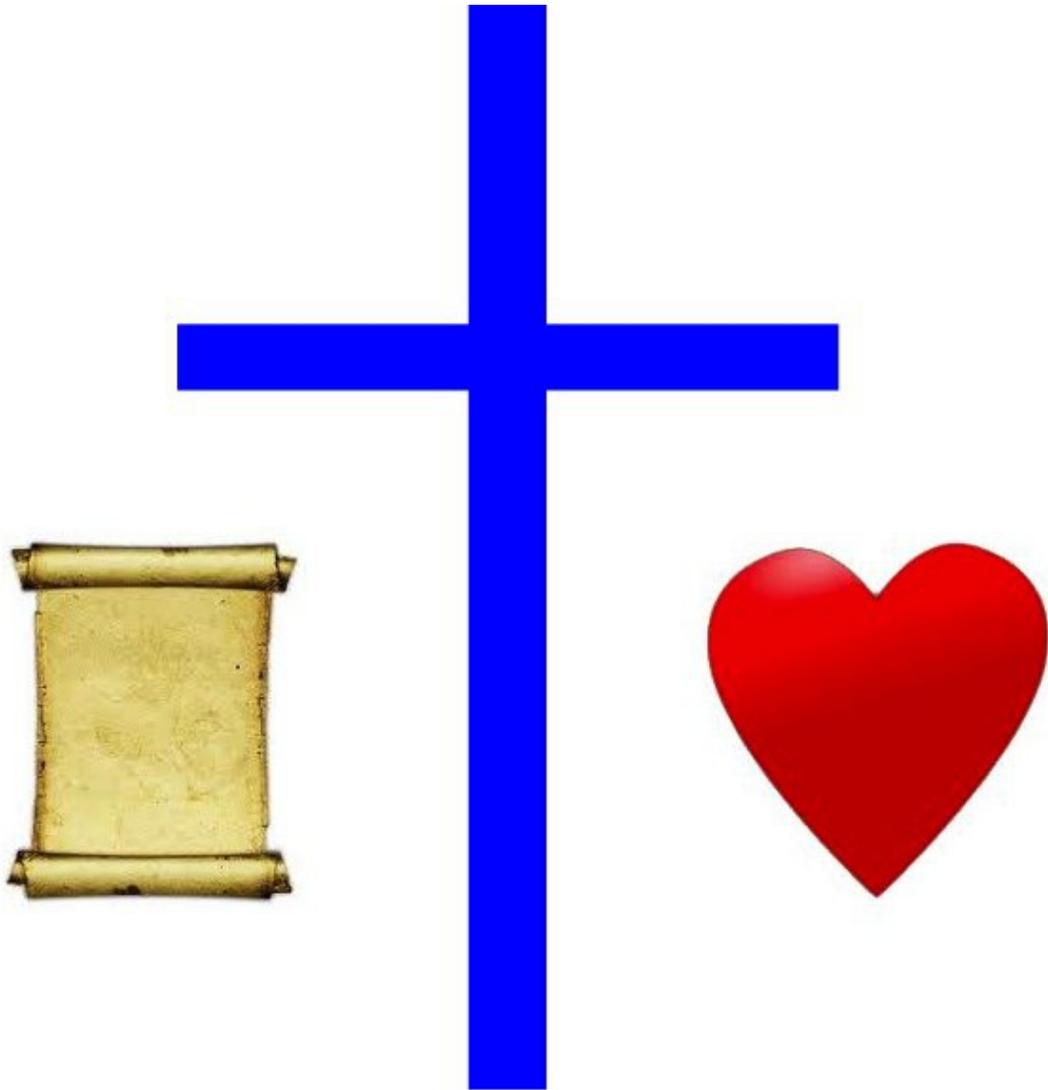
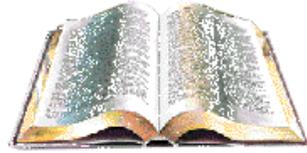


What God Says...



How Shall We Then GIVE?

by Roy Ingbre 2010

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Tithing or Giving?

The same or different?

Jesus says:

*Therefore if you have not been **faithful** in the unrighteous mammon [(earthly) wealth], who will entrust the **true riches** to you? - Luke 16:11*

How many times have you heard; "The Tithe belongs to the Lord", "Tithing is the minimum standard", "If you don't Tithe, you rob God", "When you Tithe, God will bless you"

Is tithing God's requirement for the New Testament Church?

This is by no means an exhaustive study, but simply referencing the Word of God on the subject as it pertains to the Old and New Testament as well as Law and Grace and the overall purpose of God from the beginning of time -
Having a people who would worship and love Him of their own free will.

.....And the TRUTH shall make you FREE!

John 4:23: But the hour comes, and now is,
when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:
for the Father seeks such to worship him.

Scripture References: King James and the Modern King James Versions

1. Fundamental Truth

First of all let us establish a fundamental truth that **giving is part of a God given nature** and anyone who is a new creature in Christ having been born from above by the Spirit of God with the love of God shed abroad in their hearts will, by the evidence of their new nature, be a giver and not just with money. It started with God Himself giving the most precious He had - His Son;

A short lesson in Hebrew

Love in Hebrew is "Ahava" אהבה, which is made up of three basic Hebrew letters, אהב. These three letters actually are broken down into two parts: a two letter base or root, הב, and the first letter, א, which is a modifier. The meaning of the two letter base, הב, is "to give". The letter "aleph" א, which precedes these two letters comes to modify the meaning of the base word, "give". The meaning of אהבה, is "I give" and also "love".

We now see the connection between the two words, "I give" and "love". Love is giving. Not only is love giving, but **the actual process of giving develops the very connection between the giver and the receiver.**

It is very clear in the very first language that God created, that the nature of **God is Love** and **He gives freely** to those who receive Him;

*John 3:16: For **God so loved** the world **that He gave** His only-begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*I John 4:7,8: Beloved, let us love one another: for **love is of God**; and **every one that loves is born of God**, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God; for **God is love.***

*Matthew 10:8:**freely ye have received, freely give.***

Requirement makes giving a duty.

Love causes people to give freely.

That is what God is about and that is what He wants us to be - in a loving relationship with Him. It's impossible to love without giving and if we are born from above....

*Romans 5:5:**the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts** by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

The tithe was not a voluntary act under the law, it was the law - you were required to tithe, and if you did not, it was as if you had broken the entire law. It was not out of love or appreciation, it was the law!

To put it into few words, the law was brought in because of sin, as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, which would bring us back into the correct relationship with God. Christ set us free from the law, so that we again would love and worship God freely, like He intended from the very beginning. Hopefully that will be abundantly clear by the time you have read through what is written here and allowed the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart.

*Galatians 3:24-25: **Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.***

*Romans 10:4: **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.***

In reference to giving of our money the question is not whether we should give or even how much, but rather - are the methods (if there is even supposed to be any -"methods") used by church leaders to get people to give, according to God's Word or are they traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation and taught without a "Berean" scrutiny for "whether these things are actually so".

Are the church leaders using an Old Testament Law as a "guideline" to promote giving in the New Testament Church and are they using coercing tactics to get people to give 10% of their earnings? Have they made doctrine out of a mixture of law and grace so that people will give or feel obligated to give 10% to the church?

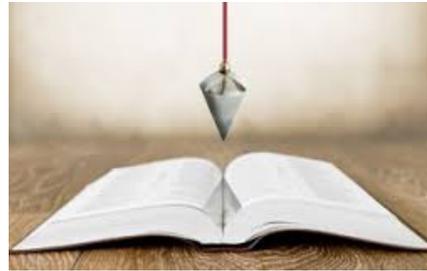
What is different from this practice and what the Roman Catholic church did in coercing people to give. Luther went against the establishment and was called a heretic when he declared the true word of God. The priests wanted to hang onto their tradition and keep the people in the dark, having people pay money to obtain certain results. In Luther's time it was penance for sins or relatives from purgatory. Now it's a promise of blessing if you tithe and a curse if you don't (Mal 3). Sounds like the same method to motivate people to give, doesn't it?

We know the strongest motivational factors known to the human spirit is the hope of gain or the fear of loss. Of the two, the greatest motivator is the fear of loss. So, if we feel guilty before God if we do not give 10%, we will either give 10% or constantly having a feeling of guilt and condemnation hanging over our head or....Well, let's find out **what God says** on the subject, which is really the only thing that matters.

The "Plumb Line" for all Christian Living - The Word!



Amos 7:7: Thus he showed me: and, behold, the LORD stood on a wall made by a plumb line, **with a plumb line in his hand.** 8: And the LORD said to me, Amos, what see you? And I said, A plumb line. Then said the LORD, Behold, **I will set a plumb line in the middle of my people Israel:** I will not again pass by them any more:



In that context it is important to begin with the most important basics for the studying God's Word;

*II Timothy 3:16: **All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:***

And that.....

*II Peter 1:20: Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.***

Is it wrong to give 10% of one's income?

No, absolutely not, IF - that is what you purpose in your heart.

NOTE: Interestingly enough, God used Paul, the person who persecuted the Christians because of his zeal for the Law, to pen these words inspired by the Holy Spirit;

*2Co 9:7 Every man **according as he purpose in his heart, so let him give; not [grudgingly, or] of necessity [necessary, distress, needful, must needs]: for God loves a cheerful giver.***

This scripture alone should be enough to establish the premise for giving. However, let's examine what is being taught in the majority of churches all over the world and see if in fact it is according to [God's Word](#). What does He say?

The purpose for this study is to establish Truth and we must ask ourselves these questions;

a] **Is tithing, as taught in many churches, a requirement that God upholds for the New Testament Church or...**

b] **Is giving, and the measure of it, a matter of the heart according to the leading of the Holy Spirit?**

It obviously cannot be both!

Personal Experience and Tradition as doctrine

Sometimes God speaks and reveals specific things to a person - something pertaining to their life and their situation and unfortunately some has taken that personal experience to be a "truth" applicable to the entire church and proceed to preach and teach it as such. There are books in Christian bookstores that are written as a doctrine, truth or principle, because the author and /or someone had an experience that they erroneously believe applies to everybody. If we should make what God told specifically to individuals in the Bible to do, as a word to everybody, we sure would have a great confusion on our hand. The acid test is always - can you find it in the Word of God as a **commandment or doctrine**. Does God make it applicable to everybody today?

The traditions that have been handed down for generations - are they based on the Word of God? Have we taken the time to check it out or do we just swallow everything that comes over the pulpit or are written by someone of supposed credibility? The ones who preach it, have they taken the time to look for the Truth or are they just passing on what they have traditionally learned and experienced?

I was an avid believer in tithing since I received the Lord Jesus Christ (or should I say "He received me") at the age 12 because I just took what was taught by my parents and preachers as the truth without checking this out and I am probably not far off the mark by guessing that - that is probably what most people do. As a matter of fact I really never "studied" the Bible at all, until in my early twenties and even then, subjects such as this one I never looked at seriously until much later.

I accepted what was taught including the selected scriptures that was used to support the teaching without much scrutiny and both believed and practiced "tithing" as a God given principle. However, God brought us through many different economic situations that made me study finances, stewardship and giving, and what I found in scripture was quite different than what is being typically taught in our churches today.

When church leaders say; "The tithe belongs to God", "Tithing is the minimum standard" or "If you don't tithe, you rob God", are they speaking from a knowledge of the truth as in

the Word of God or are they teaching traditions of men that has passed on from others. Are they trying to use the Word of God to "support" what they want to be truth or are they allowing the Word to speak for itself. I recently heard this sobering statement;

"Do not search for what you want to be the truth - search for the Truth!"

That can be challenging if we are steeped in tradition over many years handed down from what our grandparents and parents believed and taught us at home, from what they have been taught for generations in their churches.

To even consider the possibility that you have been following a principle that is not supported in scripture requires a mature and open mind to at least look at it. This is very hard for most, but if you are in search of the Truth, it is necessary.

Here is an excerpt from the book *The Mind in the Making* by James Harvey Robinson which puts it most aptly;

"We sometimes find ourselves changing our minds without any resistance or heavy emotion, but if we are told we are wrong, we resent the imputation and harden our hearts. We are incredibly heedless in the formation of our beliefs, but find ourselves filled with an illicit passion for them when anyone proposes to rob us of their companionship. It is obviously not the ideas themselves that are so dear to us, but our self-esteem which is threatened....The little word "my" is the most important one in human affairs, and properly to reckon with it is the beginning of wisdom. It has the same force whether it is "my" dinner, "my" dog, and "my" house, or "my" father, "my" country, and "my" God. We not only resent the imputation that our watch is wrong, or our car is shabby, but that our conception of the canals of Mars, of the pronunciation of "Epictetus", of the medicinal value of salicin, or the date of Sargon I is subject to revision. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true, and the resentment aroused when doubt is cast upon any of our assumptions leads us to seek every manner of excuse for clinging to it. The result is that most of our so-called reasoning consist in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do."

Change is hard for many people and what has been a steady diet for generations, particularly if there has been personal experiences involved, is not easy to alter, even if it is challenged by the Truth.

Here are some comments, on a typical story, made by Jared of Church Stewardship & Tithing Report on the book "Tithing and Still Broke"¹:

I'm sure many of you have heard testimonies that portray a couple that gives their \$127.67 tithe check to the church and then God doubles or even gives them 10x the amount to the exact penny. Some things to note on those people. One, that only happens once. Two, for some reason it doesn't happen to everyone. Three, it never happened to me.

I have no doubts that God purposefully blessed them with that exact amount, but I have no doubts that it wasn't because they obeyed the tithe. Why? Because those situations happen to those people who give freewill offerings as well. I forget to mention above, but the reason why I do not comment on the

testimony blogs is because the ability to convince them that their blessing didn't come from an old testament law is similar to convincing you that you are not real. That tithing testimony is so real to them, that scripture will not convince them otherwise.

What does God's Word say?

We'll look at **tithing** and **faith promises**, whether tithing is God's requirement for the New Testament Church and also whether there is a sound basis for "faith promises" in Scripture.

Our own opinion, whatever shaped it, has no credibility here. God alone has the answer. What does He say about it? Are these applicable to His Church, the Body of Christ? We'll look at whether these are God ordained requirements or just traditional methods by which those in charge use to fund institutional church programs?

In everything let us always have [God's Word](#) speak for itself rather than selecting portions of the Word to provide "support" for our own agenda. Is what is being taught actually what God says or is it our own accepted ideas and traditions? You'll hear me repeat this regularly throughout as it is most important to keep in mind.

*2Pe 1:20,21 knowing this first, that **no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation**,...for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

God also make special mention of people that do not just take what is being preached at face value, but actually searches the Word to see if it is correct. He actually calls them "**more noble**";

*Acts 17:10: And the brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. They, when they arrived, went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11: And these were **more noble** than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and **searched the Scriptures daily to see if those things were so.***

First of all they had a great attitude - They received the word with gladness. However, they still wanted to make sure that what they heard lined up with scripture.

Why did God specifically point that out? Do you think there is a possibility He wants us to have the same noble character and not just take everything we hear at face value? After all, **the "test score" is the Bible.**

So we'll let the Word of God speak for itself and declare whether these things are so. Our own opinions and even personal experiences are just a human endeavour to explain the Word from our own viewpoint. We must align ourself with the Word and see as God sees.

Law versus Faith - in the case of circumcision

God speaks in Acts 15:24 through a letter from the apostles, the elders and the brethren in Jerusalem to the church;

*Act 15:23,24 They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have **troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and **keep the law**"- to whom we gave no such commandment...***

In the letter to the Galatian churches, Paul addresses the issue of **faith versus law**. He even gives Peter a tongue lashing in front of everybody for being a hypocrite (would we do that today - or even write it down for future generations to read?). Let's remember, **this also was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit ;**

Galatians 2:11-14: But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was to be blamed, for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision.

*And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so as even Barnabas was led away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that **they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel**, I said to Peter before them all, If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of the Gentiles, and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?*

Can you just imagine a bunch of Christians lead by Peter and Barnabas were given a tongue lashing by Paul for not being honest? - Peter the Apostle? In front of everybody! Amazing. But is it? However, quite a contrast to often practised covert church politics in this present age.

Furthermore he says;

*Galatians 2:16 knowing this that **a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; **for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.***

God speaks further to this issue very clearly that he who attempt to be justified by law have fallen from grace. Beginning in Gal 4:21 talking about the two covenants;

*Galatians 4:21: Tell me, **ye that desire to be under the law**, do ye not hear the law?
22: For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.*

23: But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the

freewoman was by promise.

24: Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; **the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.**

25: For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

26: **But Jerusalem which is above is free**, which is the mother of us all.

27: For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29: But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30: Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31: So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Galatians 5:1: **Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free**, and be not entangled again with the **yoke of bondage**.

2: Behold, I Paul say unto you, that **if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing**.

3: For I testify again to **every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law**.

4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, **whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**

If someone teach that you should be circumcised according to the law or teach you that you should tithe according to the law (insisting that Jesus said so), what is the difference? Read the verses above again and decide what you hear being preached in your church - Liberty or Bondage!!

Paul said that: "**...they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel...**"

Furthermore he continues in the sixth chapter and says;

Galatians 6:16: And as many as walk **according to this rule**, peace be on them, and **mercy**, and upon the Israel of God.

What rule?

Well, you have to go back and see what he refers to and it is about Law and Grace with reference to the issue of circumcision that he was setting Peter and the others straight on.

Obviously some was aiming for a "show in the flesh" and put this burden on people to be circumcised. This is when Paul divides the Word of God correctly and is setting the record straight...

*Galatians 6:12: As many as desire to make a fair **shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised**; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

*13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but **desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.***

14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

*15: For **in Christ Jesus** neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

He ends the discourse by telling people not to bother him anymore [*with this trivial unscriptural nonsense*]...

*Galatians 6:17: **From henceforth let no man trouble me**: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

God says that what is important is a new creation;

*Galatians 6:15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails any thing, but **a new creature.***

Now, what has all this to do with tithing? As far as circumcision is concerned - Absolutely nothing, but as far as Law and Grace is concerned - Everything!

It clearly shows aspects of the law that the early church was concerned about. They did have an issue with circumcision and they dealt with it. However, they did not have an issue with tithing, it was never discussed as something that must be done - rather the opposite. Paul clearly spoke about how to give - As you purpose in your heart and not by compulsion or of necessity. If someone says that you have to tithe because Abraham and Jacob did and because God commands it, is that not using compulsion and necessity?

We are obviously not discussing circumcision here, but the lack of straightforwardness about the truth of the gospel which looks like a dead parallel to that of tithing. There was never a discussion like this on giving, because nobody brought up the issue of tithing - it was non-existent in the early Church. They gave willingly, without anybody reminding them to "return the tithe to the Lord" every time they took up a collection, and erroneously claiming that it is supported by God's Word.

It seems many of today's church leaders falls into the same category as those who insisted on circumcision and are quite diligent for their church members to actually keep the Law if it will cause certain actions seen as beneficial for their church – more specifically when it comes to money. And if money *should* be the motivating force one could understand their vigour, when statistically church people give an average of only 2% ².

Does not God's Word tell us that we have been set free from the law?

*1 Corinthians 15:56: **The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.***

*Romans 7:6: But now **we having been set free from the Law**, having died to that in which we were held, so that **we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter.***

*Romans 8:2: But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me **free from the law of sin and death.***

*Romans 10:4: For Christ is **the end of the law** for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

More about this later.

2. Money

The Love of Money

Money in itself has no moral value attached to it. The morality is revealed in our human spirit and attitude towards money. Scripture is filled with references to money, riches, wealth etc. and one of the more fundamental truths state that “**the Love of Money is the ROOT of ALL evil**” (1 Tim 6:10).

If it's the “root” of all evil, meaning the beginning of all evil, it would be prudent to find out when this beginning was and who was responsible.

Jesus addressed the rich young ruler and told him to sell **all** that he had, give it to the poor (interestingly enough not to the church) and follow Him.

*Mark 10:21: Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, **sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor**, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me; 22: And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

It is interesting to see how Jesus responded to the young man's question of eternal life.

Jesus told him about the commandments and the man said he had kept all of them. Then Jesus brought up the issue of money and his relationship to it. How would you and I have responded to someone who asked us about how to obtain eternal life? Would we have brought up how Jesus said we should live and how we should handle money?

Mark 10:17: ¶And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Mark 10:18: And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Mark 10:19: Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Mark 10:20: And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

*Mark 10:21: Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, **One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.***

Mark 10:22: And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

Why did not Jesus tell him to tithe? Why did Jesus tell him to sell all his possessions? Was it because he was rich? No, absolutely not. Jesus told him he was lacking in one area and that was **his relationship to his riches**. He was bound to his riches. It provided security, position and power and THAT is where most people fail.

When we hear; "the tithe belongs to the Lord", does it mean then that we have control over the rest (90%)? The message that comes across is that the tithe is out of our jurisdiction, but the rest is up to us what to do with. Jesus turns that upside down and tells us that we need to let **all** of it be under God's control, not just 10%.

The greatest challenge we face is the giving up of ourselves, our dependence on ourselves and what we can achieve on our own. Have you ever heard the word "self made" or "independent" in connection to success and money? "He is a self made millionaire" or "financially independent". That is a misnomer to begin with because nobody became anything without the involvement of other people. It's the worship of the creature rather than the creator (Rom 1:25).

Let's face it, the world we live in *is* worshipping man (the creature) in so many ways and Christians are influenced greatly through what we read, hear, watch and the people that we associate with. In that connection, let me just insert a quote from the late Jim Rohn here, which is very applicable:

"You must constantly ask yourself these questions: Who am I around? What are they doing to me? What have they got me reading? What have they got me saying? Where do they have me going? What

do they have me thinking? And most important, what do they have me becoming? Then ask yourself the big question: Is that okay?" - Jim Rohn

God also says that both the **cares of this world** as well as the **deceit of riches** will choke the Word and make you unfruitful, and - I would suggest to you that there are far more people that have cares of this world than are rich.

Even the churches seem to have cares - because of MONEY! Why? Because churches are typically run like a business, an organization, not as an organism. We are concerned with having enough funds to provide for our programs and being able to BORROW to do so if needs be. ".....that you having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work....(through the banks?)

*Mark 4:19: and the cares of this world, and the deceit of riches, and the lust about other things entering in, **choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.***

Is it possible we are "doing church" according to the unjust world system of finance instead of trusting in God's word? If we are, is it also possible that the scripture above is fulfilled in our midst and we do not see God move as we would like? God's Word becomes unfruitful? God will move on individuals in any church setting in spite of ministry condition (I've seen several), but will there be a sovereign corporate move of God?

I have been reading the famous Oswald Chambers "My Utmost for His Highest" for several years and what seems to be running like a red thread through his writings is; having a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Nothing else matters. Not accomplishments, not ministry, not the applause, not the programs, outreach, sermons, how many got saved, healed etc., only the relationship with the Savior. Because then and only then will everything else fall in place and it will be without care and concern, because He said; "*my yoke is easy and my burden is light*".

When we are program oriented and ministry oriented instead of Jesus oriented then numbers and achievements become important, because these are things we can observe and show others. It's also easy to talk about a measurable giving like 10% and get people to "give" faith promises, but how do you budget when people give as they purpose in their hearts?

When we give without strings attached, with no thought of getting anything in return, He will make sure we have what we need to do what He wants us to do. What a relief that is! All of a sudden a ton of bricks falls off our shoulders and we can rest in HIM. If that does not happen, maybe we should examine what we believe in.

Jesus said to the disciples not to get excited about their ministry and their accomplishments;

Luke 10:17,19,20: ¶And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. Behold, I give unto you power to tread

*on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding **in this rejoice not**, that the spirits are subject unto you; **but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.***

Typically people will focus on what's being done (the outward), but we must focus on who we are (internally).

The attitude we have towards money determines the fruitfulness or the lack of the Word in our lives. We'll see in a moment how Jesus connects our relationship to money to spiritual riches in a very real and easy to understand statement..

Money and Spirituality

There is a saying that goes like this "Money makes the world go around" and it is quite true. We need money to do practically everything in life. We exchange a big part of our life to acquire money, then we use the rest of the time managing and spending it. As a matter of fact we spend roughly half our waking life making money and the other half spending it. The rest of the time we sleep and/or worry about how to balance the other parts. So, it's safe to say that money plays a huge part in our life.

The important thing is to have the right relationship to money so that it serves us and not the other way around. God's Word tells us the relationship we have to it is very closely connected to our relationship to the true riches or our ability to acquire or be trusted with true riches. In the parable of the unjust steward Jesus talks about faithfulness and stewardship related to someone else's goods and says;

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in what is least [earthly goods] is faithful also in much..."

He then makes the comparison between earthly riches and spiritual riches;

*Luke 16:11: Therefore if you have **not been faithful** in the unrighteous mammon [(earthly) wealth], who will entrust the **true riches** to you?*

The end of the matter is plainly spelled out in verse 13, where Jesus concludes;

*"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"*

In other words, **our relationship to money is indicative of what spiritual riches the Lord will entrust us with.** And that applies not only to individuals, but churches as well.

How do we handle money? Are we faithful stewards [which involves a lot more than money] - is money serving us or are we serving money. Are we in control or are we allowing (or causing) the Word to be choked by cares and deceit? Do we have cares about the budget, shortfalls, decline in giving, etc? Do we have to borrow to accomplish "spiritual goals"? Should we? "Having all sufficiency...." Do we move ahead of God? Do we have cares and desires that we should not have? Do we move ahead with our wants instead of trusting God for our needs?

*Mark 4:19: and the **cares** of this world, and the **deceit** of riches, and the lust about other things entering in, **choke the Word**, and it becomes **unfruitful**.*

Maybe that is why Jesus put such a great emphasis on the handling of money. I just checked the four Gospels and there are **54 references to Money and Wealth** and **54 references to Prayer**, **42 references to Love** and **29 references to Faith**. Interesting don't you think? Which of the four brings us close to God? You're right - Prayer of course. If we are close to God, is there a good chance we will have the right relationship to Money? If we love and serve God, we will not serve (or love) money.

Having said all that, God has also concluded that He will give us the desires of our heart

Proverbs 10:24: the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

Proverbs 11:23: The desire of the righteous is only good....

The Root of All Evil

Where did it all begin? Norm Franz in his book "Money and Wealth" gives a great exposition where he ponders the question that if the love of money is the **ROOT of ALL evil**, that it must have started with Lucifer. Now what would the devil have any interest in money for? Great question, however the Word clearly spells it out in Ezekiel;

*Ezekiel 28:13-16: You [Lucifer] have been in Eden the garden of God.....You were the anointed cherub [archangel] that covers, and I had put you in the holy height of God where you were....You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you.....By the multitude of **your goods** [merchandise, business, trade] they have filled your midst with violence, and you have sinned.*

Franz makes the following observation in his book;

"There are a lot of things happening in this passage of Scripture. First, it would appear that before his attempted coup against Jehovah (YHVH), Lucifer was involved in an abundance of business and trade that was being transacted in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"Secondly, it could also appear that the original sin was birthed in Lucifer while he was in the midst of those business activities. This abundant volume of trade filled Lucifer with so much violence that he actually launched a frontal assault against Jehovah to get more. Can you imagine anyone trying anything so foolish.? This appears to be the first example of how the lust for money and material possession can drive anyone to believe they don't have to obey God's Word."

Maybe we can add to that - Position! The Devil knew how much he desired a higher position...

*Isaiah 14:13,14: For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I **will exalt my throne** above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High.***

and he is the ultimate teacher/trainer to be able to make people desire and lust for money, material possession and position. It started in the very beginning when the Devil lured Eve by speaking a mixture of truth and lies and by listening to him, her attitude changed from obeying God to desiring "good things";

*Gen. 3:6 "So when the woman saw that the tree was **good** for food, that it was **pleasant** to the eyes, and a tree **desirable** to make one wise, she took of it's fruit and ate....."*

We usually tend to think in terms of who this applies to, but what about some self examination? How is our relationship to money, possessions and position. These three areas are very much applicable to everybody and we are talking here about Christians, both in ministry, work, business and at home. Do we take ourselves and our position too serious? Does money and possessions bring people position or stature? Unfortunately they do, even in the church. It all comes down to - money. Will a person who gives large amounts to the church receive more attention than someone who gives smaller amounts although possibly a higher percentage? Unfortunately, most likely. However Jesus gave attention to the widow who gave everything she had because He knew what she had given was special. Most people probably would not pay her special attention if any. Money speaks and a lot of money speaks a lot.

So what does this have to do with tithing and the preaching and teaching of it. Well, quite a bit, because it comes down to our relationship to money.

Before we continue, let me emphasize one thing about studying God's Word. In most cases you cannot just take one scripture and build a doctrine on that without looking at the context, both before and after that verse as well as the chapter, the book and finally ALL of God's Word, because God's Word does not have any contradictions in it, if you believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. See [God's Word](#)

3. Tithing is not by Law?

“But wait”, the proponents of tithing will say - “ it was instituted before the law”. Referring to Abraham and Jacob. Then why do they keep quoting **Malachi 3:10** which accused Israel of robbing God because they did not tithe and not just tithing, but offerings as well. God went a lot further by saying; **“You are cursed with a curse”**. I have not yet heard any pastor going as far as telling their congregations they are cursed if they don't tithe, but they might as well. It's part of that scripture. And why don't they? Because it would likely get a lot of people upset and possibly leave the church. Who said it was no politics in church?

Again, when we look closely at the context in the book of Malachi you'll see that it is mainly a message to the priests who did not honor and reverence the Lord because of their contemptible offerings of the stolen, the lame and the sick and they did not teach the people the right things. **The priests were corrupt** and God says he will rebuke their descendants because **they did not follow in the covenant of Levi (the Law)**.

Malachi 2:7: *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and **they should seek the law from his mouth**; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*

Malachi 2:8: *But you have departed from the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted **the covenant of Levi**, says the LORD of hosts.*

God speaks to the priest and notice, He says they have not just robbed God, but the nation as well. God says "all of it";

Malachi 2:4: *Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, That my covenant with Levi may continue,*

Malachi 3:7: *From the days of your fathers, **you have turned aside from My ordinances (Law)**, and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say. In what way shall we return?*

Malachi 3:8: *Will a man rob God? **Yet you have robbed Me**. But you say, In what have we robbed You? **In the tithe and the offering!***

Malachi 3:9: **You are cursed with a curse;** *for you are robbing Me, the nation, all of it.*
Malachi 3:10: *Bring all the tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house. And test Me now with this, says the LORD of hosts, to see if I will not open the windows of Heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until there is no sufficiency.*

Malachi 3:11: *And I will rebuke your devourer, and he shall not decay the fruit of your ground against you; nor shall your vine miscarry against you in the field, says the LORD of hosts.*

Malachi 3:12: *And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delightful land, says the LORD of hosts.*

God speaks through the prophet to His people, and mainly to the priests who did not lead the people in the right way, who was living under the Law (the covenant of Levi). The priests were given a lashing for not keeping and speaking the Law.

Would the Church leaders today be reprimanded for not keeping or speaking the Law, or the covenant of Levi?

These scriptures very clearly refer directly to the Law and not to Jacob and Abraham who gave a tenth, completely voluntary - and once. And who decided that Abraham's and Jacob's giving constituted the institution of tithing before the law?

The New Priesthood

Furthermore, in Hebrews it discusses the King of Righteousness and how Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils and the Levitical priesthood and how they receive tithes from the people according to the law...

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

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

7: And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

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

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

10: For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Then he goes on to speak about the new priesthood:

11: If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

*12: **For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.***

Hebrews 7:14: For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15: And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

*16: Who is made, **not after the law of a carnal commandment**, but after the power of an endless life.*

18: For there is verily a **disannulling of the commandment** going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19: For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Hebrews 8:4: For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that **offer gifts according to the law:**

5: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6: But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a **better covenant**, which was established upon better promises.

In chapter 8:7-13 he talks of a New Covenant and concludes....

Hebrews 8:13: In that he saith, A new covenant, he has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. [NKJ]

It's quite clear that we are not under the old law, which included tithing (in many various forms), but at the same time the proponents of tithing say it's not legalistic, just to keep it out of the Law. However, they keep saying that the tithe belongs to the Lord, insinuating that if you don't give the tithe, Mal 3:10 applies (which is according to the law) and you are robbing God (and are cursed with a curse). It can't be both ways. So which is it? And - who decided that only tithing belongs to God and not offerings? And why not offerings first and then tithing? Simple - you cannot put a number on offerings, but you can on tithing, however Malachi includes both. So, is it one or the other or both, and who decides?

And here is an interesting point and worthy to consider -

If the pastors and leaders of our churches really believed that those who do not tithe are robbing God - are actually robbers and thieves AND are cursed with a curse (which they conveniently leave out), why do they not preach repentance from thievery and robbery, to be free from the curse, since there will be no thieves, robbers or cursed people in heaven?

If this was truly the case our altars should be full of repentant thieves and robbers and the church finances would go through the roof.

Besides, it looks like, if we should take Malachi to apply to us today we are all under the curse if we do not keep everything that is written in the law. And furthermore if we offend in one point we would be guilty of all:

Galatians 3:10: **For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse:** for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in **all things** which are written in

the book of the law to do them.

*James 2:10: For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet **offend in one point**, he is **guilty of all**.*

But thanks be to God, as we continue to read we see that Jesus took that curse on himself that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law;

*Galatians 3:11: But that **no man is justified by the law** in the sight of God, it is evident: for, **The just shall live by faith**.*

*Galatians 3:12: And **the law is not of faith**: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.*

*Galatians 3:13: **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law**, being **made a curse for us**: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

On average apparently only one third to one half of Christians support their church financially ³, and overall, only 3 to 5 percent of those who donate money to a church, tithe (give 10 percent of) their incomes ⁴. In other words, and it bears repetition, if we should take Malachi to apply to us to today, there are a lot of people who attend church who need to "get saved".

Let us see the chronological chain of events here. They say that tithing was instituted before the Law, then the Law established it and then it was upheld in the New Testament Church by Jesus? They try to make Jesus' reference to tithing a supposed transfer of it into the New Testament era, when He was actually giving the Pharisees a tongue lashing (more on that later) about their hypocrisy. Where is it found in the teaching of the early church? There is much about giving and stewardship, but somehow tithing is left out, even by Paul who was highly educated in the Law - a pharisee.

Philippians 3:5: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

We seem to adhere to tradition and what has been handed down to us through generations rather than following the Word of God. The message to the Church is;

*2Co 9:7 So let each one **give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity** (or compulsion); for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Would it not be of necessity if it was a law that we still had to adhere to? Of course, but they flip flop between a tithe that was given by two men (which was a one time event) before the law and Mal 3:10 which clearly points to the Law. In other words they are not using a clear basis for preaching tithing, but making it appear as if you are being bad (or sinful) if you don't.

It all comes down to [MONEY](#).

As we will notice later, the giving referred to in the NT was for the saints that were in need, not for fancy and expensive church buildings and equipment. Most of the churches were small and in houses which did not run a big overhead. Now, is it wrong to have a nice building to meet in? Possibly not, but it must not come at the expense of caring for the Church - the body of Christ itself which by the way, is not just the local church members but His Church, the Body of Christ world wide. We have a tendency to talk about us and them even referring to other local churches, which are really all part of the Church of Jesus Christ - His Body.

We have however, segmented the Church into our local and national church and the "mission field". Interestingly enough, you will not find the word mission, missionary or mission field in the Bible. Why, because in God's economy there is only One Church and as Christians we are One Body, no matter where in the world we are. When Paul traveled he did not go on a "missionary journey", he was visiting other local churches in the Body of Christ. It's not us and them, it is always us and we (the body of Christ) need to look after those who are in need (in other parts of the body) no matter where they are in the world.

Politically, we hear more and more about the global Village, New World Order, One World Government etc. which is a very visible sign we are living in the end of the last days. However, as Christians we are holed up in our local "churches" both in mind and body. God wants us to have "Body of Christ" mentality, *"the Church which the gates of Hell cannot prevail against"* attitude, and a global vision.

Pastors have a tendency to be very protective of their "church" (congregation) and when receiving criticism over how things are done in their local church, they seem to think that people are against The Church, the body of Christ, which is not the case at all.

Unfortunately, sometimes the "table-manners" and the procedures are not congruent with what we read in the Scriptures which results in some people going elsewhere to fellowship. They did not leave "the Church" - the Body of Christ, just changed their "address".

4. Tithing and Giving in the Old Testament

Tithe given before the law:

We see here, the record of two men that gave a tithe - once! One from the spoils of war and the other after he made a conditional deal with God.

Abram:

Gen 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 (Abram) gave him a tithe of all.

*Heb 7:1,2 For this Melchisedec, 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**;*

Abram gave a **tenth of all the spoil** (all the goods brought back v.16) to Melchisedec and he kept nothing for himself but left everything with the king of Sodom (v 23). **It was not from his own produce that Abram gave a tenth, but from the spoils of war - once!**

Jacob:

*Genesis 28:20: And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, **If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21: So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:***

*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.***

Jacob's giving of a tenth was conditional on God blessing him first, and on him coming to his father's place in peace. Today we often hear that we should trust God with our tithe and (then) the Lord will bless us.

Furthermore, there are no records that indicate that Jacob continued to give 10% of everything God gave him after he came to his father's house. Nor are there any details on how he gave it, where or to who. Did he offer it right there, since he called the stone he erected "God's House"? Or did he do it after he was safely home? And what does it mean "of all that thou shalt give me"? Was that produce and livestock only or other things as well? And, it was a conditional giving - if God will be with him, and give him bread and raiment etc. - then he would give a tenth! Not giving first, but on the condition that God blessed him first.

In both these instances we see a complete voluntary giving of ten percent to the Lord. It was not a requirement, not a law or a fee, but purely voluntary.

Giving before the Law:

When the people gave to create the Tabernacle, God's Word records over and over again how that the people's heart was stirred and they gave willingly. There was no guilt trip employed.

*Exodus 35:5: Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: **whosoever is of a willing heart**, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,*

*Exodus 35:21: And they came, every one whose **heart stirred him up**, and every one **whom his spirit made willing**, and they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.*

*Exodus 35:22: And they came, both men and women, **as many as were willing hearted**, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD.*

*Exodus 35:29: The children of Israel **brought a willing offering** unto the LORD, every man and woman, **whose heart made them willing** to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.*

Why does it not say anything about tithes here? Well, first of all they obviously did not look at Abraham and Jacob as examples. Secondly, tithing was not yet instituted. It was first mentioned within the framework of the law in Leviticus 27:30. But at any rate, when you look at any of the many different tithes, it was ONLY and always about food and drink. Never about Money or Silver and gold and precious metals, art or clothing etc. etc. - always about food - produce and livestock.

Let's look at some parallel verses in the New Testament:

*II Corinthians 8:3: For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power **they were willing** of themselves;*

*II Corinthians 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.*

Tithing Under the Law:

Tithing under the law was not voluntary and as we shall see, tithing was not just a simple giving of 10% of your earnings as some preach today. As a matter of fact it did not even

refer to money at all, but to the produce of the land. Tithing was also applied in a variety of ways under the Law. And what was the purpose for the tithe? There were several;

Eating the Tithe before the Lord;

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

24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

*25 Then shalt thou **turn it into money**, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:*

*26 And **thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after**, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and **thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,***

Here we have a tithe that is supposed to be eaten and enjoyed by the owner and his family in a place where God shall choose to set his name.

Trespass (Sin) offering and provision for the poor:

This has nothing to do with a specific "tithe", it only mentions a "tenth" as a means of measure;

*Lev 5:11 But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the **tenth part** of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is **a sin offering.***

Here we see an example of someone who may not be able to give what was required by law, because they were too poor, so the law made provision for them to give something less, a tenth of an ephah. An ephah was 21.14 liters, so the offering was 2.11 liter of flour.

Tithe of produce:

*Lev 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 unto the LORD.

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

Tithe of Livestock:

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

Tithe for the Priests, the Stranger, the Fatherless and the Widow every third year:

*Deu 14:27 And the **Levite** that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.*

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

*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; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.*

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

Deuteronomy 26:13: 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:

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.

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

An offering to Aaron the priest of the Tithe the Levites received (1%):

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

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

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

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

We see above in the context of the tithes were also the burnt offerings, sacrifices, heave offerings and choice vows.

Only one tenth of the Tithe (1%) was given to the house of God, the treasure house;

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

Tithing as a tax to the King:

*1Sa 8:15 And he will take **the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards**, and give to his officers, and to his servants.*

*1Sa 8:17 He will take **the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.***

2Ch 31:12 And brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated things faithfully: over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next.

The Lord's tribute of the plunder:

Numbers 31:32: And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep [675,000],

33: And threescore and twelve thousand beeves [72,000],

34: And threescore and one thousand asses [61,000],

35: And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him.

36: And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep:

37: And the LORD'S tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen [675].

38: And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and twelve [72].

39: And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and one [61].

40: And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was thirty and two persons [32]

41: And Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD'S heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

As you can see from the above references, the Lord's tribute from the plunder that was required under the law was **1/10 of 1% and 2/10 of 1%**. As a point of interest, Abram, before the law, **gave ten percent - completely voluntary!**

Misc. references:

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

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

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

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

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

*Mal 3:10 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.*

Not a simple "Tithe"

As we have seen in the preceding scriptures, tithing was not just one simple tenth of someones production, but part of a variety of laws and regulations. One was to the Levites because they had no inheritance of the land and the Levites gave a tithe of that tithe to the house of God (1%). I guess the "overhead" was not very big compared to today's church operations.

Not only that, but if you add up all the tithes that were to be given and the tax (tithe) to the king, it was more that just one simple 10% of ones increase.

Whenever God speaks about offerings and tithes, it was always to give the best; Here is something to ponder from the book: "Beyond Tithes & Offerings" by Mitchell T. & Michael L. Webb⁵;

Numbers 18:29

'You must present as the Lord's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you' . .

If the tithe did consist of money, then what is the 'best part' of money? Spending it? With true tithing, one can identify the best of the produce, but the best part cannot be identified when using money.

One tithe was to be eaten, another was to be set aside every third year - called the year of tithing. Another was actually tithing as a substitute sin offering. **If people could not afford to do the required offering, they could do something less.** There was the tithing to the Levites and there was tithing to kings and rulers as a tax as well. **Only a tenth of the tithe was to be brought to the house of the Lord;**

*Neh 10:38and the Levites shall bring up the **tithe of the tithes** unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.*

Here's the big question; Is tithing applicable for us today? and if so, how are we to apply the above laws and regulations to the New Testament Church? Which tithe?

Most of us have probably never paid much attention to the details of tithing laws in the Old Testament, but only heard what the church leaders have said about tithing. That would most typically be that a tenth of our income (money) belongs to the Lord and that we need to bring it to the storehouse (the church) so there will be meat (Word) in my house, referring to Mal.3:10. That's called traditional teaching.

It's a very simplified and has become a traditional way of looking at the tithing as it was in the Old Testament and a simple 10% of our income fits in well with the economy of today and the way we run our church organizations regardless of its scriptural veracity.

Does the scripture in Mal. 3:10 mean that there is a required payment to have the Word in our midst and that the poor who do not have money to give will not have the Word given to them? That sounds very much like how the Catholic Church treated the people at Martin Luther's time and that is exactly why he stood up to the Church leaders at the time and it's tradition which had absolutely nothing to do with the reality of scripture, but all to do with acquiring money for church projects etc. Keep the Word of God out of the hands of the people or distort it's meaning amounts to the same thing.

Tithe was not based on income or money.

What is very clear in all of scripture is that tithing was always based on increase in produce and live stock, never money. Did they have and use money? Yes, the first transaction mentioning money was recorded in Gen 17:12. However, silver and gold was used in transacting business from the very beginning. Gold is mentioned as early as Gen 2:11. Scripture tells us that Abram was very rich in silver and gold - Gen 13:2, and Gen 20:16 records that silver was used as payment.

Tithing under the Law had everything to do with produce and livestock. There is not a single reference in scripture that requires anybody to tithe of silver or gold or money. They did have and used money as referenced above, but never to tithe from. As a matter of fact here is how money was used in references to tithing. It specifically addresses money to be used if the distance was too far to bring the produce and the live stock. Then the produce was to be turned into money (sell it) and buy the produce and the live stock again - to be eaten by the people who brought it:

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

Deu 14:24 And **if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:**

Deu 14:25 Then shalt thou **turn it into money**, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

Deu 14:26 And thou shalt **bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,**

How many Christians have even read this passage - **that for the tithing money you could buy "whatever your soul lusteth after" and eat it before the Lord and rejoice with your household?**

Did everybody tithe under the law?

No, only the farmers and keepers of livestock were required to tithe. A lot of people had other vocations, silver and gold smiths, musicians, carpenters, tent makers etc. They were never required to tithe because they did not produce any food. The tithe was mainly to sustain people with food. Offerings of all sorts were given where everyone was involved, but never tithing.

5. Giving in the New Testament

Tithing from money is a fairly modern concept that is not found anywhere in scripture. There is absolutely no evidence that any Jewish or Gentile Christian in the First Century ever tithed anything. Here is what the Encyclopedia Americana says about the history of tithing:

"It was not practiced in the early Christian church but gradually became common (in the Roman Catholic church in western Europe) by the 6th Century. The Council of Tours in 567 and the second Council of Macon in 585 advocated tithing. Made obligatory by civil law in the Carolingian empire in 765 and in England in the 10th Century... The Reformation did not abolish tithing and the practice was continued in the Roman Catholic church and in Protestant countries... (until it was) gradually replaced by other forms of taxation. The Roman Catholic church still prescribes tithes in countries where they are sanctioned by law, and some Protestant bodies consider tithes obligatory." The Encyclopedia Britannica points this out about tithing... "The eastern Orthodox churches never accepted the idea of tithes and Orthodox church members have never paid them."

However, tithing, as presented in our churches today, has all to do with money, and the handling of money is very important in God's economy as we have eluded to previously

and will see further as we study this.

I was in a church once where a they had a visiting minister preach on finances and tithing (fund raiser). He said that you tithed of your earning, but if someone **gives you things** (ie. house, car, fridge, TV), you do not need to tithe on that.

Now, before we go any further let us establish who is the giver of everything we receive, because otherwise you might think this is completely ridiculous. Let us establish that we came into this world with nothing and we will leave with nothing and everything in between was the goodness of our Creator. God tells us that HE is the giver of everything, spiritual, mental, physical and material, because He owns everything. We are just the stewards;

*James 1:17: **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above**, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

*Psalms 136:25: **Who giveth food to all flesh**: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

*Psalms 50:10: For every **beast** of the forest **is mine**, and the **cattle** upon a thousand hills.*

*Haggai 2:8: The **silver is mine**, and the **gold is mine**, saith the LORD of hosts.*

*I Corinthians 4:7: For who makes you to differ from another? **And what do you have that you did not receive?** And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*

*Gen 28:22 Jacob says: and **of all that thou shalt give me** I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*

In other words, everything we have, we have received from God (through whatever means He used to do that with - work, parents, family, church, friends etc). So If you want to be consistent with what Jacob said; "*and of **all that thou shalt give me** I will surely give the tenth unto thee*", don't you need to tithe on everything that is given to you? - if someone gave you a house, a car, a fridge, a TV - anything? What part of ALL do we not understand?

It sounds utterly foolish, I know, but if you want to be consistent with Old Testament teachings, is that not what ALL means (in their time it was every tenth cow, sheep, goat and portion of produce etc.)? And, who decides that you don't have to? Sounds like human reasonings to me. IF, you want to say that tithing before the law establishes tithing after the law you cannot arbitrarily decide how that is going to be applied. It either is according to, or it is not at all. It smacks of **human interpretation** which God says is a no no!

Tithe mentioned in the New Testament by Jesus:

Jesus referenced tithing as He was speaking to the Pharisees;

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

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

Notice that Jesus said; "**the weightier matters of the Law**". So He was in fact **referencing the Law**, when He was speaking to the Pharisees.

This is a favourite portion of Scripture used by those who insist that tithing is for today, trying to support their position. They insist that because Jesus said to "*not to leave the other undone*", supposedly meaning that they should tithe of their herbs, and we are to tithe of our income. Jesus supposedly upheld the practice of tithing, according to the law (remember he was talking with the people adhering to the law of Moses). For us in the New Testament church where God also says we are justified by faith and that Christ came to fulfill the law. So which one is correct? Obviously it cannot be both.

We know there are no contradictions in God's Word so it can only be human interpretation that makes it so. Jesus' reference is clearly to the Law, not the one by Abraham and Jacob which was by faith. Interestingly enough, there are no references in the word of God or the law that indicates that people are supposed to tithe from their herbs specifically. Let us examine the context here;

Jesus was born, lived and ministered under the Law;

We have to remember that Jesus came to the earth and particularly to the Jews in the era of the Old Testament. There was no "Bible" as we know it, only the Old Testament including the Law. Jesus himself was born and lived under the law of Moses. The people Jesus came and ministered among lived under the Law of Moses and in that context He addressed the Pharisees. He told people to observe the law of Moses. However, the Atonement changed all that at *the fullness of time*.

*Rom 3:19 Now we know that **whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law**.....*

*Galatians 4:4: But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,***

*5: **To redeem them that were under the law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

The atonement changed everything and the era of the New Testament was ushered in...

*Galatians 5:4: **Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.***

As referred to earlier, you cannot just take one verse and let it stand by itself in studying the scripture. What comes before and after that verse, entire context of the New Testament and the entire God's Word need to be taken into consideration.

If Jesus' words to the Pharisees is to be taken as a verification of 'tithing' in the New Testament church, then the Bible has gross contradictions in it as you will see from the scriptures that follow which completely and clearly spells out that we have been set free from the law. Insisting on anything different is a blatant human fabrication and typical of someone picking out selective scriptures in their effort to support their own ideas and traditions.

When we look at that whole chapter it is about "**Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees**". Jesus addresses several issues from the OT Law and in reference to the altar He says;

Matthew 23:16: Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17: Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18: And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19: Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

Then He explains how it should be;

*Matthew 23:20: **Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar**, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.*

*21: **And whoso shall swear by the temple**, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.*

*22: **And he that shall swear by heaven**, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.*

Does that mean that Jesus upholds that we now should swear by the altar, by the temple or

by heaven, because He was addressing what they were doing wrong and what was the right way for the Saducees and the Pharisees? Of course not. As a matter of fact Jesus told us not to swear at all;

*Matthew 5:34: But I say unto you, **Swear not at all**; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne.....*

So, obviously Jesus, in scolding the Pharisees, did not establish conduct for the New Testament believers, but it was all in reference to the Old Testament Law which the Pharisees were living under presently.

Here is another example where Jesus told the man whom He had healed from Leprosy to do fulfill the law of Moses;

*Mark 1:44: And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and **offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded**, for a testimony unto them.*

Does that mean we are supposed to do it also? Of course not. Jesus upheld the law of Moses because He had not yet become the sacrificial lamb. He had not yet become the curse. The fulfillment of the Law had not yet happened, so the Law was still applicable.

Jesus continued in scolding the Pharisees; "**You tithe mint and rue (herbs)....**", because they were under the law. Grace had not yet been established, because Jesus had not yet paid the price for sin.

When He said this sentence (that proponents of the tithe uses); "*these you ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone*", **He scolded them who were still living under the law**. Just as he scolded them about the altar, the temple and heaven. Not only that, but if what Jesus said should be literally applied to today, we need to tithe mint, rue and herbs, not money!

As another point of interest, did you notice that Jesus pointed out what they were tithing of? It was probably the least they could get away with - tithing herbs! If that is even supposed to be tithed from?

How can anybody say that Jesus maintained that we should continue to tithe in the New Testament, when God says very clearly that we have been set free from the law?

*1 Corinthians 15:56: **The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.***

*Romans 7:6: But now **we having been set free from the Law**, having died to that in which we were held, so that **we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter.***

*Romans 8:2: But the law of the Spirit of life in **Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.***

There is no evidence in God's word that tells us that Jesus practiced tithing, nor taught his disciples to do so.

A Sabbath "sidebar" (as part of the Law)...

As a little sidebar for comparison's sake let's take a look at the Sabbath. God says in

Ex 31:14 that whoever does not keep the Sabbath will die;

Exodus 31:14: Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death:

The Sabbath is mentioned **sixty times** in the New Testament compared to only **seven times** referring to **three instances** - when Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, the bragging pharisee and when Paul speaks about Abraham and Melchisedec. There is way more support for keeping the Sabbath and, if you are selective, it could be portrayed as seemingly confirming it. Jesus ministered in the synagogue on the Sabbath, Paul ministered on the Sabbath to the Jews and also to the gentiles. [I'm sure if it would have had anything to do with money, we would certainly been told that we had to observe the Sabbath]. However, Jesus supposedly "broke" the Sabbath law according to the Pharisees when he and his disciples walked through the cornfield and ate, when He healed on the Sabbath day etc. and He answered the Pharisees;

Matthew 12:5: Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6: But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

7: But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8: For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

We observe the first day of the week as the Day of the Lord because that's when He rose from the dead and that's the day when the early church gathered.

Mark 16:9: Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week,....

Acts 20:7: And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,....

AND God has a few things to say about the observance of days etc...

Romans 14:5: One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6: He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Now, why am I bringing in this example? Just to show that something like the Sabbath with far more references has not been an issue in evangelical circles, But tithing, which is not even mentioned once as a practice in the Early Church is one of the biggest issues in our churches of today. Why? It's very simple - it has to do with MONEY!

Is it Law or Grace?

To further establish that we have been set free from the law, read the entire chapter 7 of Romans. As a matter of fact read all of the letter to the Romans as it systematically explains the significance of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and the relation to law and grace. Then of course, If as they say, "tithing was established before the law", then the above sayings of Jesus certainly does not apply at all, because He was, without any doubt, referencing the Law to the Pharisees.

So, it's a peculiar position to be in, switching back and fort between pre-law and law, missing "this grace" altogether.

And how do we explain away the very clear word of God when He says;

*Galatians 2:16: Knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the law**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even **we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.***

Besides, listen to what God says through Paul in reference to giving, which he calls "this grace", clearly saying this is **NOT by commandment** (law);

*2 Cor. 8:7,8; ".....see that you abound in this grace also. I speak **not by commandment**..."*

In other words, referring to Jesus' rebuke of the Sadducees and the Pharisees is absolutely ridiculous IF, you believe there are no contradictions in **God's Word**. How much clearer can it be?

How can you make what Abraham and Jacob did into a requirement, when clearly they gave out of a sincere and grateful heart? Abraham gave 10 times more than the law later required which was only 1% of the spoils (see Num. 31). And Jacob's promise of ten percent was conditioned on God blessing him and bringing him safely back to his father's

house.

Those who still hold on to the belief that the **requirement** of "tithing" is applicable to the New Testament Church, shows a clear example of trying to support *their* traditional beliefs, using selected scriptures in their endeavour to "prove" their point of view, rather than finding out What God Says on the subject.

If we should use Abraham and Jacob as an example of giving, we should do it for the attitude they had - that of gratitude and not for the un-scriptural ADDING of necessity or commandment!

Instead of searching for justification in the Bible, search and pray for direction from the biblical text - what God is actually saying, not what we want to believe He is saying.

Why are we told by the "traditionalists" to tithe of our money when there are absolutely no references in scripture to even remotely support that? It was always from the best produce and the best livestock. How can we give the "best" money? Even Jesus' word to the Pharisees was that they should not leave the other undone - tithing on mint, anise and cummin, which are spices and herbs. AND, there is absolutely no reference in scripture for a requirement to tithe on spices or herbs. Nor did Jesus tell the Pharisees to tithe of their wages?!?!

Did they get their wages paid in herbs? Very doubtful.

Jesus referred to Mint, Anise and Cummin, the first two which is not found anywhere else in scripture. Cummin is mentioned three times in Is 28: 25,27 in reference to preparing the spice.

Before we go any further let me reiterate what we have said from the very beginning;

**This is not an exercise in abolishing tithing
for the purpose of avoiding giving,
but rather the opposite:
To admonish giving - FREELY,
from a willing heart, in gratitude towards God.**

As referred to earlier, giving can never be done by requirement, commandment or a law, just like love can never be given by requirement, commandment or law.

Tithing as a good 'Principle' for giving?

Now, someone will agree that tithing is not a requirement in the New Testament Church, but at the same time they will say that it is a **principle** of giving **from the Old Testament** and a good place to start. That sounds reasonable and the secular world agrees to a great degree. I hear it all the time in business seminars - giving 10% back to worthwhile causes.

However, reflecting on people in the church who cannot start with 10%. What about them? Those who can only give a "**tenth of an Ephah**" (God's remedy in the O.T.), a very small amount compared to the regular offering? Will they not feel condemned if the message and expectation is for people to give 10% of their income as a start? Besides, if the Old Testament law is going to be seen as a principle of giving, then we should start giving of produce and livestock as well and not money, right? How ludicrous.

This whole thing about pushing tithing on the people of God whether by "law" or "principle" is purely money motivated (however noble the cause), otherwise they would have no problem with preaching giving according "*as your purpose in your heart*" as it was in the early Church;

*II Corinthians 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...*

You see, by preaching 10%, that is a humanly measurable goal you can strive for, but how do you set a goal for giving if you encourage people to give as they purpose in their hearts?

Is it wrong for a person to budget for giving? Not necessarily, if that is what you purposed in your heart and you believe that is what God wants you to do, but don't write a book about it and call it a principle for everybody to follow. God speaks often uniquely to each individual.

Are we supposed to budget giving? It does not appear that God is overly concerned with budgets, since He promises that if we do it His way, we will have all the finances and resources available to undertake all the good work He leads us to do. This applies both to churches and individuals;

*...II Corinthians 9:8: And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always **having all sufficiency in all things**, may **abound to every good work**:*

With the Holy Spirit, the principle is, if you could call it that, giving from a grateful heart, out of a relationship with Him, according as He will prompt you, not any percentage of income, unless He impresses that on you, and not from any coercion from the pulpit or otherwise, putting a burden on people;

*II Corinthians 8:8: I speak **not by commandment**,.....*

You don't need the Holy Spirit to follow the coercion from the pulpit to give 10%, but you do need Him to be able to give as you purpose in your heart.

The message from God is to be FREE from BONDAGE through Jesus Christ and to love and give freely, not by necessity or commandment or any other thing including a so-called "principle". The Pharisees through their interpretations, opinions and traditions (of men)⁶, loved to put burdens on people for their own gain;

*Matthew 23:4: For they bind **heavy burdens** and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders;*

As a matter of fact, the word "principle" is not even found in God's Word. However, here is how Webster explains it;

a : a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption

b (1) : a rule or code of conduct (2) : habitual devotion to right principles <a man of principle>

The above descriptions may be wonderful and noble, but is it by those definitions we are to conduct our lives? We do follow doctrine as also was exemplified in the believers in the early Church, but the execution of that comes from the new birth. Not man made ideas. Many secular people live by excellent principles and lead noble lives without being Christians. Are they an example of right living? Well, to many in the secular world they probably are and outwardly they put some Christians to shame. That is why some people ask what is the difference in Christians, and the answer they will never understand, because;

*John 3:3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***

So, do Christians live by principles or by the new nature in Christ, led by the Holy Spirit? What comes first - relationship with Jesus or principles?

Os Hillman gives some clarity here....

... "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Tim 3:5).

God never called you to live by Christian principles. He calls you to live in relationship with the living God, Jesus Christ. One of the weaknesses of the Church today is that we teach people principles without the relationship.

The western church is big on ten step programs, "how-to" methods and acrostics to illustrate memorable ideas. There is a place for establishing principles to change negative behaviour. However, we are not called to have a relationship with principles, but a living God.

Living by principles is the equivalent to living by the law in the Old Testament. It is rooted in the Greek system of learning and is dependent upon our strength instead of being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Principle-based living is powerless living. This makes our Christian experience a religion instead of a relationship. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Gal 5:18).

Lisa Robinson writes...

Somehow, this idea exists that Christians mature by giving them a list of principles to measure up to and then pointing out how they are not measuring up. This only creates condemnation or self-righteousness. Rather, we are changed into the image of Christ through identification as the Holy Spirit does his work and we respond to that work, accordingly.

Again...

*II Corinthians 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...*

Right believing, right living and right ministry comes from a right relationship with Jesus Christ - first!. After all, the Bible is a revelation of Him. He is the Word. Reading the Bible is not a principle, it is an act of participating in the relationship with Jesus and as the Holy Spirit makes that alive in our hearts, it will change our lives into becoming more and more like HIM. The Holy Spirit was sent to reveal Jesus to us and out of that process will come right living. Some might call that principles, but it is only as a result of the foregoing, not the other way around. This is the foundation;

II Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

If you will, giving becomes a "principle" that is born out of a relationship with Jesus Christ and not as a good idea or derived from any law in the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, giving without the love of God shed abroad in our hearts profits the giver nothing;

*I Corinthians 13:3: And though I **bestow all my goods to feed the poor**, and though I give my body to be burned, **and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing**.*

God Loved....so He Gave....

*John 3:16: For **God so loved the world, that he gave** his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

A great example of giving freely and the resulting joy from it is when David gave of his personal fortune to the house of God and the people followed his example;

*I Chronicles 29:9: Then **the people rejoiced**, for that **they offered willingly**, because*

with perfect heart **they offered willingly to the LORD**: and David the king also **rejoiced with great joy**.

It is all about FREEDOM to allow the Holy Spirit to move upon God's people to give as they purpose in their heart. It is about allowing "**this Grace**" to have full impact in our midst where giving is done with cheerfulness out of a grateful heart, not because of duty, compulsion or commandment. And - whether it is any percentage or dollar amount at all.

Actually the Canada tax laws allows for giving tax free up to 75% of your income, so it is a lot of room to grow in giving, but you may start with any amount the Lord puts on your heart, small or big.

God created us with a free will and being able to chose. He did not want robots, He wants people who love Him. If we love Him we will give because His nature is in us and God is a giver.

God did not create us for the purpose of blessing us, but for his pleasure...

*Revelation of John 4:11: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure they are and were created**.*

6. The Early Church

Before we go into the teachings of Paul and the Early Church let's look at some references to foundational doctrine. These are both warnings about human unbiblical traditions as taught and practiced by the religious entity of the time - the Pharisees, as well as showing God's established foundation for sound doctrine and practice through His Prophets and Apostles.

Up through the ages, both apostles and prophets who have stood for the truth have been opposed and persecuted and slain and it is still happening today. Jesus said that.....

"all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. II Timothy 3:12.

Not many people like to hear the truth, sometimes not even in Churches. If you preach the whole counsel of God, like Paul did.....

Acts 20:27: For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

...You will likely suffer persecutions and afflictions, both from outside and inside the church;

II Timothy 4:1: I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who

shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;
2: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
3: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
4: And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.
5: But watch thou in all things, **endure afflictions**, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Luke 11:49: Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them **prophets and apostles**, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

I Corinthians 12:28: And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Ephesians 2:20: And are built upon the **foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

Ephesians 3:5: Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy **apostles and prophets** by the Spirit:

Ephesians 4:11: And he gave some, **apostles**; and some, **prophets**; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

II Peter 3:2: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy **prophets**, and of the commandment of us the **apostles** of the Lord and Saviour:

Revelation of John 18:20: Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye **holy apostles and prophets**; for God hath avenged you on her.

Paul references the Law and his own credentials

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law.....

Php 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; **touching the righteousness which is in**

the law, blameless.

Pretty good resume don't you think? A perfect candidate to confirm tithing in the New Testament, if that was what God wanted to establish. However, the Spirit did not move upon Paul or anyone else to write any such things.

Here is another great quotation I just heard; "**Do not distort the truth to support a theory**". The "principle of tithing" as taught in churches today can only be treated as a "theory" of doctrine established by tradition and not by God's Word.

Paul teaches on Giving

It is a fact that there is the absence of teaching about tithing in the New Testament. It's quite easy for anyone to verify. However, there is plenty of teaching on Giving and how it is connected to our relationship with the Lord. One thing that stands out and it even seems like Paul is stressing this very point of calling giving - "**This Grace**". Grace has everything to do with the Atonement of Christ. The Law has everything to do with what we could not fulfill in ourselves....

*Galatians 2:21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: **for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.***

*Galatians 3:24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be **justified by faith.***

Nobody knew the Law like Paul did, yet when he is talking about giving he calls it "**this grace**" and says that: "...see that ye **abound in this grace also**". Paul talks to the Corinthians about their giving;

*II Corinthians 8:3,5: For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability; they **gave willingly**.....And not as we hoped, but **first they gave themselves to the Lord**, and to us through the will of God.....*

First the right relationship with God, then you will have the right relationship to money and giving. Then He will entrust you with true (spiritual) riches.

*2Co 8:7 But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see **that you abound in this grace also.***

Paul the Apostle, a man who was strictly adhering to the Law, persecuting Christians and then chosen by God to preach the gospel to the gentiles, would be the perfect one to

establish or confirm tithing in the New Testament, if that was God's plan, but he does not. Rather he calls giving "**this Grace**" and that **giving is NOT a tithe as under the law or otherwise**, because he says;

*"I speak **NOT by commandment**, " (v8) AND...
(V12) "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath,
and not according to that he hath not."*

that leads right into.....

7. What about "Faith Promises"?

This brings out the question about "faith promises" which leaves a lot more people in distress than those few that bring positive testimonials. Let us just establish a fact that seem to apply universally in any good size group of people....

**There will always be a small percentage of people
that will have a positive result to any appeal.**

And those are typically used to show or "prove" that it works and the inference is that it can work for anybody.

Does God speak to people to step out in faith? Of course and there are many examples of that, but it is a huge difference between that and what preachers use as a wholesale coercion of their congregation to give a "faith pledge" and in that context falsely connect it to sowing and reaping. A "faith promise", by it's very implication is the supposed giving (in faith), of something you do not yet possess, otherwise faith would not be needed.

The principle of sowing and reaping which is used many times in the New Testament is a Principle that does not change. **You cannot sow by faith if you don't have any seeds!** However, there is great support biblically for giving even the smallest of measure, that God can bless, to become an abundance. To promise to give what you don't have is just not according to God's Word. What it looks like is that when preachers ask you to give a faith promise, they want you to give the crop you have not yet harvested. How many times have you hear about "sowing into a ministry", yet giving in the New Testament references mostly giving for peoples needs, not "ministries" or "programs" or "building funds".

Unfortunately, the people who gave (faith promises) and has a fabulous story to go with it, are brought up to the front to prove that if you "give by faith" these things can happen to

you too and connect it to sowing and reaping, making it a principle that applies to everybody every time the church is asking for a "faith pledge". Is giving by faith wrong? No, not if you had a specific word from God about it. But it is not a general biblical principle of giving.

*2Co 8:12 For if there be first a willing mind, **it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.***

Giving is supposed to be according to ***as you purpose in your heart and according as the Lord has prospered you.***

Referring back to the parable of the Talents, God does not expect us to make something from nothing. He gives us first, then He expects us to produce, increase and be fruitful.

There certainly has been instances where God has spoken to individuals to give in faith, but it is always from what little they have had believing that He would still supply for the needs that follow. Nobody can give what he does not have. It is both a natural and spiritual principle.

God says very clearly that He will supply for every good work and you'll notice He calls it "grace" again;

*2Co 9:8 And God is able to make all **grace** abound toward you; that ye, **always having all sufficiency** in all things, may **abound** to every good work:*

"having all sufficiency.... " so that you have whatever is required to do good work. Not will have, but having (present tense continuance).

Elisha asked the widow **what she had in the house** and that is what God used to bless and increase (2Ki 4:2)

Jesus used what a young boy had - five barley loaves and two small fish, to feed five thousand people.

Can you can find any incident in the Bible where God asked people to promise to give something from what they did not yet possess?

Let's face it - we have absolutely nothing we can give the Lord except ourselves. God clearly says that **we do not have anything that has not first been given us:**

1 Corinthians 4:7:And what do you have that you did not receive?.....

We can only give back to the Lord from what he has first given to us. Actually, that is not

quite right, because **He expects a return on His Investment**. He wants more. God expects that what He gives to us will multiply. Let's look at the the story of the talents;

Matt 25, 14-30 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.....

This man gave three of his servants talents - five, two and one respectively. Two of them invested wisely and it multiplied. The last one **gave back 100%** of what he was given and he was called an **unprofitable servant**. God wants us to take what He has given us and make it grow, produce and be fruitful. Stewardship is obviously not just looking after someone else's goods, but making it grow and produce more. **God wants us to be productive** with what He has entrusted us with - not just a part, but all of it.

Matthew 25:26: His lord answered and said to him, Evil and slothful servant! You knew that I reaped where I did not sow, and gathered where I did not scatter, Matthew 25:27: then you should have put my money to the exchangers, and coming I would have received my own with interest.

If we give to the Lord with all our heart, no matter how small, the Lord can bless it beyond anyones wildest imagination.

Giving is a matter of the Heart - abounding in this Grace also

Paul goes on to say:

*2Co 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.*

"**not..... of necessity..**"

When someone says; "The tithe belongs to the Lord", is that not "of necessity" ? And then goes on to quote this scripture and without saying it out loud letting the "scripture" say it for them - calling Christians thieves and robbers and being cursed, if they do not give a tithe to the church;

*Mal 3:8,9 Will a man rob God? Yet **ye have robbed me**. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? **In tithes and offerings**. You are **cursed with a curse**.....*

Furthermore, they are quoting this scripture trying to prove to people that if they give the tithe they will be greatly blessed!

*Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes (Money?) into the storehouse, that there may be meat (Word?) 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.

This is the typical method that a lot of preachers are using to emphasize or "prove" their point of view, taking scriptures out of context.

Not only out of context but selecting just a portion of the scripture to support their false teaching. Why do they say that only the tithe belong to God? Why not offerings also? God says that Israel had robbed Him in Tithes AND Offerings. **Why do they make tithing compulsory by saying it belongs to God, it's a minimum standard etc., but do not make the same claim for offerings?** Maybe it's because offerings is harder to identify because there is no set percentage given?

These verses of scripture are speaking to Israel who were under the law. It was their only "Bible" - until Jesus.

When Abraham and Jacob gave tithe to the Lord it was out of a grateful heart and it was according to what they purposed in their own heart, not out of requirement or compulsion. That is exactly how the Lord wants us to give today - out of a willing heart;

*2Co 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.***

The emphasis in the New Testament Church is to **abound in the grace of giving** - willingly, liberally, purposefully and cheerfully.

Furthermore it is not dependent on our position – whether poor or rich, but to give. And as we will see, the prerequisite for giving that way is, that we **first give ourselves to the Lord.**

Additionally the emphasis is to give to help the saints. Often the request for funds in our churches is for projects, not to help the saints that are in need. Jesus said that we'll always have the poor with us. Instead of adding to the burden of the poor by requiring them to give 10%, we need to give to the poor to help them as Jesus commanded. The poor did give, but out of a willing heart, not of necessity, requirement or compulsion. That is **the freedom that Christ brings** and that produces cheerfulness. **The Truth will set you FREE!**

2Co 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

*2 How that in a great trial of affliction **the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.***

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

*4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would **receive the gift**, and take upon us the fellowship of the **ministering to the saints.***

5 *And this they did, not as we hoped, **but first gave their own selves to the Lord,** and unto us by the will of God.*

6 *Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.*

Paul goes on to say that you ought to abound in giving (this grace) just as you abound in everything else in your spiritual walk;

*2Co 8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye **abound in this grace also.***

*8 **I speak not by commandment,** but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.*

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

*12 For if there be first a willing mind, **it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.***

Here is the Christian community which is not "spreading the wealth" by rules or law, but driven by love and grace from a willing heart;

*2Co 8:13 For **I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:***

14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

*19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us **with this grace,** which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:*

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight

of men.

22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.

23 Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, **the proof of your love**, and of our boasting on your behalf.

2Co 9:1 For as touching **the ministering to the saints**, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

2 For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

3 Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

4 Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

6 But this I say, **He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully.**

7 Every man **according as he purpose in his heart, so let him give**; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 **And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:**

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remains for ever.

10 Now he that minister seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which cause through us thanksgiving to God.

12 **For the administration of this service not only supplies the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;**

13 Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;

14 And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you.

15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Now, THAT is what giving is all about and in that context we will have the right relationship to money, because our relationship both with the Lord and the saints are in harmony.

Outside of that, our relationship to money will be unhealthy at best and idolatry at worst, when our attachment to money will demonstrate itself as being a dominating force manifested by a love for money, which is the root of all evil.

Jesus again scolded the Pharisees in their treatment of widows;

*Matthew 23:14: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for **ye devour widows' houses**, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

*Mark 12:40: Which **devour widows' houses**, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.*

*41: ¶ And **Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury**: and many that were rich cast in much.*

*42: And there came **a certain poor widow**, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.*

43: And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

*44: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but **she of her want did cast in all that she had**, even all her living.*

Here is a link to an excellent article that will help you to look at this portion of scripture with a different understanding. When you look at the context and what God says about the treatment of widows, Jesus' words take on a whole new meaning than what has been traditionally taught;

[The Truth About The Widow's Gift](#)

[If the link here does not work, go back to www.WhatGodSays.org and click on Links]

8. Erroneous preaching

I once heard a pastor preach on tithing and make the following statements;

"The tithe belongs to the Lord"

"This is not legalism"

"It's like a minimum standard"

"In the New Testament we move into more generousities"

"Tithe was not removed in the New Testament, but grace was added". and then he referred to the often used scripture above, where Jesus says;

"these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (referring to tithing).

The above statements are blatant opinions and not in the slightest based on the Word of God. The Law is not legalism? It's a minimum standard? Where does that come from except pure speculation based on human assessment. Moving into more generousities? Where does God talk about generousities? The New Testament has one reference to being generous (communicate) and that is a message to the rich:

1 Timothy 6:18: that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate (be generous).

Grace was added?

To tithing?

Where in the Word is that taken from?

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

Should we tithe of our food then since that's what Jesus said they did and should do (under the law).

Then he (the pastor) continued, with reference to to Ja 4:17;

Jas 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Now that is a real big problem if we continue willfully in sin and that's a whole other subject. However, in that connection what is really puzzling, as referred to earlier and it bears repeating, is that if pastors and church leaders really believed that tithing is for today and that Mal. 3:10 is applicable for the New Testament Church, how come they do not preach repentance from thievery, robbery and deliverance from curses? Because it is a well known fact that a great percentage of church members are actually NOT "tithing", AND we know there will be no thieves and robbers in Heaven! And certainly not people who have been cursed with a curse!

How could anybody say that the law of tithing was not fulfilled in Christ and that we still have to keep whatever part someone choses for monetary reasons. And furthermore that grace was added???

God did not add grace to anything. The grace of God stands on it's own merit because of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Grace was the fulfillment of the Law, not an addition to it. Grace is not built on top of nor is an addition to anything. Certainly not to tithing. That's ludicrous. The Grace of God through the atonement of Jesus Christ is the foundation, the only one that we could ever hope to build anything on.

Before the Law was Faith:

Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

As a matter of fact, God says that the Law was added (430 years later) because of transgressions;

*Gal 3:19 What purpose then does **the law** serve? It **was added** because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

For the purpose of bringing us back to Faith:

*Gal 3:24 Therefore **the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ**, that we might be justified by faith.*

Then, some would argue that the tithe was introduced before the law and referring to Abraham and Jacob who decided to give God a tenth for blessing them. Now, that was something they did at very specific time and place, but where does God's Word say that it sets a precedent for a law to be carried into the NT church? The "law of first mention" that some people hang onto. Where does God say that applies? It's basically human fabrication on how to interpret scripture when God says;

2Pe 1:20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

Regardless of all of the previous discourse, is giving a tenth or 10% wrong or bad? Of course not. As a matter of fact it is a very common principle taught even by many secular motivational business speakers as well, to give 10 percent to charitable causes. The principle of giving is widely used and 10% is often applied as a guideline and that's great as long as it does not become a requirement by law.

What I am trying to shed some light on here is **BONDAGE!** Preaching tithing from a standpoint of requirement, commandment and/or necessity is totally and completely false teaching and brings people into bondage and slavery to the local church (congregation).

People sometimes shares their testimonies that after they started tithing, their financial situation was changed. It was not because of "tithing", but because they started to give and might I add, with the right attitude. That is the principle - GIVING!

If people truly have a relationship with the Lord and are not bound to money or possessions, they will by the evidence of their love for the saints - GIVE. **It's a heart condition not a percentage.**

What is our Our Priorities? What should they be?

I was in a church a while back and listened to a pastor preach to support his building program. The title of the sermon was; Getting Back to Basics - Living for what matters most. His first point was; Make God's House a top priority in your life. That was a great concern in the Old Testament, but I fail to see even a single verse mentioning the importance of a physical building in the New Testament. The emphasis is on the Body of Christ, not on buildings. But in the western world particularly, we seem to be having a love affair with great beautiful buildings and structures that show an outward presence, but sometimes are very dead inside. Do we need buildings? That's a good question that is coming up more frequently lately. We may, but to call it a top priority is really stretching it.

Again, he had to go to the Old Testament and use scriptures referring to the building of God's house and the Temple to support his quest for funds to build now. There are no such support in the New Testament where the emphasis is on a spiritual building not a physical one. I believe very strongly that in the last days, the Church of Christ is not going to grow by building mega churches, but by the multiplication of churches in homes and smaller settings as it is now happening in many countries where persecution prevents them from meeting in large buildings.

Are we as the Church (and Body) of Christ living according to the pattern and principles

laid out in the Word of God or have we for all intents and purposes produced something that has an appealing appearance rather than the power of Christ? Some mega churches attract and are filled with people who go to hear comfortable sermons that makes them feel good for the moment.

Transition from Law to Faith

In the early Church we see Paul's message to the Jews in the process of transition from being justified by keeping the Law of Moses to justification by faith in Jesus Christ;

Paul has a discourse on the law in Romans and explains that the Jews with the Law is just as guilty as the Gentiles without the Law;

Rom 2:17-24 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," as it is written.

In this process of transformation he goes on to explain that;

Rom 2:29 but **he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter**; whose praise is not from men but from God.

He further explains this in this letter as well as to the Galatians;

Rom 3:20 Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

*Galatians 5:18: **But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.***

And the conclusion;

Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**

Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law, because as is clearly laid out in Paul's letters to the Romans;

Rom 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

*Rom 7:6 ...now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that **WE SHOULD SERVE IN THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT and not in the oldness of the letter.***

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

When this is a reality we can give as we purpose in our hearts led by the Holy Spirit

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Is it possible that because of the concern and pressure of needs and budgets and organizational funding (cares) we have, through the use of legalistic “Biblical” methods that justifies the end, become fleshly minded and not moving in the Freedom of the Spirit?

Clearly, we can only achieve the righteous requirement of the law through the Grace of God manifested itself in the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

That's why Paul calls giving, "**this grace**" and using phrases in references to giving such as;

- **as he purpose in his heart**
- **not of necessity**
- **not by commandment**
- **willing mind**
- **cheerful**

It does not sound like giving according to a law, does it? Either by the Law of the Old Testament or by "law" (or requirement) instituted by modern day preachers?

The fact is that if people were given the truth and not some twisted forceful way to make people give, there would be far more funds available in our churches to do everything that

God wants us to do. **Do we really believe this - that God is able?:**

*2Co 9:8 And **God is able** to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always **having all sufficiency** in all things, **may abound to every good work.** (fruit of the Spirit)*

This is in reference to giving according to the above scriptures and not because of necessity (Law/compulsion) or guilt.

God is able - Then if we don't have, maybe we have missed the mark? Or possibly God is testing and teaching us? It makes you wonder, if we do not have all the funds to do what we think God wants us to do, that maybe we're out of His will? Maybe we're not ready to do it or maybe we are not in the right relationship with the Lord so that He is not making all grace abound toward us and therefore we do not have all sufficiency.....to every good work?

Paul encourages the believers in Galatians:

*Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a **yoke of bondage.***

In the beginning we used the example of the Apostles, brethren and elders were discussing the law and circumcision. Here Paul is talking about circumcision which were under the law and he says that if you try to keep the law by being circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. He goes on to say that if you try to keep that portion of the law, you become a debtor to the entire law and even saying that **if you attempt to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace!**

Gal 5:2-4 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

The argument seems to come down to this; did Jesus fulfill tithing to abolish it or confirm it? Then ask yourself; **is tithing consistent with Spiritual laws of faith and grace or with physical laws of circumcision and blood shed sacrifice?**

In Ephesians 6 Paul addresses giving as sharing with those who teach the Word and it has absolutely nothing to do with tithing;

Gal 6:6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

In the same chapter he refers to those who want you to keep the law so they may boast in the flesh;

*Gal 6:12 As many as desire to make a **good showing in the flesh**, these would compel you to be circumcised [**keeping the law**], only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.*

*Gal 6:13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised **that they may boast** in your flesh.*

Then he summarizes the whole issue of keeping the law, that the issue is not whether you do or don't, but a new creation [in Christ];

Gal 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

It would appear that not much have changed. People still want you to keep the Law if it suits their purpose, because even if they say it was before the law, they still quote scriptures that are addressed to people under the law.....

What is different from the leaders of that day pointing to the issue of circumcision and the leaders of today pointing to another issue of the law like tithing? Absolutely nothing. The application is exactly the same.

"But this is different" some will say. "We are not preaching the law, because tithing was introduced before the law". Then (and I repeat) why do they refer to scriptures that specifically talks about tithing in reference to the Law, the most popular one seem to be Mal 3:10, which clearly points out that people had broken the law and robbed God? And, when Jesus spoke to the Pharisees about tithing - who were under the law.

Those that say tithing was instituted before the law are just using that to put pressure on people to tithe. Abram and Jacob did not "institute" tithing. They gave out of appreciation, gratefulness completely voluntary. That does not make it a doctrine or a principle. Giving is a principle - like sowing and reaping and It's not limited to 10%. Can you imagine if a farmer only used 10% of his grains to sow?

Remember the unprofitable servant? He gave back 100% of what was entrusted to him and was called unprofitable!!

We concentrate so much on the money part, because that's what the enemy want us to do (the love of money), when God looks at Stewardship and how we make His "investment" in us prosper and grow. That is not just money, but everything in our lives.

Abraham was justified by FAITH, not by law (tithing). The reference to Abraham in Romans bears this out as well;

Rom 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Could Abraham boast about [his works] of giving a tenth to the Lord? Of course not! The only thing that brought righteousness was his faith. Giving the tenth of the plunder was in gratitude, not of necessity. As a matter of fact it was ten times the required according to the law (Num 31). It was from the heart and it can never be preached as a requirement or law or anything else. God wants us to love him out of our free will, otherwise he would have made us like the animals. He gave us the greatest gift - the ability and freedom to choose.

Let me say it again and it bears repeating, that if the church leaders really believes Mal. 3:10, they need to preach repentance from thievery and robbery since there will be no thieves in heaven;

Mat 6:20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

The truth is, they don't really believe that, but it sure is a convenient motivational tool to make people give. Actually it does not really work. The numbers show it.

9. The purpose of God

What is the overall purpose of God from the very beginning?

Why did He create us?;

*Revelation 4:11: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure they are and were created.***

God created us for **His pleasure** and so that we, His creation, would have the pleasure of knowing Him.

God showed His love toward us and whoever receives and responds to that love through

the atonement of Christ, is accepted by God. **He wants people who love and worship him of their own free will** not because he makes them to;

*Romans 5:8: But God commendeth **his love** toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

*I Corinthians 8:3: But **if any man love God**, the same is known of him.*

*Joshua 24:15: And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose you this day whom ye will serve**; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: **but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.***

*Romans 8:32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also **freely give us all things**?*

*Matthew 10:8: Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: **freely ye have received, freely give.***

God gave freely and he want us to receive and give freely. He does not want us to "love" him to escape hell, but love him (freely) because he first loved us.

The emphasis is on that we have been given a free will and are able to choose whom we will serve. God seeks such to worship Him.

*John 4:23: But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.***

So, the message that is proclaimed in God's Word from Genesis to Revelation is that He wants people that love him freely for who He is and not because they are "programmed" to do so or have no say in the matter.

What was the purpose for the law then?:

*Galatians 3:24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster **to bring us unto Christ**, that we might be justified by faith.*

*Jeremiah 31:33: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Why? Because they chose to serve the Lord, through faith in Jesus Christ.

We love God because we choose to love Him, because He loved us first. **We are**

responding freely to His love shown us through the atonement. God so loved the world that He gave....

We worship God, in body, soul and spirit AND with our resources (money) - FREELY! Not because of a law. That's the way God wants it and it is clearly declared in His Word.

Why do some try to bring people into bondage with part of the Law, when God says that we should give, not by commandment nor of necessity or compulsion?;

*II Corinthians 9:7: **Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity [or compulsion]: for God loveth a cheerful giver;***

*II Corinthians 8:8: I speak **not by commandment,***

Is there contradictions in the scripture then?

Yes, IF - you say Jesus upheld tithing in the New Testament it would be.

However, you cannot isolate one verse and make a doctrine out of it. You need to look at the context of that scripture as referred to earlier, both before and after in that chapter as well as the entire New Testament and the complete scripture as well as observing **God's purpose from the beginning - that our worship must be from a willing heart** and not because of the law, which was fulfilled in Christ.

Whether you say tithing is valid because of, two incidents before the law, in the law or after, it is human teaching of tradition and bondage and not according to God's Word.

Remember - This is not an argument against giving, rather the opposite, but against the wrong teaching of compulsory tithing that has no place among the saints who are to be stewards of everything God has blessed us with.

If we taught giving God's way, we would most likely have more than enough funds for all the things the Lord wants us to do and no one would lack. He promised that as a result of verse 7 above. Verse 8 says;

*2Co 9:8 And **God is able** to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always **having all sufficiency** in all things, **may abound to every good work.***

If churches borrow from the banks to meet their needs (or wants), it might be prudent to ask if money is handled according to the **world's methods rather than believing what God says about having all sufficiency (and abounding) to every good work through Him.**

Maybe we need to cry out; "*.....Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief*". Mark 9:24

Prosperity without preaching "Tithing"

A friend of mine in our church (a missionary who does not believe in compulsory tithing) once told me about a church where the pastor announced that he would stop preaching about tithing and told his congregation to give what God put on their hearts. They put a collection box at the back of the church where people could put their giving. The result was that they received way more than at any other time preaching about tithing every so often. Present genuine needs to the church and people will give.

Why some people do not "Tithe" (give)

People will give freely from what they have if they are not under condemnation or guilt. Typically people are not giving because they do not have what is "required" of them. The same is true with people that are in financial trouble. Why do they get calls from creditors? Because they do not have the amount they are supposed to pay and therefore don't pay anything. They do not communicate with their creditors and hence the annoying phone calls. They feel guilty, remorseful and depressed under a burden that seemingly is too big. But that is not God's purpose.

10. My Story

How do I know? Because we went through all of that in the early eighties and even lost our house in the process that I had spent tens of thousands to remodel.

We had constant calls from creditors. Why? Because we did not have money to pay them and because we did not have the money to pay all of it, we paid little or nothing. That of course is foolish, but that is the way people behave and why they have trouble with creditors.

Then one day I picked up a little book written by a Christian on "How to Succeed with your Money". The information and understanding I gained from that book changed everything. It emphasized that communication was very important and doing something is better than doing nothing. The basis for getting out of debt is first of all communication and secondly to pay everybody something. I followed the direction given and listed all my creditors and the amount I owed them. It came to about \$86,000. That was in 1980 and it was a lot of money. Then I figured how much I could pay each month towards that debt

and it came to \$400. The next step was to work out the percentage of what we owed each creditor and then to pro-rate the amount that would be given to each one. The smallest amount was \$2.12 and the largest \$250. Then I wrote twelve postdated checks to each creditor and mailed it with a covering letter. After that I never heard again from my creditors. Why? Because I had started an orderly payment of debt and no judge in the world would dismiss that effort. Communication was key coupled with a new understanding and action.

In addition to that exercise, we continued to pray every day, because to pay \$400 a month on a \$86,000 debt would take some time.

One day when I was in my office, I received a phone call from the largest creditor. It was the mortgage company I got stuck with owing \$54,000 after we lost our house. He said; "I was just transferred from Toronto, I am the new manager here and I would like to clean up this account." My hair stood up on my back and I got in a defensive mood. He continued; "I'd like you to pay \$5,000 and settle this account." Still my mood was defensive and I told him; "I don't have any money, let alone \$5,000". I did not realize at the time that this was an answer to prayer. However, after some reflection I started thinking that if this guy wanted to settle a \$54,000 debt for \$5,000, maybe others wanted to settle also. So I contacted the other creditors and asked if they wanted to keep getting a check every month or settle for a smaller amount and get it right away? All in all my \$86,000 debt was reduced to \$9,000. I went to my banker and asked if they would loan me \$9,000 with a monthly payment of \$400. That was an easy decision on their part (back then) and in 18 months from day one of starting to pray and my orderly payments after reading that book, our debt was completely gone. Praise God! What did it? Gaining Godly counsel, prayer and action.

Before I learned this I did what most people do - because they cannot pay what is required, they often pay nothing and get in trouble.

During that time I also learned a big lesson in giving because it is very similar to the debt issue. A lot of people handle giving the same way they do debt. If it is something they owe and cannot pay the whole, they pay nothing. This is true with the teaching and pressure of tithing. Statistics show that a lot of people do not tithe. Why? Chances are that they have a lot of expenses and payments (rightly or wrongly) and do not have enough funds to pay the "required tithe", so they give nothing or very little. They will not communicate what they feel (for obvious reasons) to the church leaders so they are under guilt and condemnation that only leads to more problems, both personally, in their marriage and with the family.

Every time they go to church they are reminded of giving their tithe and when the minister refers to Mal. 3:10 they feel even worse, because although the pastor do not come right out and say it, he lets the scripture do the work for him, calling them thieves and robbers, even being cursed with a curse. Every time the offering plate passes them they feel the pain

in their gut. People are hurting and the church leaders adds to the hurt by wrong teaching and most of them will probably defend themselves by saying something like; "if they trusted God with their tithes, God would bless them financially". Wrong! It's when people give from a grateful heart, that God will bless. It's all about attitude. And, the blessing may not come in a financial way, but manifested differently.

In the past I have given tithes without seeing any specific financial blessing, and also not given tithes in hard times and have seen the Lords blessing anyway. You can't put God in a box. He works however He wants. Job was perfect according to God, but He still allowed the devil to rip him apart and take everything he had, including his health. Later he was blessed, not because he gave, but when he prayed for his, not so great, friends. His attitude was right. Job did not have anything to give. He had lost everything, yet God blessed him abundantly. It had nothing to do with giving financially whatsoever, but it had all to do with faithfulness. God proved the devil wrong.

*Job 42:10: And **the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.***

We had that guilty feeling in our own lives as well, when we did not "tithe" and when the offering plate came, until I started studying what God really says about Giving and Stewardship. A subject very seldom if ever taught in our churches apart from "tithing".

I also read a story on the back of a magazine about a lady that wanted to give to a particular ministry. She did not have the amount that she wanted to give so she gave nothing. Then God spoke to her and told her to give from what she had. She started to give \$5, then gradually increased the amount and in the end she was able to give far more than she had originally wanted to do.

When you are in huge debt like we were, "tithing" is something that is often overlooked. As a matter of fact it looks impossible. However, the guilt from not doing it, because of the traditional teaching of the local church, is always there. This brings people into bondage and we wonder why there is not a fresh move of God in our churches. Remember, how we handle money is indicative of our spiritual riches, yet the teaching in this very important area is sorely lacking;

*Luke 16:11: Therefore if you have not been **faithful** in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the **true riches** to you?*

We applied that same principle of giving [from what you have, no matter how small it is] and started to give \$10 a week. As time went, we were able to increase it and eventually go far beyond any "tithing".

Particularly in the western world we are very concerned with material goods, the comfort of living etc. and there is basically nothing wrong with money and things unless it

becomes “cares”, “deceit” or “lust”. Because if it does, the Word becomes unfruitful as referred to earlier.

Mark 4:19: and the cares of this world, and the deceit of riches, and the lust about other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.

As alluded to earlier, Is it possible that we have become so materialistic, full of deceit and lustful, also in our churches, so that we do not allow the Word of God to have it's rightful place and impact and it becomes unfruitful in our lives (churches)? Absolutely **everything comes down to money**. It is a representation of our life and our time. Zig Ziglar put it most aptly with his famous quotation; **“Money isn't the most important thing in life, but it's reasonably close to oxygen on the 'gotta have it' scale”**.

I know I keep repeating this issue and scripture, but how we handle money is very important to God.....and I believe this applies both to the local church as well as individuals?

*Luke 16:11: Therefore if you have not been **faithful in the unrighteous mammon**, who will entrust the **true riches** to you?*

We can pray for revival in our churches until we are blue in the face, but the preceding Word from God tells us very clearly that it will not happen unless we are faithful stewards in the area of finances.

The use of Testimonials in support of "Tithing"

Typically, after a church has had a specific teaching on tithing and offerings, There usually is an increase in giving, which is the purpose for the exercise in the first place. There are people who started to give and because of it saw a change in their life. These testimonies are often brought before the church as “proof” that tithing is right and used as an example for others to follow. This is the same common trigger that is used throughout any industry and is called "Social Proof".

So many people believe in it and here is the proof that it works so it must be right. You only need to demonstrate that many others already believe so to make it true. Testimonials serve as an important form of evidence and validation, no matter what you want to promote.

Erroneously these people start believing that things changed because they started "tithing". However, that is not the reason for the blessing at all, but rather a changed heart attitude towards giving. There are countless others who started to tithe/give after the teaching but rather out of duty and out of “necessity” or condemnation, because who wants to be a

robber and a thief. BUT, when things do not change in their finances, because their heart was not in it, these people fall off on their giving and are back to where they were before, and possibly in a worse spiritual state. Hence the giving in the church starts to slide.

There are other reasons for people limiting their giving to the "local church" as well, such as not believing the church exercise good stewardship and hence give in other areas of need in the Church at large.

Then I hear someone say; "We give to God and it is the leaders in the church who is responsible for handling the money correctly". True, they are responsible, but we are also responsible to give where we believe God directs us to give. We are individually responsible for being good stewards and not only in the areas of giving but in all areas of finances (we must be "...**faithful in the unrighteous mammon**").

True Giving is about faithful stewardship and a right heart attitude towards God, not numbers or percentages;

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

Here is an interesting passage of scripture that showed the attitude among the believers in the early church. Can you just image this kind of attitude towards giving today? And not just giving money, but the attitude towards their possessions and one another?

*Acts 4:31: ¶And when they had **prayed**, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**, and they **spake the word of God with boldness**.*

*Acts 4:32: And the multitude of them that believed **were of one heart and of one soul**: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but **they had all things common**.*

*Acts 4:33: And **with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**: and **great grace was upon them all**.*

*Acts 4:34: **Neither was there any among them that lacked**: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,*

*Acts 4:35: And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and **distribution was made unto every man according as he had need**.*

This was after Peter and John had been persecuted for preaching the Gospel and for a miracle of healing that God performed. They went back to the believers and prayed for more boldness to preach. It is almost outside our reach to believe that anything like this could happen today. Maybe when we will experience real persecution for our faith, other things of this world will be dimmed and lose their hold on us.

There is no evidence at all in the teachings in the New Testament church that they taught

or practiced tithing and in reference to the above scripture that is almost laughable.

Can you imagine preaching tithing in that setting? "What do you mean tithe? I just sold my property and gave it to the Apostles for distribution as needed?" Hmmm. This should be an "Aha" moment of revelation for some.

Paul, as the most educated and knowledgeable in the Law being educated a Pharisee, not once mentioned anything about tithing, but had a lot to say about stewardship and giving and the right attitude towards finances and obviously, THAT had a great impact on the believers in the early church. Instead of requiring those in need to tithe, they were blessed by the other believers in the church. What a difference in attitude both by the ministry and the people than what we see today.

The preaching of the requirement of tithing creates **bondage** both for those that cannot give 10% and those that can give more than 10%.

**For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:
to whom be glory for ever. Amen.**

Romans 11:36

11. Great Questions to Ask "Tithers" ⁷

1. When considering the principles that we should convert from the OT laws into NT giving principles, how was it determined that the percentage is the only part of the law that is relevant? In other words, why is the exact percentage obeyed and not the exact product or exact purpose?
2. Why don't we celebrate a feast of tithes (Deuteronomy 14)?
3. Why did they give food and we give monetary (they did have and used money!)?
4. How can you scripturally justify tithes used today for building funds and maintenance?
5. Why is it recorded that Abraham gave 10% of his war spoils and not of his firstfruits and increase at that time?
6. Why did Abraham give 10% of his war spoils when the Israelites were required only to give 1% of war spoils (Numbers 31).

7. The tithe was used to support civil and governmental duties, so why are we required to tithe before our civil and governmental taxes are taken out?
8. In Malachi 3, was the amount the test, or is our faith?
9. What category of the law does tithing fall under? The retired schoolmaster of the ceremonial law that brings us to Christ, or is it a limited principle that reflects the eternal character of God that should be given forever?
10. In Malachi 3, because specific portions of offerings were required as well, Israel robbed God not only of tithes but also offerings. So why are offerings freewill for us?
11. Why should we tithe before our freewill offering? Can't I just give freely before I tithed? He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Why did we partially change how and what we give? If our change is justified, then what made him change?
12. Let's compare these two questions:
 - Where should our giving begin?
 - Where should we end our giving?

Now, which answer should we be teaching?

Here is a link to a rather entertaining and enlightening story that covers this debate in a court setting. Well worth the watching;

["The Trial of Pastor Jones"](#)

**Give Yourself First- Give Largely - Give Often
and start with what you have - no matter how small!**

**Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure
pressed down and shaken together and running over,
they shall give into your bosom.
For with the same measure that you measure,
it shall be measured to you again. Luke 6:38:**

And the Truth shall make your FREE!!

John 8:32

To the Readers who actually read this entire commentary:
I applaud you and encourage you to continue to
seek the TRUTH - no matter where it leads.

*"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,
that I should bear witness unto the truth".*

- Jesus Christ (John 18:37)

[Also see TRUTH](#)

<http://www.WhatGodSays.org>

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End Notes.....p.71

1 <http://churchtithesandofferings.com/blog/category/books-on-tithing-stewardship-and-finances/>

2 David B. Barrett, Tom M. Johnson, Peter F. Crossing. "Missiometrics: Creating Your Own Analysis of Global Data," International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2007, p. 8.

3 The United Methodist Foundation of Los Angeles, Money and Religion, rpt. in Lifestyle Stewardship: Learning the Freedom of Generous Giving, Alliance Life (January 2001), 13. <http://library.generousgiving.org/page.asp?sec=4&page=161>

4 George Barna, How to Increase Giving in Your Church: A Practical Guide to the Sensitive Task of Raising Money for Your Church or Ministry (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1997), 20.

5 <http://churchtithesandofferings.com/blog/category/books-on-tithing-stewardship-and-finances/>

6 *Teachings and opinions of rabbis;*

According to Rabbinic Judaism, the "**Oral Torah**" or "Oral Law" (Hebrew: תורה שבעל פה, Torah she-be-`al peh, lit "Torah that is spoken") represents those **laws, statutes, and legal interpretations that were not recorded in the Five Books of Moses**, the "Written Torah" (Hebrew: תורה שבכתב, Torah she-bi-khtav, lit. "Torah that is written"), but nonetheless are regarded by Jews as prescriptive and co-given. This holistic Jewish code of conduct encompass a wide swath of ritual, worship, God-man and interpersonal relationships, from dietary laws to Sabbath and festival observance to marital relations, agricultural practices, and civil claims and damages.

According to Jewish tradition, the Oral Torah was passed down orally in an unbroken chain from generation to generation until its contents were finally committed to writing following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, when Jewish civilization was faced with an existential threat.[1]

The major repositories of the Oral Torah are the **Mishnah**, compiled between 200–220 CE by Rabbi Yehudah haNasi, and the **Gemara**, a series of running commentaries and debates concerning the Mishnah, which together comprise the Talmud, the preeminent text of Rabbinic Judaism. In fact, two "versions" of the Talmud exist: one produced in Jerusalem c. 300-350 CE (the Jerusalem Talmud), and second, more extensive Talmud compiled in Babylonia and published c. 450-500 CE (the Babylonian Talmud).

The **Talmud** (/ˈtɑːlmʊd, -məd, ˈtæl-/; Hebrew: תלמוד talmūd "instruction, learning", from a root **lmd** "teach, study") is a central text of Rabbinic **Judaism**. It is also traditionally referred to as **Shas** (ש"ס), a **Hebrew** abbreviation of shisha sedarim, the "six orders". The term "Talmud" normally refers to the Babylonian Talmud, though there is also an earlier collection known as the **Jerusalem Talmud**.

The Talmud has two components. The first part is the **Mishnah** (Hebrew: משנה, c. 200 CE), the written compendium of Rabbinic Judaism's **Oral Torah** (Torah meaning "Instruction", "Teaching" in Hebrew). The second part is the **Gemara** (c. 500 CE), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related **Tannaitic** writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the **Hebrew Bible**. The term Talmud can be used to mean either the Gemara alone, or the Mishnah and Gemara as printed together.

The whole Talmud consists of 63 tractates, and in standard print is over 6,200 pages long. It is written in **Tannaitic Hebrew** and **Aramaic**. **The Talmud contains the teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis** on a variety of subjects, including **Halakha** (law), **Jewish ethics**, philosophy, customs, **history**, lore and many other topics. The Talmud is the basis for all codes of **Jewish law** and is much quoted in **rabbinic literature**.

7 <http://churchtithesandofferings.com/questions/topquestionsasktithers.html>