them free; don't tie them up with religion and doctrine. If you preach 'share what you have with the poor', then share with the poor. If you preach abstain from sexual immorality, then do so!

Strong's Literal Bible says [2198] **TO LIVE - is a VERB**. **Yet when it's translated as 'receive their LIVING from the gospel', "TO LIVE" (a VERB) is made into a NOUN ("A LIVING")**. **That is an error in the translation -** likely influenced by the 'institutional church' mentality of the translators who have buildings to pay for, and the salaries of pastor and staff. Our cultures understanding of "making a living" simply doesn't fit the context of the scripture. Jesus sent out the Apostles in Matthew 10 and Luke 10 with nothing more than the clothes on their backs, and sandals on their feet, and told them to expect nothing more than food and a place to sleep.

The word ANNOUNCING is key too... to 'announce' means (as I understand Paul's use of the word) the first to proclaim the gospel in a new territory, or to a people who have never heard it before. The closest we have these days to that function is a MISSIONARY. There really are very few in the western culture who are "announcing" the gospel in that fashion. There are many who are 'repeating' the gospel, in church buildings, over and over and over again to those who have long ago heard the gospel announced - but those who 'go out' and who are spearheading the gospel to new cultures are very few. In reality, the gospel is announced only once - thereafter the gospel should be put into practice by the people who have heard and received the gospel.

In regard to "ANNOUNCING" the gospel, Jesus instructed His disciples: **"...Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8)**. If that was Jesus command to the apostles, and it is apparent Paul understood Jesus command where in 1 Corinthians 9 Paul sought only food and shelter, how is it pastors expect a full time salary for preaching the gospel?

## What About The Floodgates?

I often asked myself a tough question about the floodgates in [Malachi 3:10](#), but I have refused to answer it because it seemingly made God out to be a liar! Finally one of my close friends asked me the same question - and I knew God wanted me to give an honest answer. She asked "**why after tithing, tithing, and tithing, don't we ever see the flood gates open?**" Immediately I heard the Holy Spirit say "**sowing into a lie does not produce a blessing**". The Holy Spirit impressed me that [Malachi 3:10](#) was not a lie in and of itself, but rather some ministers use the scripture in a manipulative way to extract the tithe from the congregation. During a time of meditation later that evening, the Holy Spirit impressed me to read Galatians, and I heard the Spirit say "**Jesus paid the tithe for you**". The next morning I read and re-read Galatians.

In a nutshell, Galatians contrasts the differences between reliance upon the law for salvation, and reliance upon Christ. [Galatians 2:16](#) sums up the difference saying "...**a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ...**". For those who place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, [Galatians 3:25](#) says "**we are no longer under the supervision of the law**". The most important scripture in my view, is [Galatians 3:19](#), which says "... **the law ... was added ... UNTIL the Seed to whom the promise referred had come...**". [Galatians 3:16](#) says **Jesus Christ is the "Seed to whom the promise referred". And so, the law applied UNTIL the time of Christ.** Thereafter, the new covenant in Christ applies.

Since Christ has come, our salvation depends on faith in Him, not upon our observance of the law. **Yet for whatever reason, many ministers continue to teach elements of the law, and congregations are expected to obey. The tithe is one such element of the law that is frequently taught from the pulpit.** My concern for the Church is that opening the door to any element of the law could lead to reliance upon the law for righteousness sake, about which Paul writes in [Galatians 3:10](#) "**All who rely on observing the law are under a curse...**". If a believer's sole reason for tithing is obedience to the law, it should come as no surprise that the floodgates never open.

In [Galatians 5:18](#) Paul writes "**If you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law**". And so one must ask: "**Are we led by the Spirit, except for giving which is directed by the law? "NO! Jesus paid the tithe for us because we have died to the law through Christ** ([Romans 7:4](#), [Romans 8:2](#), [Romans 10:4](#), [Galatians 3:13](#)). THE moment we try to make ourselves righteous by resuming the practice of any portion of the law, **WE INSULT CHRIST** just as if we were to say "Jesus sacrifice was not sufficient to pay for all sin."

**Let me paint the picture for you that the Father painted for me regarding the tithe**, or for that matter, any other law of the Old Testament. **IF** after Jesus died to pay the price for sin we were still required to obey any portion of the law, then Jesus did NOT in fact pay the price for ALL sin. If there were a sin that the blood of Jesus did not cover, judgement would look something like this: "**Jesus forgives all of your covered sins - BUT WAIT - you are condemned to HELL because Jesus death doesn't cover your failure to obey certain applicable laws...**" Preaching Jesus AND the law means either we need a 2nd sin offering to pay for what Jesus did not cover, OR, we will be condemned to HELL for failing to obey the laws not covered by Jesus blood. Suddenly our "coverage" sounds very much like an insurance policy with numerous exclusions in the fine print at the bottom! Brothers and sisters there are **NO LOOPHOLES** in the blood of Christ! Jesus has paid the tithe for us!

## But I Feel Guilty - *A Personal Note*

Every time I heard a minister preach on the tithe, I felt sick - best described as a nauseous feeling in the pit of my gut. For years I assumed that feeling was guilt welling up in me, caused by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I can't count the number of times I responded to that nauseous feeling by swallowing hard and giving all the money I had with me - sometimes beyond what I had - whereupon I borrowed from my line of credit account. **Years of hearing messages on the tithe, where ministers had enslaved my compliance by sowing guilt and shame had convinced me that God was the type of Father who whips, prods, guilts and shames His children into obedience! *I simply did not know the wonderful Abba Father who loved me*** so much that He gave everything to restore our relationship and ensure that I would spend all eternity with Him. After years of believing God was using guilt to force my obedience to the law, I prayed about it. Abba Father gently said "the sick feeling you experience is My gift of discernment serving to tell you that what you are hearing is a lie." He was there all along, but I didn't know His language, and I didn't know enough to ask Him to teach me. And the shepherds didn't teach me to listen to the Father for myself. Now I know that I am His, He is mine, and I hear His voice. So can you ([John 10:14-16](#)).

## If You Still Have Doubts

I wrote back and forth with one brother in Singapore for several months, as he was not comfortable changing his giving habits without a thorough explanation of every scripture that mentioned the tithe. Even after every scripture was accounted for, he still struggled with years of tithe teaching, and the guilt it had instilled in him.

For me, it comes down to [2 Corinthians 9:7](#) "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." What [2 Corinthians 9:7](#) says to me is: "what he has decided" (**it is MY decision what to give**), "in his heart" (**I am to follow the leading of MY heart**), "not reluctantly" (**what I give must feel right**), "or under compulsion" (**no one can make me give**) and "God loves a cheerful giver" (**God wants me to give what I feel GOOD about giving**).

There is one final observation I shared with my brother, that has freed me from all condemnation concerning the tithe. I have given far more than a tenth/tithe to the Lord, I have given my ALL! When I made Jesus my Lord and Savior and took up my cross to follow Him where I daily offer my body a LIVING SACRIFICE ([Romans 12:1](#)), I gave all of me - 100% - to the Lord. To that end, the Lord Himself said: "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)). Christ laid down His life for me out of love for me ([John 10:11](#)). In turn, I have laid down my life for Christ out of love for Christ ([Matthew 16:24-25](#)) so that He will live through me ([John 3:30](#)), and my friends might see Christ in me ([Galatians 2:20](#)) and be saved ([1 Peter 3:15-16](#)). There is no more loving and pleasing sacrifice you can offer to God than your life.

## The Last Word

In regards to the law, what part of **“It is finished”** ( [John 19:30](#) ) is so difficult to understand?

Or what about **“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law”** [Galatians 5:18](#) ?

***There can be only one conclusion:***

**Mini\$ter\$ who \$tre\$\$ tithe\$ \$how a \$elfi\$h intere\$t in \$omething be\$ide\$ \$aving \$oul\$ for Je\$u\$.**

Let us be clear about who is entitled to the first fruits of your labors:

**2 Timothy 2:6 "The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops."**

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## ***The Tithe: Who's Robbing Who?***

***Preface:*** *About 2 years ago, the Lord led my wife and I to leave the institutional church we attended to home church. Since both of us had attended institutional churches all of our lives, the new direction challenged us, and the alarmed reaction of our friends nearly persuaded us to ignore the Lord's leading. Finally, after the Lord showed us numerous scripture references about believers meeting in homes ([Acts 5:42](#), [Acts 8:3](#), [Acts 16:40](#), [Acts 20:20](#), [Romans 16:3-5](#), [1 Corinthians 16:19](#), [Colossians 4:15](#), [Philemon 1:2](#)), and that there is not even one scripture in the New Testament where believers erected a dedicated church building, we were put at ease about home church fellowship.*

**Home Church** is a new path for us, and the questions are many, as we feel our way along in this vast new territory. Still it is a wonderful adventure, and provides the kind of relational Christian fellowship, freedom and flexibility we have always longed for. One of the nagging questions for me as a 'Home Churcher' is the subject of the 'collection'. There are clues in the New Testament about giving, such as the glimpses of the early Church provided by [Acts 2:42-47](#) and [Acts 4:32-37](#) where everything was shared, every need was met, and there were no needy persons among them. There is also the picture in [Acts 6](#) where the Apostles devoted themselves to the Word, and chose 7 men to oversee the daily distribution of food among the believers.

Clearly, the giving ('collective wealth') of the early Church was shared by all, in as much as the people obviously discussed their needs so that they could help each other meet those needs, and feed each other on a daily basis. Other scriptures support this conclusion, such as 'carry each other's burdens' ([Galatians 6:2](#)), 'love by actions' ([1 John 3:18](#)), etc. The early Church was a close knit family who really 'walked the talk'.

The picture of the Church that emerges from these scriptures differs RADICALLY from the Old Testament. In the OT, the Levite priests were the recipients of the tithe, and the 12 tribes of Israel were responsible to bring the tithe to the priests. The reason for that was simple, the Levites did not receive any land as an inheritance to raise flocks and herds or grow fruit and grain. They worked in the temple day and night, so someone had to feed them and their families.

Now we turn the page to the New Testament, and suddenly EVERY BELIEVER is benefiting from the offerings of the Church, not just a select few.

The reason for that became clear when the Lord showed me [1 Peter 2:5 and 9](#), and [Revelation 1:6](#), in which the Word says we are ALL PRIESTS. The Word of God also makes it clear that as believers in Jesus Christ, we are SONS of God ([1 John 3:1](#), [Galatians 3:26](#)), and Jesus said in [Matthew 17:25-27](#) that the SONS ARE FREE (exempt from the temple tax). It is also very important to note that Stephen and Paul stated clearly in [Acts 7:48](#) and [Acts 17:24](#) (respectively) that God does NOT live in houses made by human hands. Rather, God now lives in US - we are the temple of the Holy Spirit ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#)).

If we believe the Word of God about who we are (Priests, Sons, the Temple of the Holy Spirit), we can clearly see another of the fatal flaws of trying to re-implement the OT "tithe" in the NT church. The Biblical pattern for the OT tithe is that it was the NON-priest tribes (the 12 tribes of Jacob) who brought the tithe to the temple. The priest tribe (Levi) received the tithe. In fact, the priests (Levi) could NOT tithe because they didn't grow food! Far more important than that though, is that God was the inheritance of the Levites, and as such the Levites were WHOLLY consecrated/devoted to serving God. In other words, instead of getting off with giving just 10% of their food-stuffs to God as did the other tribes, the Levites had to give 100% of themselves to God!

The Levite priesthood is the picture (a fore-shadow) of New Testament believers, who have also received God as their inheritance by giving themselves WHOLLY (100%) to Jesus Christ ([Matthew 16:24-25](#)).

That all believers are IN Jesus Christ who is our High Priest forever and as such all believers are priests, sons, and the temple of the Holy Spirit, is the basis and reason for every believer sharing in the gifts ('collective wealth') of the Church.

Following the train of thought that ALL Priests are to share in what is given, and backing it up with the words of Jesus in [Matthew 25:40](#) wherein He makes it clear that giving to His "brothers" (all believers) is the same as giving to Christ directly, we need to assess who is really being robbed when ministers quote [Malachi 3:8-9](#) to their congregations of believers.

8. "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, `How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings.
9. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me.

Please take a look at [Malachi 3:5](#) with me:

5. "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.

Notice that one of the things God is angry about is that laborers are defrauded of their wages. Owing that Malachi and Nehemiah were written at about the same time, I believe the fraud (robbery) spoken of in [Malachi 3](#), is described in detail in [Nehemiah 13:4-13](#). In this text we see how that robbery was taking place. What I gather from the scripture, is that it was NOT that the Israelite's were withholding the tithe from God, but rather Eliashib the priest opened the temple store rooms to Tobiah and the portions of food assigned to the Levites were not given to them. (Tobiah was an Ammonite who worshipped the pagan-god Molech according to [Ezra 2:59-60](#) and [Nehemiah 2:10](#)). In fact, [Nehemiah 13:12](#) says ALL JUDAH brought the tithe to the storerooms, and once TRUSTWORTHY priests were put in charge of the storerooms, the Levite priests once again received their portion ([verse 13](#)).

The 'robbing of God' wasn't taking place with the 'bringing' of the tithe, it was taking place with the 'distribution' of the tithe to the priests. The wicked priest Eliashib and Tobiah the Ammonite (pagan) were apparently raiding the storerooms of the temple for themselves. What God considered robbery (fraud) was withholding the tithe from His priests, who abandoned their service to God when they weren't fed.

And there in [Nehemiah 13:4-13](#) you have THE VERY picture of what is happening in the Church today: the priesthood of believers is being robbed by those who are in charge of the 'temple store room'.

Brethren, EVERY BELIEVER IS A PRIEST and as a priest YOU are entitled to share in the gifts (collective wealth) of the Church to meet YOUR needs ([Acts 2:42-47](#) and [Acts 4:32-37](#)), for food and drink ([Acts 6:1](#) and [Matthew 25:35](#)), for shelter, clothes and medical expenses ([Matthew 25:35-36](#)).

Brethren, you aren't the ones robbing God. The ones robbing God are the very ones who are accusing you!

To be **ABSOLUTELY CLEAR** in this matter:

- **Sons do NOT tithe. The SONS are FREE. WE are ALL SONS** ([Matthew 17:27](#), [1 John 3:1](#), [Galatians 3:26](#)).
- **Priests do not tithe from their own labors, they receive the tithes of those who do. WE are all PRIESTS** ([Numbers 18:20-23](#), [Hebrews 7:5](#), [1 Peter 2:5 and 9](#), [Revelation 1:6](#)).
- **The tithe was brought to the temple in Jerusalem. The temple is NO LONGER a building. WE are now the TEMPLE** ([Malachi 3:10](#), [Acts 7:48-50](#), [Acts 17:24](#), [1 Corinthians 3:16](#)).

It is for **THESE REASONS** the early Church shared **EVERYTHING** with each other!

## FLIP-SIDE OF THE TITHE

One recurring thought I've had about articles which expose the false teaching of the tithe, is that the FLIP SIDE of the tithe is seldom discussed. Here's what I mean:

*Acts 2:44* All the Lord's followers often met together, and **they shared everything they had**. *Acts 2:45* They would **sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it**. *Acts 2:46* Day after day they met together in the temple. They broke bread together in different homes and **shared their food happily and freely**, *Acts 2:47* while praising God. Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved.

*Acts 4:32* The group of followers all felt the same way about everything. **None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other**. *Acts 4:33* In a powerful way the apostles told everyone that the Lord Jesus was now alive. God greatly blessed his followers, *Acts 4:34* and **no one went in need of anything. Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money** *Acts 4:35* **to the apostles. Then they would give the money to anyone who needed it.**

Notice all those scriptures that imply they freely sold their land and possessions, and then shared ALL the proceeds with the community of believers? [Acts 2:46](#) also indicates that they practiced HOSPITALITY on a regular basis. I find some relief in [Acts 2:46](#) in that it is clear the believers had their own homes to live in.

The early Church was so committed to the Lord and to each other that they shared EVERYTHING and sold their possessions and shared ALL the proceeds - which is 100%. Faced with giving ALL / 100%, perhaps that is why the tithe is so attractive to your average run-of-the-mill church goer. The 'tithe' lets people get by with just 10%, whereas the examples in scripture require 100%.

What concerns me is that people, myself included, are glad to see the lie of the tithe exposed, but we resist embracing the truth that ALL / 100% of what we have belongs to the Lord. Since all that we have and are belongs to the Lord, we are expected to share what we have with our brothers and sisters who are also in the Lord. Our mindset that by abolishing the 10% tithe means we can now give as little as 0% is headed in the wrong direction .... we now give 100%.

I imagine very few of us are prepared to share everything we have, myself included. If giving ALL is the example Christ set for us, and if giving ALL is the example set by the early Church, are we really willing to cast off the "lie of the tithe" for the truth of "giving all"? And for me this is a hard question: IF there is something that I am not willing to share, has it become an idol in my life?

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## *Just What Was Abraham's Example?*

*I have received many responses to the article "To Tithe Or Not To Tithe". The following message from Doug White, a dear brother in British Columbia, is very insightful, and I believe Doug has touched upon the heart and faith of Abraham. I made a few edits for readability, and converted the scripture passages to contemporary English versions to assist with understanding Doug's insightful reply. Here is his reply, posted by permission. Thank you Doug! - Jack*

Dear Jack,

I recently read with interest your article "**To Tithe Or Not To Tithe**" ... It confirmed and clarified some things I have been thinking myself in reference to the institutional church's preoccupation with the tithing ordinance. Later this evening I found the follow up article on tithing. Your reference to Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek ([Genesis 14:17-20](#)) was of particular interest to me because I studied it a while back trying to reconcile the issue of Abraham's "example".

**When Abram came back from his victory over Chedorlaomer and the other kings, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in Shaveh Valley (also called King's Valley). And Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and also a priest of the Most High God, brought bread and wine to Abram, blessed him, and said, "May the Most High God, who made heaven and earth, bless Abram! May the Most High God, who gave you victory over your enemies, be praised!" And Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the loot he had recovered. ([Genesis 14:17-20](#), GNB)**  
If we are to look to this passage and Abraham's actions as an example for us today, **should we not consider the whole example? Or are we allowed to pick and choose just the portions that what we want to emulate and ignore what we don't?**

To those who would insist on making Abraham's giving an example for us today, I would say, "Ok, what **WAS** Abraham's example?"

Abraham gave a 10th of the spoil to Melchizedek. **How much did Abraham keep?** Sorry folks, the answer is **NONE!**

Abraham gave the rest of the spoil (which was rightfully his to keep) back to the people from whom it was stolen. We are all familiar with his statement.

**The king of Sodom said to Abram, "All I want are my people. You can keep everything else." Abram answered: The LORD God Most High made the heavens and the earth. And I have promised him that I won't keep anything of yours, not even a sandal strap or a piece of thread. Then you can never say that you are the one who made me rich. Let my share be the food that my men have eaten. But Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre went with me, so give them their share of what we brought back. ([Genesis 14:21-24](#), CEV)**

If Abraham IS our example of giving (as we have so often heard), then let us all rise up to the example shown. ABRAHAM GAVE ALL!! He kept NOTHING for himself. The mathematical term for this kind of "offering" is called 100%. **There is NO language in this passage for the "doctrine of portions."** The "bridge to the New Covenant" that this passage makes is "you are not your own, you have been bought with a price." EVERYTHING we have is an offering to our high priest and mediator. The only variable suggested here is in where it is allocated.

Which brings us to one of those "between the lines" kind of questions. Why did Abraham do it? Obviously he was expressing his gratitude to God. But was there another layer of consideration in his actions?

**These next thoughts are speculative.** There really is no way to prove them one way or another. But I think there may be enough reason to give them serious consideration.



When Abraham made his offering to God via Melchizedek, who else was there to witness to the whole event? The King of Sodom of course. Immediately following the offering event was the dialogue between Abraham and the King of Sodom regarding the allocation of the remaining spoils. My question is: Was Abraham ONLY expressing thanks to God through this offering? Or was he making a statement as well?

***Was Abraham in effect and action, saying to the King of Sodom, "I KNOW who looks out for me, who protects me, who prospers me and who gives me victory over my enemies. I don't need your wealth to be blessed because I trust Him to prosper me. King of Sodom, you would do well to pay attention and look to the Lord most high yourself that you too would come under His banner of protection and blessing"?***

Now that may be a speculative stretch to suggest, but we all know what happened a short time later when God revealed to Abraham Sodom's future. Abraham interceded for Sodom. He begged God to spare the city for the sake of even a few righteous. I suspect that the burden of Abraham's intercession for Sodom did not begin the day he was visited by the messengers from God. **I suspect that Abraham had been interceding for Sodom, people he knew personally and had risked his life before to aid, for some time.**

If we are going to make bridges between Abraham and the New Covenant, I think we can make one here. **As wicked as they may have been, Abraham was willing to risk his life for them, willing to defend them, willing to give to them, willing to pray for them AND willing to witness to them of God's grace and mercy.**

So, while we gather in our cloistered meeting rooms and haggle among ourselves over Abraham's example of "tithing", I wonder if we should be taking Abraham's example far more seriously. **Like Abraham, are we willing to put our lives on the line and give ALL to the wicked people living outside our Christian ghettos that the judgement of God that is poised over their heads may be averted?**

**Or do we just want to drop 10% in the bucket on Sunday mornings and live the rest of our lives and spend the rest of our money however WE choose and "cross by on the other side" ([Luke 10:30-35](#)) when we encounter the morally bankrupt people of our communities?**

Abraham's true example of giving all **makes the whole "tithe" argument a moot point doesn't it?**

Doug White

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## "Fun With Numbers"

I recently found myself looking at the institutional church in terms of overhead, and what the end product is for the majority of people. There is a sense in which the church exists to deliver the message, which in the institutional church is typically a 20-minute sermon on Sunday morning. **For the vast majority of the congregation, the sermon is the product they take home. For those whose only church involvement is in the capacity of a listener on Sundays, everything other than the sermon is overhead.** For giggles I examined the topic of dedicated giving using a typical church as an example.

The church has **500 members** who collectively pay for a pastor to preach the gospel twice each Sunday for 20 minutes. **That's 40 minutes of preaching the gospel per week** - which amounts to **2080 minutes per year** or 34.67 hours per year. We'll give the pastor credit for occasionally going overtime and round it up to **36 hours per year**. Based on the standard corporate year of 2080 hours for full-time employment, **the delivery of the "sermon" represents about 1.7% of the pastors work year**. In the interest of fairness, it is necessary to credit that 36 hours of preaching to the congregation that hired the pastor to preach the gospel for them rather than do it themselves as Christ commanded in [Matthew 28:19](#). So those **36 hours spread equally across the 500 church members amounts to 4 minutes and 10 seconds per member per year (250 seconds) of "preaching the gospel"**.

Now the church has an **annual budget of \$250,000** or the equivalent of **\$500 per member per year**. 250 seconds of preaching per member at \$500 per member breaks down to a total cost of (including overhead) **\$2 per second for the sermon**. The rate per minute is \$120, per hour is \$7200. Each 20-minute sermon costs the annual offering of 5 members. The church pays about **\$2,400 for a 20 minute sermon!**

**No wonder Peter left fishing for the ministry.**

But wait! I've made a rash assumption! The pastor only preaches in the church where everyone is already saved (supposedly)! **So that 4 minute and 10 second credit per member per year for "preaching the gospel" to the LOST is WIPED OUT because it was preached to the FOUND!** In other words, the example church is spending a QUARTER MILLION DOLLARS per year to reach **NO ONE!**

How will the members of that church fare before the **judgement of Christ** who commands us to be **good stewards** and to **preach the gospel** throughout the whole world?

Personally, I think the devil laughs himself silly about it.

Obviously there are problems with my logic, nevertheless this flight of fancy serves to demonstrate the absurdities many of us have bought into for so long. I zeroed in on the pastor's sermon because many of us have made it the **pinnacle of the church week**, and many of us have bought into the notion that only an ordained pastor can preach. In a very real sense, much of the church is built around the pastor's message – just look at the sanctuary and the focus of the congregation: the altar - where usually the pulpit sits center-stage. Of course there can't be a message without a church building, right? Or can there?

One of the biggest problems with the institutional church today, is that **ministries are often viewed in terms of "vehicles"**. **A building! A bus! A plane (CBN's Operation Blessing)**, etc. Many of us seem to have bought into the idea that ministry requires a vehicle - or that by giving our money for a vehicle that we are giving to ministry. Vehicles and ministry are not the same. Vehicles do not accomplish ministry - people accomplish ministry. Looking to Jesus as our example for ministry, we see that **Jesus didn't have a building from which He based His ministry (Luke 9:58)**. In fact, until Constantine the Great declared Christianity the state religion of Rome early in the 4th century AD, Christians were violently persecuted and they met in secret. There were no dedicated church buildings for the first 300+ years of Christianity. Yet in terms of growth, the first 300+ years of Christianity were the most explosive! Why then do we insist on having a vehicle for ministry when they have often served to constrain ministry and thereby render Christianity impotent by diverting resources from what ministry is supposed to be: people spreading the message of Christ! Vehicles turn Christianity into "church in a box" and they have become a "millstone" around the neck of the true Church - the people!

Especially when we have been conditioned to think of ministry as something that happens only "in the church", or more specifically "ministry in a box". The only requirement for most ministries are dedicated Christians who are willing to serve.

**Let me illustrate the point by a confession from my **distant** past.**

When my brother and I were in our early 20's, we had a Christian band. Our lives ahead of us, we had dreams of full time music ministry - touring the country - recording albums, etc. We had written 3-4 songs that were quite good considering the state of CCM in the late 70's. **And so with our big dreams, and the naiveté of youth, I began considering all that we would need for our ministry.** Every big-name Christian band I'd seen up to that point traveled the country in a bus with their name on the side (*picture the Partridge Family bus... ;^*) and so **I started learning everything I could about busses.** GMC, Eagle, Prevost... 35 and 40 foot diesel powered vehicles - and I subscribed to 2 bus magazines to learn all that I could about busses. Yet there we were, with only 3-4 songs, while 10 was the standard for an album. And even if we had 10 songs - there was no money for recording and pressing an album, let alone buying a smelly old bus on its last legs. The saddest part was the time I wasted studying about busses - time that could have been spent writing songs, practicing, promoting concerts to reach more people, etc.

**It didn't take too long before I forgot about busses,** and we turned to local ministry in the outlying areas of Western Washington State - and we hauled our equipment around in the back of my pickup truck. Our only investment was a public address system - we already had guitars and amplifiers. We enjoyed several years of weekend engagements at prisons, schools, churches, retirement homes, campgrounds, military bases and private parties. What little we received from love offerings was not put towards a bus or an album, it was given to area food banks, or returned to the host church for the poor in their congregation.

And we were greatly blessed for it.

If you desire ministry, take your talent, your testimony and your Bible, and put legs under them. They are the only vehicle you need.

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## Have Questions?

If you need further proof that the Tithe is NOT APPLICABLE to the New Testament Church of Jesus Christ, please check out these other fine resources:

[The Prayer Shack](#) offers the book "**Should The Church Teach The Tithe**" by Dr. Russell E. Kelly as a free download (800K). The book spans 364 pages, and addresses EVERY tithing scripture in the Bible. Requires Adobe Acrobat reader.

[Harvest Net](#) has collected a number of articles and resources on the Old Testament Tithe, and what giving in the New Testament is all about.

[On Time Publishing](#) is the source for a book entitled "**Beyond Tithes and Offerings**" by Michael L. Webb and Michael T. Webb. Michael T. has a new web site called [Mission Impossible](#) which you will simply have to see to believe.

[Jack Helser](#)

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