

No Tithe for the Christian

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Introduction

Money is a big deal. In the 1960's, when a youthful American counterculture was throwing off the importance of money, my Dad looked me in the eye and said, "*Money may not be everything ... but it sure is if you don't have any.*" Like it or not, we all have a relationship with money. **Fortunately**, God addresses this subject in great depth in the Bible. While the study of money is exceedingly interesting, this Ebook will focus primarily on one aspect of it - the tithe. All side discussions will dovetail back to this primary concern.

In the first part of this Ebook, I will present the common teaching on the "tithe" in Christian circles. Then we will examine the Biblical record in three main eras; Pre-Law, The Law, and Post-Law. This will be followed by a discussion on The Christian and the Law, Missed Opportunities in the New Testament, The Priesthood Systems, What is Taught About the Christian and Money, a More on that Later section (which discusses the "rediscovery" of the "tithe"), and then a Conclusion.

Before going any further, I have a request. This is very important. I would like you to take "The Tithe Test" below. You do not have to share results - **but you may want to later**. But if you opt out now, that will not be an option. It's "closed book" and takes about five minutes. Just write your answers on a separate piece of paper if you have not downloaded this Ebook yet.

The Tithe Test

1. How many Bible authors wrote commands about the tithe - its purpose, amount and procedures?
2. Who are they?
3. What was done with the third and sixth year tithe? Who had access to it?
4. Can you explain the "tithe cycle" of the Israelites?
5. What was done with the tithe every seventh year?
6. Explain Abram's tithe. What did Abram give Melchizedek?
7. Did any of the Levites tithe? If so, to whom and how much?
8. How much money did the tithers give to the Levitical Priests?
9. In the "to the Levites" tithing years, did all the tithe go to the Levites?
10. What group did Jacob give his tenth to?
11. What were the conditions God must meet before Jacob would give that tenth?
12. When was the tithe "rediscovered?"
13. Who is credited with that "rediscovery?"

14. What was the catalyst for that “rediscovery?”
15. Is tithing the number one responsibility for the Christian and his/her money?
16. What kind of curse should the Christian expect for failing to tithe (Mal 3:17-23)?
17. Where did Jesus tell Christians to bring their tithe?
18. Where did Paul, or the other New Testament writers, tell Christians to bring the tithe?
19. When the Corinthians, and others, were making their collection for the saints, what was done with that collection before Paul and company took it to Judea?
20. Can the tithe be given to parachurch ministries?

The answers are at the end of this Ebook. Grade yourself, and then read this Ebook. Dissect the forthcoming material - analyze it, wrestle through it, and ask God about its contents. If you do this, **I guarantee** you will know more about the tithe *than your preacher and entire church leadership ...* or your money back. (Please overlook the fact the Ebook is free. It’s my thought that counts.) In fact, you will probably be more knowledgeable on this subject than any of your denominational materials you can find. The only way I will lose this wager is if your preacher, or church leadership, got this Ebook before you!

“Why did you have me take this test before reading the Ebook?”

Well, I have three reasons.

1. You will know how much you actually do know about this subject ***right now!***
2. You can **retake** the test ***after*** you have read the Ebook and see how much you have learned.
3. Once you have gained confidence in the position you finally adopt on this subject, it is my hope you will give this test to others - especially those who are asking “the tithe” from you! Actually, it is wrong for you to give 10% of your gross income ***to anybody*** without knowing ***for sure*** it is God’s will. I don’t care who they say they are. If your income averages \$50K a year, after fifty years, you will have given a ***quarter of a million dollars*** - to somebody! If you are being told that God requires that treasure to be given to the local church weekly for your entire life, it only seems reasonable that those making this claim be willing to answer a few questions (say ... the twenty above). And it does seem like the responsible thing for you to do - to ask some questions about this. In fact, it seems rather stupid ***not to***. Indeed, if you ***do not*** ask questions about this, you deserve to have 30% extracted from you (as some maintain is God’s actual requirement - so dropping to 10% is a bargain). But, if those who claim this ***as God’s command*** for you are not willing to answer a few questions, how should you view such a refusal?

How to Give “The Test” to Others.

You may want to practice on a friend or two (I did). It’s fun. So, here’s the procedure.

1. Tell your “testee,” you have 20 questions, and the results are to become part of a worldwide project. You can tell them ***you*** made a 35% (or whatever), and want to see if they do better. They will most happily want to show you up. Also, let them know there will be ***no personal identification*** attached to the test scores. Only ***the position*** of the “testee” is recorded (church attender, pastor, elder, deacon, church board, etc.).

2. You can give this *orally*, or they can write responses *as you wait on them*. Either “The Test” itself can have the answers written on it, or you may want to use the separate “Response Sheet” (attached to the end of this Ebook). All that really matters is that all twenty questions be asked and answered *in the order written* - and that “The Test” be taken as a “pop quiz.” No questions in advance - or taken home.
3. Grade it for them on the spot (they will want to know how they did). Then, if they want, send them to the Website for their free copy of this Ebook (or anything else they may be interested in).
4. Forward the test score and we will post running totals. Also, identify which numbered questions were answered correctly, plus any unusual answers (add in the comment line).

Now to the Substance of this Ebook ... But First, a Note to Pro-Tithers ...

When an author addresses an important topic (especially a controversial one) the goal is to win the reader to the author’s point of view. Normally, certain “rules” of persuasion and etiquette are followed. For example, it is probably not the best idea to state the conclusion of the entire work in the title. Also, one should avoid unnecessarily offending the opposition. Indeed, there are entire books explaining how to win friends and influence people. I have violated many of these rules. Embedded in this work, you will discover why I have taken such a wayward course. Even this last statement is a manipulative, deferred challenge designed to push you to read the entire treatise. Gutsy ... or stupid? I guess *you will have to read on* to accurately decide.

Challenges to any part of this Ebook are welcome! To submit them, go to the “Organic Document” right after the “Conclusion.” You see, I realize that if *you*, as a pro-“tither,” hold the correct position, then *I* am a false teacher and there is no telling what God will do to me. This will be a work encouraging rebellion - placing my brothers and sisters in peril. If it is true that God *is cursing* his children because they do not give this required Christian “tithes” from all gross earnings to the local church, then *I need you* to convince me of my error. If you succeed, I will shout from the rooftops *that Christians must fulfill this duty ...* and I will give you the credit for my corrected understanding. I will *not* waste my energies in other areas of teaching until I get them *to quit stealing from God!* I will hammer on *obedience to this “tithes”* until *I know* there is obedience. That will be the only loving thing to do - indeed a top tier responsibility. But ... as of these keystrokes, I am of the persuasion, there is **No Tithes for the Christian**.

The Common “Tithes” Teaching

Some groups make rather vague references of the need for the Christian to “tithes.” But, for the ones who enunciate (and announce) it, here is the basic teaching. It is 10% of one’s *gross* income, to be given in full, on a weekly basis, to the local church. Otherwise, the Christian is robbing God - stealing - and is under a curse (Mal 3:8-10). That’s it.

Concerning the “curse” incurred - well, that is where things become a bit murky. While I have never heard a pro-tither declare the cursed Christian will go to Hell, I have heard threats of deep, dark, and impending maladies that will fall from God on the disobedient son or daughter. The mutinous Christian is warned of *sure* financial troubles ahead, or being stunted into a spiritual midget, or missing out on spiritual works ... basically living under the frown of an actively aggressive, displeased God. Some tone down the curse part and just say that the “non-tithing” Christian will miss blessings from God. There is no real aggression from God - just an absence of blessings. The “non-tither” is relegated to a blah existence instead of living in a vibrant relationship with an obviously pleased Deity. Of course, all agree the “non-tither” will suffer great loss and humiliation at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

A related side teaching on this Christian “tithes” has to do with “parachurch ministries.” Most pro-tithers teach that any ministry outside of the local church is a parachurch ministry. “Para” is a Greek preposition meaning, “beside” or “amiss.” The call is for Christians “*to bring the*

whole tithe into the storehouse” and that storehouse is now the local church. A parachurch ministry should only receive *offerings above and beyond that “tithe.”* But even though this concession is often granted by pro-tithe churches, members are usually discouraged from giving those gifts. The primary reason is because these ministries are often “lone rangers” - lacking official church oversight. They are “amiss” from the church. Interestingly, many leaders of these so-called parachurch ministries echo this *“offerings-only-after-giving-your-‘tithe’-to-your-local-church”* position. I do not know if they really believe this, or if they say this so as to avoid being blacklisted by pulpits. Concerning this parachurch teaching, **More on That Later.**

_____ **Who are the people teaching this?** This is an important question. *Most* pro-tithers are pastors, and many of them have theological degrees. They also make their living from the local church. Others are professors in various fee-based theological institutions. The rest of the pro-tithers are the faithful inner core of these churches. There will be **More on That Later** as well. **From what grounds does this Christian “tithe” arise?** I do not believe very many have actually studied the Bible on this. If you took the quiz that goes along with this Article, or have read this quiz to others (and taken down their answers), you will know this is indeed an accurate assertion. There may be *a few* who teach this Christian “tithe” because they *do* believe God calls for it, but most of the others who teach it simply *want to believe* it is true. The reason is quite simple. To get 10% of the gross earnings of every church attender every single week means - lots of money. For the churches who can get this, the issue of money changes from, *“How are we going to pay for this?”* to, *“What are we going to do with all this money?”* Even if a church does not grow numerically, the budget will keep increasing as the audience keeps improving its money making skills through raises and/or better paying jobs.

_____ **Has this “tithe” been taught for the last two thousand years in the Christian church?** No. Later in this Ebook, you will find out how much of the Church Age it has been taught in, when it was “rediscovered,” and the circumstances under which it was “rediscovered.”

Pre-Law

Cain and Abel. *“... Abel was a keeper of the flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. So it came about in the course of time, that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and his offering He had no regard”* (Gen 4:2-5). In the New Testament, we are told that *“by faith Abel offered to God a **better** sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts....”* (Heb 11:4). The account *in Genesis* gives us no real information why Abel’s gift was “regarded” by God and Cain’s was not. One can only speculate. Did Cain bring the wrong things (plants), or the wrong amount? Were there commands about proper sacrifices, to which we are not privy, with Cain in violation? You sure cannot build a case for the tithe from this passage, though some have tried. The passage in Hebrews does help, as it states that Abel’s sacrifice *was better* - but we still do not know what made it better. Was it *better* because he offered it *by faith*, or was it *better* because it really *cost* Abel - sacrificial giving? Was it *better* because it was bigger, or of the right stuff, or offered correctly according to some directive? Again, one can only speculate. A case for a tithe is nowhere in sight. Also, it appears this was a one time event on Cain and Abel’s part. This is **much** different from some type of weekly giving.

Incidentally, in a totally unrelated side point, in this world’s *infancy*, the evil man continued living. The “good guy” was lost to this age. The world has not changed.

Abram (Abraham) and Melchizedek. When Abram was returning from the slaughter of the kings, *“Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; now he was a 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 (Abraham) gave him (Melchizedek) a tenth of all.” (Gen 14:18-20). In Hebrews, we are given more details on this mysterious encounter. After saying that Abram gave a tenth part of all the spoils, the Hebrew writer adds this little nugget. “*Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils*” (Heb 7:4). So, now we discover that it appears Abraham gave a tenth **of the best stuff** - not a tenth of everything! Of course, I realize “*a tenth of the choicest spoils*” would be included in “*a tenth of all*” in the Genesis account, but it is also quite possible the Hebrew’s author (the Holy Spirit) is **refining** the account. In fact, it seems rather questionable that the Holy Spirit would add these words later if they had no real purpose. I believe He refined the message to explain more clearly to us what happened that day Abram encountered Melchizedek. This whole episode begs closer examination - so, here goes.

In the Genesis account, we find Abram was **returning** with the **recovered possessions** of the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar. What Abram gave Melchizedek was a tenth of these **recovered goods**. But Hebrews says he actually gave a tenth **of the best of these goods!** And get this - Abram, after giving a tenth of the choicest spoils to Melchizedek, returned the 90% back to the king of Sodom! The king of Sodom wanted Abram to keep all the goods as a reward for rescuing all the people who had been captured, but Abram replied, “*I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share*” (Gen 14:22-24). I have the feeling Abram did not keep the goods of the other kings either - especially Gomorrah or Zoar. **So Abram actually gave Melchizedek a tenth of the choicest spoils of a bunch of stuff he wasn’t intending on keeping anyway!** But here are some other very important points. I have heard preacher after preacher use this passage to make a case for the Christian “tithing.” But did Abram go home and get together a tenth of **all his stuff** and bring it back to Melchizedek? Did he then put aside a tenth of all his gain **week after week** and bring that to Melchizedek? Today’s advocates of this Christian “tithing” at least insist on this last part - and point to this passage to back up their dictum. This is a classic example of twisting scripture to meet one’s own agenda. Furthermore, where did Abram come up with this 10% figure anyway? We are not told this anywhere in the Pre-Law era. There is not even a hint this percentage was **a command from God**. So, is the 10% a “Biblical Principle” as many insist? Let’s talk about that for a moment. What exactly is a “Biblical Principle?”

The Biblical Principle. If a Christian religious leader has some doctrine or practice he/she wants obeyed, it is usually understood that Scripture is needed to back up the assertion(s). When no Scripture can be found that clearly backs up the dogma, then the pet doctrine, or practice, is often cloaked in a “Biblical Principle.” That way, it appears authoritative with the full weight of God behind it. This is not a new tactic. That is **exactly** what Jesus confronted in the teachings of the elders (the Talmud) when He was here. They had devised many “Biblical Principles” and were teaching those principles as though they were God’s own words and will. “*You have heard it said But, I say to you*” Jesus was regularly peeling off “Biblical Principles” from God’s word. But this account between Abram and Melchizedek is so far removed from what pro-tithers promote as the Christian “tithing,” they can’t use this as a “Biblical Principle” anyway! Abraham gave a tenth **only of the choicest spoils of a bunch of stuff he had no intention of keeping!** His own possessions were still at home untouched, and he never came back with a tenth of all future earnings for the rest of his life either! Abraham gave nothing of his own. If you don’t see this, it is because you don’t want to.

Jacob after his dream of the Ladder. After Jacob left his father Isaac, he had a dream one night while on his journey. He saw a ladder going into heaven and the Lord standing above it. From there, God pronounced a series of fabulous blessings that were to come Jacob’s way. Upon

awakening, Jacob felt great fear and after renaming the place and setting up a pillar, he made this vow. *“If God be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house; and of all that Thou dost give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee”* (Gen 28:20-22). This is quite **a deal** Jacob made with God. It turns out, all the conditions were met, and we can **assume** Jacob kept his vow as we do not hear otherwise. Twenty years later, Jacob did return to this place and built **an altar** (Gen 31:38,41 and 35:7). Maybe this altar was the promised, *“God’s house.”* Maybe this altar was *in* God’s house. Maybe all this constituted that promised tenth. It is impossible to say. But again, it is a great stretch to present this as a “Biblical Principle” to shore up current “tithe” demands. For starters, there is no indication this tenth was commanded, or even expected, by God. Second, this was **a conditional deal**. This tenth was **offered** as **fulfillment of a vow after** God fulfilled **the conditions** of being with him, keeping him, giving him food, giving him clothes, and returning him safely to his homeland. God had to meet all the conditions before Jacob would cough up this tenth. Third, just like Abram, this appears to be **a one-time gift**. It is not at all clear this was a continual tenth after God had met all the conditions of Jacob’s vow. But even if it was, this is all still part of a vow fulfillment. And if this was a one-time offering, then we are back to similar territory as we had with Abram. There is a lot of difference in a one-time percentage gift and a perpetual giving of that same percentage! But just as important, there is no indication God even had any kind of religious order in operation where Jacob could deposit that tenth - much less a weekly tenth. After building the promised “house of God,” who populated “the pulpit?” There was no priesthood yet (other than Melchizedek’s), or any other God-ordained religious order in operation of which we know. If Jacob built that house of God on that stone (which he probably did), and did support it with a continual tenth (which we do not know if he did), who did populate “the pulpit?” Was it some order God did not tell us about? Was it an order God was pleased with? Who knows, maybe this became “the church” from which Balaam arose hundreds of years later. He did come from somewhere, and God did interact with him. But, if Balaam was the long term fruit of Jacob’s church ... well, you get the point. So, here is my point. There really is no grounds for using this account as some kind of “example” for us to “tithe” weekly to the local church. A conditional vow? Come on!

While there are many instances of offerings, sacrifices and memorials, in the Pre-Law era, there is nothing about a tithe that remotely resembles what preachers are calling for today. Look over Abraham, Melchizedek, and Jacob again before moving on. You have probably never heard some of the material just shared. What a shame! This is simple stuff. Personally, I have no agenda other than this - I want to accurately handle the Word of God. Why teach things that are destined for the fire as wood, hay and stubble?

Well, that’s it for Pre-Law. That wasn’t too bad, was it?

The Law

The era of the Law began for the Israelites shortly after the Exodus from Egypt while being led by Moses. The Israelites agreed to have God as their King. They agreed to live under His command and agenda. This was a Theocracy - the only one ever ordained in all of human history. The Law consisted of two main components - Religious Law and Civil Law. Religious Law consisted of injunctions in the relationship with God. Civil Law consisted of decrees for people’s relationship to each other. All the Law was to be strictly obeyed. If it was not, the consequences were quite severe. For the blessings and curses under this Law covenant, see Deuteronomy chapters 27 and 28.

All the commands concerning **the tithe** are found in this Law covenant. In fact, **the only commands** anywhere in the entire Bible concerning the tithe are found in the Law covenant!

Wow! Did you catch that? ***Moses is the only one who wrote commands about the tithe!*** No one else did ***anywhere*** in the rest of the Bible! Even God's charges in Malachi contained no new commands. The **real tithe** is a Law system doctrine and practice! Does this give you pause - if only for a second? It should. But, if not, read on, and it will! Moses' instructions for the **tithe of God** are given in great detail. The Law explained ***why the tithe was given, who gave it, who received it, what was to be given, what was to be done with it, and where it was to be taken.*** Obedience to the tithe system *was critical* to a proper functioning of this governing system. It provided moral and practical moorings to the entire Law system.

_____ **Why was the tithe given?** This 10% tithe was to provide basic support for the Levites so they could attend to the religious institutions of the Israelites - before and after entering the promised land of Canaan. The Levites were prohibited from owning land and the tithe was their inheritance (Nu 18:21-24). While the priests only came from the family of Aaron, the other Levites who were not priests (i.e., not of Aaron's family) served as assistants to the priests and kept up the sanctuary, as well as serving as judges, scribes, gatekeepers, and musicians (1Chron 24-26). But the tithes of the third and sixth year were to support aliens, widows and orphans - ***not just Levites*** (Deut 14:28,29)!

_____ **Who gave the tithe and who received it?** The eleven tribes of Israel gave a tithe (10%) to the tribe of Levi. And any Levites not of Aaron's family (thus not priests), were required to give a tithe ***of the tithe they received*** to the priests (Nu 18:26-28).

_____ **What was given?** Interestingly, money ***was not given*** for a tithe. The produce of the land and the produce from husbandry constituted the tithe. It consisted of 10 percent of all produce, and every tenth animal that "*passed under the rod*" (a procession of all owned livestock). Now if the distance was too great to physically bring the tithe (Jerusalem after the conquest of Canaan), the tither could exchange the tithe for money, bring the money to Jerusalem, and then buy whatever produce or animals he wanted and present that (Deut 14:24-26). So, why didn't they just give the money to the Levites and let them figure out what to do with it? I don't know the answer to that, but maybe God knew the Levites would more likely keep out of trouble if they did not have piles of cash around. **Hey, maybe that is a "Biblical Principle" that should be explored!**

_____ **What was to be done with the tithe?** The tither was ***to share in the eating of the tithe*** when it was presented to the Levites. Then whatever was left after this joyous occasion, was left with the Levites. This was the routine on the first, second, fourth and fifth year of the tithe cycle.

Where was the tithe to be taken? There was a seven-year tithe cycle (actually a fifty-year cycle) that was to be strictly adhered to by the Israelites. And here it is. On the first, second, fourth and fifth years, the tithe was to be brought to the sanctuary that bore God's Name (Jerusalem after the conquest). Once the festive meal with the tither was completed, what was left of the tithe went entirely to the Levites. But the tithe of the third and sixth year, was a completely different story. In these years, the tithe was fully deposited in one's local town. But, it was not just the Levites who had access to this tithe (as in year one, two, four and five). These tithes were also for "*the alien, the orphan, and the widow who are in your town*" (Deut 14:28,29). They could come and get whatever they needed - without any screening by some "benevolence committee." Also, on this third and sixth year, the tither did not eat any of it - as would be done in year one, two, four and five. But the tithe cycle does not stop here. Every seventh year the land was to rest with no sowing or reaping. Obviously, there was no tithe these years (unless maybe of animals?). So every seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, twenty-eighth, thirty-fifth, forty-second and forty-ninth year there was ***no tithe***. But then came year fifty. This was the year of Jubilee. Just as the forty-ninth year had no sowing or harvesting - neither did the fiftieth year - the year of Jubilee! This completes the tithe cycle.

_____ ***"But I have never even heard of this tithe cycle!"*** Don't feel bad. Neither had I. It always helps to read the Bible. All I ever heard was that the "tithe" was 10% of my gross income

(which is probably 13 or 14% of my after tax cash) and that “tithe” was to be cash or check to the local church each week for the rest of my life. I was also told this required “tithe” was **just the beginning** of giving. There are freewill and sacrificial offerings on top of this required “tithe.” But after looking at this tithe cycle, I am beginning to see a whole bunch of “Biblical Principles” here - aren’t you? Maybe every third and sixth year this Christian “tithe” should go to so-called parachurch ministries like children’s homes, nursing homes, immigration shelters - our orphans and widows and aliens! And every seventh year, plus the fiftieth, we should just take off - with no “tithe” for anybody! But, I can hear it said, “*We are not Israelites in a Theocracy! And we do not have Levites around anyway!*” Well, these are both correct assertions. So then, let me ask this. Where does one get the authority to pick and choose **parts** of this system and impose it on the New Testament church - and then claim it as God’s command? Friends, the plot is thickening. Wait until I expose the real story. Pro-tithers are going to get really, really, really mad, but right now panic attacks are beginning to strike. If you are a pro-tithe teacher, maybe you should start thinking of some authoritative pro-tithers you can run to so they can assure you that you have been teaching the right things and laying right commands on God’s beloved children. Don’t go to God Himself about this matter. Go find those strong, well known, high profile authoritative voices. They will soothe these alarming worries you are starting to feel. But be warned - if you keep reading, you are going to get in worse shape. We are only 20% through this!

_____The Malachi Passage. One of clearest warnings for disobedience, and blessing for obedience, to the tithe is found in Malachi 3:7-12. “*From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. Return to Me and I will return to you,*” says the Lord of hosts. “*But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed Thee?’ In tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there might be food in My house, and test Me now in this,*” says the Lord of hosts, “*if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,*” says the Lord of hosts. “*And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land,*” says the Lord of hosts.”

Now for once, let’s do an honest handling of this remarkable passage. Integrity demands we look at this passage and see **who** is speaking, **who** is being spoken to, and **what** is the historical context in which this passage is spoken. Then a more accurate application of this passage might be able to be applied to a current reader. But you must first let it stand in its own time and context. This is exegesis by commonly acknowledged hermeneutical principle (this is some fancy theological terminology to validate what is actually plain old common sense). To begin, four times in this short passage the One speaking is referenced to as “*the Lord of hosts.*” “Lord” is equivalent to, Ruler, Boss, Chief, King, Master ... but what are “the hosts” He is Lord of? Well, the Bible talks of a host of nations, host of the heavens, and host of angels. Whatever host one brings forth, the Lord is the Boss of that host. Second, while we see that He is addressing individuals (“*will a man rob God?*”), He is primarily speaking to a nation. It is obvious the nation is Israel. Malachi 1:1 says, “*The oracle (burden) of the word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.*” We are not talking about the spiritual Israel of Covenant theology. This passage was brought by a real prophet to a real people who were in real trouble with the real God in real time. “*From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes ... you are cursed with a curse the whole nation of you....*” And what was the charge against the Israelites at this time? “*Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!*” How? “*In tithes and contributions.*” **The charge** could not be more clear. The “beef” is plainly presented. **The solution** that would end the hostilities (and for the entire nation to be cursed with a curse from the Lord of hosts is indeed a hostile situation) is also plainly presented. “*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse....*” Obedience to the tithe of God would preserve “*the*

fruits of the ground” and of “the field” creating a “delightful land” which all the rest of the nations would call blessed. **This passage is calling for a physical response to fill actual storehouses in a real territory.** If that was done, then the contemporaries of the prophet Malachi experienced real time action by God Himself. God challenged **that group** then and there to test Him! You see, the Israelites were in a conditional relationship with God. As a nation, their well being was dependent upon their obedience to the Law. The tithe, and all its specific arrangements, was part of that agreement. **They better bring that whole tithe in - or hostility from God - by God - would come!** And come it did. To rip this passage from its proper place in theological history and apply it in some fast and loose spiritualized manner to present day Christians in 21st century America - well, this is absurd *at best* and criminal *at worst*. God was speaking **to a nation that had agreed to obedience to a Law Covenant.** The laws laid out to the Israelites through Moses were the terms of that agreement between God and that physical group of people. The history of the Israelites from Moses to Christ was extremely turbulent as the Israelites continuously fell back from the terms. God sent judges, prophets, priests, and kings to call them back to their obligations under this agreement. Through those turbulent centuries, He employed all kinds of disciplinary measures including foreign invasion and deportation - even temple destruction! Finally, there was a moment when this Covenant was dissolved by God Himself. God personally took on the likeness of sinful flesh (became a man) and physically came into the Jewish nation. That is who Jesus was. The ruling Jews proceeded to frame and murder Him. The moment Jesus died, the veil in the second temple was ripped in two **from top to bottom** (Mt 27:51). That veil separated the holy place from the most holy place - the place where the Shekinah glory of God dwelled. The tearing of that veil ended that Covenant of Law right then and there. The murder of God in the flesh was the final straw. From God’s viewpoint (and that is the only one that matters), the temple sacrifices ended, the Levitical priesthood ended, **and the tithe that supported the Levites ended.** The Levitical system, with all its duties, crashed to the ground. We are going to see that God has brought forth a new priesthood line (or possibly just reactivated an old one - Melchizedek’s line). He states, “*when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also*” (Heb 7:12)! The money system **now in play** under a **new High Priest** will be addressed in due course.

Post-Law (The New Testament)

_____ **“But, Jesus spoke about the tithe in the New Testament. In fact, it is in the New Testament twice which means added emphasis.”**

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus was in the middle of a series of scathing rebukes - precatory warnings - to the scribes and Pharisees. “*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the Law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done **without neglecting the others.***” Here is the normal way this passage is used by pro-tithers. **First**, because it is in the New Testament, then **it applies to all Christians.** **Second**, it was spoken by Jesus **Himself**, so that means it is **really** important, applies to all Christians, and trumps any other passage on the subject. It’s even in red letters in some translations! **Third**, it was also recorded in Luke’s account (Lk 11:42), so **He really, really meant it!** It is in the New Testament **twice!** Why don’t we try something really radical with this passage. How about if we apply the same common sense hermeneutical principles we applied in Malachi, and see what we find!

It is imperative to go back to the scene where a Bible passage was born. To be sure, each passage may have application far beyond that initial setting, but there are reasons for the original utterances at the source point. To assert otherwise is to say the author wrote in a void - with no context, or meaning, at that moment. While this may be true of some prophetic material (Dan 12:8,9 or parts of the Revelation), this is an exceptional circumstance rather than the rule. The two

passages of interest here are clearly a specific, historic dialogue between a speaker and a defined audience. A huge error in modern proclamation is to take a passage and immediately rush to, “*What does this mean to me - to us?*” That formula creates error. You will see, in the use of these passages, a classic example of this error.

Point 1: “*Since these passages are in the New Testament, doesn’t that mean they apply to all Christians?*” The answer is - no. Jesus was born under the Law, and this “discussion” was to scribes and Pharisees also born under, and obligated to, the Law. So, even though this account is in the New Testament, ***it is dealing with life under the Old Covenant - the Law!*** The New Covenant did not begin ***until the death of Jesus.*** At the time of this “discussion,” the whole tithe was required as prescribed by Law (as discussed earlier) by all participants in this “conversation” - including Jesus. But the scribes and Pharisees were “*straining at gnats and swallowing camels*” as they were missing the intent, or spirit, of the Law system. The “camels” of justice, mercy and faithfulness were devoured, while the “gnat” of the tithe was greatly dawdled over. But, as we have seen in the Malachi declarations, to neglect this “gnat,” (the tithe) was an open door ***to incite God to curse the whole nation!*** That is why Jesus said they were not to neglect tithing their mint, dill, and cummin. As Jews, under the Law, they better tithe. “*For whoever keeps the whole Law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all*” (Ja 2:10).

Actually, in its own way, and in its right spirit, the tithe ***did*** forward justice, mercy, and faithfulness. It recompensed those responsible for dispensing ***justice*** (part of the Levite’s role), it had an element of ***mercy*** (particularly the third and sixth year tithes) and it was part of the ***faithfulness*** of every Israelite to God. So, when properly obeyed, the tithe was ***a starting point*** of the justice, mercy and faithfulness in the Law system. It was a relatively small part, but still important and Jesus said it should not be neglected. But, the scribes and Pharisees eisegeted this part of the Law system (isolated part of God’s word) from the whole, and had thus perverted it. A pro-tither who uses *this text* as evidence of a tithe for the Christian is also guilty of eisegesis.

Point 2: “*But this tithe material was spoken by Jesus Himself, thus making it more weighty! Some Bibles have them in red - like His blood!*” If one believes that “*all Scripture is inspired by God (or God-breathed)...*” (2Tim 3:16), then all Bible passages are intrinsically of equal weight. Whether spoken by Jesus, Paul, Daniel or whoever, the Bible is actually authored by God Himself. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit no matter who He is moving through. And Jesus, as God, speaks equally with the Holy Spirit as they are One. So, the proper approach to each passage - is to ask God to teach us how each part of His word integrates with every other part. There is no competition or hierarchy between passages. Incidentally, the red letters are a pious ***addition*** to God’s word. Even though well intentioned, when man seeks to enhance God’s word, he just corrupts it. The original had no red ink.

Point 3: “*But the tithe passage is found twice, even in two gospels - so that means God really meant it!*” Does repetition mean greater authority? Well, let’s see. “*For You have magnified Your word together with Your Name*” (Ps 138:2). “*Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven*” (Ps 119:89). When God says something once, that is equal to His own Name, and the matter addressed is forever settled in heaven. To repeat the same thing twice - or a million times - cannot make it more authoritative or settled. One might be able to make the case that repetition is for our benefit, so we get the point. But when one considers the fact that much of the New Testament was written in letters to particular audiences, there probably is not much repetition on any subject. In the original situation, Matthew’s audience had no repetition of this account, and neither did Luke’s. ***We*** have repetition because we have gathered all the separate accounts together in one place. It does not follow that this kind of repetition carries any type of authoritative weight.

For those who use the three point statements above in forwarding their pro-tithe position, here is the way they do it. While acknowledging the “tithe” is not as weighty as “*justice, mercy,*

and faithfulness,” that does not mean it is unimportant. It is still required. They call for it - just like Jesus did - while saying they are more concerned about forwarding “*justice and mercy and faithfulness*” than getting your money ... but you still need to give this full Christian “tithe.” Sounds pious, doesn’t it?

That’s It!

Concerning the tithe in the New Testament - **well, that is it.** We are now done with all the material on the tithe that exists in the New Testament - ***indeed, in the entire Bible!*** Does that surprise you? Well, even though the Biblical material is exhausted, we are just getting started. We need to discuss “The Christian and the Law.” Then we need to examine “Missed Opportunities in the New Testament” to affirm the tithe for the Christian. Next, we need to study “The Priesthood Systems.” Then we can look at the money directives of the New Covenant. Finally, we will see ***why*** this “tithe” is taught for today’s Christians. Hang on! This ride will take you to the place of accuracy, knowledge and liberty - sometimes referred to as - truth.

You may have noticed that I have put the word “tithe” in quotes in many places. The only true Biblical tithe is the one Abraham gave (the writer of Hebrews calls this a tithe - Heb 7:9) and the tithe of the Law, as was given through Moses. The “tithe” teaching of today is neither of these. To teach that 10% of every Christian’s gross pay, is required by God to go to the local church every week for life - in cash - comes from another source. It is under protest that I use the word “tithe” when referring to this teaching. To refer to this invention with the word “tithe” is a grievous abuse of a good word. You see, I am actually pro-tithe. But the only tithe I support is the tithe of Abraham and the tithe of Moses. I am completely behind these tithes, as being tithes, and I teach them both fully. I do have a word for this current “tithe” teaching, but you will have to read on to find out the label I give it. It begins with the letter “E.” So, for the time being, and in the interest of communication, I will continue to use the word “tithe” when referring to this **new teaching** being imposed upon Christians today. But it will remain in quotes as a protest for profaning this honorable Biblical word on the teaching of today. It is similar to my mother’s anger over homosexuals hijacking and ruining the word, “gay.” Forward!

The Christian and the Law

Entire books have been written on this subject. The basic question is this. How does the Law of Moses relate to the Christian - whether in salvation (justification) or in Christian living and development (sanctification)? The way one answers this will impact how the tithe is viewed. I will make this as concise as possible.

Jesus and the scribes and the Pharisees were under the Law. They were required to obey it morally and ritually - every jot and tittle. The tithe was part of this. Following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, spectacular changes occurred in God’s dealings with mankind. But it took a little time for these changes to be made clear. For example, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit began residing *in* His people. Also, Peter, and his Jewish friends, were amazed when they witnessed God pouring out the Holy Spirit ***on the Gentiles*** (Ac 10:44-45). It was soon clear that God’s mode of operation had changed and great fundamental shifts had taken place in God’s relationship to man. Paul may not have been the first to understand these changes, but his letters annunciated these changes most clearly. He spoke in great detail about the Law. He understood it as the covenant agreement between God ***and His people Israel.*** It covered all aspects of life - morals, civil accountability, religious ritual - everything. The tithe, which supported the Levites and priests, was an intricate part of the Law. But the cross changed everything. In a nutshell, here is Paul’s assessment of the Law ***after the cross.***

First, “*the Law is holy*” (Ro 7:12). That is actually a statement of faith. It is in this way, that faith establishes the Law - declaring the Law as indeed perfect and right (Ro 3:21-31).

Second, Paul maintains that no one keeps the Law, so the Law rightly stands up and damns us all! *“By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight ...”* (Ro 3:20 and Gal 2:16). He further asserts it is evident that *“no one is justified by the Law before God”* (Gal 3:11). That is why he calls the ministry that came through Moses (the Law) *“the ministry of death”* - even *“the ministry of condemnation”* (2Cor 3:7,9)!

Third, Paul sees the Law as extremely valuable for this reason; *“Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin”* (Ro 3:20). *“I would not have come to know sin except through the Law”* (Ro 7:7). If one has no concept of personal sin, one has no concept of a need *to be saved from it!* This is a very important statement - worthy of deep, reflective thought. If a person lacks a keen understanding of personal sin - and certain accountability before an angry God - the message of the cross is foolishness. *“Therefore, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Gal 3:24). So, this is how the Law is used lawfully; it is a **tutor** to show us we are in trouble with God, and then points us to The Solution. While the Law does not have the ability to make us right with God, it is an invaluable tool in leading us to what (Who) can. The work Jesus performed on the cross is the only action that can pay for our violations of God - not some doomed attempt at Law keeping.

Fourth, Paul understood that *“now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor”* (Gal 3:25)! **Christians do not grow and develop in the faith (sanctification) by going back to Law-keeping!** That was Paul’s whole argument with Peter, and even Barnabas, as well as the converted Galatians. Christians are to understand that God is working with them under an entirely different system, not **under Law** but **under grace**. (As an aside, anyone who wants the 10 Commandments posted as “a guideline for living” is ignorant of what the Law is about. It damns us all and is it not meant to be a guideline for Christian living.) You are now about to read what may be the most important point in this entire work. Please slow down one notch and digest what I am about to say. Listen carefully.

In Paul’s **warnings** to the Galatians, he said, *“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse: for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them’”* (Deut 27:26 and Gal 3:10). The tithe is clearly one of *“the works of the Law.”* The commands are very specific. It tells what was given, who gave it, who received it, when it was given, why it was given, where it was given ... the tithe is *“written in the book of the Law.”* And, as we have seen, Abraham’s and Jacob’s pre-Law tenth were not **at all** like the **continuous tithe** of the Law. As a pro-tithe advocate, who uses Malachi, **are you calling for performance to all the Law?** *“Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them”* (Gal 3:10). **Partial obedience** to the Law **makes one cursed!** And this Galatians 3:10 quote is actually an Old Testament passage. The Holy Spirit employs it in the New Testament **as a warning to Christians!** (If you are one who believes that repetition in the Bible makes a passage more emphatic, well maybe this is one time that position may have some merit.) So I ask again; pro-“tithe” teacher, **are you calling for obedience to all the Law?** When you say that bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse (the local church) will **ward off** curses from God, **actually the exact opposite is true!** You, and your obedient listeners, are under a curse - unless you, and your listeners, keep all things written in the book of the Law - which you don’t - and neither do your listeners! And where do you get the authority to take one part of the Law and selectively “obey” only that part? But you don’t obey that tithe anyway. You rewrite it and make up new rules on what constitutes compliance. The storehouse is now the local church, the third and sixth year directive is abandoned, the recipients are not Levites, the medium is now money - on and on. The Law is **an act of God - not open to amendment or selective obedience**. It is an all or nothing system. James declared, *“Whoever keeps the whole Law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”* (Ja 2:10). The arrogance of calling this new teaching “the tithe,” ... You have directed God’s beloved children into a trap - a trap of partial Law

keepers!

It is my hope that my brothers and sisters have been motivated to give a “tithe” based on some fabricated “Biblical Principle,” rather than being motivated by a Law passage like the one found in Malachi 3. “Obedience in giving” based on some invented, but errant, “Biblical Principle” may not get them in trouble with God, but “obedience in giving” based on Law moves a person from under grace to under Law. If you are still going to insist that God requires 10% of each Christian’s gross income to go into the plate of the local church for life, please leave out the Malachi 3 material, or any of the Law material. I will take even that as a victory for my brethren.

Missed Opportunities in the New Testament

There are several places in the New Testament where a call for the tithe would have been appropriate - and would have spared me the work of writing this Ebook. Here are two golden opportunities that were somehow “missed” - or were they?

Missed Opportunity Number One: The Jerusalem Council

In Acts 15, an amazing convergence of events took place. A great controversy arose and a great trial resulted. You could call this “The Trial of the Millennia.” This trial, and attending decision, has had resounding impact from that moment to the present and beyond. That is not to say it has been faithfully adhered to through the ages, but that does not negate or diminish its authoritative dictates. The judge and jury at this Council consisted of James, the Apostles, the elders and the whole church. The prosecutors included Peter, Paul and Barnabas. The defense consisted of certain believing Pharisees. The defendant, the one on trial, was none other than, “*observance of the Law of Moses.*” The defense was simple. The converting Gentiles must get circumcised and observe the Law of Moses. The prosecution was equally simple. “*...do you put God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?*” (Ac 15:10). This is Peter’s assessment of the Law - *a crushing yoke!* After some testimonials from Paul and Barnabas, a simple decision was rendered and agreed on by the Apostles, the elders and the whole church. Here’s the directive to the converting Gentiles. “*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.*” (Ac 15:28,29). How could these Law inundated Jews miss warning the Gentiles about the Malachi 3 curse for failing to tithe weekly to the local church 10% of their gross income? Did the Holy Spirit also forget this *essential*? I mean, if curses from God are the lot of the tithe-failing Gentile, wouldn’t the directive to tithe qualify *as an essential*? How can they “*do well*” as ones who are robbing God, and thus cursed? As pro-“tithers” - do you believe this was an errant early trial short on *essentials*? Maybe you should have been there and corrected James, and Peter, and Barnabas, and the Apostles, and the elders, and the whole church - and the Holy Spirit! And I bet you yourself are a Gentile. So, you have a better understanding of the Law, and the tithe, and this upheaval in God’s relationship with man after the cross, than they did - right? I guess, as a Gentile, you need to correct those errant early Jews, call your own Council and declare the essentials for yourself and the Gentiles of your congregations and denominations. Come to think of it, I guess that has happened.

Missed Opportunity Number Two: The Rest of the New Testament

As already seen, Jesus addressed the tithe to the Pharisees who were under Law. Later, the writer of Hebrews discussed Abraham’s tithe to Melchizedek. But, as has been pointed out, there is no other mention of the tithe in the rest of the New Testament! It is **never mentioned** in any of the letters to the churches and it is **never mentioned** in any of the *Pastoral Epistles!* While

money, and giving, *is addressed repeatedly* in the New Testament, the opportunity to call for the tithe *is missed over and over again!* Not a peep. One great reason for this has to do with the subject of the priesthood. Wow! That is a rather shocking statement, isn't it? But, after the cross, *a huge change in the priesthood occurred.* This change affected many things in man's relationship to God - including the tithe. This is our next stop.

The Priesthood Systems

You may have never heard of the priesthood God has granted *to each of His children.* This is criminal because this is a *fundamental* teaching. The forthcoming material is astounding and revolutionary. I want every single Christian to grab this tight with both hands - and never let go.

To begin, one must ask, "*What is a priest?*" Stated in simplest terms, a priest is one who brings matters directly to God. But in order to be a true priest, one must actually be *allowed in* by God. Otherwise, that "priest" is simply offering presented matters into the air. The One in power is the One who decides who gets an audience. If I want to bring matters before some king, I must follow the procedure established by that king for any hope of an audience. The Living God has established the parameters for engagement with Him. We have no vote on this matter. Our opinions, or concepts of fairness, are irrelevant - and from His perspective, irreverent. He holds the power, He sets the rules, and that is the end of the matter.

Under the Law system, *a group* from the tribe of Levi - the sons of Aaron - constituted the pool, *the only pool*, from which priests arose. As we have seen, the tithe, was **ordered** from the other eleven tribes, and from the non-priests of the tribe of Levi, to support those priests. Anyone who exalted himself to this priest position committed a capital offense from which there was no reprieve. The only other priesthood in the Old Testament (which predated the Levitical priesthood) was the Melchizedek order. This Melchizedek (who also happens to be a king) is "*without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God*" and "*he abides (as) a priest perpetually*" (Heb 7:3). In Hebrews 6:20 - 10:22, tremendously important material is presented on the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Let's look at this priesthood.

First, He is the High Priest for every Christian (Heb 4:14,15).

Second, His priesthood stands *against* the Levitical system of Moses, as Jesus is from the wrong tribe for priests (Judah). We are informed that He is a High Priest forever *but according to the order of Melchizedek* (Heb 7:13,14 and 17).

Third, His priesthood is based on the power of an indestructible life (Heb 7:16). This is a permanent priesthood. Death prevented the Levites from continuing theirs (Heb 7:23,24).

Fourth, concerning gifts and sacrifices for sin, the Levites had to offer them *continually* and in accordance with the Law. But Jesus, as High Priest, offered up a one time sacrifice - Himself (Heb 7:27 and 9:26). With that sacrifice there is no longer any need for an offering for sin (Heb 10:18). The Levites had to *stand* daily in a non ending work, but Jesus *sat down* after completing His work (Heb 10:11,12).

Fifth, His priesthood is for "*a better covenant, enacted on better promises*" and is "*a more excellent ministry*" (Heb 8:7,6). Because fault was found with the first covenant (The Law), a second was established. The Levitical system served as a "*copy and shadow*" of the second covenant - which is the truly effective system. Jesus entered the true Holy Place, with the true sacrifice that could actually take away sins (Heb 9:24 and 10:4). Therefore, "*He has made the first (covenant) obsolete*" (Heb 8:13). It is finished - forever done. "*He takes away the first in order to establish the second*" (Heb 10:9). With this change, the Levitical priesthood died. ***The tithe, with its laws (the Levite's support system), died with them. The warnings of Malachi 3 died also.*** Those warnings about robbing God and being under a subsequent curse, were fully alive for 400 years after being penned. They were correctly directed to a people under the first covenant. But

the moment Jesus died on the cross, *the relevancy of those warnings expired*, and brethren - things changed! A New Covenant *and a new priesthood* took over in the matters pertaining to the God of the Bible. “*When the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also*” (Heb 7:12).

So, here is the “New Deal.” The Bible tells us that every Christian can now “*enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus ... through the veil*” (Heb 10:19,20). But only priests can enter the holy place - and through the veil!?!? How can a simple Christian do that? Well, guess what? Of the myriad of promises applied to your eternal existence at the moment of conversion, He also granted certain positions in life. Every single Christian has been given the title and position, with all the duties, privileges and responsibilities, *of priest!* **If you are a Christian, you are a priest!** We are “*a chosen race, a royal priesthood*” and as living stones we are “*being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood*” (1Pet 2:9,5). John tells the churches in Asia (Gentiles) that “*He made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father*” (Rev 1:6). This priesthood is not bestowed by theological degree, laying on of hands, or any other human device no matter how seemingly pious or well intended. It has nothing to do with robes or ritual. Oh, how this cursed clergy system has tried to steal this from you! **More on That Later.** The true priesthood position is bestowed upon every Christian at the moment of rebirth in Christ. This is undeserved and unearned. It is a gift that God the Father has decided to give to every one of His children. Even in our varied cultures, if a baby is unconditionally adopted, the moment the adoption is consummated, all kinds of positions are immediately conferred. It may take some maturing before that adopted one realizes its fortunes in that relationship, but those fortunes are present from the start. For God to give His beloved Son to die for us, *it is no big deal to freely give us all kinds of other things!* In fact, all other gifts *pale* in comparison to the sacrifice of the Son. But these “crumbs” that fall off the Master’s table into our lap, are beyond priceless. One “crumb” of God eclipses **all** the treasures of earth - even piled up in one pile - on our doorstep. You, my brother or sister, have been handed a **priesthood** from God the Father as a part of your inheritance. I will exalt that. I will honor that. By his grace, I will teach you about that. I will also attack anything that attempts to supplant or diminish that. I will expose anything that attempts to stand over it, or cast any shadow upon it. If you doubt this, just read on.

Even though this truth of the priesthood position of every Christian is rarely taught, the children of God operate in it instinctively. Every time a Christian approaches God the Father through Jesus Christ, that saint is operating in his/her priesthood position. It provides a direct and unimpeded line to the Father anytime and anywhere. Through this line, we operate as priests by offering sacrifices of praise as well as making our requests known for His attention and action (Heb 13:15 and Phil 4:6). This direct line to the Father is unbreakable (Ro 8:38,39). The Father wants us to use our priesthood position continuously. Every care, every concern, every issue of any importance to any child of His, He wants brought forward. He will decide what is important and what is not. And Jesus Himself, as our High Priest and Mediator, continually enables us in this role (1Tim 2:5). If we were taught about this inherited role of priest, we would become more confident of our place at the throne and take greater advantage of this opportunity.

While I do not know everything about this priesthood that you and I have been granted, here is what I do know. While I cannot flatly say that ours is a Melchizedek priesthood, our priesthood does have some common elements with it.

First, we have been given eternal life in Christ. Since our priesthood is in Him, it seems reasonable to maintain that our priesthood is also based on the power of an indestructible life.

Second, Peter calls our priesthood “*a royal priesthood*” (1Pet 2:9). Royalty is kingly. Melchizedek and Jesus are acknowledged as Kings - Melchizedek as king of righteousness and king of peace (Heb 7:2), and Jesus as King of kings (Rev 17:14 and Rev 19:16). Being of a *royal* priesthood is a second major commonality with the Melchizedek line.

Third, Peter also calls our priesthood “*a holy priesthood*” (1Pet 2:5). These traits are consistent with Melchizedek’s line.

Lastly, consider this. Since Jesus is declared as our High Priest, and since we are priests, it seems reasonable to see ourselves as priests *of His line* - Melchizedek’s line. It would be similar to Levitical priests who were under the Levitical high priest of their time.

But if these four deductions are errant, one thing is certain - ours is not of the Levitical line. ***And it was in that line the tithe was found.*** But, let’s assume for a moment we can drag the tithe into our line of priests. Guess what? The tithe is meaningless. You see, even in the Levitical line, ***priests did not tithe to priests. Priests received tithes.*** However, there was one lone exception. While in Abraham’s loins, the Levitical priests did tithe **to Melchizedek’s line - our line!** (Heb 7:9,10) So, any way you dissect this - ***our priesthood line has no one to give a tithe to!*** Ah! But a clergy/lay system might do the trick! **More on That Later.**

From God’s viewpoint, there are no other legitimate priesthoods outside of the Levitical priesthood (now defunct), the Melchizedek priesthood (Melchizedek and Jesus) and the royal/holy priesthood (Christians). And this Christian line may be of Melchizedek. All other “priesthoods” are false. It is only on the blood, in the blood, and through the blood of Jesus Christ that the true priesthood exists, operates and flourishes. And it cost Jesus His life to make this opportunity available. Christians, make yours flourish! Do not allow anything to cast its shadow on this bestowed position as you enter “*the holy place by the blood of Jesus*” (Heb 10:19). Those shadows are damned. “*Draw near with confidence to the throne of grace*” (Heb 4:16). As Christians, we are priests. The true ones - the real ones - indeed ... the only ones.

What is Taught About the Christian and His/Her Money ...or More Missed Opportunities

So, what are the directives to the Christian in relation to his/her money and possessions? Let’s get to it! Let’s begin with The Corinthian Contribution. This contribution was given by converted Gentiles *outside* Judea to Jewish Christians *inside* Judea. Not only was this a revolutionary action by Gentiles, but the whole affair brought forward some tremendously instructive material about a Christian and his/her money.

The Corinthian Contribution

Most believe Acts 11:27-30 provides the backdrop for this event. Agabus, a prophet, warned of an impending famine coming over the whole world. “***And in proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to the elders***” (Ac 11:29,30). Notice - the contribution depended on whether or not a disciple “*had means.*” This is a rather curious statement, as it qualified who was to participate in this gift. A new “tithe” system, now based in cash, would have created a very broad support base with a continuous stream of income - extracted from everybody whether they “*had means*” or not! But this contribution was restricted to those who “*had means*” - whatever that might mean. To help decipher this, the accounts in the Corinthian letters give us a look behind the scenes. Many of Paul’s most instructive remarks were “asides” as he worked with the Corinthians on getting this contribution together. These “side notes” give great insight on Paul’s understanding about a Christian’s money. “*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so I do you also. On the first day of every week, let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomever you may approve, I shall send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me*” (1Cor 16:1-4).

First, the monies for this offering ***were saved*** - not spent. The local church did not get any

of it. No salaries, no building repairs, it was all saved for this one time bountiful gift for the Jewish brethren in Judea. In fact, this money was probably saved by each Christian - at home!

Second, each one gave *as he/she prospered*. Pro-“tithers” view this contribution as *an offering* above and beyond the “tithe.” Therefore, the “disciples” involved in this had already given their 10% gross to their local church so as to not be under a curse. But that imposes a predetermined idea on this passage when there is not even a hint anywhere in the New Testament to support such a presumption.

Third, we find in 2Cor 8:8 that Paul was not *commanding* them to give (we will examine this shortly). When urging the Corinthians to complete their donation, Paul asserted he was not speaking to them “*as a command*.” He wanted the Corinthian’s gift to be an exhibition of “*the sincerity of (their) love*” (2Cor 8:8). He was directing them *on the procedure* for their giving for this *one* project. The Corinthians are the ones who came up with this idea to help the famine struck Jewish brethren in Judea in the first place (2Cor 8:10). But, even though Paul bragged about the Corinthians to the Macedonians on this matter (2Cor 9:2), he evidently had some doubts about their follow through. So, he not only sent this letter, but also Titus and the “famous” brother to make sure all was ready. Paul did not want to be humiliated that his bragging on them was “empty” (2Cor 8:11, 8:6, 8:16-24, and 9:3-5). On the other hand, when the Macedonians (which included Philippi and Thessalonica), learned of this gift for the brethren in Judea, they begged “*with much entreaty for the favor of participation*” in this endeavor (2Cor 8:4). This was **an opportunity** - and wanted in! They gave “*beyond their ability*” (2Cor 8:3) and “*of their own accord*” (2Cor 8:3). They saw this as a chance to invest in true Kingdom work. We are now beginning to see the real deal concerning a Christian and his/her money. A Christian **invests** in actions that he/she discerns to be true Kingdom expanding work! (Whoops. I am getting ahead to my Conclusion.) It is in this context that Paul made this famous statement; “*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver*” (2Cor 9:7). **Giving is an opportunity. It is directed by the internal desires of each individual heart.** Giving is based upon personal judgement, personal evaluation, and personal volition. It sure would have been easier for one of our current pastors to have been there - and just called for the new “tithe.” To collect 10% from everybody for over a year would have made for a nice pile of cash - and saved Paul a lot of trouble. After all, Paul was stuck in the Law. He obviously saw the tithe as being for the Levites and could only be offered according to the Law. Maybe he needed enlightenment on this new Christian “tithe” system ... right?

Fourth, the main way I have heard this passage used, is as an apologetic for the birth of, and eternal perpetuation of, **the weekly offering plate**. It is in this plate that all “tithes” and offerings are to be placed. **What offering plate?** Read 1Corinthians 16:1-4 (above) again. There is no offering plate anywhere! It appears to me that each saint kept his/her gift in his/her own “piggy bank” at home, and brought it to Paul and company when they arrived on their way to Judea! Paul did not want any collections to be made when he showed up - they just brought in their piggy banks filled with what had been saved in them each week! What an atrocious use of this beautiful account in the early church. If you are going to create some “Biblical Principle” for the weekly offering plate, a passage ought to be found **that has one**. And an account should be found that does not have as its purpose - **a one time gift!** Of course, I realize there aren’t any passages that meet those needed requirements. A more honest use of this passage would be to use it as a blueprint for how to collect an offering for a one time project. “*And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful*” (Tit 3:14). These Gentiles saw a pressing need, and Paul helped them in practical terms. “*Set aside money weekly, save it, let each give as each has prospered and let each give as each has purposed in his/her own heart.*” Whether or not these “piggy banks” were retired after the gift was delivered to Paul and Barnabas will be interesting to find out when we reach the other side.

By the way, I am sure Paul did not take a penny from this gift for himself or those with him. He was very sensitive on the money issue with the Corinthians - more than with any other church. He did not want anyone to be able to accuse him of working with this carnal group for monetary gain. *"I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you"* (2Cor 11:8). To be fair to the Corinthians, Paul also wanted to make sure he was not lumped in with a bunch of *"false apostles, (and) deceitful workers"* who had been *"disguising themselves as apostles of Christ"* (2Cor 11:13). These frauds were fleecing the Corinthians, and Paul wanted to distance himself from these evil workers. One way, was to take no money from the Corinthians. Why don't any current day pulpiteers adopt this as a "Biblical Principle?" Oh, I guess we don't have any religious "leaders," or religious frauds, fleecing any Christian groups in Jesus' name.

But lastly, this gift was not to cause the Corinthian any financial difficulty. Paul made this remarkable assertion. *"For if the readiness is present (the desire to give), it is acceptable, according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have"* (2Cor 8:12). Wow!! This is a time when ***the thought does count!*** Boy, I would like to hear that from our churches today! But why would Paul make such a statement? This we must examine.

Denying the Faith ... and Worse

The Pastoral Epistles are not written to any particular church, but are letters to individuals that contained the broader church doctrines and practices. Many believe these pastoral letters should be looked to ***first*** for doctrine and practice. Examples include the letters to Timothy and Titus. When discussing the pressing matter of the care of widows, Paul asserted that the widow's extended family should be looked to ***first*** for the widow's provision, so the local church would not be burdened. In the midst of this discussion, Paul made a remarkable assertion that goes to the heart of the Christian's responsibility with his/her money. *"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever"* (1Tim 5:8). This is an incredible verse, and I can hardly believe the Holy Spirit authored it. The implications of a Christian failing in the task of family provision is nightmarish. It is terrifying. To fail in family provision is to ***deny the faith!*** Is that a ***curSED position*** or what? It is only ***upon our faith*** that we have any hope of acceptance with God. By our words, we may profess to know Him, but failure to provide for our own ***are deeds that deny Him!*** And this provision requirement extends even beyond our immediate family. But the warning does not end here - as if this isn't bad enough. The non-provider is ***worse than an unbeliever!*** What does God say about unbelievers? Well, here is their ultimate fate, and then you tell me. *"But the cowardly and unbelieving... their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"* (Rev 21:8). God says the non-provider is ***worse*** than that unbeliever! Quite honestly, I cannot think of a more severe warning levied anywhere in the Bible. It rivals even the passages on blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Paul understands that the Christian's ***first financial responsibility*** is toward his/her own home front. That is why a willingness to do more (like participation in the Corinthian Contribution), yet the incapacity to do so, is acceptable before God. That is what was behind Paul's statement in the case of the Corinthian Contribution. If you are worried about a curse that can come your way because of the way you handle your money, dear Christian, look no further than this passage. Paul had ample opportunity to say something about a tithe requirement in his letters. If it is essential for a healthy relationship with God, it surely would be in these Pastoral Epistles. Why? Well, Paul was sent ***to the Gentiles***. He was critical to the founding of non Jewish congregations, and if these heathen, who were ignorant of Jewish Law, would be under a curse for failing to tithe, ***Paul would have instructed them on such a critical matter***. How could he hope they would prosper if this essential was left out? He warned them about curses that come for *adultery, fornication, homosexuality, idolatry, thievery, drunkenness and swindling*. He expanded the list of curses to also include *effeminacy, coveting, reviling,*

sensuality, impurity, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, and factions. Anyone practicing any of these things “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” (Gal 5:19-21 and 1Cor 6:9,10). (John, the Apostle of love, added *cowards, unbelievers, vile people, murderers and all liars* to the list in Revelation 21:8.) So, where is the non-tithe in this list? Did Paul and John and all the New Testament writers make a terrible omission to all the Gentile converts? Well, if they did, not to worry mate! Because 1800 years later, American Theology came to the rescue with the “rediscovery” of the tithe! **More on That Later.** The truth is, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, the one who had been a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees, who had been climbing the ladder of Judaism, who was a Hebrew of Hebrews - **he knew the tithe died with the Levites - along with the whole Law system.** He knew the Gospel message ushered in the explosive Age of Grace that called Gentiles worldwide into the Kingdom of God. And this New Deal by God did not drag the failed Law system with it. This Law-steeped Jew, the Apostle Paul, knew this, proclaimed this, and suffered for this. “*If righteousness is by the Law, then Christ died needlessly*” (Gal 2:21). Paul paid dearly, at the hands of his countrymen, for “betraying” the Law. But this same Paul did not shrink back from declaring the whole counsel of God to the Gentiles. He warned where the curses of God resided. The tithe was not on the list. Who are you, O little pro-“tithe,” to include it? Be warned even right now, O great theologian. Are you **sure** you know what you are presenting to God’s beloved children in His Name? I’m telling you, O pro-“tithe” advocate, you better watch out. I will now tell you why.

The “E” Word

We are now getting to the heart of the matter. To **extort** is “*to get (money, etc.) by violence, threats, misuse of authority, etc.; to exact (from)....*” **Extortion** is “*the offense of an official who extorts.*” When one is calling for this new “tithe,” God is called upon as **the authority** behind this call. Would **He see it** as a “***misuse of authority***” to stand in an “***official***” capacity and call for money from His beloved children - **when that is not what He commands?** To compound the offense, what about “**threats**” (even subtly implied) of curses from God for failing to “tithe?” If you are doing any of these things, you are an extortioner.

As far as **how severe** the trouble is for all those teaching this new “tithe” invention - I can’t really say. This is a matter between the extortioner and God. All I know is that there is no tithe for the Christian. Also, to say, “*The tithe is not required, but it is still a ‘Biblical Principle’ to give 10% to the local church*” - **is a lie!** There was never a Bible example of 10% of anyone’s **money** given every week from anybody to anybody anywhere. How can you come up with a “Biblical Principle” with no Bible? You can’t even twist up the tithe of the Law and get to this “Principle.” Oh yes. There is one other point. If something is extorted from another, isn’t that stealing? If you are calling, in God’s Name and by His authority, 10% of your brothers and sisters income **and you financially benefit by this** - you are also a thief. What charges! Extortion and thievery! I think after you have repented, it may be proper for you to reimburse **your victims** - with interest. Let them determine what God would have them do with their money - as was their right and responsibility all along.

“But, how will the church budget be met without this “tithe” - or at least as much of it as we can - out of our parishioners?” Maybe the church budget won’t get met. Genuine church leadership is primarily concerned that the budgets God *does give commands about* are met - each Christian’s family budget! True church leadership does not declare that curses will come from God for failing to obey this new “tithe.” True shepherding warns that failure to provide **for one’s own** is the **real place** of peril - denying the faith and being worse than an unbeliever. I know individuals **who do not pay their bills** and yet “tithe” to their local church. We are to “*owe nothing to anyone*” (Ro 13:8), and we are not to “*be in any need*” (1Thes 4:12). We are to “*behave properly toward outsiders*” (1Thes 4:12), “*walk with wisdom toward*” those outside the faith (Col

4:5), and “*have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men*” (2Cor 8:21). **Christians are to pay their bills!** This is a witness God is extremely serious about. ***Deny the faith - worse than an unbeliever?*** This is big league stuff. Church leadership, shepherding according to God, works with each family unit to make sure they are paying all bills, owe no one (be debt free?!?!), and have health insurance - maybe even long term disability insurance, and adequate life insurance - at least on the primary bread winner. Then, after all these things are covered, true shepherds help the Christian look at his/her extended family for other responsibilities (opportunities) needing support. Widows are an obvious group, but maybe even “at risk” individuals should be looked at ... like nephews or nieces in divorce situations, etc. After this, ***then*** talk of giving outside these circles begins - things like the church budget.

“But it won’t hurt a Christian to give 10% to the church. You can’t out give God anyway! And giving to support the local church - God can’t get upset about that! Besides, it is good to get Christians in the habit of giving. That can’t be wrong!” Well, let me ask you this. What if a person gives ***everything*** they have to God? Could that person get in trouble with God? Jesus commended the widow and her mite ... right? Well, the Pharisees taught something interesting. They taught that the truly devoted would make everything Corban - that is, “*given to God.*” Jesus (as God, He was the recipient of this seemingly wonderful devotion) **rebuked** the Pharisees for this teaching. “*A man says to his father or mother, ‘Anything of mine that you might have been helped by is Corban’ (that is to say, ‘given to God’, or ‘a gift or offering to God’). So you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother - thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down*” (Mk 7:10-13). When a Christian meets all bills and all family responsibilities - **this is the giving God wants!** His Name - His reputation - is upheld in the world when His children owe no one and meet all their obligations! That is His money call - His command - not this extortionistic, twisting of scripture, “tithe” fabrication! And the real tithe isn’t even taught in this heresy!

The Double Impact of Sin

The **commission of sin** has a **double** impact. It innately carries two components in its destructiveness. We incur sin by wrong things we do, ***and we also incur sin by not doing things we should.*** Thus, the double impact. For example, consider Romans 1:21. “*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks: but they became futile in their speculations and their foolish hearts were darkened.*” They knew Him, yet failed to honor Him or give thanks to Him. These are sins ***of omission.*** It is obvious God expected them to honor and thank Him - and they did not do what they should have done! And what contributed to this failure? Their sins ***of commission*** led to their sins ***of omission!*** They were busy with “*futile speculations*” which led to the errant actions in the rest of Romans 1. Herein lies the double impact of sin! When we **commit sin**, we are, at the same time, **not doing things we should!** Think about this! When a man gets drunk, at that same time, **he should have been doing something else** - maybe applying himself to his job, helping his wife get the groceries in - or playing catch with his son. Instead of a person stealing from an employer, that same time **should have been used in doing something** to build that business up - maybe calling on a customer or running the vacuum. The double impact of sin is everywhere! **Time** spent on the **commission of sin** can never be regained. It is gone forever. And that lost time **should have been used for something productive.** I am going to have tremendous regrets when I stand before Jesus Christ! Only His blood can successfully bring me through that moment when my massive failings - in commission and omission - are exposed.

So, what does this double impact of sin have to do with the current “tithe” teaching? Well, if this “tithe” teaching is wrong (which it is), then it is false teaching. False teaching is an act of unrighteousness as it misrepresents God. The Bible says, “*all unrighteousness is sin*” (1Jn 5:17). The teaching of this “tithe” is **sin in commission.** So what then might be ***the omission sins?*** Let

me relate this story, and let's examine this.

I work with a woman who is part of a church that requires this new "tithe." She and her husband have been "faithful" to this for several years. Last month, she and her husband declared bankruptcy. That means over \$19,000 in goods and services will not be paid to creditors. The husband has quit going to church. Giving the "tithe" all this time did not work. She never got any big raises in these last years. He never did land *"the big job"* so as to have an increase to cover their modest lifestyle. The wife is recruiting prayer partners from her church family to pray for her faltering husband and is putting everything *"in God's hands."* They also have three children - and there is no telling how this is registering with them. She so much wants to believe that her pastor and denomination are correct on this "tithe" teaching that she *is afraid* to even examine the possibility she has been misled. By the way, why don't these pro-"tithe" churches bring **these** testimonies to the pulpit? Well, here are some of the reasons why. *"The 'tithe' did not work because these people probably aren't real Christians anyway. After all, the husband has quit going to the church. Or maybe they are harboring some secret sin - like Ananias and Sapphira (who lied to the church) - and have held back part of their 'tithe' for themselves!"* You see, a church that promotes this "tithe" teaching must find fault **with this couple!** Somehow, these Christians (if they are) have failed! After all, the "promises of God" for obedience to the "tithe" giver cannot fail - right? Now, let's look at my proposal on the double impact of sin.

This false teaching means the correct teaching **has been omitted.** Instead of the church extorting 10% of this couple's meager earnings every week, the church **should have** been working with them to pay their bills! This couple **should have** received financial counseling and help with budgets. Maybe someone in the church **should have** hired them for some extra jobs so as to earn more and pay off some bills. Even now, this family is without health insurance and has already begun the descent down as the husband has been referred *this last week* to a cardiologist for stress testing! Where will they be a month from now? They **should have** been worked with by their church leadership to get some kind of health coverage! Why do I say this? Because the Church **should know and teach** that failure to provide *for one's own* is to deny the faith and places one in a position of great jeopardy - being worse than an unbeliever! Do you see all the **"should haves"** in this paragraph? These are all **sins of omission** that flow from a **sin of commission** - this heretical "tithe" teaching. And I know I could add more "should haves" if I thought on this more. You see, if the 10% stayed with this couple over these last years, plus financial counseling, plus additional side jobs - **there would be no bankruptcy.** God's name and reputation have been defamed by professing Christians who have defaulted on goods and services they took. Boy, that's a great way to win people to the faith, isn't it? Only God knows, and only God can measure, the extent of the damage that has sprung from this one case - and this "tithe" teaching has been an accomplice to this train wreck I am witnessing. I may be witnessing a shipwreck (1Tim 1:19). And I believe this scene is being repeated **all over this country!** O pro-"tithe" advocate, in your own self interest, you need to examine what I have forwarded in this treatise very carefully. Your dealings are not going to be with me.

A Couple of Other Missed Opportunities

To quickly look at a couple of more missed opportunities, Peter said to Ananias, *"... after it was sold (your property) was it not under your control?"* (Ac 5:4). It appears to me that Peter realized that 100% of the money gained by Ananias' sale was his to do with as he pleased. No tithe mention here. Indeed, money problems among those believers in Acts, were addressed, and solved, by property proceeds being laid at the apostles' feet - 100% - which was then distributed according to need (Ac 4:32-37). Quite honestly, this does not appeal to me too much. I mean, **we are talking about houses and property!** This is the big ticket stuff. I would rather have 10% of my gross pay required weekly for life! But even in such a seemingly pro-tithe precedent setting

opportunity, the tithe does not get high enough to hit the radar screen. I do not think a tithe option ever came into Peter's mind. He knew the tithe was intended for a defunct Law system that supported a defunct Levitical priesthood.

Another missed opportunity occurred later when Paul wrote Timothy about many general church doctrines and practices. Concerning the rich, Paul said, "*Instruct those who are rich in this present world ... to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share ...*" (1Tim 6:17-18). Not so much as a hint of a tithe - even to the rich! And even the accused Law leaner James - not a tithe hint. And Peter, John, Jude ... dead silence.

Just out of curiosity, I wanted to see how many commands were in the small book of Philippians. **Twenty-five times** the imperative mood was used. While not all imperatives in the Greek should be viewed as commands, most are. And sometimes, even participle constructs are commands. The point? God had ample opportunity to have issued at least **one command** for tithe giving **somewhere** in the New Testament. He obviously is not averse to commanding what He wants done. Twenty-five various commands - just in the little book of Philippians? You will not find **one** Post-Law command to tithe. Did He forget?

"More on That Later" has arrived

I postponed discussion on The "Rediscovery" of the Tithe, The Clergy/Lay System, Parachurch Teaching, Secular Work, and Base Motives. To now address these topics should help answer some burning questions you may be asking, like; "*If this 'tithe' is so wrong, then why is it taught everywhere? How do all these preachers, teachers, denominations, and professors come up with it? Voices on the radio, T.V., and pulpits all call for it! Even all the Christian financial counselors call for it! And you are telling me they are all wrong? Who do you think you are? How can everybody be wrong - but you? This is taught everywhere!*" Well, it is taught everywhere. But, even if trillions of voices are in full agreement on any error, the error is still error. As far as who I think I am, well ... I am just a Bible student. Since becoming a Christian, that is all I have ever been - and that is all I will ever be. Actually, that is all I want to be (until my exit from this age). That is who I think I am. I am no more than that. But, I am no less either. If you want to straighten me out, well, here I am. Of course, I guess by now you have figured out it might be a good idea to use the Bible in your endeavor. Avail yourself of this Organic Document format.

So, let's examine how this "tithe" got here, why it is now with us, and what propels it. But, here is the simplest answer. When completely boiled down, it is really quite simple. In fact, I bet you have already figured it out! **Why teach this "tithe?"** Say it with me - "**It's all about the money!**" It's all about getting 10% of your gross income from now until the day you die! Let's add some details so you see the web that has been spun and how the unsuspecting have been caught. Let's go back to December 15, 1791. Something occurred that day that affected our first subject - The "Rediscovery" of the Tithe.

The "Rediscovery" of the Tithe

On that date in 1791, a little piece of paper was ratified by thirteen brand-new states in a place called the United States of America. It was called the Bill of Rights. That little piece of paper created a tremendous crisis for many churches in those states. Of these 10 Amendments to the Constitution, the first one is of interest to us here. "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion*" That meant governing authorities could not extract a single penny from any citizen for the support of any church! Put another way, the local church could no longer tax anyone. The money flow that had existed for centuries **was now cut off!** One little stroke of the pen - and all the churches in the Union were on their own for their income. They now had to look entirely to those in the congregation for their resources. Oh, what could be done about this?

Even before 1791, there had been some experimentation going on with some sort of "tithe"

extraction from parishioners, but it was largely rejected as there had been no tradition of it in preceding centuries. For example, the earliest Baptist confessions denounced this new “tithe” movement. But, the adoption of this First Amendment to the Constitution acted as a catalyst for change. For a while, things just stumbled along. But a discipline called Systematic Theology, was expanding in many church circles, especially in academic realms. This discipline takes a topic and then exhausts it from all angles of theological assumption, presumption and presupposition. In these academic, theological realms, American theologians have largely been “shut out” in moving many of the discussions forward. But there is one area where American theologians have been credited with a major contribution. You guessed it - *the “rediscovery” of the tithe!* In a new era with no automatic money, this 1800 year old *lost truth* was rediscovered! But this discovery did not occur until *after* the church was separated from the state treasuries. Doesn’t this strike you as a bit convenient? Doesn’t this raise at least one of your eyebrows? Anytime money is the focus of attention, funny things happen. And proponents for change in money matters are almost always *beneficiaries* of the proposed change. In fact, maybe always. But how could this new “tithe” be imposed on a group that is entirely composed of royal priests - the Church? We are now approaching bottom lines to our discussion on the tithe.

The Clergy/Lay System

Sadly, that is the answer. Fairly early in Church history, various hierarchical schemes began being imposed on God’s Royal Priesthood. One common denominator of the various hierarchical systems is the creation of two distinct groups. One group, the clergy, is composed of select individuals who are “*called into the ministry.*” The other group is then labeled “laymen.” This framework of clergy/lay is a mirroring of a “Levites/Eleven Tribes” pattern. Now the clergyites, like the Levites, are the ones handling all the holy duties. And the laymen, like the Eleven tribes, *materially serve* those who handle the holy duties! Yeah, that’s the ticket. This opens up all kinds of doors and opportunities. The various clergy systems of the various sects can now pick and choose what parts of the Levitical system are beneficial to their particular religion - and add them in! For example, how about *ordination* for the clergy? “*The Levitical priests were ordained - so how about our clergyites?*” With lots of pomp and circumstance, and all kinds of honors and accolades, this is quite useful in *formally* separating those who are “*called to the ministry*” from “*the people*” - the laity. (For a Biblically based Article on this, get my Article, “*An Exhaustive Research Article on What the Bible Teaches About the Ordaining of Christians to the Clergy, Complete with Footnotes.*” You will finish it in one sitting, and it, too, is free.) For many centuries, these various clergy systems did not need a tithe, as money was extracted from the general population in a number of ways. The church and state were wedded in Europe and in many of the Thirteen Colonies in America. But then ... December 15, 1791 - O fateful day! “*But, wait a minute! The Levites got 10% gross from the Eleven tribes! Hey, let’s take that part of the Levitical system and add it to our system! But let’s forget about the third and sixth year tithe, and definitely forget about each seventh year or the fiftieth year! And let’s also just make this new “tithe” money - and not mess with all the mint, dill and cummin, or, in America, tobacco or whatever else. And let’s tell our laymen this 10% gross must come into the local church as that is now the storehouse! After all ... it does take money to operate these churches.*” When you begin with a clergy/lay model that mirrors the Levite/Eleven Tribes system, it is easy to get to the imposition of this new “tithe.” It is quite logical, reasonable ... and predictable. But this model, and its “tithe,” are destined for fire.

The Levitical system was a “funneling” of duties and resources *into a few select hands*. The clergy/lay model does this as well. But the priesthood-of-all-believers system is one in which duties and resources get *spread out*. Each Christian serves God as a Royal Priest in many roles and in numerous ways throughout life. **This system puts *power in the hands of many* - not the few.**

In this way, Kingdom expansion is exponentially increased. I will promote this system as often as God grants me opportunity.

Some churches doctrinally profess a belief in the priesthood of each believer, yet have a rigid clergy/lay system in place. What is professed *as belief* is denied *in practice*. They caught a truth that fell from heaven, but then dropped it on the ground. This demonstrates the difference between “a belief” - **and a conviction**. Viewed another way, let’s visualize a Sunday morning gathering of five hundred Christians. Let’s say there is a staff of four - pastor, associate pastor, youth pastor and worship leader. There are **two competing visions** for what is before our eyes as we gaze upon this group. The Clergy/lay modelites see a bunch of laymen coming in from all their secular endeavors to then submit themselves to the only ones actually in the ministry. This vision sees four people “*in the ministry*” and four hundred and ninety-six who are not “*in the ministry*” (I realize the clergyites throw out a few bones so laymen can occasionally cross over into ministry by joining the choir, or going out on visitation, etc.). On the other hand, the Royal Priesthood model sees something quite different. In view are five hundred **full time** ministers! Four hundred and ninety six ministers are gathering at church so as to be equipped, encouraged, and sent back out into their varied ministries - by the four equipping ministers - pastor, associate, youth and worship leader! All five-hundred understand that everything they do is to be done in the Name of Jesus, to the glory of God. And each one will be rewarded, or suffer loss, for that service. And isn’t that what ministry is - service to God? That is the definition of ministry.

The difference between these two visions is night and day. It is obvious which is night. At least it is to me. Choose which model you think is right - and then let it run freely and consistently **throughout every activity and endeavor of your local church**. Which model do you think would have the greatest impact on the community? Which model do you think is the most vibrant? Which model do you think God has ordained? Incidentally, to be ordained simply means to be appointed. If you are a Christian, you have been **appointed as a royal priest in God’s holy nation!** That is the only ordination I want, and with His help I will learn to honorably function, moment by moment, in that blood-purchased role. How about you?

If individual Royal Priests want to band together and pool resources for a common cause, that’s great! We have good precedents in Acts 4 and 1 Corinthians 16. But each decision is left **fully** in the hands of each Royal Priest - exactly where it belongs.

The Parachurch Threat Arises

Discussion on another facet of this black diamond (this new clergy/lay/required “tithes” system) is needed - the parachurch issue. The clergy/lay systems, whether Catholic, Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, or whatever, have struggled in various degrees with “issue oriented” works that pop up *outside* their formal religious institutions. “*What should we do about these works that are outside the church’s jurisdiction - maybe under no church jurisdiction at all? ‘Issue oriented’ works like children’s homes, street gospel missions, campus outreaches, unwed mother’s homes, pregnancy support centers, all kinds of counseling services, prison ministries, radio and television programs, etc., etc., etc. - what should we do with these renegades? It is hard to discredit them all, because too many of them produce results that cannot be easily refuted. But they are a financial threat to ‘the storehouse’ as they siphon off our laymen’s money! What should we do to at least blunt this financial threat?*” Well, here’s the answer. “*Let’s take two Greek words, stick them together, throw the new word into our clergy system and see if it will solve the problem. If we take the preposition, **para**, and compound it with the noun, **ekklesia**, then we have a new word, **paraekklesia**, or parachurch. This preposition, **para**, is fantastic as it carries a couple of different meanings. It can carry a rather benign meaning of ‘beside’, but it can also carry a more negative connotation of ‘amiss from.’ So, if there is some issue oriented work that does not threaten us much, we can say it is simply ‘beside*

the church.’ But if it is a work we do not want sanctioned in any way, then the concept of ‘being amiss from the church’ can be invoked. It does not matter that **this word** does not appear in the New Testament. Come to think of it, this compounded word does not exist in the Greek language. And it also does not matter that **this concept** does not appear in the Bible either. But this is koine Greek, and laymen will never know the difference anyway. So let’s introduce this parachurch concept with the power of the original Greek behind it because it should have been somewhere in the New Testament anyway.” One of my seminary professors wrote this **para + ekklesia** thing up on the chalkboard in Greek as he was railing these “amiss from the church,” unsanctioned, lone ranger works. I listened for a while, and waited for the appropriate moment to say, “Dr. Fisher, I think it is only fair that you share with everybody this compound word does not appear in the New Testament.” To his credit, he did acknowledge this to the class. **It is a made-up word and an invented concept!** The Bible teaches that Christians **are** the Church. How can their work be “amiss from the church” **when they are the church** (Eph 5:23-32)? But, there is one word that does appear quite often in the New Testament. It is *metanoeo*. We translate it, “repent.” That is a Greek word the propagators of this parachurch heresy do need to study and apply - to themselves.

Secular Work

There is one other falsehood imposed upon the Royal Priests of God that must be refuted. The clergy/lay system teaches that laymen are engaged in **secular work**. Proponents of the heresy do not even attempt to cloak this in Greek, or anything else. Simple logic dictates clergyites are in the ministry and laymen are not. The dictionary defines secular as, “*not related to church or religion; not sacred or religious; temporal; worldly.*” To secularize something is, “*to deprive (it) of religious character, influence, etc.*” To me, this sounds like Theology has been invaded by Humanism - **Secular** Humanism. Clergyites teach that laymen are laboring in worldly, temporal, non-sacred work. Does God care about that type of work? As non-sacred, it isn’t ministry. Only things done in Christ, for the expansion of His Kingdom, will survive the fire of Judgement Day. As secular, this labor cannot be eligible for eternal rewards. It is destined for fire.

Fortunately, I have always, and absolutely, rejected this “secular work” thing. Even when I was under this teaching, I never fell prey to it. I “instinctively” knew I would account to God for everything - including my jobs. When working various sales or delivery jobs, I have known, “*This is my ministry. This is my assigned mission field.*” I prayed for those in it and, as God opened opportunity, I spoke to employers, fellow employees, and my customers about God - His will and ways. And I still do! It is important to do this wisely, because one is not being paid to evangelize. But at select times, I have even had my employers ask me why I have been diligent in my work, honest and aggressive at it, and I have told them that **I am really working for God**, and they, as my employer, are actually middlemen (but beneficiaries) of this higher motivation. You see, I know I will answer to Him on Judgement Day and will either be **rewarded or rebuked** on incident after incident in my work life. The moment I became a Christian, **secular work died for me**. I am now called to be salt and light in every job I engage in. I must operate in honesty and integrity and faithfulness to my assigned duties as I will answer to Him on all this. **It is all ministry**. What a difference this has made to Monday mornings! “*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus*” (Col 3:17).

A couple of times I did resign jobs, as duties were added that I could not do in the Name of Jesus to the glory of God. One restaurant supply company hired a salesman who began selling our products to strip clubs in South Florida. Could I deliver all this bar paraphernalia to them in the Name of Jesus? R.A.Torrey, a saint of yesteryear, wrote, “*If you cannot do it in the name of Jesus, get out of it directly.*” After giving notice, God greatly honored my decision to leave. “*Do not touch what is unclean*” (2Cor 6:17).

So, here is a summation. The gift of Royal Priest is bestowed upon each believer at the moment of new birth in Christ. Next, each Royal Priest ***has been gifted differently from other Royal Priests as the Holy Spirit has deemed fit*** (1Cor 12:11). Each one has different roles and responsibilities all through the sojourn here, yet never ceases being a Royal Priest anywhere along the way. ***So, forget any layman designation.*** Next, every Christian is in a continual state of ministry from the moment of new birth to the moment of departure from this life. Those ministries are dependent upon the gifts the saint has, the maturity level of that saint, and the timing of the calls that God the Father grants. ***So, forget the secular work degradation.*** And no activity any Christian undertakes is “beside” or “amiss from” the church. It is impossible for a Christian’s work to be “beside the church” when Christians are the Church! ***So forget the parachurch fabrication.*** And, while you’re at it, ***forget the new “tithing” invention.*** Priests do not tithe to fellow priests.

The assaults on a Christian’s priesthood are myriad! Our priesthood was purchased by the agonizing death of God on a Roman cross. I will not strip the brethren of this war gained position. I will not stand before the One who secured this for His brethren and attempt to explain why I supported a system that attacked it. Will you?

The Real Deal With the Christian and His or Her Money

To begin, each Christian has full control over all of it at all times. Peter stated that to the lying Ananias just before his demise (Ac 5:4). At the same time, we are to understand that all physical possessions actually belong to God - for two reasons. First, God owns everything just by simple creation rights. It does not matter if anyone believes this or not. Everyone will see Him exercise that right when He burns it all up and then creates the new heaven and earth. But here is a second point for the Christian. God has actually laid a ***second*** rightful claim to all our possessions. When we come to Him in Jesus Christ, He informs us we are no longer our own. He has bought us with a price (1Cor 6:19,20). We have been redeemed, or bought back, from the bulk of a wayward humanity by the blood of Christ. His ownership extends to all that is under our jurisdiction at the time of new birth, what we have presently, and everything we attain in the future. As a Royal Priest it is our duty and responsibility to discern, as we move through life, ***what He wants us to do with what is His!*** We are to work this out between our individual self and Him - knowing it is to Him, as Master, we account! If you determine that God is working through your local church, He may want you to invest 50%. Or if God is directing you to invest in a Children’s Home, or a Street Gospel Mission, or a Christian Drug Rehabilitation program, ***you decide*** before Him how much and how often. You, and you alone, decide how much to invest, where to invest, when to invest and if you continue to invest. You are the priest and you owe nothing to any fellow priest.

As you have probably noticed, I opted for the word, “invest,” over “giving.” To be sure, we are giving, but our giving to the discerned work of God is actually an investment that will yield its return on the Judgement of the Great Day. That is the maturity date.

“But, what about”

“What about those who testify that when they began to ‘tithing,’ God blessed them in unbelievable, and surprising ways?” Well, each person must decide what is authoritative in matters pertaining to God - ***someone’s alleged experience (anecdotal evidence), or the written Word of God.*** Recently, I was talking to one of my customers about this Ebook. It turns out he is an evangelist/pastor. He then began recounting to me all the blessings he has been receiving - financially and spiritually. He believes his faithful “tithing” has been a great factor. When he finished I said, *“I am glad God has done so many things for you, but everything you have just told me is anecdotal evidence. It is your story and experience. Is that superior to the written Words of God?”* I should have shut up and let him answer, but this was a rhetorical question. Then I asked,

“What about Christians who ‘tithe’ and then wind up declaring bankruptcy?” (My current workplace of six employees has two Christians who have done that in the last year. One of those, maybe both, have been faithful “tithers”). His response was immediate - with no sense of doubt. *“Poor stewardship.”* My friends, that answer makes no sense. The true Bible tithe makes it clear the tither would have ***an abundance***. He/she would not have to worry about every nickle and dime of the other 90%. That 90% would be swallowed up in the running over portions of God coming upon, and overtaking, the tither (Mal 3:10-12)!

It is interesting (depressing) **how unwilling** so many are to examine their beliefs. They get their beliefs and then get pious sounding answers to all potential objections. And when given the opportunity (or are challenged) to examine those beliefs ***up against God’s words***, they resist. ***It should be exactly the opposite.*** There should be no hesitation to reexamine any belief **when God’s words** are presented ***as the refuting factor.*** This man should have **asked me** for a copy of this Ebook. Anyone who wants to grow in truth, and proclaim the same, ***is not afraid of a Biblical challenge to their beliefs.*** ***That should be welcomed and aggressively sought out.***

Satan can stand in the pulpit and appear as an angel of light - and so can his servants. The wicked prosper around us all the time. If Satan can get God’s children off track and damage their witness, he will do it. **Satan does not want Christians to pay their bills or take care of their extended family members.** He knows this is a witness worth destroying. He wants Christians to make everything “Corban” - given to God - and then sin by failing to meet God’s actual commands (See Mk 7:5-13. Really do turn to this one, even right now).

So, here are the real principles for the Christian and his/her money.

First, the Christian must take care of all personal responsibilities. This cannot be overemphasized. Christians who live in affluent societies have a real challenge in being able to determine what constitutes ***need*** and what constitutes ***wants***. These lines become easily blurred.

Secondly, a major principle is that if we sow sparingly, we will also reap sparingly. And conversely, if we sow bountifully, we will also reap bountifully. But we are to do this as we have purposed in our own hearts, not grudgingly or under compulsion, but cheerfully (2Cor 9:6,7).

Third, we are to ***learn how*** to engage in good deeds to meet ***pressing*** needs (Tit 3:14). It is folly to give hard earned dollars to some church, or other “ministry,” unless we are confident God is truly expanding His Kingdom through that work. Personally, I am not at all sure that giving my money to become part of some pastor’s \$100,000 salary is meeting a ***pressing need***. And if Jesus was here today, would He, as ***Chief Shepherd***, be making ***more than these undershepherds?*** Would He be calling for a “tithe” from the gross earnings of His ***younger*** brothers and sisters who are struggling to make \$30,000 a year with a couple of kids at home, so He could make that 100K +? Hey, fellow pastors, it is now time to expose some base motives. “Laymen” need to know about this.

Base Motives

This can really be put into one word - career. Boy, that surprises you, doesn’t it? That even sounds rather benign. Well, if you have followed me this far, stay with me a bit longer. Do you, my reader, have any idea what is involved in securing a theological degree? Do you know what kind of time and money is required for one to gain the various appositions of Rev., Dr., PhD., etc.? Well, let’s review this for a moment.

The American culture places great emphasis on an adult’s work life - his/her career. This thinking is so ingrained, that common, habitual criminals are even labeled, “***career*** criminals.” Not much stock is placed on the proverbial jack-of-all-trades, who can do many things, but is master of none. From earliest times, children are asked, “*What do you want to be when you grow up?*” The most fortunate people in our society (at least financially) are those who know early in life what they

want to do as adults. They can plan for, and obtain, the proper credentials and enter that field early on. If they actually do enjoy that line of work ... what a great plus. And if it happens to be a field of substantial financial reward, well, a career does not get much better. And these individuals often make great contributions to society as they grow in expertise and experience. We do live in a complex society requiring specialization on many fronts.

But, there are some institutional problems with our society's *economic* format. While capitalism works well for the production and sale of many goods and services, there are some areas of exchange that are bad fits. For example, the medical profession, based upon a capitalistic model, does not work well for this society. The biggest reason is because the needed services are largely out of the realm of volition. If one needs a car, the consumer can choose to buy an old clunker - or a brand-new Corvette. When purchasing a home, all kinds of options are available, and the consumer can shop around, negotiate, postpone decisions, *or even reverse course by resale* if necessary. The consumer has great control over the transaction. But medical need is completely different. The consumer is in the hands of, and at the mercy of, the provider. The system in the United States has evolved to the point where the consumer - financially - never wins. The medical profession, and all the surrounding industries (including the liability insurers), have almost absolute power on pricing. When they find they are not doing well enough for the standard they have set for themselves, prices are simply raised. It is no accident that a large percentage of the richest people in every town in this country are associated in some way with the medical field. There are no price wars for office visit fees, lab tests, a hospital bed - or even a hospital bandage or aspirin. You see, this profession operates with *all of the benefits* of a capitalistic system, but it does not have *the constraints of competition and the free will of the consumer* to actually make it work for the general populace. Without question, the greatest financial threat to the average citizen in the United States is the medical profession. The key to financial survival is - do not get sick and do not get injured. Otherwise, work for a company that offers great medical insurance. Individual policies are rapidly getting out of reach for an average wage earner. Even the policies with high deductibles leave the average person with substantial financial exposure.

So, let's look at the religious field with an eye to the material just presented. Do the services rendered by these professionals fit with a capitalistic system?

First. In order to get the credentials to operate in the clergy field, one normally passes through *a capitalist-based system* of schools and universities. These are *fee-based* institutions. Since there **is competition** between schools for a finite number of potential customers (students), they are somewhat constrained in what they can charge. But, unfortunately, credit is extended to potential buyers (students) with great ease (loans) - thus taking hold of future earnings. Many consumers of this product (school) leave with a piece of paper in one hand, and a very large certificate of debt in the other. So, the theological graduate often enters the pulpit with - big debt.

Second. Many successful professionals in other fields have much less education than one who is theologically educated. At our local State University, a Master in Business is 30 semester hours and even Health Administration programs are in the 45 to 60 semester hour range. My Master of Divinity degree was 90 semester hours. I had two full years of New Testament Greek (twelve semester hours) and 1 year of Hebrew (eight semester hours). This is *two* foreign language studies. Additionally, a Master's thesis was required. This small book was written for **no credit** with its contents defended before a panel of professors before being accepted. Here is the point. Those with earned theological degrees are among the highest educated people in the country. When you add a Doctorate, or whatever else, there may be no field with more rigorous degree securement requirements than the institutionalized, academic, theological realm.

Third. Now, when the degreed (and in debt) graduate walks into the local church as a pastor, or other staff person ... Ah, now the rub! The financial base of the church is *donation-based ... not fee-based!* Wow! This spells t-r-o-u-b-l-e ... unless something is done. The

“something” is spelled, t-i-t-h-e. While few of these degreed individuals have the courage to tell those in the pew how those *in the academic circles* view this dilemma, rest assured ... there is discussion about the problem. Here is the basic thrust.

As white collar professionals, they look around at other white collar professionals and reason, “*Shouldn’t we be financially compensated on parity with other educated professionals? Our earned degrees rival any lawyer’s, and even most medical professionals. We, too, have sacrificed our early income gathering years, and have often incurred great debt to now be able to serve our constituents. And we certainly have much more invested in our education than any accountant or businessman or architect!*” The new “tithe” solves the problem.

One of the greatest services Bible Colleges and Seminaries can do for their graduates is to declare that God requires 10% of the pew-sitter’s gross income to go to that local church every single week, for life - in cash! If a week is missed due to sickness, emergency, or vacation, this 10% requirement is still due. God’s commands accept no excuses.

If a church calls for this new “tithe,” but does not take this hard line, then you know it is not **really believed** as **God’s** command. If He **curse**s His children for stealing from Him, how can church leaders **let any** of their beloved flock step outside this command - **even for a moment**? They will **demand the whole tithe** be brought into the storehouse every single week - without excuse, without reprieves, with no exceptions. “*We love you too much to let you be attacked by God with whatever curses He sends from heaven - as He declares you a thief! And we know ‘thieves ... will not inherit the Kingdom of God’ ”* (1Cor 6:10).

This new “tithe” teaching is filled with the basest of motives. It is a criminal enterprise illegally hoisted upon the Royal Priesthood of God. It will be torn down. It is destined for fire. I am not sure what fate the perpetrators of this false command are heading into, but I do know this for certain - I want no part of that lot. It is extortion **in God’s Name**. I will distance myself from this teaching, and all its corollaries, as far as I can possibly get.

Those who **sheepishly** call for 10% of all your money in God’s Name, yet back off from warning you of God’s curses ... these are more vulgar than the errant pulpit pounders warning of coming curses. God either commands this new “tithe” - or He does not. Attendant curses will fall for disobedience to this new “tithe” - or they will not. **Declare** the whole counsel of God, or go back home to mommy. These sheepish new “tithe” callers remind me of the schizophrenia one witnesses in some of the groups who believe water baptism by full immersion **is essential** for salvation. One seminary I attended embraced this full immersion teaching. After listening carefully to their reasoning, I began to discover **exceptions** they made to this requirement. For example, if a person on a deathbed makes a profession of faith, they do not drag that individual to a baptistry, or local river, to baptize them. They do not even drag the new believer into the bathtub and dunk them. I suspect fear of lawsuits (and/or jail) may have something to do with this exception. If they **really did believe** immersion was **essential** for sins to be washed away - so what if one drowned in the tub? That person was on a deathbed anyway! Those who **really believe** total immersion is **essential** for salvation would not care about angry family members, lawsuits, or jail time by a pagan State - or even execution by the same. The salvation of that eternal soul would trump the gravest of consequences this age could possibly meet out!

So, let’s return to our graduate. When deciding to serve a congregation as pastor, etc., that servant is submitting himself to that group’s ability to compensate. And how is that ability to be determined? As we have seen, the first financial responsibility of those in the pew is to meet all financial obligations for their immediate, and extended, family (1Tim 5:8). It cannot be risked that even one attendee stand before God “*denying the faith*” for failing in family financial responsibilities, or be declared “*worse than an unbeliever*” for the same. Health insurance should be in place - and possibly some other family-friendly protective measures. Also, these attendees should be debt free - or, in rare cases, have liquid assets in excess of any debt. After crossing these

thresholds, the next step to be discerned is this; *“If I receive money from this group, will this jeopardize my labors - like Paul with the Corinthians?”* Hey! Maybe this should be the “Biblical Principle” taken into a new congregation instead of the new “tithe!” Maybe the new pastor should serve for **no pay** until **convinced** that the receipt of money will not hinder the effectiveness of the work! Tent making time! And it might take a while to determine this. But wouldn’t it be better to forego pay for a season, and see if the congregation is mature enough **spiritually** to handle remuneration, rather than starting out on the dole only to find they should have been labored with like the Corinthians? And this determination can only be ascertained by the new pastor **within his own self** and God (like Paul did) - and not by the church’s board or committee. If the Corinthians had a church board, or mission committee, they probably would **have voted to pay Paul**. They had some well-to-do members. And, as Paul’s financial supporters, surely they would **not** think they could control and direct Paul’s message and methods would they? **Surely not!** But Paul, being a spiritual man, decided not to take a penny from them. He determined this **without their input**. You see, this is how one can draw fair Biblical Principles consistent with honest exposition of genuinely relevant texts. What do you say, pastors - new graduates and old pastors alike? How about following Paul’s example?

Oh, Yeah ... One More Crime

There is one other criminal thing in this extortion. Many times **unbelievers** come to church! Do you want their money? John apparently didn’t (3Jn 7). Do you want them to see the church as another weekly bill? I wonder how many people **stay out** of the church because they feel they just cannot afford it? There are many unbelievers who do not want to receive services without paying for them - and they will not let the offering plate go by without feeling they must contribute. So, they can come and hear about God - **for a price!** Doesn’t this cause you pause, O man of God? Salvation is free, eternal life is free, immortal bodies are free, God’s wisdom and knowledge is free - but coming to church is not! *“But they can let the offering plate go by (in front of their kid’s eyes). Besides, everybody knows it costs money to run a church! So everybody expects to pitch in so the services we offer are available!”* Well, why not give unbelievers what they **don’t expect**? Isn’t that what **God** does? Who would ever guess that all the things we really need are available to us from God - **for free?** Every religion in the world is somehow work related - except ours! Christianity is the only one where the God of that belief system **gives**. Indeed, we **cannot** work for any of those things I rattled off a minute ago. And that list is not even **the tip** of that iceberg of freely bestowed treasures! *“What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered ... ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent’”(Jn 6:28,29).* Let the unbelievers come! Lay off the money calls. If your work wins the hearts of your listeners, billfolds will open. Money will be laid at your feet. And if it isn’t? So what! You will have represented God freely! You will be **a giver** - just like Him! And isn’t that the goal - to be like Him? If God wants you preaching full time, don’t worry. He will bring saints around who **will want** to invest in you. The same goes for me. Not to worry, mate!

My Expectations

Concerning this new “tithe” teaching, I do not expect to make huge headway with the present generation of religious “leaders.” It is important to understand why many Christian “leaders” cannot abandon this new “tithe” teaching.

First, many are *“on record”* calling for this new “tithe.” They cannot, and will not, even entertain the possibility they are teaching error. To publically recant would hurt their projected image. This is really too much to ask, and too much to expect. Money is too important a subject to err on. And to admit error on such a fundamental topic would create doubt about the accuracy of other areas of their proclamation in the minds of their listeners. This is too big a risk to take.

Secondly, many “leaders” cannot, and will not, back down from this new “tithe” teaching because if it is acknowledged that “laymen” are not commanded to “tithe,” ***then their livelihood is in imminent and immediate danger!*** Do not lightly dismiss this. Any threat to one’s wages is a powerful motivating force that *most will fight against*. We all need money. Something that threatens our ability to make the money we want, or need, is a threat!

Third, (somewhat related to the previous reason) if a person renounces this new “tithe,” big trouble can come from others in that particular sect - especially higher ups. This could prove to be a bad career move - a real bad move.

“But, there are many ‘laymen’ who believe in the ‘tithe!’”

Yes, there are. They also believe they are laymen. So, their track record for being a fount for truth ... well, you figure that one out. But, be that as it may, what should we think about this? For these saints, this question of giving 10% of one’s gross income each week to the local church for the rest of one’s life is a settled issue. *“The pastor says it, I believe it, and that settles it!”* Or, *“My denomination says it, I believe it, and that settles it!”* Or, *“All kinds of Christian leaders from all kinds of works and denominations say it, I believe it, and that settles it!”* But, what is authoritative - the voices of man or the word of God? I desire that all my brothers and sisters imitate our Berean brethren (Acts 17:10).

Quite honestly, the giving of a tithe, whether the real one or this new thing, does have an appeal to the religious. The Pharisees were quite pleased with themselves and their meticulous tithing. If Jesus was in one of our pulpits today, I would not be surprised to hear this declaration; *“You have heard it said, ‘Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that is the local church, that there might be food in My house,’ but I say unto you, ‘if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever’”* (Mal 3:10, + man, against 1Tim 5:8). For one to be a “tither” in this new system, especially in this age where giving is not in secret because of tax credit laws, that person is “in.” These “tithers” become the select of the congregation. They are *“the faithful,” “the committed,” “the obedient.”* And when this “tither” has a need or request, ***it is attended to!*** If the “tither” has an opinion on the direction of the church, that opinion ***is heard*** by leadership loud and clear. And when the pulpit declares that 80% of church monies come from 20% of the pew sitters, that “tithing layman” can beam with pride and look around knowing he/she is part of that blessed-from-the-pulpit 20%. For one who believes himself to be a layman in secular work, this kind of spiritual accolade can be highly coveted. It is something the layman can present before God ... much like the Pharisee who prayed, *“I pay tithes of all that I get”* (Lk 18:9-14). You know, maybe there is a reason Jesus wanted giving to be done in secret (Mt 6:2-4). Also, as a pastor, I have seen the stranglehold “tithers” can exert on the direction of a local church.

“But, what about the sincere ‘tither?’”

I do realize there are some “tithers” who are very sincere in their “tithing.” Some even “tithe” in cash in secret. This is an obedient act of faith between the individual and God. The reason I know there are some of these “tithers” is because ... I was one of them. I believed what I was being taught at the time, and I obeyed what I ***sincerely*** believed to be God’s command for me. I guess you have probably figured out - something changed. It’s called, “Bible knowledge.” But, how should this era of my Christian giving be viewed? I was very sincere, my giving was in secret, and it was done in faith. Well, let me ask some questions.

1. *“Does my sincerity obligate God to anything?”* You already know the answer to that. *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”* (Pr 16:25). If something “seems right” to a man, that man ***sincerely*** holds that belief. We are surrounded with sincere

people. Many unbelievers *sincerely* believe in evolution. Many of them *sincerely* believe in the right of abortion. And many of them *sincerely* believe homosexuals should not only be given civil rights protections for behavior, but also the “right” to marry. These are all sincerely held beliefs. While it is clear God is not obligated to uphold *these* very sincere beliefs, surely He is obligated to uphold mine, right? After all, I am His child **acting in faith!** Well, I hate to break this to me, but somebody has to. “Robin, God is not obligated to honor any errant belief you have. It does not matter if you were duped by false teaching, or simply misunderstood truth. Your sincerity does not make error correct. God does not live in, or function in, **error**. He is ‘the God of truth’” (Ps 31:5). The most the “sincerely wrong” can hope, is that God may be moved by compassion and lead the errant one into the truth. He alone opens the mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45). Sincere darkness is still darkness. Many guides that are blind are sincere guides. They do not even know they are blind (Jn 9:35-41).

2. As a new “tither,” and as a “non-tither,” God has always faithfully met my needs. He has never dropped curses from heaven, intended for Jews under Law, upon my head. The only time I was really in some jeopardy was in that era of “tithe-giving,” as I was putting myself under that Law! “For as many as are of the works of the Law (i.e., true tithing) are **under a curse**; for it is written, ‘**Cursed is everyone** who does not abide by **all things** written in the Book of the Law, to perform them” (Gal 3:10). But maybe what saved me was that this new “tithe” was so far removed from the actual tithe of the Law, that He did not even recognize any of my acts as a tithe anyway. I was just a dupe in the pews. “Cash, to the local church, every week for life - and you call that a “tithe”? Don’t worry, that is not the tithe anyway!” That is what probably did save me from real curses from God. This new teaching ... “the tithe?” What a joke. Go back and reexamine the actual Bible tithe. If you haven’t figured this out by now, hopefully you soon will. You see, **nobody tithes!**

Conclusion

If you have read this material, you now have some decisions to make. I know I have made you **think**. All of us are to be renewed **in our thinking** (Ro 12:2). It is now your duty, as a Royal Priest, to “*examine everything carefully and hold fast to that which is good*” (1Th 5:21). If your thinking is right, your actions will also be right. I want you to thoroughly examine my declarations. Also, if you submit this treatise to your church leaders, do not allow them to simply dismiss this material with statements like, “The ‘tithe’ is our denominational position” or, “Sometimes a few lonely voices out there raise objections to the ‘tithe,’ but it is taught in our seminaries by our most learned professors, so don’t worry about this outsider.” If they are declaring, by God’s authority, that 10% of your gross income for life is required to go to the local church, **they should welcome your questions**. On the other hand, if they *refuse* to honestly deal with your questions (especially in light of the material I have brought forward), **should you trust them with accuracy in other spiritual matters?** There is an interesting account in Acts when the Bereans encountered a learned “professor” named Paul. This Paul had some rather weighty credentials. He was recognized by his sending church as an Apostle to the Gentiles (Ro 11:13 and Ac 13:2,3). Concerning experience, he had talked to God, and God talked back (Ac 9:4-6)! He had even been healed of blindness (Ac 9:17,18)! And he also had been into the third heaven (2Cor 12:1-4)! Before any of this, he had been a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees, and was greatly active - and advancing - in Judaism (Ac 23:6 and Gal 1:14). While this was not the message he carried as a Christian, his knowledge of Judaism formed a great base for understanding Christianity. Well, this Paul showed up at Berea with his message. We are told the Bereans were **more noble minded** than those of Thessalonica, because **they searched the Scriptures daily** to see if Paul’s teaching was right (Ac 17:10-12)! You see, they understood that what makes a position authoritative is **the quality of the actual Bible**

material behind the assertion - not the credentials of the man. The man is only **a messenger**. **The message** is the important thing. If Paul's message did not stand up to the light of Scripture, the noble-minded Bereans would have rejected it - and Paul. We can do no less. If you are going to share this Ebook with friends, pastors, seminary instructors, etc., do not allow them to object with broad generalities. Rather, point them to specific parts of this Ebook and ask them to **deal with the material - not me ... or you!** Their titles, position, experiences, credentials - all of that means nothing. The Word of God, and accurate handling of the same, constitutes the only authority. I can assure you, there is no one around today who could match the Apostle Paul in knowledge, experience, commitment - or credentials. Yet, the Holy Spirit **commended** the Bereans for their examination of Paul's assertions! The Thessalonians who accepted Paul's message, without the scrutiny evidenced by the Bereans, lucked out. Paul happened to be carrying a correct message. But the Galatians were not so lucky. They were barraged with false teachers - and they received that message as truth. And what were those false teachers calling the Galatians to? **A perverted Law message!** Sound familiar?

I am sure that 99.9% of all false teachers and prophets believe they are godly teachers and prophets. They *sincerely* believe they are accurately representing God. *"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* (Mt 7:21-23). They had religiously operated in **The Name of Jesus!** The greatest lawlessness one can commit is to use, or proclaim, God's words **errantly**. He has exalted His word as high as His own Name (Ps 138:2). Jesus is even called *"the Word,"* and *"The Word of God"* (Jn 1:14 and Rev 19:13). It is easier for the heavens and earth to disappear than *"for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail"* - or any of His word to be error (Lk 16:17). To twist His word, whether in "innocence" or by design, is a terrifying place in which to stand. Beware, fellow lowly creatures. The Creator is extremely serious about His name and reputation. I always cringe when I hear patronizing politicians use the word of God in their speeches. They have no idea what is awaiting them - nor do base preachers. One time, a cult member said to me, *"Well, we are both really pointing people in the same direction."* I replied, *"You would be better off to die in the gutter as a drunkard having never said anything about God, than to stand before Him having misrepresented Him to the people of this age."* That was an act of love on my part.

One reason I have decided to write this Ebook has to do with a basic assumption I hold. I am convinced that **all** spiritual error, whether innocent or malicious, **does not move the agenda of God forward**. Error is incapable of moving that agenda forward, and **institutionalized error** compounds the paralysis. God does not live in, or honor, error. It will be obliterated now, or at the Judgement. The motives behind error are irrelevant except for the degree of culpability that God Himself will determine is appropriate for the perpetrators.

For those of you who object to my "challenges"(mocking?) of pro-"tithers" throughout this paper - well, this has been by design. Being "nice" to those entrenched in the propagation of this false teaching does not usually produce repentance. When Jesus verbally attacked the false teachers of His day, His motivation was not to damn, but to break through - to shatter - their error (Jn 10:37-38 was spoken after heated contentions. They wanted to kill Him right then!). Those who were the target of His attacks were not prohibited from response, **but the response had to be content oriented**. He required that. God challenges us to bring our arguments forward and to present our case to Him and state our cause and see if we are proved right (Isa 41:21 and Isa 43:26). With my Ebooks and Articles, I take the same approach (Go to "The Organic Document" at the end of this "Conclusion.>"). Actually, through several self edits, I have toned down my "attacks" in several places. It is true that soft words can break bones (Pr 25:15), but so can hammers (Jer 23:29). You see, I do not believe my attacks will run off anyone who is truly

interested in growing in the truth. As case in point ... you are still reading this aren't you? Why didn't you get offended and run away?

I have wanted to write this Ebook for twenty years. I have a folder with outlines and all kinds of rough drafts, but I knew I would have to put in a concentrated effort to get it to flow and be coherent. I do hope these goals have been achieved. I have read books from the pro-"tithe" perspective and have also listened to many sermons from pro-"tithers." While I did not footnote their points, many of them are embedded throughout this work - especially some of the most common assertions. But if you have some other points, submit them!

As part of my life's work and testimony, I always had this nagging question: *"What can I do with this once it is complete? Publishers are looking for specific types of works - and authors - and I have never fit anyone's mold - so, why would I now?"* But then ... along came the Internet! Distribution is no longer an obstacle! And I can offer my work **for free!** This is tremendous! One of the treasures of my Christian faith is that **it is**, in its most important facets, **above money**. God **freely** gives us all the truth and wisdom and understanding that we care to seek Him on. Pardon is **free** and He **charges nothing** for eternal life. And the coming New Heavens and New Earth - is **free** to His children as well. And He has also **freely** thrown in an immortal body for all His children there. Money is out of the picture on these great issues. Currently, I deal with money (just like you) all the time. Good grief, I am presently a salesman! But, I will be glad when the New Age comes. If money does exist there, it will have no problems associated with it. But while here, I have always wanted my Christian transactions free of the green stuff.

My wife voiced a concern about my authoring of this Ebook. *"Surely other serious Bible people have come to the same conclusions on this 'tithe.' Why aren't they being heard? Maybe they have muzzled themselves so as to not cause strife among the brethren - you know, not wanting to be divisive. After all, 'there are six things which the Lord hates, yes seven which are an abomination to Him', the seventh being, 'the one who spreads strife among brothers'"* (Pr 6:16,19). I have another good friend who cautioned, *"You are going against the grain. You are going to be a lonely voice out there."* Well, concerning strife and division, is it God's will that the brethren be unified around error? Is that the place of liberty, growth, and productivity? So, for the sake of harmony and unity, let's embrace and promote error - or at least shut up ... right? And as far as being a lonely voice ... well, I would rather be a lonely voice **here** and stand in victory **there**. I would rather forego pats on the back **here** so as not to be rebuked by Jesus **there**. Besides, a lonely voice **here**, with the company of the living God, does not translate into a lonely person. God's company makes for a pretty full house.

Well, after reading this Ebook, if you want to continue to teach this new "tithe" for the Christian - go ahead. I have given you my best shot. And if you want to continue to give this new "tithe" to the local church - go ahead. The brethren will not stand before me. But, if this material has been an accurate handling of the Word of God, you will find that **I** am not your opponent. *"There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the Lord"* (Pr 21:30). All error is destined to be crushed. He wins every time on every subject. That's just the way it is. Concerning the tithe (no quotes), there is *"No Tithe for the Christian."*

Lord bless you.

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“Why Do You Give All Your Work Away?”

Robin Calamaio 2005

This is a good question. There are several reasons. But before stating them, **know** that I do believe my Ebooks and Articles have value - and they did require a lot of work. Also, I have invested a lot of time, and money, in procuring a **Bachelor of Arts** (Major: Business Administration, Minor: Bible, Milligan College, Milligan, TN), an **Associate of Divinity** (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX), and a **Master of Divinity** (Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, TN). The Master was a 90 semester-hour program with two years of New Testament Greek, one year of Hebrew and a Master Thesis (“*Matthew 18:15-17 as a Procedure for Addressing Offenses Between Christians*”). I was also elected to the **International Society of Theta Phi**, “*An honor society for theological students, scholars in the field of religion, and outstanding religious leaders.*” This society selects members and cannot be applied, or lobbied, for. So, why do I give my work away?

1. The chance of securing a book deal is probably about zero. Publishers are primarily looking for celebrities, or previously established writers, before investing in an author, so I haven’t wasted my time. Besides that ...
2. Anything of value in my writings has come to me **free of charge**. **God** has charged me **nothing** for His knowledge, understanding or wisdom. Therefore, it seems a bit strange for me to place a money barrier **in front of** any insight He may have imparted to me.
3. The Internet, and the ability to have my work electronically downloaded to your personal computer, is a truly incredible thing. It gives me the opportunity to bring my work freely to you. The possibility of influencing your thinking and values is more valuable to me than anything else.
4. My readers fall into *one* of *three* groups. They are **current** eternal brothers or sisters, **to-be** eternal brothers or sisters, or the unfortunate **never-to-be-redeemed** individuals (which I hope numbers zero after exposure to my work). Why would I want **the money** of any of these groups?

Having stated the above in what I hope is a genuine honesty, some readers may see this work as an investment opportunity. So, I have set up a **back end** money situation.

1. God is opposite of the world. I want you to fully vet the materials here **first**, and *if* you financially qualify, you can respond. See the page “Invest” on my website to see if you qualify!
2. Money is not evil. It is a tool. Use **your** money to **your** best benefit.
3. Any money given here is **an investment**. If God uses these materials to strengthen or otherwise expand His Kingdom, you will be recompensed - eternally.

So, the bottom line is that I leave this whole matter with you. That is just the way I have wanted to do this. It’s my material, and I can do what I want with it. I want you to have it.

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The Tithe Test Answers
Robin Calamaio Copyright 2005

*“The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of fools feeds on folly” (Pr 15:14).*

Each correct answer is worth 5% (20 questions). Multiply the number of correct answers by 5 to get the percentage score.

1. One.
2. Moses. In Malachi, God was speaking and simply reiterated the commands in the Law.
3. It was kept in the local town. It was for the local Levite, alien, orphan, and widow.
4. Year one, two, four and five were taken to the designated place (eventually Jerusalem). Year three and six - see question 3 answer. Year seven - see below.
5. There wasn't one. There was not one on year fifty (Year of Jubilee) either.
6. He gave him 10% of the choicest spoils of a bunch of stuff he had no intention of keeping anyway. He gave **nothing** of his own possessions.
7. Yes. Those Levites not of Aaron's family gave a tithe of the tithe they received. They gave it to the priests of Aaron's family.
8. None. The tithe was **never money**.
9. The tithe of year one, two, four and five was **shared by the tither** with the Levite in a celebratory meal when the tithe was given. What was **left over** stayed with the Levite. In year three and six, it appears the tither deposited the whole amount in the local town without partaking of any of it.
10. There was no "group" to give it to of which we know. If the testee simply says, "God," go ahead and give him/her credit. The testee is still going to flunk.
11. God had to be with him, keep him on his journey, give him food to eat, give him garments to wear, and return him safely to his father's house. **At that point**, God would be his God. The tenth came (we assume) twenty years later. It was a vow fulfillment.
12. After the Bill of Rights was adopted in the United States.
13. American Theologians in the Higher Criticism of Systematic Theology.
14. The loss of the church's ability to tax citizens (The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights) caused a financial crisis in the church. That led to this "rediscovery."
15. No. Family obligations are number one. There is no tithe for Christians anyway.
16. There aren't any. Christians are not Jews under Law.
17. He didn't, because there isn't one.
18. They didn't, because there isn't one.
19. It was saved - probably at home by each contributor.
20. There is no such thing as a parachurch ministry, and there is no tithe for the Christian either. All the assumptions in this question are nonsense.

If 50% are answered correctly, I will be amazed. But, even with that high a score, any school I've ever attended - 50% was deep "F." ***And you are expected to give 10% of your gross income each week - for life - to such a one?*** Go ahead if you want.

These answers are correct. Now you will need to read the Article, "*No Tithe for the Christian*," in order to understand the accuracy of each answer to each question. That is your assignment. You can challenge any answers via "*The Organic Document*."

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The Tithe Test Response Sheet

Testee's Position _____ (parishioner, pastor, elder, etc.)

Correct (X)	Incorrect (X)	Notable answer/Comment
1. _____	_____	
2. _____	_____	
3. _____	_____	
4. _____	_____	
5. _____	_____	
6. _____	_____	
7. _____	_____	
8. _____	_____	
9. _____	_____	
10. _____	_____	
11. _____	_____	
12. _____	_____	
13. _____	_____	
14. _____	_____	
15. _____	_____	
16. _____	_____	
17. _____	_____	
18. _____	_____	
19. _____	_____	
20. _____	_____	
_____	_____	Number Correct _____ x 5 = _____ % Score
Total Correct	Total Incorrect	