The Doctrine of Tithing

All Scriptures are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

The question of tithing has spawned sharp debate. Some insist that the tithe was part of the Old Covenant, tied to Israel's agricultural economy and its Levitical priesthood. Others argue that tithing has no place in the New Testament era because Christians are "not under law but under grace." Still others regard tithing as a helpful but optional practice, encouraging generosity but leaving the amount and manner entirely to the individual's discretion.

These views reflect a widespread uncertainty about whether God expects His people today to give a tenth of their income, but Scripture is not vague on this point. From Genesis to Revelation, the tithe is consistently presented as the appointed portion belonging to the Lord. It appears before Mount Sinai and within the Law of Moses; it was affirmed by the prophets, endorsed by Jesus, and applied by the apostles.

What is the tithe?

The word "tithe" simply means "a tenth." In biblical usage, it refers to the giving of one-tenth of one's increase or net profit to God. This tenth is not a donation or freewill offering given from what is left over. It is a commanded portion, holy to the Lord, and returning it to Him is an act of obedience, not generosity. Tithing is a declaration that God owns all things and that His people must set apart the sacred portion of their increase as belonging to Him.

The purpose of this study

This treatise will examine the biblical teaching about tithing. We will begin with the patriarchs, the Law of Moses, and the prophets, then culminate with the teaching of Jesus and the apostles. Next, we will explore the theological reasons for tithing, showing why it is a vital spiritual discipline, not just an accounting exercise. Finally, we will answer several common objections, showing that tithing is not obsolete, optional, or merely cultural.

Tithing Before the Law of Moses

Many opponents of tithing argue that the practice was instituted within the Mosaic Law and therefore has no relevance for Christians today. This objection collapses when confronted with Scripture. The Bible shows that God's people tithed long before Moses received the Law at Mount Sinai. The accounts of Abraham and Jacob demonstrate that the tithe is not simply an Israelite custom but a universal moral duty that flows from God's generosity and the believer's gratitude.

Abraham and Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18–20; Hebrews 7:1–10)

The first reference to tithing appears in the life of Abraham. After rescuing Lot from an invading coalition of kings, Abraham encountered Melchizedek: “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!’ And Abram gave him a tenth of everything” (Gen 14:18–20).

This passage is significant for several reasons:

First, Melchizedek was both a king and a priest, which is unique in Scripture for uniting the two offices. He represented a priesthood greater than that of Levi, since Levi had not yet been born. Hebrews emphasizes this point, saying: “For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace” (Hebrews 7:1–2). Abraham’s tithe was not a casual gesture, but a recognition of Melchizedek’s divine office as priest of God Most High. Tithing is not incidental but central to the way God’s people honor Him and support His work.

Second, this is an example of Abraham’s obedience to divine law. Some critics insist that Abraham’s tithe was voluntary and isolated, but in Genesis 26:5, God said that “Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen 26:5). God’s commandments existed long before Moses. Since God told Israel to tithe in the Law of Moses, it is logical to infer that tithing was one of the laws that God gave to Abraham. So, tithing is a timeless command that applies to all of God’s people, not just Israel. It is rooted in God’s moral order, not a limited, national ordinance.

Third, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of “everything” from the spoils, which would have included gold, silver, weapons, clothing, and other valuables (Gen 14:16). This proves that tithing is not restricted to agricultural produce, but applies to all forms of wealth.

Jacob’s Vow at Bethel (Genesis 28:20–22)

The second example of tithing comes from the life of Jacob. As he fled from Esau, Jacob stopped at Bethel, where God appeared to him in a dream. God renewed the covenant promises of Abraham and Isaac with him, and Jacob responded: “Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you’” (Gen 28:20–22).

Jacob’s tithe was an act of faith. He vowed to give God a full tenth “of all that you give me.” He recognized God as the source of every blessing, from his daily bread to his safe return. Like Abraham, Jacob’s tithe was not limited to agricultural produce; it included any wealth that God would give to him.

Jacob’s tithe was also an act of gratitude. He could not purchase God’s blessing, but he could

respond to it. His tithe was a tangible way to thank God for His help and protection.

Jacob's tithe was also an act of obedience. His vow showed that tithing was an established practice within the family. He did not invent the idea; he inherited it as part of the faith passed down from Abraham.

Tithing Under the Law of Moses

The Levitical Tithe (Numbers 18:21–24)

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He commanded Moses, saying, "Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD… And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD" (Leviticus 27:30, 32).

When Israel entered the land of Canaan, God distributed the inheritance among the tribes. Every tribe, except Levi, received a portion of the land. God set the Levites apart for service in the sanctuary. They were not given farmland to cultivate or estates to pass down to their sons. Instead, God gave them all the tithes in Israel.

Numbers 18:21–23 says: "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting, so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance" (Num 18:21–23).

Tithing is a quid pro quo relationship: God's ministers serve His people in spiritual matters, and His people support the ministry in material matters. The Levites devoted their lives to temple service, and Israel's tithes sustained them in that work.

The Festival Tithe (Deuteronomy 14:22–27)

The Law of Moses also commanded Israel to set aside a separate tithe that the people would use to celebrate the biblical festivals at the sanctuary.

Deuteronomy 16:16 says, "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths; and they are not to appear before the LORD empty-handed" (Deut 16:16 NASB).

Deuteronomy 14:22–23 also says: "You shall certainly tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes from the field every year. You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always" (Deut 14:22–23 NASB).

This tithe was not given to the priests and Levites; it was a separate tithe for the Israelites to use

to celebrate the biblical festivals and worship in God's presence. It reminded Israel that all their blessings came from God.

Deuteronomy 14:24–27 also says:

> "And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the LORD your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you" (Deut 14:24–27).

The ancient Jewish historian Josephus also described this festival tithe, saying: "Let there be taken out of your fruits a tenth, besides that which you have allotted to give to the priests and Levites. This you may indeed sell in the country, but it is to be used in those feasts and sacrifices that are to be celebrated in the holy city; for it is fit that you should enjoy those fruits of the earth which God gives you to possess, so as may be to the honor of the donor" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 4, Chapter 8, Section 8).

Notice that this tithe could be converted into money to spend on food and drink for the biblical feasts. This disproves the claim that tithing only applied to agricultural produce because crops and money were interchangeable; it was the actual value of the tithe that was important to God, not the type of commodity, therefore, God expects His people to tithe from the increase of all their wealth regardless of the form.

The Poor Tithe (Deuteronomy 14:28–29)

Besides the tithe for the Levites and the tithe for the festivals, God also expected Israel to set aside an additional tithe for the poor: "At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do" (Deut 14:28–29).

Josephus also wrote: "Besides those two tithes, which I have already said you are to pay every year, the one for the Levites, the other for the festivals, you are to bring every third year a third tithe to be distributed to those that want; to women also that are widows, and to children that are orphans…" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 4, Chapter 8, Section 22).

God instituted a social safety net for society's most vulnerable thousands of years before Social Security, Medicare, or Welfare. This law showed God's compassion for the less fortunate and reinforced Israel's responsibility to care for one another. Most modern nations have adopted the essence of this commandment whether they know it or not.

Malachi's Rebuke (Malachi 3:8–12)

Centuries after Moses, Israel grew careless about tithing, so God confronted them through the prophet Malachi:

> "Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:8–12).

This passage teaches several important truths:

First, failure to tithe is robbery. God owns the entire universe, but He allows us to use His possessions to earn a living. In return, He has set aside a prior claim on ten percent of the profit. Failure to tithe cheats God out of the portion that rightfully belongs to Him.

Second, God invites His people to test His faithfulness. Tithing opens the windows of heaven, unleashing God's blessings. This is how God proves that He exists and that He keeps His promises. Those who obey grow in faith, while those who shrink back cannot please God.

Third, God's blessings are both spiritual and material. He promised fruitfulness, protection from devourers, and a reputation as a land of delight. When Adam sinned, God cursed the ground, but when people turn to God, He grants success and joy.

So, tithing was a central feature of Israel's covenant because it teaches many important spiritual lessons. It honored God, sustained the ministry, promoted fellowship, and relieved the poor. It expressed gratitude and exercised faith. These lessons remain relevant in the New Covenant as well.

God Is the Source of Wealth

God is the ultimate source of all possessions. No one can boast about self-made success, because the power to gain wealth comes from the Lord alone. So, tithing is not simply about supporting God's ministers. It is an act of worship, a financial sacrifice that honors God and acknowledges Him as the source of every material blessing.

Deuteronomy 8:17–18 – God Gives the Power to Gain Wealth

As Israel prepared to enter the Promised Land, Moses warned them against pride. In their prosperity, they would be tempted to forget that everything came from God: "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day" (Deut 8:17–18).

This passage reminds us that strength, skill, ability, and opportunity are gifts from God. To claim

otherwise is nothing more than pride and arrogance.

God blessed Israel to confirm His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They didn't do anything to merit God's favor; they constantly provoked God in the wilderness. Prosperity was a sign of God's faithfulness, not their human genius.

Moses warned Israel that if they ever forgot the Lord, they would perish out of the land just like the nations before them (Deut 8:19–20).

This principle still holds today. Every job, paycheck, and possession is possible only because God grants life, strength, and opportunity. To tithe is to confess this truth; to withhold the tithe is to live as if blessings come by our own power.

Proverbs 3:9–10 – Honoring the Lord with Our Wealth

The book of Proverbs provides a timeless principle about God and wealth: "Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prov 3:9–10).

To "honor the LORD with your wealth" means to give an offering that reflects His dignity and stature: something fit for a king, not moldy leftovers. The Hebrew term for wealth refers to one's riches or possession, not just agricultural produce.

The firstfruits represented the earliest and best part of the harvest that was offered to God (Exod 23:19). This practice was a token of respect and an expression of faith that the rest of the harvest would be successful and abundant.

The promise of overflowing barns and vats does not guarantee riches, but it assures us that God will provide for those who put Him first.

The sequence is to honor God first, and then come the blessings. God does not ask His people to wait until they feel secure before giving. He commands that the tithe be given first, trusting Him to supply the rest.

Giving the tithe first places our finances under His rule and declares that our security lies in His faithfulness, not in hoarded wealth.

Tithing in the Teaching of Jesus

Some argue that Jesus abolished the Law of Moses, including the tithe, and replaced it with a system of voluntary generosity, but Scripture refutes this claim. Far from abolishing God's commandments, Jesus upheld the Torah and commended the practice of tithing.

Matthew 5:17–20 – Jesus Did Not Abolish the Law

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared the abiding authority of God's Law:

> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever

> relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:17–20).

These verses establish several truths:

Scripture clearly teaches that Jesus did not abolish the Law. His mission was not to nullify God's commandments but to fulfill them by teaching, magnifying, and demonstrating their true intent.

He specifically said that the Law would endure "until heaven and earth pass away." Since creation still stands, God's Law remains in force.

Jesus expected His disciples to teach and keep the Law of Moses. Setting aside even the least command results in being called the "least in the kingdom." Tithing is hardly one of the least of God's commandments, so the consequences are much more severe.

Failure to live up to the standards of the scribes and Pharisees results in the loss of salvation. The Pharisees were very careful to keep external rules but often neglected the spirit of the Law. Jesus called for righteousness in spirit and letter.

Failure to tithe is robbing God, therefore, tithing is an important issue, so it is important to follow Scripture carefully.

Jesus upheld the Torah as God's enduring standard of righteousness. He neither abolished nor relaxed tithing.

Matthew 23:23 / Luke 11:42 – Commending Tithing

Later in His ministry, Jesus directly addressed the subject of tithing. Although the scribes and Pharisees were often hypocritical in their behavior, they were scrupulous about tithing even on small items: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others" (Matt 23:23).

The parallel passage in Luke 11:42 says: "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others" (Luke 11:42).

Notice that Jesus did not criticize them for being meticulous in tithing. Instead, He approved their carefulness, saying, "These you ought to have done."

The problem was not that they tithed, but that they neglected justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Obeying the letter of the Law without the spiritual intent is worthless.

Jesus did not say, "Do justice instead of tithing," but "Do both." The weightier matters must not be neglected, but neither should the tithe.

This passage is critical. Jesus explicitly endorsed tithing, even in small matters, while also insisting on inward righteousness. Those who claim that Jesus set aside tithing must reckon

with His own words: “These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.”

Jesus’ Broader Use of the Law

The Gospels repeatedly show that Jesus upheld the authority of the Torah.

For example, during His temptation, He resisted Satan by quoting from Deuteronomy three times. When the devil urged Him to change stones into bread, He quoted Deut 8:3, saying: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matt 4:4).

Tithing came from the mouth of God and is found in Deuteronomy, the same inspired book that Jesus used to defeat the devil. We cannot pick and choose which parts of God’s Word we will obey based on personal preference or convenience.

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, He quoted directly from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, saying: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 22:37–40).

For Jesus, the Law of God was not a temporary code to be discarded, but the revelation of God’s will to be fulfilled and obeyed. Tithing, as part of that Law, was not abolished but affirmed.

Therefore, the teaching of Jesus confirms that tithing remains a Christian duty. It is not opposed to grace but flows from a heart that loves God and trusts His Word.

Tithing in the Apostolic Church

The church did not discard the principle of tithing. Instead, the apostles taught the same truths found in the Law and the Prophets, showing that Christian giving should support God’s ministers just as Israel’s tithes supported the priests and Levites. While the forms of worship shifted from the temple to the church, the moral principle of providing for God’s work remained.

Paul’s Defense of Ministerial Support (1 Corinthians 9:3–14)

The clearest teaching on this subject comes from Paul’s defense of his apostleship. Some critics accused him of preaching for profit. To answer them, Paul explained that it was right for those who preach the gospel to receive material support from the church. He argued that just as soldiers, farmers, and shepherds share in the fruits of their labor, ministers of the gospel also have the right to receive material support.

He concluded by appealing to the Law of Moses: “Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor 9:13–14).

Paul taught that the same principle of giving tithes and offerings to support the Levitical

priesthood also applies to Christian ministers. Those who are employed in the full-time ministry are entitled to receive a living wage from the congregation.

Paul is invoking the same quid pro quo principle found in Numbers 18:21; God's ministers serve His people in spiritual matters, and they support the ministry in material matters. According to Paul, this is what the Lord Himself commanded the church to do.

Galatians 6:6 – Sharing All Good Things

Paul also gave a simple but profound command in his letter to the Galatians: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal 6:6).

This verse establishes the duty to support the teachers of the Word. The phrase "all good things" includes material goods, income, and resources. Just as the Levites received tithes in return for their spiritual service, pastors and teachers are to receive financial support from those who benefit from their labor.

Hebrews 7:1–10 – Abraham, Melchizedek, and Christ

Hebrews 7 links the practice of tithing to the priesthood of Christ. The writer cites the account of Abraham and Melchizedek: "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything…" (Heb 7:1–2a).

The writer highlighted Melchizedek's greatness and then argued: "See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises" (Heb 7:4–6).

This is important. By giving the tenth to Melchizedek, Abraham tacitly acknowledged the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood over the descendants of Levi.

The writer then equates the ministry of Christ with Melchizedek: "This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, 'You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek'" (Heb 7:15–17).

Since Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, tithing now finds its ultimate fulfillment in Him. Therefore, the tithe is not abolished by Christ but transferred to Him. The principle is not obsolete; it is elevated.

The apostolic church did not abolish the principle of tithing. Rather, it affirmed tithing as the biblical method of sustaining the ministry. What began with Abraham, and continued under Moses, now finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and His church.

Objections to Tithing and Biblical Responses

While the Bible presents a consistent case for tithing, there are many objections against it. Some claim that tithing is legalistic, obsolete, or irrelevant under the New Covenant. Others argue that giving should be purely voluntary or that tithing applied only to agricultural produce. Each of these objections fails when tested by Scripture.

Objection 1: “Tithing Was Only for Israel”

Some argue that tithing belonged only to the Mosaic Covenant and was never intended for Christians. They say that because the Levitical system ended, so did the tithe, but Scripture refutes these claims.

First, tithing predates the Law of Moses. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek (Gen 14:20), and Jacob vowed to give God a tenth of everything (Gen 28:22). These patriarchs lived centuries before Moses and the Old Covenant.

Second, God’s Law is not limited to Israel. In Genesis 26:5, God said that Abraham kept “my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” In Matthew 4:4, Jesus said that man shall live “by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” God’s law is universal because it flows from His authority as the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

Third, Jesus explicitly taught that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (Matt 5:17–20); He also affirmed the practice of tithing in Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42.

So, tithing is not limited to Israel or the Old Covenant; it is an enduring command grounded in God’s eternal and universal authority.

Objection 2: “Tithing Was Only Agricultural”

Others insist that tithing was restricted to crops and livestock, not to money or wages. They cite passages like Leviticus 27:30–32 for support, but this is a flawed argument.

First, Abraham’s tithe included the spoils of war, which would have included gold, silver, weapons, clothing, and other valuables (Gen 14:20–24).

Second, Jacob’s vow was comprehensive: “Of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you” (Gen 28:22). That covered every kind of blessing, not just agricultural produce.

Third, the Torah allowed the Israelites to convert the festival tithe into money so they could carry it to Jerusalem (Deut 14:24–26). It was the value of the tithe that was important to God, not the specific form, so a salary is equivalent to a harvest.

The Bible shows that tithing was never confined to agricultural goods. It applies to all forms of increase, including financial income.

Objection 3: “Christians Are Only Called to Give Voluntarily”

Some claim that Christian giving is only voluntary, not commanded.

They point to Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 9:7: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:7).

But this argument also falls apart under careful examination.

First, Paul was addressing a special collection for the poor in Jerusalem, not regular ministerial support. This was an additional offering, not the tithe.

Second, voluntary giving and commanded giving are not opposites. A voluntary offering should be given willingly and cheerfully, but that does not abolish the command to tithe. God desires both obedience and joy.

Third, Jesus approved of giving voluntary offerings and tithing. He urged His followers to give alms to the poor (Matt 6:2–4), but He also commended the scribes and Pharisees for tithing (Matt 23:23). These two actions are not mutually exclusive.

So, Paul's call for cheerful giving supplements, rather than cancels, the tithe.

Objection 4: "There Is No Record of Jesus or the Apostles Tithing"

Some argue that since the New Testament never explicitly records Jesus or the apostles tithing, Christians are not required to tithe, but this argument is illogical.

First, this is an argument from silence, which proves nothing. The New Testament does not record Jesus keeping the Sabbath every week, but no one doubts that He did because He kept God's Law perfectly and never sinned (Heb 4:15).

Second, Jesus explicitly upheld the practice of tithing in Matthew 23:23.

Third, Paul used the Torah command to give tithes and offerings to the Levitical priesthood to show that Christian ministers should also receive financial support (1 Cor 9:13–14). He assumed that God's commands were still binding, not abolished.

So, the Bible provides clear evidence that Jesus and the apostles supported the practice of tithing even if it does not provide a specific example of them giving a tithe.

Objection 5: "The Tithe Supported an Obsolete System"

Some claim that tithing and the Levitical priesthood came to an end when the New Covenant rendered the Old Covenant obsolete (Heb 8:13).

This argument also rests on faulty assumptions.

First, Ezekiel 40–44 describes a future messianic temple where Levitical priests will once again offer sacrifices. This shows that the Levitical priesthood, and tithes to support them, is not obsolete but awaits a future restoration.

Second, Hebrews 7 equates the priesthood of Melchizedek with that of Christ. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, and Christians tithe to Christ, who is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. The tithe is not abolished by Christ but transferred to Him.

Third, Paul applied the same quid pro quo principle of Levitical support to Christian ministers in

1 Corinthians 9:13–14. He assumed that the Law was still binding and that it served as a guide for proper Christian behavior.

So, the biblical evidence shows that, while the Levitical system has paused, the principle of tithing continues under Christ's superior priesthood.

Objection 6: "Tithing Is Legalism"

Some argue that requiring Christians to tithe turns Christianity into a legalistic, works-based religion that is contrary to grace, but this argument confuses justification and sanctification.

First, obedience is not legalism. Legalism is seeking salvation through works. Tithing is not about earning salvation but about honoring God with what already belongs to Him.

Second, obedience flows from love, not legalism. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Third, grace motivates obedience. Paul wrote: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor 15:10). Grace does not reduce our obligations to God; it increases them.

So, tithing is not legalism; it is an expression of faith, gratitude, and love.

Blessings and Responsibilities

Tithing is not only a duty but also a means of blessing. God does not tell His people to tithe because He needs our resources; He is the Creator of all things (Ps 24:1). He commands tithing to teach His people faith and open the way for blessings. Scripture consistently ties faithful tithing with divine blessing, while also stressing the responsibility of giving with sincerity and gratitude.

Malachi 3:8–10 – The Windows of Heaven

Perhaps the most famous passage on tithing is found in Malachi:

> "Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Mal 3:8–10).

This text teaches several important truths:

First, withholding the tithe is robbery. God has a prior claim on the first ten percent of our increase; failure to give the tithe is stealing from Him.

Second, faithful tithing brings blessing. God invites His people to test Him. This is a rare

challenge in Scripture. Those who tithe will experience His abundant generosity.

Third, the quid pro quo principle applies. In Israel, the tithe supported the temple services and the teaching of God's Word. Today, it supports the ministry of the church and the proclamation of the gospel.

So, tithing is not optional. Those who rob God are cursed with a curse.

Proverbs 3:9–10 – Overflowing Provision

The book of Proverbs echoes the same principle: "Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prov 3:9–10).

First, we must honor God, then the promised blessings follow. The Hebrew term for wealth (*hone*) refers to one's riches or material possessions, not just agricultural produce. The result is full barns and overflowing vats. This is not a prosperity gospel guaranteeing riches, but it is a biblical principle that God abundantly provides for those who trust and honor Him with their first and best.

The New Testament echoes this same concept. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matt 6:31–33).

"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

Likewise, Paul thanked the Philippians for their generosity, saying: "I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:18–19).

Tithing rests on a firm biblical principle that God multiplies the resources of those who give cheerfully and faithfully.

Hebrews 11:6 – A Test of Faith

Tithing is a unique opportunity to exercise faith. The author of Hebrews notes: "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him" (Heb 11:6).

Tithing is one of the clearest expressions of faith because it acknowledges God as the Provider and places trust in His promise to reward obedience. When Christians tithe, they confess that God exists, that He rules over their lives, and that He is faithful to bless those who seek Him first.

Conclusion

Tithing is not an ancient relic or a burden imposed by the Mosaic Law. It is a timeless principle rooted in God's eternal authority, practiced by the patriarchs, codified in the Law of Moses, affirmed by the prophets, endorsed by Jesus, and upheld by the apostles. Far from being obsolete, tithing is a vital expression of Christian obedience, faith, and gratitude.

From the beginning, God's people recognized that every blessing comes from His hand. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, acknowledging God's greatness. Jacob vowed to tithe, confessing that all his increase came from the Lord. Under the Mosaic Law, Israel's tithes sustained the priests and Levites, funded temple worship, and cared for the poor. The prophets rebuked Israel for withholding the tithe, effectively robbing God (Mal 3:8).

Jesus declared that He did not come to abolish the Law; He expected His disciples to keep and teach the Law (Matt 5:17–19). He commended tithing without neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt 23:23). He did not discard the tithe but insisted that it be practiced with sincerity of heart.

The apostles carried this principle into the life of the church. Paul taught that those who are taught the word should share all good things with the one who teaches (Gal 6:6). He equated Christian ministry with the temple service and noted that the Lord Himself commanded the church to financially support those who preach the gospel (1 Cor 9:14). The writer of Hebrews linked tithing to the eternal priesthood of Christ, showing that the tithe is not merely tied to Levi but to Melchizedek and thus to Christ Himself (Heb 7:1–10).

Objections to tithing collapse under the weight of biblical evidence. It is not limited to Israel, for it predates Moses. It is not restricted to agriculture, for Abraham tithed from the spoils of war, and Jacob promised a tenth of all that he received. It is not legalism, for obedience flows from love. It is not obsolete, because the priesthood of Christ is greater than Aaron.

Tithing is both a duty and a blessing. God commands it as an act of worship, a confession of stewardship, and a means of sustaining gospel ministry. He promises that those who honor Him with their wealth will experience His generosity and blessing (Prov 3:9–10; Mal 3:10; 2 Cor 9:6–8). The tithe trains believers to put God first, to trust His promises, and to partner in His work.

The message is clear: God owns all things, and His people must acknowledge His lordship over their finances. To withhold the tithe is to rob God; to give it is to honor Him. The church of Jesus Christ advances only when believers faithfully bring their tithes, sustaining the ministry of the Word.

In an age where wealth often becomes an idol, tithing stands as a clear declaration that God comes first in a person's life. By giving the tithe, Christians testify that their hope is not in money but in the God who supplies every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

The command endures. The principle abides. The blessing awaits. Christians must tithe.

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Published by Didactic Ministries

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