



Is the Gospel Your Ticket to Wealth?

John 10:10: (NASB) *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

This past week, the Powerball jackpot was up around 500 million dollars! To many it represents a dream of a care-free life full of travel, leisure and luxury.

For some Christians, the mere fact of their Christianity represents the same, as the "Prosperity Gospel" preaches that God does absolutely want you to live the good life - to live with ease and comfort - after all, God WANTS to bless you! So, is the Gospel really our ticket to wealth?

Does sowing the seeds of tithes and offerings reap a harvest of financial freedom? Stay with us!

Where does tithing come from?



First fruits commercial, [Money Hungry Prosperity Preachers](#), [YouTube.com](#)

- *What you do in the first of the year establishes and governs the rest. God places tremendous importance on things that are placed first. So start 2008 in prayer, fasting and by giving God your firstfruits! Proverbs chapter 3 reminds us to honor the Lord with the firstfruits of all our increase. So join Paula White and present to God your 2008 firstfruits offering today. Many give a week's increase. Others a day or a month, but everyone gives their best firstfruits to God. Call our toll-free number on the screen or write to...*



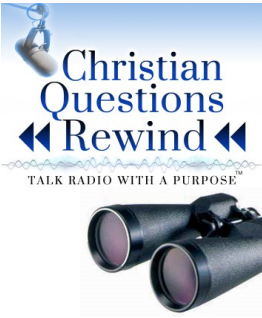
We encourage giving the best to God, but what does that actually mean?

The first account of tithing in the Old Testament:

Sodom and Gomorrah weren't always bad. This is the point in time when they were raided and word got back to Abraham. (*Abram* at the time.) His nephew lot was taken captive with all of the goods.

Genesis 14:11-24: (NASB) ¹¹Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed. ¹²They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom. ¹³Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram. ¹⁴When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people. ¹⁷Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. ¹⁹He blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. **He gave him a tenth of all.** ²¹The king of Sodom said to Abram, Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself. ²²Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth...

So Abram brought back all the goods and the people, including Lot. He was so successful in the attack to bring back what was stolen that a grateful King of Sodom, whose city was just pillaged, goes out to meet Abram. Melchizedek is a well-respected priest, a representative of God and also goes to meet Abram.



Abram gave ten percent of the goods to Melchizedek. This is the very first tithe in the Bible. The King of Sodom was so glad to get his people back that he tells Abram to keep all of the stolen goods, but Abram refuses.

Observations regarding this first occurrence of tithing in the Bible:

- Abram's tithe was not from his own goods, but from the goods of the land of Sodom.
- These goods were what he won back in battle.
- Melchizedek blessed Abram and gave credit for the victory to God.
- Sodom's king offered all of the goods to Abram as just reward for the rescue of the people.
- Abram refused and gave all the rest back to its rightful owners!
- This "tithe" was a one-time offering that cost Abram nothing of his own goods.



Introduction, *The Prosperity Gospel Ruined My Life*, YouTube.com

- *We were a couple that wanted to live the American dream so when the pastor started teaching about business and how God wants you to be prosperous, how to get wealth God's way, we were blown away! We were thinking like, wow, so God wants us to be rich and have a nice house, all these cars, and vacation homes? I mean, both of us came from a background where his family struggled; my family struggled, so we weren't used to having nice things. So to see people say that God blessed them with these things if they would seek Him first...*



God wants to bless you! We agree...but what does that blessing look like?

The Law of the Jews introduced tithing for all the people:

Leviticus 27:30-34: (NASB) ³⁰Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. ³¹If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. ³²For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. ³³He is not to be concerned whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; or if he does exchange it, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. It shall not be redeemed. ³⁴These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.

The tithes were to come from the land that God would give them, and those tithes would be considered holy before God. Tithe here specifically meant ten percent.

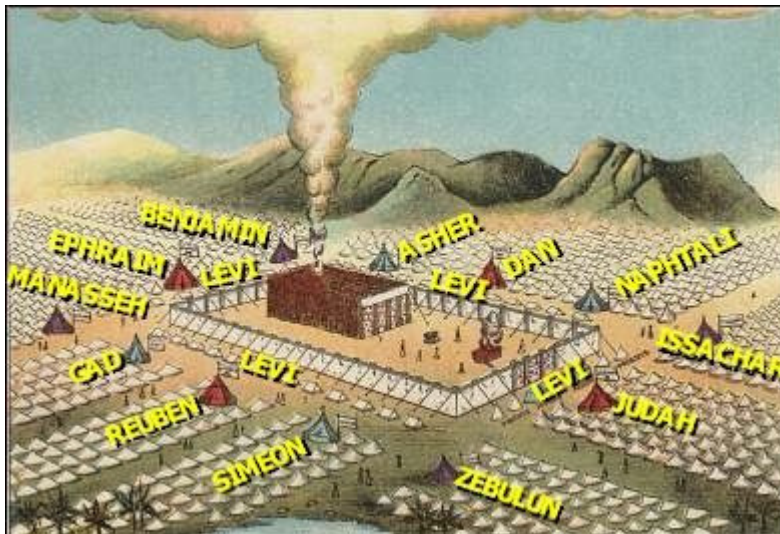
Who received the tithes? And why?

Numbers 18:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰Then the LORD said to Aaron, You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. ²¹To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.

There were twelve tribes in Israel and eleven were given ownership of land. The tribe of Levi was not given any physical inheritance because they were set



aside for special service to the Lord as priests. They were not to be spending time working the soil; rather, they were in charge of worship for the nation. The Jewish people were to give a tenth to support the Levites, who had no way to make a living because they had no land ownership. The Levites relied on everyone else.



A caller suggested: God wants our hearts, minds, souls and our every being. The thought that He needs our money is almost comical. We could never give enough to God to equal that which He deserves. He doesn't want us to give just to get something back.



If you want blessings, pay first, Creflo Dollar

- ... 'cause we need supernatural help! Some of you need to get down and get some communion. Put your bills on the table, take your "seed" and put it aside. Put your bills on one side and hold that cup up and hold that bread up and solicit the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit and sow that seed where God cares for you to sow that seed and you WATCH how God shows up! You have to do this if you're ever going to know if it works! This is the authority that we have been honored with. And if we execute this authority, it works! Do NOT allow your intellect to determine whether or not you will do this. Your intellect won't agree with this. This blows the socket out of your intellect. This does not make sense!



Don't think? Just send the money? Hmmm...we do not agree.

But the Levites also had a responsibility to offer a tenth - how?

Numbers 18:25-30: (NRSV) ²⁵Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁶You shall speak to the Levites, saying: When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that I have given you from them for your portion, you shall set apart an offering from it to the LORD, a **tithe of the tithe**. ²⁷It shall be reckoned to you as your gift, the same as the grain of the threshing floor and the fullness of the wine press. ²⁸Thus you also shall set apart an offering to the LORD from all the tithes that you receive from the Israelites; and from them **you shall give the Lord's offering to the priest Aaron**. ²⁹Out of all the gifts to you, you shall set apart every offering due to the LORD; **the best of all of them is the part to be consecrated**. ³⁰Say also to them: When you have set apart the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the wine press.



When Israel was to give their tithes to the Levites, Israel would count out every tenth cattle that would be arbitrarily set aside. But the Levites had to give the BEST tenth to the Priesthood - Aaron and his sons. So it cost the Levites even a little more than it did the average person.



God: Everything I wanted Him to be, *The Prosperity Gospel Ruined My Life*, [YouTube.com](#)

- *At that time I viewed God as the source for everything I needed and wanted. Whatever I wanted out of life that was positive or good, then God wanted it for me as well. I guess that God was everything I wanted Him to be. If I was going to sacrifice and do all these things, God had things he was going to give me in return.*



Is the Christian life supposed to be about the accumulation of things because God wants to bless you?



Observations - the giving of tithes was limited to the following conditions:

- Tithes were only from the increase from the land of Canaan, either of the harvest or cattle, both of which grew because of the land;
- Tithes were given to those who had no land but who served the people spiritually instead. Those who served had to *also* give the *best* tenth of the total tenth they received.

It is interesting that when preachers today ask for tithes, they do not talk of all of the *other* tithes required of Israel.

There were other tithes on top of the tithes given to the Levites, for a total of three:

1. As already discussed, the tithe given to support the Levites:

Numbers 18:21: (NASB) ²¹*To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.*

2. The tithe was used by the tither to be able to worship the Lord throughout the year: Deuteronomy 14:23: (KJV) *And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place His name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.*

You have heard of “emergency” funds? This was a “worship” fund!

3. A tithe once every three years: Deuteronomy 14:27-29: ²⁷*And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.* ²⁸*At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns,* ²⁹*so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.*



This was to support *those who could not support themselves*:

- i. Levites in your hometown;
- ii. Strangers (people who are not Jews and are struggling) in your hometown;
- iii. Fatherless or orphans in your hometown; and
- iv. Widows in your hometown.

All of these tithes were required by the same Levitical Law!

Did God command us to tithe?

Tithes were *never* money! They were *always* harvest or cattle.

2 Chronicles 31:5-6: ⁵And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the **tithe <4643>** of all things brought they in abundantly. ⁶And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the **tithe <4643>** of oxen and sheep, and the **tithe <4643>** of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid them by heaps.



We will control the money supply, Bill Winston, YouTube.com

- **Folks, we're in a combat zone! Not only we gonna get the wealth, we gonna strip it! Meaning leave them with none of it, that the church gonna have all of it! We gonna be in control of the financial system of this earth!!! Praise God! That came from the Holy Ghost! We are gonna be in control of the financial system of the earth!! (repeated) We're gonna be in control of the money supply! (repeated)**

Jesus did *not* teach tithing for the Christian.

Let's look at another New Testament text that confirms that Jesus could NOT have perpetuated such a ritual:

Hebrews 7:11-14: (NRSV) ¹¹Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood—for the people received the law under this priesthood—what further need would there have been to speak of another priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than one according to the order of Aaron? (If perfection had been obtainable through the Levitical priesthood - and it wasn't - things would have moved on that way.) ¹²For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ¹³Now the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. (The tithes went to the tribe of Levi. Jesus is of the tribe of Judah, not Levi. Different time, different law, different method.) ¹⁴For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

The inability of the Law and its priesthood (due to sin) to bring the people to God caused a change - now there would be a new High Priest and a new priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9-10: (NASB) ⁹But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy



The Apostles made it clear that Jesus made a new rule. Did Jesus tell us to tithe to the new priesthood? NO.

What kind of inheritance was this new priesthood given?

John 14:2-3: (NASB) ²In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

Jesus did not tell his followers that while he was gone, we are to accumulate as much wealth as possible here on earth. He offered a spiritual blessing with the reward to be with him in heaven.

We are supposed to take the *principles* of the Old Testament law and apply them to our lives. We will talk more about how to do that.

 **Tithes - offerings and fear, [The Prosperity Gospel Ruined My Life, YouTube.com](#)**

- *They really stressed tithes and offerings a lot. It made us afraid so we started giving money even when we had overdrawn our account. We just felt like if we didn't do this that God was gonna curse us and we weren't gonna get all these things that we wanted to have. It was scary!*

Notice the core point of tithing - the land of Israel that God gave His people - is no longer a part of the conversation. It is no longer about the land. The Son of Man did not have a place to lay his head - it was now about something broader.

If tithing were a New Testament command or continuation, then consider the following:

- Gentiles were being converted by the thousands;
- Gentiles were pagan and had no sense of the Jewish Law, including tithing. Why isn't the New Testament harping about tithing to these newcomers?
- There were many major conflicts between the Jewish Christians and the Gentiles, such as eating meat offered to idols, circumcision, and other rituals of the Law relating to the Gentiles. The core of Christianity came from the Jews.
- The conference in Acts 15 targeted the most major conflicts between the two cultures - but tithing was NEVER even mentioned at this conference. (The big point was circumcision.)
- Gentiles had never tithed and were *not* being asked to tithe! If tithing was a mandate for Christianity, there would have been much teaching on the matter to all of the new Christians who had no Jewish context.

What did Jesus say about tithing?

This text is about giving, not tithing:


Mark 12:41-44: (NASB) ⁴¹And he sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. ⁴³Calling his disciples to him, he said to them, Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more





than all the contributors to the treasury; ⁴⁴for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on.

It was not about the amount of dollars and cents; it was about the heart behind the giving. What she gave was essentially worthless, but it was all she had. She chose to give that money.

 Give and you preach, Binny Hinn, *Money Hungry Prosperity Preachers*, YouTube.com

- *The only people anywhere who can preach the Gospel are those who have been saved. Think about the judgment of God on those who reject this privilege. That's why Paul said, Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel. The greatest privilege we have been given is the preaching of the Gospel. And when we sow seed - when you give to "God TV," you are preaching the Gospel! Look, you may not be the one going around the world like I am...maybe God hasn't called you to go out and preach to the multitudes, but every time you sow seed, every time you give....*

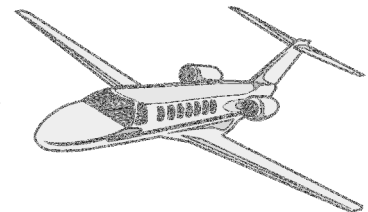


Isn't it interesting that they don't mention money - they refer to it as "sowing the seed," which just happens to be land related?



A caller suggested: Psalms 112:1-3: *Happy are those who fear the Lord; wealth and riches shall be in their homes.* People can seize on tithing as a magic formula because we are afraid of money: We are afraid we won't have enough, and we are also afraid you have to be poor to be holy. Christians can be free of fear. 1 Kings 17:13. The Christian need not fear work, because we do not work for our boss, our company or even our family. We do our daily duty for Jesus. Working perfectly for him can lead to success.

Luke 9:57-58: (NASB) ⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.



So, I guess Jesus didn't have a private jet???

The blessing is not in what you are *getting*, the blessing is what you are *giving*.

 Book of our dreams, *The Prosperity Gospel Ruined My Life*, YouTube.com

- *We had this book where we put all of our dreams. We would have these things that we would recite every day. Me and my husband would hold hands and we would recite these things like, "We believe that we have money and we can feel it in our hands!" We are now awaiting a plan from God by which to accumulate this money and when we see that plan, we will follow it. But it seemed like we were trying to speak them into existence more we were than getting God's guidance on if this was His will.*

The following are some of the New Testament texts used to support Christian tithing and the only places in which Jesus actually discusses the practice.

The only places where Jesus discusses tithing:

Matthew 23:23: (NIV) *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more*



important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

These were Jewish Pharisees that were opposing Jesus. So yes, you are supposed to give your tithes, he was saying, because that is what is required of you by the Law!

Luke 18:10-14: (NIV) ¹⁰Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. ¹³But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, have mercy on me, a sinner. ¹⁴I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

- Who was being spoken about in these texts? (In both cases, the person doing the tithing was a Pharisee.)
- What Law were they under? (The Jewish Law from the Old Testament.)
- Were they Christian? (...no.)
- Is there any indication that they even wanted to be Christian? (No, most of the Pharisees only wanted to condemn Jesus.)
- What level of importance is Jesus putting on tithing in these examples? (It is important, but not THE most important thing. Jesus doesn't even put tithing at the top of the list in relation to Judaism!)

Can Old Testament tithing instructions apply to Christianity?

 **What you have left blesses, Money Hungry Prosperity Preachers, YouTube.com**

- *God said I don't need anything that you lost to bless you. God will always use whatever you got left - the blessing isn't in what you lost, the blessing is in what you got left! And if you will sow what you got left, God said He will give you back...everything that got away from you, everything you lost, everything that slipped away...!*

A lot of preachers hold these next verses over their parishioners' heads and ask, "Are you going to rob God?"

Malachi 1:6-10: (NIV) ⁶A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the LORD Almighty. It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. But you ask, How have we shown contempt for your name? ⁷You place defiled food on my altar. But you ask, How have we defiled you? By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. ⁸When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you? says the LORD Almighty. ⁹Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?--says the LORD Almighty. ¹⁰"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you, says the LORD Almighty, and I will accept no offering from your hands.

Remember how the tithes were given to the Levites - the priesthood - and they were to give the best of those tithes as their own tithe? Guess who is in trouble here! They were self-centered, not God-centered, by keeping the best for themselves.



The average person (same as the parishioner now) was not being chastised - it was the priesthood. (Same as Christian ministers today?)

 **God's "smack-down," Money Hungry Prosperity Preachers, YouTube.com**

- *We felt such a disconnect from Jesus the more and more we pursued all of these things, until one day I think God just smacked both of us. On a certain day we had been on the phone arguing for hours and at that moment both of us said to ourselves, we are not doing God's will. We have to just forget all of this stuff about prosperity and trying to find wealth and possessions and just try and get back to seeking God and find out what God really wants from us.*

Having your allegiance to heaven does not mean accumulating wealth. But you can still serve Christ and work a job. The Apostles advised that we are to take care of our families or we are worse than an unbeliever.

Here is God's anger towards the priesthood specifically:

Malachi 2:1-4: (NIV) ¹And now this admonition is for you, O priests. ²If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name, says the LORD Almighty, I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me. ³Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. ⁴And you will know that I have sent you this admonition so that my covenant with Levi may continue, says the LORD Almighty.

Malachi 2:7-8: (NIV) ⁷For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction--because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty. ⁸But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi, says the LORD Almighty.



As you listen to the Prosperity Gospel, are the preachers giving instructions as a messenger of the Lord Almighty or as a messenger of accumulation and "me first?"

Who is doing the robbing in this next text? The priesthood!

Malachi 3:8-10: (NASB) ⁸Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! ¹⁰Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may 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 it overflows.

Where were the Christian storehouses during the writing of the New Testament? There weren't any.

Preachers will say the *storehouse* here is their church. The problems with that are: a) tithes were never money; b) this is talking about the Old Testament Law only, and c) the true church has nothing to do with a physical building or real estate.

But how does the Bible define the "church" in the New Testament? It is the people serving God. So there is no physical *storehouse* to bring the tithe there.

Acts 20:28: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.



THIS is what the prosperity of the Gospel is...pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

Habakkuk 3:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹The Lord GOD is my strength...

**So is the Gospel your ticket to wealth?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**

**And now even more to think about...
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**



First Malachi in a fuller context:

Malachi 1:6-10: (NIV) ⁶A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the LORD Almighty. It is you, O priests, who show contempt for my name. But you ask, How have we shown contempt for your name? ⁷You place defiled food on my altar. But you ask, How have we defiled you? By saying that the Lord's table is contemptible. ⁸When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you? says the LORD Almighty. ⁹Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?--says the LORD Almighty. ¹⁰Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you, says the LORD Almighty, and I will accept no offering from your hands.

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Malachi 3:2-3: (NIV) ²But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness,

Malachi 3:8-12: (NASB) ⁸Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! ¹⁰Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may 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 it overflows. ¹¹Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in



the field cast its grapes, says the LORD of hosts. ¹²All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land, says the LORD of hosts.

This text has NOTHING to do with Christians in regard to tithing. It is not even *primarily* meant to focus on the people of Israel at large, but to focus specifically on the Levites and particularly the *Priesthood* of Israel. The book of Malachi is written as a conversation between God and the Levites and it is meant to bring their accountability of the nation to the forefront...

Key points regarding Malachi: It was addressed to the Priesthood of Israel to tell them of their sins:

- Showed contempt for God's name;
- Defiled God's altar with sick and crippled sacrifices;
- They are to be cursed as a result;
- They violated their covenant with Levi;
- They have been unfaithful;
- They needed purification;
- They were robbing God; and
- They could change the pattern by bringing the WHOLE tithe into the storehouse.

The "church" could not possibly be the "storehouse" for there were NO buildings that Christianity owned for hundreds of years!

Second, the context of the "other" tithes that seem to be ignored by those who believe in Christian tithing:

The tithe - once every three years for:

- a. Levites in your hometown
- b. Strangers in your hometown
- c. Fatherless or orphans in your hometown
- d. Widows in your hometown

All of these tithes were required by the same Levitical law!

Deuteronomy 14:22-29: (NIV) ²²*Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. ²³Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. ²⁴But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), ²⁵then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. ²⁶Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or*



other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice. ²⁷And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own. ²⁸At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, ²⁹so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

The Apostle Paul, though able to be supported by the Church, did not make it a habit to do so:

Acts 20:33-35: (NRSV) ³³*I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. ³⁵In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

- **Tithing by the poor**

Those who did without were protected, not required to do things that were beyond their means.

Deuteronomy 24:19-21: (NRSV) ¹⁹*When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings. ²⁰When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. ²¹When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.*

Deuteronomy 14:27-29: (NRSV) ²⁷*As for the Levites resident in your towns, do not neglect them, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you. ²⁸Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns; ²⁹the Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake.*