

Is Tithing For Today?

Tithing is the giving of one tenth of gross income to the LORD. Many feel that it was a part of the Law that God gave the Hebrews through Moses, that was done away with when Christ died on the Cross. But does the New Testament endorse the principle of tithing? Much confusion has been caused by misunderstanding tithing in the New Testament. Our Testament certainly does support tithing, but its no longer the rigid 10%.

1. How much did the first Christians give to the support of the LORD's work in Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37?

This is the New Testament minimum. We recognise that *all* we have and earn belongs to God. Some people work out to the last cent how much their tithe to the LORD should be and give appropriately. This giving under legalism and as such is condemned in the New and Old Testament. The beauty of the New Testament over the Old is that it is written on our hearts, not on a legal contract made of stone! (Jer. 31:31-34) This implies that we *want to* serve the LORD not *have to!* Is our money more important to us than God Himself? New Testament tithing is our chance to prove to God that His law is not in Library, but in our hearts.

2. What was the Psalmist's attitude toward God's Law? (Ps. 119:16, 174; 1:2)

3. Read Genesis 14:18-20; 15:1.

- a) Who told Abraham to give a tithe?

- b) Who did Melchizadek represent? (vs 18)

- c) Although Abraham offered a tithe to Melchizadek, and he was told to take all the possessions, how much did he offer to Melchizadek of the spoils? (vs 23)

- d) Was this event before or after God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and what does this tell us about tithing and its relationship to the Mosaic Law?

4. What does the word *sacrifice* mean and is there any need for it today financially?
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Sacrifices represented something that cost the sacrificer something. The amount of that cost determined the level and value of the sacrifice. The greatest sacrifice ever made was when God sent forth His Son to die on the Cross. God gave His all to us. This was ultimate generosity! The Bible's first record of sacrificing was when Cain and Abel offered up their sacrifices. There is obviously a point to be made about the issue of blood atonement of animal sacrifices in this story, but there is also another issue often overlooked.

5. What part of the flock did Abel offer up to the LORD? Is Cain's offering described in any way like Abel's? (Gen. 4:3-5)
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6. Years later, the Bible still endorses this as the way to show love and honor for the LORD. What way is that according to Proverbs 3:9?
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After God broke off His covenant with His people and sent them into exile into Babylon, He had the Babylonians eventually destroy every trace of the covenant that He had previously had with Israel. The temple was destroyed, the Ark of the Covenant was banished and lost forever which contained the two tablets of stone on which the Law was written, and the veil separating God's presence was removed. Only a remnant remained despite the Covenant being broken and expired. Into this setting God decides to restore the remnant back to their homeland because of promises He had previously made to David about the Messiah. To finish off this addendum, He sends Malachi the prophet to inform the people that the Messiah would be the next event in God's calendar (Mal. 4:2, 5). Remember, the Law of Moses that formed the covenant was now over.

7. What accusation does Malachi bring from the LORD against Israel? (Mal. 3:8)
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8. What did the LORD want them to do?
(i) *Bring all the _____ into the storehouse* (vs. 10)
(ii) *_____ Me now in this* (vs. 10)

9. What two things had they robbed God of? (vs. 9)
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Is tithing in the New Testament? Perhaps the question should be put- *Does tithing belong only to the Law of Moses?* The answer to this question is certainly not. Abraham tithed well before the Law was ever given. Malachi provided the key the

LORD's financial blessing upon a remnant of people who were living between the testaments. The early church practised tithing by giving everything in some instances, and regularly supporting both ministry of God's Word and the welfare program of the Church. We are obliged to give at *least* 10% to the LORD besides our offering!

10. What is the promised blessing? (Proverbs 3:10; Malachi 3:10)

Amen.

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