

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*, the Bible addresses this subject in great depth. 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.

The first part of this Ebook, presents today's common teaching in Christian circles called, "*the tithe.*" We will then 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," "More on That Later" (which discusses the "rediscovery" of the "tithe"), all followed by 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 yet downloaded this Ebook.

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 3:7-9)?
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, where was that money kept 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 can almost guarantee you will know more about the tithe *than your preacher* - and probably more than all your denominational materials on this topic. The only way I will be wrong about this ... 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 have an idea 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 are confident in the position you finally do adopt on this subject, it is my hope you will give this test to others - especially those who are asking you to “*tithe.*” Actually, it is wrong for you to give 10% of your gross income *to anybody* without knowing *for sure* it is God’s will. It does not matter who they say they are. If you average \$50K a year - after fifty years, you will have given a *quarter of a million dollars* - to somebody! It seems reasonable that anyone making such a claim to your cash be willing to answer a few questions (say ... like twenty?). But, if those who claim God requires this “*tithe*” are not willing to take this test, what does that tell you? Your money is *your* responsibility. We all answer to God on all matters – no one else.

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

When addressing a topic (especially a controversial one), sometimes the primary goal is to win over the opposition. But, sometimes that *is not* the primary goal. In this work, my main goal is to expose, and then dismantle, this current “*tithe teaching*” - and be used by God to deliver brethren under this teaching ... from it. However, if any who teach and enforce this current “*tithe*” system do

abandon it because of the coming materials - that will be a welcomed side effect, but it's just that - a side effect. I have found that teachers of this "tithing" are normally so locked in (for a host of reasons - some of which will be addressed in the pages to come) that they are not my primary audience. That is why I have not concerned myself with certain "rules" of persuasion and etiquette. For example, the conclusion of this entire work is in the title. If that is already offensive to someone, then they should stop right there and go no further. But if they decide to enter and then take offense ... well, look at it this way. If there is a sign over a movie theater, "Adult XXX Movies" and I then go in ... and become "offended" - really ... how legitimate is my offense?

Having said this, challenges to anything presented here are welcome. As long as I am still in this age, I will attempt to respond to each one. You see, I realize that if a "pro-tither," holds the correct position, then *I* am the false teacher and there is no telling what God will do to me. This work will be encouraging rebellion - placing my brethren in great peril. Why? Because, if they are robbing God by failing to "tithing," then I am helping them *steal from God - and thus be under His curse* (Mal 3:10). Correct me and I will shout from the rooftops *that they must fulfill this duty before anything else*. It would be a total waste of time to teach anything else to those under such a curse. So, I would hammer on *obedience to this "tithing"* until I know there is obedience. That would be love - and the top tier goal. But, as of these keystrokes, I am of the full persuasion there is ... **No Tithing for the Christian.**

The Common "Tithing" Teaching

Some groups make rather vague references of the need for the Christian to "tithing." But, those who do enunciate it, here is the basic teaching. The "tithing" is 10% of one's *gross* income, to be given to the local church for life. Otherwise, the Christian is robbing God 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, impending maladies that will fall from The Father on this 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 Father. Some tone down the curse part and just say that the "non-tithing" Christian will just lose out on blessings from their Father. There is no real *aggression* from God - just absence of blessings. The "non-tither" is relegated to a blah existence instead of living in vibrant relationship with an obviously pleased Deity. Of course, all agree the "non-tither" will, at a minimum, suffer great loss and humiliation at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

A related side teaching addresses "*parachurch ministries*." Most pro-tithers teach that any ministry operating *outside* of the church's jurisdiction is a "*parachurch ministry*." "Para" is a Greek preposition meaning, "*beside*" or "*amiss*." The call is for Christians "*to bring the whole tithing into the storehouse*" and that storehouse is now the local church. A parachurch ministry should only receive *offerings* above and beyond "*the tithing*." But local church members are often discouraged from giving those gifts because those ministries are often portrayed as "*lone ranger*" enterprises - lacking official church oversight. They are "*amiss*" from the church - thus "*parachurch*." Interestingly, many leaders of these so-called parachurch ministries echo this "*offerings-to-us-only-after-giving-your-'tithing'-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. Many are pastors with

theological degrees. They 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 “tithing” arise? I do not believe very many people have actually studied the Bible on this. If you took The Tithe Test (or choose to administer it to others), you will probably validate this assertion. So, why such little study on this subject? The reason is quite simple. To get 10% of the gross earnings of every church attendee for life means - a lot of money. So, why study it? Just assert it. 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 cash?*” Even if a church does not grow numerically, the cash flow will keep increasing as the audience keeps improving its money making skills through raises and/or better paying jobs.

Has this “tithing” 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 surrounding this “*rediscovery*.” Here we go.

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. And some have tried to connect this to some kind of improper tithe by Cain, but that is speculation on top of speculation. Besides, the tithe was never referred to as “*an offering*” (Genesis account) or a “*sacrifice*” (Hebrews account) anywhere in the Bible. 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 do realize “*a tenth of the choicest spoils*” would be included in “*a tenth of all*” in the Genesis account, but it is also possible the Holy Spirit decided to refine the original account with this added tidbit in Hebrews. In fact, it seems rather questionable that the Holy Spirit would add these words if they had no real purpose. I believe He refined the message to explain more clearly what happened that day Abram encountered Melchizedek. This episode obviously begs closer examination.

In the Genesis account, we find Abram was returning home 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 may have refined it to a tenth *of the best of these goods!* Then we read that Abram, after giving a tenth of the choicest spoils to Melchizedek, kept nothing of the remaining goods! 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! This leads to some other very important points. I have heard preacher after preacher use this passage to make a case for the Christian *“tithe.”* 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 *“tithe”* insist on these things - 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 person (or denomination) 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 wanted pronouncement, then the teaching, 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). They had devised many *“Biblical Principles”* and were teaching them 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 these *“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 *“tithe,”* 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. One of Abraham's grandsons, Jacob, decided to leave his father Isaac, and go on a journey. One night, he had a dream. 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 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. 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*. There is nothing conditional about the tithe of God. 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 grant God 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. If Jacob built a house of God on that stone, and did support it with a continual tenth, who populated “the pulpit?” Was it some order God did not tell us about? There was no priesthood yet (except Melchizedek?), or any other God-ordained religious order in operation of which we know. The point of this speculation? There are no grounds for using this account as some kind of “*example*” for us to “*tithe*” weekly to the local church for life. One can’t even extract some “*Biblical Principle*” from this conditional vow fulfillment.

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. 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 and the tithe. 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 about the tithe are found in this Law covenant. In fact, *the only commands* in the entire Bible about the tithe are found in the Law covenant. Also, 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 but for a second? 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. Let’s now go through the “*why*,” “*who*,” “*what*” and “*where*” instructions/commands.

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). I'm jumping ahead.

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 never 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 stay out of trouble if they did not have piles of cash around. 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. 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 deposited in one's local town. But, more just the Levites 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. Also, on this third and sixth year, the one tithing did not eat any of it - as would be done in year one, two, four and five. They just left it. 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 a tithe cycle!" You're not alone. It always helps to read the Bible ... especially when someone is calling for this much cash. All I ever heard was that "*the tithe*" was 10% of my gross income (which is way more than 10% of my net pay) to be given to the local church for the rest of my life. And 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, we are not Israelites in a Theocracy! And we do not have Levites around anyway!*" That's true. 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? The plot is thickening.

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.”

Let’s look at this remarkable passage very closely. Integrity demands we 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 theological terminology to validate what is actually just 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.”* 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 was clear and detailed. 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 other nations would call blessed.

This passage is calling for a physical response to fill actual storehouses in a real territory. If they did respond correctly, 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 its specific arrangements, were part of that agreement. *They better bring that whole tithe in - or hostility from God - by God - would come!* God was speaking to a nation that had agreed to obedience to a Law Covenant. 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 murder of God in the flesh was the final straw ending the Law Covenant right then and there. 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. To totally rewrite the Biblical tithe (as you are just starting to see), and then use the warnings in Malachi on present day Christians (mostly Gentiles) - is absurd *at best* and criminal *at worst*.

But, you may already know that God has brought forth a new priesthood line (or possibly just reactivated an old one - Melchizedek's line). Concerning this, 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. This gets phenomenally interesting.

Post-Law (The New Testament)

"But, Jesus spoke about the tithe in the New Testament. In fact, it is recorded twice which means added emphasis." In Matthew 23:23, Jesus was in the middle of a series of scathing rebukes 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!* Well, ... let's 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, many passages have application far beyond the 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 (Prophetic material is usually an exception.) The two passages of interest here are presented as a historic dialogue between a speaker and a defined audience. Before asking, "*What does this mean to me - to us?*" ... we need to simply ask, "*What does this mean?*"

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 is in the New Testament, all the participants this "*discussion,*" were living under, and accountable to, *the Old Covenant - the Law*. The whole tithe was required as prescribed by Law by each of these participants. 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). 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 Malachi, to neglect this "*gnat,*" (the tithe) was an open door *to incite God to curse the whole nation!*

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 guilty of even *more* than eisegesis. Much more. Read on.

Point 2: “But this tithe material was spoken by Jesus Himself, thus making it more weighty! Some Bibles have these passages in red - like His blood!” If one believes “*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. And I think you already know the red letters are just an addition by translators. 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.

That's It!

Concerning the tithe in the New Testament - *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 now 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. I think you are going to appreciate this. There are no secrets here.

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 does call this a tithe - Heb 7:9) and the tithe of the Law, as 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 for life - in cash - comes from another source. It is under protest that I use the word “*tithe*” when referring to this teaching. It is a grievous abuse of a good word. I am actually pro-tithe. But the 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.” But, 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 on Christians today. But it will remain in quotes as it profanes this honorable Biblical word.

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 (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. After 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 (new temples - 1Cor 3:16!). 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 explained these changes from many angles. He spoke in great detail about the Law. He understood it as the covenant agreement between God *and His people Israel*. And that Law 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 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." If you are a pro-tithe advocate, *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 an Old Testament passage. The Holy Spirit employs it *as a warning to Christians!* 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 no one does (Jesus being the lone exception).*

But since this new "*tithe*" teaching is not part of the Bible, and definitely not part of The Law, maybe God simply classifies it as false teaching ... not some attempt to come under the Law. This new teaching changes why the tithe is given, who gives it, who receives it, what is given, what is to be done with it and where it is to be taken. It is a total re-write in every detail.

It is my hope that my brothers and sisters have been "*tithing*" based on this fabricated new teaching with invented, fake "*Biblical Principles*" ... rather than being motivated by a Law passage like the one found in Malachi 3. "*Obedience in giving*" based on some invented, errant, "*Biblical Principle*" may not get them in trouble with God, but "*obedience*" 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 so entrapped.

Missed Opportunities in the New Testament

There are several places in the New Testament where a new tithe declaration would have spared me the work of writing this Ebook. Here are two golden opportunities that were "missed" - I guess.

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 converted 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*” to the local church from their gross income for life? How can the Gentiles “*do well*” if they are robbing God, and thus cursed? And did the Holy Spirit miss this too? If curses are going to fall from Him on these “*tithe-failing*” Gentiles, would He fail to warn them? If you are teaching and/or enforcing this “*tithe*” ... I guess you are correcting this error by James, Peter, Barnabas, the Apostles, the elders, the whole church - and the Holy Spirit. And if you are a Gentile, I am also to believe you have a better understanding of the Law, the tithe, and this upheaval in God’s relationship with man after the cross, than they did.

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 again and again!* There is a reason for this. While there is no mention of some new “*tithe*” - there is substantive material about a new ... priesthood. After the cross, *a huge change in the priesthood occurred.* While this affects many things in one's relationship to God, we are going to see what this means for the tithe.

The Priesthood Systems

You may already know that each child of God ... is a priest. You have probably heard of “*the priesthood of all believers.*” This was a major teaching “*rediscovered*” and promoted by the Protestant movement. It is truly a *fundamental* teaching if a Christian is to understand who he/she is – from God's viewpoint. It is worth reviewing this as it is both astounding and revolutionary. And since it is a blood bought position secured for us through a Roman execution, I want every single Christian to “*get this.*”

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, indeed *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 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, Jesus 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). It 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). Also, 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 ... and the Levite’s support system - the tithe of the Bible - died right along with them. The warnings of Malachi 3 perished as well. Those warnings were active for 400 years after being penned, but the moment Jesus expired on the cross, *those warnings also expired*. And brethren – how things have changed! A New Covenant *and a new priesthood* took over in the matters pertaining to God. And *“when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also”* (Heb 7:12).

So, here is one *“change of law.”* Every Christian can now *“enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus ... through the veil”* (Heb 10:19,20). Only priests can do that. Of the myriad of changes applied at the moment of conversion, here is one. 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). God has no other priesthood. It is not bestowed by theological degree, laying on of hands, or any other human device no matter how pious or well intended. It has nothing to do with robes or ritual. The true priesthood is populated by Christians 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 for Him to freely give us all kinds of other things!* In fact, all other gifts *are crumbs* in comparison to the sacrifice of the Son for us. 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 – all of them combined. 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. *“More on That Later.”*

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. We are "set apart" (holy) from the rest of mankind in this role.

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 some kind of tithe into our line of priests. Guess what? It would be meaningless. 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 makes a way. "*More on That Later.*"

From God's viewpoint, there are no priesthoods outside of the Levitical priesthood (now defunct), the Melchizedek priesthood (Melchizedek and Jesus) and the royal/holy priesthood of Christians - which is probably Melchizedek's line as well. All other "*priesthoods*" are inventions of man. 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 your priesthood 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). "*Draw near with confidence to the throne of grace*" (Heb 4:16). Christian, we are the true priests - 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 begin with The Corinthian Contribution. It 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. If a new “tithing” system, based in cash, was in place there would have been a very broad support base flush with a continuous stream of income - extracted from everyone whether they *“had means”* or not. All that would be required? Income. But this contribution was restricted to those who *“had means”* - whatever that might mean. To help decipher this, the accounts in the Corinthian letters are quite helpful. Many of Paul’s most instructive remarks about a Christian’s cash were “asides” as he worked with the Corinthians on getting this contribution together. Paul’s reveals part of his 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*. And this saved cash was probably kept ... at home. I am not at all sure it was deposited in the local church.

Second, each one gave *as he/she prospered*. “Pro-tithers” view this contribution as *an offering* above and beyond the *“tithing.”* 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. 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). Paul bragged about the Corinthians to the Macedonians on this matter (2Cor 9:2), but 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). They wanted in on this opportunity! 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 one of the legitimate elements about a Christian’s money. A Christian *invests* in actions that he/she discerns as true Kingdom expanding work! (I am getting ahead to my Conclusion.) In this context, Paul made this well known 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. It is based upon personal judgment, personal evaluation, and personal volition. It would have been easier for Paul to just called for the new cash *“tithing.”* 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.

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 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 again. There is no offering plate. It appears 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 - just bring in what *had been saved*. If a “*Biblical Principle*” for the weekly offering plate is going to be created, a passage ought to be found *that has one*. Also, an account should be found that is not - *a one time gift!* Of course, there aren’t any passages that meet those 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 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. Now there is a “*Biblical Principle*” worth some real consideration.

But lastly, this gift was not to cause any Corinthian any financial difficulty. Listen to 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!* But why would Paul make such a statement? This we must examine.

Denying the Faith ... and Worse

The Pastoral Epistles are letters written to individuals and contain broad church doctrines and practices. Many believe these “books” should be looked to *first* for doctrine and practice. This includes the letters to Timothy. When discussing the pressing matter of the care of widows, Paul asserted that the widow’s extended family should be *first* for the widow’s provision, so the local church would not be burdened. In the midst of this discussion, Paul made a statement 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. I can hardly believe the Holy Spirit authored it. The implications of a Christian failing in the task of family provision is nightmarish. To fail in family provision, which even extends beyond our immediate family, is to **deny the faith!** 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!* 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? “*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). So the non-provider is **worse** than an unbeliever? So, who is in danger with God?

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 the Christian's *first financial responsibility* is toward his/her own family. That is why *a willingness* to do more (like participation in the Corinthian Contribution), yet the incapacity to do so, is acceptable before God. 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 some sort of new "tithe" in his letters. And if it was/is essential for a healthy relationship with God, it surely would be in these Pastoral Epistles. Why? Because 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, even this new one, *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 include *effeminacy, coveting, reviling, sensuality, impurity, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, and factions* (Gal 5:19-21 and 1Cor 6:9,10 – and John, the Apostle of love, added *cowards, unbelievers, vile people, murderers and all liars* to the list [Rev 21:8].) So, where is the non-tither 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, in the 19th century, American Theologians came to the rescue by "*rediscovering*" the tithe. "*More on That Later.*" The truth is, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who was "*circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee*" (Phil 3:5) - knew the tithe **died** with the Levites - *along with the whole Law system*. The Gospel message ushered in the explosive Age of Grace that called Gentiles worldwide into the Kingdom of God - and 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 do reside. The tithe was not on the list. Who are you, O "*pro-tither,*" to include it? Are you **sure** you know what you are presenting to God's beloved children in His Name? Now, ...

The "E" Word

Now, the "E" word ... 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 cash money "*tithe,*" God is declared as *the authority* behind this. Would God see this as a "*misuse of authority*" to stand in an "*official*" capacity and call for an invented cash "*tithe*" from His beloved children – if He never commanded this? And what about the "*threats*" of Him cursing His children (even if subtly implied) for noncompliance to this new "*tithe?*"

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 declare, "*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 for life from anybody to anybody anywhere. How can there be a "*Biblical Principle*" with no Bible? Not even the tithe of the Law can be pretzeled into this "*Principle.*" But back to this extortion business for a moment. If something is extorted from another, *isn't that stealing?* If a person calls - in God's Name and by His authority - for 10% of a Christian's income for life, and that person *financially benefits by*

this ... add a "T" to the "E." Extortioner and thief. If you are in any way involved with this new teaching, you will serve yourself well to examine this matter thoroughly. What an understatement.

"But, how will the church budget be met without this "tithe?" Maybe ... it won't. Genuine church leadership will be concerned that the budgets God *does give commands about* are met - each Christian's family budget! 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). One element of that - *Christians are to pay their bills!* This is a witness God is extremely serious about. *"... deny the faith ...worse than an unbeliever"?* True church leadership does not declare that curses will come from God for failing to obey this new cash "tithe." Church leadership, shepherding according to God, works with each family unit to make sure they in compliance with God's will with their cash. I have a separate article on this, *"Compliance Directives for the Christian's Cash and the Bible."* It is interesting.

"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 ... the truly devoted made everything Corban - that is, *"given to God."* Jesus (God in the flesh) **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). A Christian is to meet all bills and family responsibilities *first*. This is God's will. His Name and reputation are thus protected when His children - His representatives - meet *all* their financial obligations. Giving to anything always follows after. This new "tithe" is Corban's cousin.

The Double Impact of Sin

Sin has two components in its destructiveness. It creates something that is wrong, while at the same time negates something that would have been right. 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."* When they failed to honor Him or give thanks to Him, these were sins *of omission*. And what led to this failure? Sins *of commission*. They were busy with *"futile speculations."* When we commit sin, we are, at the same time, not doing things we should. When a man gets drunk, *at that same time*, he should have been doing something else - like maybe working, helping his wife get groceries in - or playing catch with his son. Instead of stealing from an employer, *at that same time* the employee should have been 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 “tithing” teaching is wrong (which it is), then it is false teaching. False teaching is an act of unrighteousness. The Bible says, “*all unrighteousness is sin*” (1Jn 5:17). The teaching of this “tithing” is a *sin of commission*. So what then might be *the omission sins*? Here is a story.

I work with a woman who is part of a church that requires this new “tithing.” She and her husband have been “*faithful*” to this for several years. Last month, they 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 “tithing” all this time “*did not work*.” She never got any big raises in these last years. He never landed “*the big job*” so as to have an increase “*until there is no more need*” (Mal 3:10). The wife is recruiting prayer partners 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 “tithing” teaching that she is *afraid* to even examine the possibility she has been misled. By the way, why don’t these “*pro-tithing*” churches bring **these** testimonies to the pulpit? Well, here are some of the reasons why. “*The ‘tithing’ 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 ‘tithing’ for themselves!*” You see, a church that promotes this teaching must find fault *with this couple!* Somehow, these Christians (if they are) “*have failed!*” After all, the “*promises of God*” to the “tithing” giver who has been “*obedient*” cannot fail - right? The problem is – God is not obligated to honor promises He never made. 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 great jeopardy - being worse than an unbeliever!

Do you see all the “*should haves*” in the last paragraph? These are all **sins of omission** that flow from a **sin of commission** - this heretical “tithing” 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 consumed. This is a great way to win people to the faith, isn’t it? Only God knows, and can measure, the extent of the damage from this one case. And this “tithing” teaching has been an accomplice to this train wreck I am witnessing. I may be witnessing a shipwreck (1Tim 1:19). And this scene is being repeated *all over this country!* O “*pro-tithing*” advocate, in your own self interest, you need to examine what I have forwarded in this treatise very carefully. Your dealings will not be with me.

A Couple of Other Missed Opportunities

Peter said to Ananias, “... *after it was sold (your property) was it not under your control?*” (Ac 5:4). Peter knew that 100% of the money gained by Ananias’ sale was his to do with as he pleased. No “tithing” mention here. Indeed, money problems among those believers in Acts, were addressed, and

solved, by property proceeds being laid at the apostles' feet - 100% of the sale - 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!* I would rather have 10% of my gross pay required weekly for life! But even in such a seemingly pro-tithe precedent setting opportunity ... total silence! I do not think some kind of "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 tithing *somewhere* in the New Testament. He obviously is not averse to commanding what He wants done. Twenty-five commands - just in the little book of Philippians? You will not find **one** Post-Law command to tithe anywhere in the New Testament. And never this new cash "*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 ... until now. These coming paragraphs should help answer some burning questions 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 from the radio, T.V., and pulpits all call for it! Even Christian financial counselors call for it! And you are telling me they are all wrong? How can everybody be wrong - but you? It is taught everywhere!*" Well, **it is** taught everywhere. But, even if trillions of voices are in full agreement on any error ... error is still error.

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. What is coming below are just details of the spun web explaining 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, the Bill of Rights was ratified by thirteen brand-new states. It was made up of 10 Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America. Of these, the first one is of interest here. "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion*" One thing that meant ... churches could no longer be the governing authority with taxing authority over the citizenry. The result? The money flow that had existed for centuries *was now cut off!* One stroke of the pen - and all the churches in the Union were on their own for income. So, where could the needed cash now come from? They soon figured out the potential resource was sitting ... in the pews in front of them.

Even before 1791, there had been some experimentation with some sort of "*tithe*" extraction from parishioners, but with no tradition of it in preceding centuries, it was hard to establish. 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 the academic realms. This discipline takes a topic and then exhausts it from all angles of theological assumption, presumption and presupposition. American theologians have largely been “*shut out*” in moving most of these 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 ... raise at least one eyebrow? Any time 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. A common denominator of the varied systems has been the creation of two distinct groups. The clergy, is one - composed of individuals who are “*called into the ministry*” with the other group being “*laymen.*” This clergy/lay framing mirrors the “*Levites/Eleven Tribes*” pattern. The clergyites, like the Levites, handle the holy duties and the laymen, like the Eleven tribes, *materially serve* them. This opens up all kinds of doors. The varied clergy systems of the varied sects can now pick and choose what parts of the Levitical system are beneficial to their particular religion - and add them in. For example, *ordination* for the clergy? “*The Levitical priests were ordained - so how about our clergyites?*” With pomp and circumstance, honors and accolades, this is quite useful in *formally* separating those who are “*called to the ministry*” from “*the people*” - the laity. (Here's a free 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). For many centuries, the varied clergy systems did not need a tithe, as money was extracted even 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! The Levites got a tithe from the Eleven tribes! 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 and the fiftieth year! And let’s 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 cash tithe must come into the local church as that is the new storehouse!*” When you begin with a clergy/lay model that mirrors the Levite/Eleven Tribes system, it is easy to get create and impose a new “*tithe*” system. It even seems quite logical, reasonable ... and it is also predictable.

The *Levitical* system “*funneled*” Israel's religious responsibilities and duties into the hands of the few. The clergy/lay model also does this. But the *priesthood-of-all-believers* system is one in which responsibilities and duties are spread to the hands of all. Each Christian serves God as a Royal Priest in many roles and in numerous ways throughout life. 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*. The Protestant

Reformation caught a truth that fell from heaven, but then, in large part, 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 500 Christians. Let’s say there is a staff of 4 - pastor, associate pastor, youth pastor and worship leader. There are *two competing visions* for what is before our eyes. The clergy/lay model sees 4 people “*in the ministry*” and 496 laymen “*out of the ministry*.” The 496 are coming in from their secular endeavors to then submit themselves to the 4 actually in the ministry. Laymen *can* cross over into some form of ministry by joining the choir, or going out on visitation, but they are still even then, at best, lay-ministers.

On the other hand, the Royal Priesthood model sees something quite different. In view are 500 **full time** ministers! 496 are being equipped, encouraged, and sent back out into their varied ministries - by 4 equipping ministers! All 500 understand that everything they do is to be done in the Name of Jesus, to the glory of God and each will be rewarded, or suffer loss, for that service at the Judgment. 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. God has “*set apart*” every Christian and *appointed* each *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.

Of course any time 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 1Corinthians 16. But those decisions are 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 “tithe” system) is needed - the parachurch issue. 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. It is hard to discredit them all, because too many of them produce results that cannot be easily refuted as lawless works. 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 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**, 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. In fact, this compound word does not exist in the Greek language. But even more important, **this concept** does not appear anywhere in the Bible. So it is fake Koine Greek inventing a fake parachurch concept. 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. 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 a compound Koine Greek word that does appear quite often in the New Testament. It is *metanoeo* - “*meta*” + “*noeo*”. We translate it, “*repent*.” That’s a compound Greek word the propagators of this parachurch heresy do need to study and apply ... to themselves.

Secular Work

One other falsehood imposed upon the Royal Priests of God must be exposed. The clergy/lay system teaches that laymen are engaged in **secular work**. Proponents do not even attempt to cloak this in Greek, or anything else. 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.*” Clergyites teach that laymen are laboring in worldly, temporal, non-sacred work. As non-sacred, it is not ministry, not eligible for eternal rewards ... and is destined for fire.

Fortunately, I have never yielded to this “*secular work*” teaching. Even as a new convert under this teaching, I somehow never fell prey to it. I “*instinctively*” knew I would account to God for everything - including my jobs. I have known, “*This is my ministry, my assigned mission field – my sentry post.*” I have prayed for those in my assigned posting. And as God given opportunity, I have talked with 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 there have been times, my employers have asked why I have been so diligent in my work - honest and aggressive at it. I have told them that *I am really working for God*, and they, as my employer, are middlemen (but beneficiaries) of this higher motivation. You see, I know I will answer to Him on Judgment Day and will either be rewarded *or rebuked* - incident by incident - in my work life. The moment I became a Christian, *secular work eternally 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 must account 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. We often need wisdom to know when our job is clearly calling us to defile what is our ministry - “*do not touch what is unclean*” (2Cor 6:17).

So, here is a summation. First, the gift of Royal Priest (notice capital letters) 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 has different roles and responsibilities all through this life, yet never cease being a Royal Priest anywhere along the way. So, forget the layman designation. Third, 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 of the saint, the maturity level of that saint, and the calls that God grants “*at the proper time*” (1Pet 5:6). So, forget the secular work degradation. And forget the parachurch fabrication, too. No

activity any Christian undertakes is “beside” or “amiss from” the church ... when Christians *are* the Church! And, while you’re at it, forget the new cash “tithe” invention. Priests never tithed, or “tithe” today, 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 and demeaned it. Will you?

The Real Deal With Royal Priests and His/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 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 actually has 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 God may be directing you to invest in a Children’s Home, or a Street Gospel Mission, or a Christian Drug Rehabilitation program. 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 as such, 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 Judgment of the Great Day. That is the maturity date.

“But, what about”

“... those who testify that when they began to ‘tithe,’ God blessed them in unbelievable, and surprising ways?” Well, each person must decide what is authoritative in matters pertaining to God - someone’s 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** – and words. Is that superior to God’s words?” 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 the windows of heaven opened by God Himself and He would “pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need” (Mal 3:10). God’s tither did 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.

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 look up this passage).

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 plus?

Base Motives

This can really be put into one word - career. 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 academic 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 our 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 where it is bad fit. 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. In many situations, nothing is known about pricing until well after the fact - especially in emergencies. There is no opportunity to shop around, compare prices or reverse course by resale after a transaction. And any negotiation comes *after "the sale."* That has the customer in a really bad situation because this negotiation can not be walked away from. In capitalism, one negotiates *before* the sale - with the opportunity to walk away at any point.

The medical profession, and 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 and/or they negotiate between themselves. 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 charges, lab tests, a hospital bed - or even a hospital bandage or aspirin. This profession operates with *all of the benefits* of a capitalistic system, but it does not have *the primary restraints of capitalism* - i.e., competition and the free will of the consumer. But some of this is simply due to the nature of this "*business*" - or at least segments of it - that do not lend themselves well toward capitalism. Bottomline, without question, the greatest financial threat to the average citizen in the United States is medical need. The key to financial survival is - do not get sick and do not get injured. Or, work for a company that offers great medical insurance. Individual policies are rapidly getting out of reach for an average wage earner. Even 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. As *fee-based* institutions there is *competition* between schools as there is a finite number of potential customers (students). This does constrain what can be charged. 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, a theological graduate often enters the pulpit with - big debt.

Second. Many successful people 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 in a Doctorate, there may

be no field with more rigorous degree securement requirements than the institutionalized, academic, theological realm.

Third. When the degreed (and in debt) graduate walks into the local church as a pastor, or other staff person, then comes the rub. The financial base of the church is *donation-based ... not fee-based!* 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 that of any lawyer, and even many 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 some accountant or businessman or architect!*” The new “*tithe*” solves the problem.

Additionally, 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 for life - in cash. If a week is missed due to sickness, emergency, or vacation, the 10% is still due. God's commands take no time off. That gives even heavier weight behind this new teaching. The academic “*brains*” behind the organization are behind this teaching and they are hard to get to.

If a church calls for this new “*tithe*,” but goes soft on the curses from God part, then you know they do not *really believe* this is *God's* command. If *God is* cursing His children for robbing Him, how can church leaders let any of their beloved flock disobey this command - *even for a week?* They will demand *the whole tithe* be brought into the storehouse - no excuses, reprieves, or 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 all know 'thieves ... will not inherit the Kingdom of God'*” (1Cor 6:10).

For those who *sheepishly* call for 10% of your money in God's Name, and yet back off from warning you of God's curses ... they 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. The sheepish “*tithe*” caller reminds 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 extended, and immediate, 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. 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?*” Maybe the new pastor should serve for **no pay** until *convinced* that the receipt of money will not hinder the effectiveness of the work. And it might take a while to determine this. Tent making time. 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*. Maybe this should be the “*Biblical Principle*” taken into a new congregation instead of the new “*tithe!*” What do you say, pastors - new graduates and old pastors alike? How about following Paul's example?

This new “*tithe*” teaching is filled with the basest of motives. I am not sure of the ultimate fate of each perpetrator of this false teaching (some will find themselves in 1Cor 3:15), 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.

One More Problem ... a Big One

Many times **unbelievers** come to church. Do you want their money? John didn't (3Jn 7). Do you want them to think of church ... as another weekly bill? I wonder how many people *stay out* of the church just because they feel they can not take on another bill. Many unbelievers are uncomfortable receiving services without paying for them - so, when the offering plate is passed, they feel they must contribute. “*But they can let the offering plate go by if they want* (in front of their kid's eyes). *Besides, everybody knows it costs money to run a church. So everybody expects to pitch in something!*” Well, why not give them what they *don't expect*? Isn't that what **God** does? Who would ever guess that all the things we really need from God are available - *for free*? Indeed, we **cannot** work (or pay) for salvation, eternal life, immortal bodies, or His wisdom, knowledge or understanding. And this list is not even *the tip* of that iceberg of His freely bestowed treasures! His things are beyond money ... but coming to church is not? Does this cause you pause? Jesus was once asked, “*What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*” He answered, “*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent*”(Jn 6:28,29). Let the people come! Lay off the money calls. If your work wins the hearts of your listeners, billfolds will open. You and your church will have all the money you need. He always provides for *His* agenda. Never a day late ... never a dollar short. Represent God freely! Be *a giver* - 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.

My Expectations

Concerning this new “*tithe*” teaching, I do not expect to make huge headway with the present generation of religious “*leaders*.” But I do think 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 publicly recant would hurt their projected image. This is 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.

Second, 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, what can I say? But, be that as it may, what should we think about this? For these Royal Priests, this question of giving 10% of one’s gross income 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!*”

There is an interesting account in Acts when the people of Berea encountered a man 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 miraculously healed of blindness (Ac 9:17,18). He had been into the third heaven (2Cor 12:1-4). Before any of this, he had been a “*Hebrew of Hebrews*” and was greatly active - and advancing - in Judaism (Ac 23:6 and Gal 1:14). While Judaism was not the primary message he carried as a Christian, his knowledge of it formed a great base for understanding Christianity. When he 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)! They rightly understood that what makes a teaching authoritative is *the quality of the actual Bible material behind the assertion* - not the credentials of the man. The man is but a messenger. **The message** is what is important. If Paul’s message did not stand up under scrutiny to Scripture, the noble-minded Bereans would have rejected it - and Paul. We can do no less. 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 one, 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, plus 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!* And 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 is of great value. 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).

“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’s 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 people *sincerely* believe in evolution. Many *sincerely* believe in the right of abortion. And many *sincerely* believe homosexuals should not only be given civil rights protections, but also the “*right*” to marry. These are sincerely held beliefs. While it is clear God is not obligated to uphold **those** 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, or function, in error. He is ‘the God of truth’*” (Ps 31:5). (I hope I am not being too harsh on me.) The most any of the “*sincerely wrong*” can hope, is that God is moved by compassion to pardon ... and then lead the errant one into the truth. He alone opens the mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45). Sincere darkness ... is still darkness.

2. As a “*tither*,” - and now 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 “*tithe-giving*” chapter of my life. I was putting myself under the 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*” is so far removed from the actual tithe of the Law, that He did not even recognize me as coming under The Law. I was just a dupe in the pews. “*Cash, to the local church, every week for life - and you think that is the ‘tithe’ of the Law? You didn’t put yourself under the Law. You were just under fraud.*” That is what probably did save me from real curses from God. This new teaching ... “*the tithe of God?*” What a joke. **Nobody tithes!**

Are you ready for a real shocker? Did you know that Jesus, as a Jew born under The Law, as a carpenter ... never tithed? And He was born under The Law so as to fulfill *all* its righteous requirements. Also, as Jewish fishermen under The Law ... Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James and John

never tithed either. And as a Jewish tax collector under The Law, Matthew never tithed from his gains. So, who tithed in the Bible? You will find that article fascinating. You have much more to learn!

Conclusion

If you have read to this point, you may have some decisions to make. You have definitely been made to *think*. All of us are to be renewed *in our thinking* (Ro 12:2). The duty of each Royal Priest is to, “*examine everything carefully and hold fast to that which is good*” (1Th 5:21). When thinking is right, actions will also be right.

If you submit this material to your church leaders, do not be surprised if they simply dismiss it 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 learned professors, so don’t worry about this outsider.*” If they are declaring to you that God requires 10% of your gross income to go to the local church for life, *they should welcome your questions*. They shouldn't want anyone taking advantage of you - especially themselves. On the other hand, if they *refuse* to honestly deal with your questions, *should you trust them with accuracy in other spiritual matters?*

If you share this Ebook with family or friends, etc., do not be surprised if they *point* to high positioned “*pro-tithe*” authorities as “*proof*” of the validity of this teaching. In response, simply *point* them to specific parts of this Ebook and ask them to *point out* the error. You can then *point* to the Bereans in Acts 17:10-12. Rest assured, 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 as they searched the Scriptures daily to see if Paul actually knew what he was talking about! Those in Thessalonica, who accepted Paul’s message without such scrutiny, 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 peddling to the Galatians? **A perverted Law message!** Sound familiar? Any person's title, position, experiences, credentials - none of that is authoritative. The Word of God, and accurate handling of the same, constitutes the only authority. There is tremendous freedom in knowing - and functioning - in this.

I am sure that 99.9% of all false teachers and prophets *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). These had even operated in The Name of Jesus! The greatest lawlessness one can commit is to use, or proclaim, God’s words and will *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. God is extremely serious about His name and reputation. 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. May she find pardon.

One reason I write on many subjects is because of a basic assumption I hold. I am convinced that *all* misinformation, whether innocent or malicious, *does not move the agenda of God forward*. It cannot. And *institutionalized error* compounds the paralysis. God does not live in, or honor, error. It will be obliterated now, or at The Judgment. 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 are queasy with my “*challenges*” of “*pro-tithers*” throughout this paper - well, what is the alternative? Those entrenched in this destructive, false teaching, are not willing to let go of it. I have not met an aggressive “*tithe*” advocate yet that has been willing to really examine the material presented here. They immediately attack. That is where a lot of the quotes have come from throughout this treatise - their objections and rationalizations. When Jesus confronted the false teachers of His day, His motivation was not to damn, but to break through - to shatter - their error. Those whom He targeted were not prohibited from response, *but the response had to be content oriented*. And it had to be substantive. One time, after a particularly heated exchange, they picked up “*stones again to stone Him.*” And He said, “*I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?*” (Jn 10:31-32). Their retort of “*blasphemy*” was error and without Biblical substance. The Word was standing right in front of them. 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). While it is true that soft words can break bones (Pr 25:15), so can hammers (Jer 23:29). Actually, I am not overly concerned that the tenor of this work will run any one off who is truly interested in growing in the truth. Case in point ... *you* are still reading this aren't you?

I wanted to write this Ebook for twenty years. I have a folder with outlines and all kinds of rough drafts, but I knew it would take a concentrated effort to get it done. 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 here, many of them are embedded throughout this work (as noted in the last paragraph) - especially the most common assertions.

As part of my life's work, I had this nagging question about this effort: “*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 all my work *for free!* This is tremendous! One of the treasures of the Christian faith is that **it is** beyond money. While we all must deal with money in this age (I am even a salesman), I am really looking forward to the coming age. If money does exist there, it will have no problems associated with it. But, the Internet has even now freed me in this regard.

One person voiced this concern as I was writing this work. “*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). Another good friend cautioned, “*You are going against the grain. You are going to be a lonely voice out there.*” Well, concerning the strife and division part, 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 commendation **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 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, or this new “tithe,” I conclude with this: there is “No Tithe for the Christian.” Neither the real one ... or the fake one.

Lord bless you.

In 1977, Robin Calamaio became a Christian. BA, Bus Admin (Milligan College '90) and Master of Divinity (Emmanuel School of Religion '92).

While this Ebook was originally written in 2003, I have learned quite a bit more since that time. I have made a few minor edits to this work since 2003, but have not written included too much of my expanded learning. I wanted to keep it largely intact, but I did “*tone down*” some of the harsher rhetoric. No compromise, just a bit of rephrasing :)

I have found that when you turn from some error, and get on the right track, God confirms the gain by giving even more knowledge and insight on the subject. I was invited into a Tithe Study group within a couple of years of posting this and that group was quite active until 2010 or so. I learned many things from those brother and sisters that led to several points in the articles below. But, I have also greatly benefited from my readers - with stories they have shared and insights they have imparted. You will find some of these referenced in articles below. So, I hope you enjoy them too!

Involvement in this project has resulted in many hours of great joy.

Sincerely,

Robin Calamaio

February, 2019

“Urgent Inquiry to all who Teach Tithing for Christians Today”

This is 4 simple questions and 1 page long.

“Who Tithed in the Bible?”

This one is quite a stunner. A list of occupations under Law – who tithed and who did not! 19 pages.

“Compliance Directives for the Christian's Cash and the Bible”

So what exactly does God want us to do with our cash? This also has directives for the local church. 13 pages.

“The Christian's Money and the Bible (response to a reader's email)”

I was nice :) Read it last. 4 pages.

Here are a few other related articles that I know you will find of value. Under Articles tab at freelygive-n.com

“Work and the Bible”

How practical is Christianity? Work is totally revolutionized! 4 pages.

“The Royal Priesthood and the Bible”

This delves deeper into this position granted by God upon each of His sons and daughters. 12 pages.

And there are more! All are free at [freelygive-n.com!](http://freelygive-n.com)

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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.

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