



Do Tithes and Offerings Belong in Christianity?

Numbers 18:20: (NASB) *Then 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.*



What is the business of Christianity? What are we here to do, and how is it supposed to be accomplished? To cut through all of the rhetoric - what does it monetarily cost to follow Jesus - is it ten percent of your income? More? How much of our Christian message, method and motivation is based (should be based) on our church's and our pastor's financial statements? As with any issue regarding Christian belief, there are countless ways that we can interpret this answer. When Israel was established by God as His chosen nation, there was a definitive system put in place that actually supported the priesthood and the tribe of Levi. With such a

clear path of tithes and support in place, many Christians firmly believe that we, as Jesus' disciples, should follow that same path. On the other hand, many Christians believe that an entirely opposite approach is more appropriate. Who is right?



Where did tithing come from, and how did it originally work? The original tithing event took place in Genesis and was very different than the later tithing of Israel under the Law. The first context was a war between several kings in which Lot, Abram's nephew, was captured.

Abram responded by fighting for Lot's freedom and also recapturing Sodom's goods after they were taken:

Genesis 14:16-18,21-23: (NASB) *¹⁶He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people. ¹⁷...the king of Sodom went out to meet him... ¹⁸And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He gave him a tenth of all (to Melchizedek). ...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, ²³that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours.*



Observations from this first occurrence of tithing in the Bible:

- Abram's tithe was not from his own goods, but the goods of Sodom that he won back in battle. It did not cost him his own personal possessions.
- Melchizedek blessed Abram and gave credit for victory to God.
- Sodom's king offered all of the goods to Abram as a 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.

Tithing and offerings in some Christian circles gets out of hand. Should it exist?



Televangelist Jesse Duplantis and the \$54 million Jet, CBS Evening News, May 29, 2018

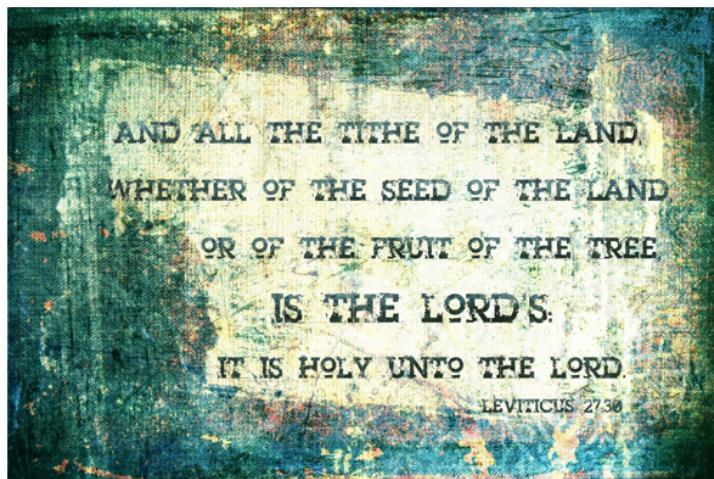
- (Jeff Glor) *The meek may inherit the earth, but a bold preacher has his eye on the heavens, and he's asking his flock to get him there in style. Here's Tony Dokoupil.*
- (Jesse Duplantis) *I really believe that if Jesus was physically on the earth today he wouldn't be riding a donkey. Think about that for a minute. He'd be in an airplane preaching the gospel all over the world.*
- (Tony Dokoupil) *Televangelist Jesse Duplantis is hoping to take the word of Jesus to "new heights" with help from a 54 million dollar private jet.*
- (Jesse Duplantis) *I've owned three different jets in my life, and I use them - just burning them up for the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- (Tony Dokoupil) *Duplantis runs a ministry and church outside New Orleans. In a video posted to his website last week, he asked his followers for help funding the aircraft.*
- (Jesse Duplantis) *We believe in God for a brand new Falcon 7x so we can go anywhere in the world, one stop.*
- (Tony Dokoupil) *We were unable to reach Jesse Duplantis for comment, and we don't know how much money he's raised so far. Jeff, in the video he acknowledges that some people believe that preachers should not have private jets, but he believes in using every outlet.*
- (Jeff Glor) *This would be his fourth jet?*
- (Tony Dokoupil) *Number four, if he gets it.*
- (Jeff Glor) *Fifty-four million. Alright! Tony, thank you.*

Tithing was formally introduced much later, as Israel was being set up as God's chosen nation:

Leviticus 27:30, 32-33: (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... 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.

God announced that a tenth part from the land would belong to Him. The method to divide the flocks was *whatever passes under the rod* - simply by counting, the random tenth one was separated.

The tithes were to come from the land that God gave them, and those tithes would be considered holy before God.



"Tithing Takeaway"
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TITHING was a holy recognition of God and His Authority.



We now know why the tithes were given, but how did they work? Who got what?

The tithes and offerings of the Old Testament were simple in objective but often more complex in administration. We need to look for the bottom line regarding Israel in their giving and receiving of these gifts. As we focus on the details, we will find clarity and a basis for comparing to Christian giving.

The question, *Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions*

- *So let's go right into the first question: Do pastors in churches always talk about money? Shouldn't that be a personal decision? They write, if I go, I'll give what I feel I have to give, have capabilities to give. If I don't go, then I don't think I should be made to feel that I should still give. It's kind of like attendance. If you come to the movie you've got to pay for your ticket.*

Throughout our podcast, we will drop in on a group of pastors discussing tithing. Here they ask, "If I do not show up for church, do I still have to pay the money?"

Israel's first official "tithe and offering" point - Aaron and his family were different:

Numbers 18:8-9: (NASB) *⁸Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment. ⁹This shall be yours from the most holy gifts reserved from the fire; every offering of theirs, even every grain offering and every sin offering and every guilt offering, which they shall render to Me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons.*

Aaron was in charge of all of the offerings from the people. God called it a *perpetual allotment*. Aaron would be receiving a windfall, right?

(Source: Bible commentary by Jamieson Fausset and Brown) A recapitulation is made in this passage of certain perquisites (perks) specially appropriated to the maintenance of the priests. They were parts of the votive and freewill offerings, including both meat and bread, wine and oil, and the first-fruits, which formed a large and valuable item.

The priesthood received these things so they could live off of them and serve God and the people. Who wouldn't want to be Aaron?

Now for the catch:

Numbers 18:20: (NASB) *Then 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.*

Aaron and his family are therefore entirely dependent upon the people. Their ability for service was dependent upon the people supporting them. They were to earn nothing in terms of crops, herds, flocks - nothing other than what the people gave them. Instead of, "Wow, I have lots of stuff," it was more like, "I hope the people make their offering today so we can eat!"

They did not have the biggest house, the grandest pastures and were not supposed to plant or harvest crops. They were reliant on others because they were focused on other activities. They were the bridge between God and the people.



 **That's on you, Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions**

- *Well, sir, I did a little research on this and I found a quote. Jesus talked more about money - 16 of the 38 parables were concerned with how to handle money and possessions. Matter of fact, one quote says he talked more about money than he did about heaven and hell combined. So, I think if we look at money as just a tool - but I made up my mind. I've been in the ministry 40 years, I made up my mind a long time ago. People already know what they want to give before they come, before they come to church. So I'm not going to make it a begrudging or a twist of the arm. Hey, this is a time of worship. If you want to worship God with your giving, fine. If you don't, that's as they say - that's on you.*

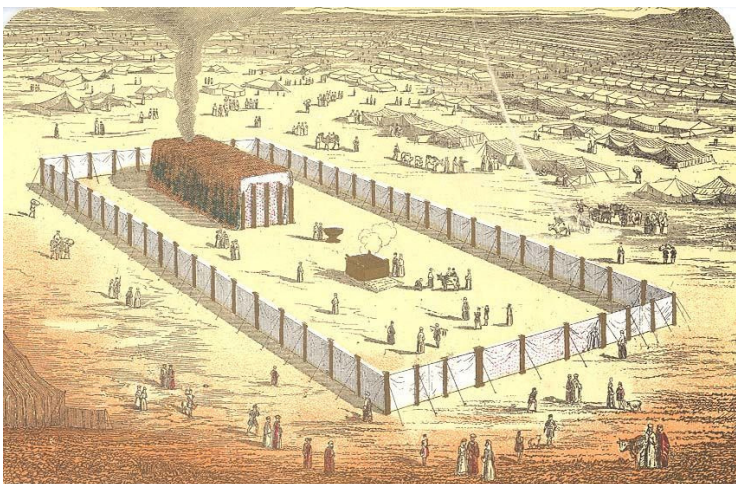
Jesus talked a lot about money, but what does that prove? He did not talk about giving money to him or his followers. He talked about money, goods, things, harvest and abundance because that is what the people were concerned with in everyday life. Jesus taught how to live spiritually with stories about real life. He spoke mostly about how to manage your life on a God-honoring level.

“That’s on you,” is condescending. Is Christian worship that simple - dollars in/blessings out but no dollars in - that’s on you? We do not believe this is what the Bible teaches.

Numbers 18:21-23: (NASB) ²¹To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service... of the tent of meeting. ²²The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die.

The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again - earlier during the Passover deliverance out of Egypt, the firstborns were specially called out and saved from death. The concept of the firstborn as a special group of people was going to now be transferred to the tribe of Levi, as representatives of that original group of firstborn. (**Numbers 3:45**) The tribe of Levi was set aside to do only spiritual work, and would be supported by a tithe.

²³Only the Levites shall perform 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 sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance.



THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

What was the “**tent of meeting**”?

Originally it was the tent where God would speak with Moses (**Exodus 33:7-9**).

Later, God commanded the people of Israel to construct a special place where all of their religious services and ceremonies were instituted.

This was called the **Tabernacle**, (meaning “the dwelling place” in Hebrew) a portable structure that included such articles as the Ark of the Covenant and Table of Showbread. See **Exodus 25-31** and **35-40**.



The tribe of Levi was just like Aaron and his family - they were recipients of the tenth of what everyone else gave, but they received no inheritance. They would spend their days doing the work of God as the go-between for the people and the priesthood.

(Source: Bible commentary by Adam Clarke)

- The Levites had the tenth of all the productions of the land. (the tithe)
- They had 48 cities, each forming a square of 4,000 cubits.
- They had 2,000 cubits of ground around each city.
- Total of the land they possessed: 53,000 acres.
(This sounds like a lot of land, but it was less than half of one percent.)
- They had the first-fruits and certain parts of all the animals killed in the land.

For the Levites, it was not just about receiving goods. They had a special requirement that was different from the rest of the people:

Numbers 18:25,26,29: (NASB) ²⁵Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁶...speak to the Levites and say to them, When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, **a tithe of the tithe**... ²⁹Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them.

The extra requirement: Even the Levites had to give a tenth of what they received - *a tithe of a tithe*. They could not give just a random tenth like the people from the other tribes; they had to pick the best of the best of what they had received to honor the Lord.

(Source: Bible commentary by Adam Clarke, continued) Canaan contained about 11,264,000 acres; therefore the portion possessed by the Levites was rather less than... one to two hundred and twelve; for 11,264,000 divided by 53,000, (equals less than half of 1%) ...small proportion for a whole tribe that had consented to annihilate its political existence, that it might wait upon the service of God.

(Note: The bolded word “all” below corrects what was stated in the podcast.) To get perspective, assume all of the regular tribes received 100 acres for their living space. One percent of a hundred acres is one acre, one half of one percent is a half-acre. The Levites’ portion was tiny in comparison.



How many Levites were there? Numbers 1:47-49 forbid that they be included in the census, but the other tribes had between 32,200 (Manasseh) and 74,600 (Judah) “fighting men,” not including women and children.

There was a separate census taken of the clans of the Levites (the sons of Levi - Gershon, Kohath and Merari) in Numbers 3:14-39. The number of males one month or older was 22,000.



In summary, even the receivers of the tithe had to give a tithe. They had little space and owned nothing other than what they used. Being on the receiving end of tithes did not produce wealth. They were wholly dedicated to doing the work of the Lord rather than pursuit of material gain. Theirs was a life of sacrifice and service.



"Tithing Takeaway"

The Levites and Aaron's family had NO land possession and relied on others for simple support.

Wow! The Levites themselves then gave away the BEST 10% of the support they received!

The Old Testament precedent is to support the priesthood, so does tithing belong in Christianity?

This really is the big question. Determining whether tithing should be a Christian practice is dependent on several things. First, is the reason and method for tithing transferrable? Second, if we do transfer it, are we taking into account all aspects of the practice, or are we being selective based on convenience?

The Levites not having any title to the land was a future picture of the heavenly reward given to those "firstborn" belonging to God.

The existence of the Levites was humble, simple and probably cramped. If we want to transfer tithing into Christianity, is the person or organization we give our tithe to humble and simple like the Levites?

Why tithe? To support the priesthood. Why support them? They had no worldly inheritance. Does this translate to Christianity today? Do those who receive the tithes own "stuff"? Do they have big houses?

 **Faith or feelings, Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions**

- *Here's the thing, if you say I should be able to give what I am able to give, fine, that's fine, but don't ever pray another time to God, because obviously you've got this game on lock down. You don't need God. You are able and capable. You are the "great you think you are." But what we need is a Great I Am and that is always by faith. We don't do according to what we think we can do, but by the faith we have. We don't give according to the way we think we have, because again, do you want faith or do you want your feelings?*



Because your feelings didn't go to the cross, but faith took Jesus to the cross so that you could have that to say that I believe God can do the impossible.

We interpret this as insulting those who give within their means. A Christian is supposed to use the spirit of a sound mind and act in accordance with the will of God in proportion to what He has provided for us. These pastors seem to be discouraging the right to prayer if one is trying to live within their means.

Here is the New Testament way of doing it:

Acts 11:29: (NASB) *And in the 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.*

If any of the disciples had means, they were to help the brethren who did not. The Apostle Paul saw the need of the Jewish Christians who had no food. He rallied the different Gentile churches to help the brethren. Giving should be to support those in our congregation who really need it.

How did they originally tithe?

Leviticus 27:30: (NASB) *Thus 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.*

The tithes came from the land God gave them and would be considered holy before God.

Because tithes were products of their God-given land, they were NEVER money:

2 Chronicles 31:5-6: (NASB) *⁵As soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all. ⁶The sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed them in heaps.*

Tithes were tangible products related back to the land, not gold, silver or coins.

Does this translate to Christianity today?

Some would say that money was not in use then - actually it was common:

Genesis 23:15-16: (NIV) *¹⁵Listen to me, my lord; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver, but what is that between me and you? Bury your dead. ¹⁶Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants.*

A monetary system was in existence long before Israel was established as a nation.

Why was tithing about the land? Because God promised them land.

(Paraphrasing from Deuteronomy 26:9): "I will deliver you from slavery and bring you to a land flowing with milk and honey. If you follow Me when you are in this land, I will bless you in basket and store and the land will produce. Because this land is what I gave to you, give 10 percent back to honor Me." It was a perfect give-and-take.

Does this translate to Christianity today? Who shows up today and tithes 55 ears of corn, a goat or a basket of tomatoes?



 **God guides and provides, *Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions***

- *Putting myself in her shoes, I agree with her that offerings at churches can go way too long. It's almost like instead of giving cheerfully, and I totally get this, they're giving out of compulsion because they're being primed and pumped. And, like my husband says, if people are going to come and give generously, they've already decided that before you get up there and go on with a 30-minute offering. And that's how pastors get that "all they do is talk about money." I mean, really, where God guides, He provides, and people aren't our resource anyway, right? So we don't have to put the pressure on the people. We put the pressure on our God who is faithful, but we teach with wisdom the tithes and the offerings.*

"Teach with wisdom the tithes and the offerings." We challenge that statement because we challenge its basis. The basis of tithing was entirely different than what is done in some churches today. To that pastor I would say, "Do you have a retirement plan saved up? How much stuff do you have? You shouldn't have a house, you should live in a one-room apartment, mirroring the way the Levites did it."

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

1. The tithe given to support the Levites. (Numbers 18:21; already discussed)
2. The tithe to be used by the giver to be able to worship the Lord throughout the year. (Deuteronomy 14:23) This was like an "emergency worship fund."
3. (Deuteronomy 14:27-29) A third tithe given 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 and all tithes were "land-based."

God was teaching his people to be generous, because He was generous to them by giving them this beautiful land that was blessed. In other words, "Take the blessings you have been given and share them with those who need it. Support those who help you to worship me."



If we are going to transfer the tithing concept from the Old Testament to current day, what happened to the rest of the tithes that were required?



Tithes were *never* money - they were *always* harvest or cattle!

Does this translate to Christianity today?



"Tithing Takeaway"

- **The true tithing template is NOT based on money, but the bounty of the land and cattle.**
- **It was given to the priests who had no earthly inheritance.**
- **Other tithes were for others in need.**
- **None of this translates to current Christian tithing practices!**

In Malachi 3, God promises to shower blessings when tithes are given. Does that NOT count for Christians?

If we are going to dismiss tithing from Christian practice then we need to have an explanation for God's promises of great blessing based on the practice. As usual, we need to understand the context of the promise. With that comes understanding of the problem, which is surprising.

The Promise

Malachi 3:10: (NASB) *Bring 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.*

Doesn't this sound amazing? Some churches today say that if we tithe, we will be overwhelmed by the blessing of God!

It is a simple equation, right? Tithes in the storehouse = unlimited blessing. More on this in a moment...



FICA and consequences, Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions

- *I like what she says, I should give what I feel in my heart. Now, I believe the tithe, that's kind of like FICA, that's your federal income tax. That comes off the top. That belongs to God. Your offering is totally up to you. What you choose to give is what you choose to give, but remember, your choices are free, but your consequences are not. People can choose what they want. You can choose to give, you can choose not to give, but the consequences of holding too much, or not giving the way that God tells you to, those consequences are already locked into your seat. So, you have to determine in your own heart what has God purposed in your heart to give? Let every man give as he purposes in his own heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. So, I believe that with each person, you should determine already in your heart. If somebody said there's 30 people out there that are called to give a thousand dollars. If God is not speaking to me, then I'm not one of the 30, and that doesn't mean that you are not going to get blessed. You still can be blessed as long as you're obedient with the Spirit.*
- *But if you're one of the 30, you'd better step up, is what I say.*



They are insisting a 10 percent tithe is the base requirement. A consequence of fear seems to be pushed upon the congregation. Jesus and the Apostles never spoke of fear as a consequence of not contributing, as this is not a scriptural principle.

If we want to use these Malachi Scriptures to try and extend necessary tithing to Christians (and we shouldn't), then it is important to know WHO is being reprimanded right before that promise and for WHAT.

The Problem

Malachi 1:6,8,10: (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...

Before that promise of abundance was given, it was the priesthood who got in the way of God's blessing.

⁸ ...When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong?... 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.

Who was robbing God? The Levite priesthood was manipulating the system for their personal gain, giving half-heartedly. They were offering the crippled and diseased animals when they were supposed to offer the best of the best.

Pastors to trust God, Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions

- *Who are you listening to? So, if there is a pastor that is going out that way - that's between him and God. I'm going to give between me and God. Now you said something a minute ago, Pastor Amy, are the pastors trusting God? Because the fact is if I've got need for resources in my church, am I trusting God more than the people? I better be trusting God more than the people that are in the seats. The other side of this is there are greedy pastors out there that have a focus more on the resources. You said something about however many parables - in the overall Bible there are over 2,350 references to money and possessions. Second only topic referenced to God himself. So, there is a battle between what wants to be "God" in our lives for the pastor and for the hearer.*

When Israel was established, everything was about possessions - how to divide them, manage them, take care of them, what belongs to God - the Law was a handbook of how to live. When we begin to apply tithes in a Christian environment where they do not belong, we are mixing the Old Testament with the New Testament. The New Testament is for the spiritually-minded, not the earthly-minded.

THE CONSEQUENCE

God's anger towards the priesthood:

Malachi 2:1-3: (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 rebuke your descendants - this is serious! This was a wrong big enough that their descendants would suffer. The priesthood primarily was to blame for



misusing a God-honoring system. We submit that tithing in Christianity today easily becomes a man-honoring system and not a God-honoring system. It does not look anything like the tithe-offering setup in the Bible.

Their selfish arrogance had a ripple effect on the nation:

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.*

Does this translate to Christianity today? (Unfortunately it does. Often the clergy end up misusing the tithes.)



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... 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.*

With the context of the priesthood manipulating the system, it has a whole different meaning. "Get the priesthood in order, do things correctly and then you can receive a blessing."

Tithe-believing Christians believe that the storehouse is today's church building:

Acts 20:28: (KJV) *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the **church <1577>** of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Church: Strong's #1577, *ekklēsia*, a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): - assembly, church

The Apostle Paul is talking about spiritually supporting each other. *To feed the church of God* - the people, the flock. When you are feeding the church, you are not feeding a building. You are bringing the food to the flock itself, the followers of Christ. The building happens to be a shelter. The bottom line is, the "church" exists wherever two or three are gathered in Jesus' name. It can be in a home, it can be in a field, it can be in a synagogue. Where two or three true believers are gathered, there is the church.

How many buildings did Jesus and the apostles build in their day? None. They built "the church," the people, individuals to follow Christ, not buildings.

If you want to take this Malachi text and "Christianize" it, it is the *priesthood* robbing God, and the Christian storehouse is not some building, but heaven.



The challenge of tithes misuse was on the backs of the priesthood, not the people.

Those who today quote these verses as motivation for people to give are seriously misquoting!

Some quote these verses and tell their congregation they are not doing a good enough job at giving. But the text says it was the priesthood who was not doing the right thing - don't blame the people.

We do not have a "Christian storehouse." Our inheritance is not here; it is in heaven. The Levites were concerned with spiritual matters, as should we. We should not be looking for what God will give us if we give to our church.

**The Old Testament is clear on tithing.
What did Jesus and the Apostles teach about Christian tithing?**

Understanding the Jewish tithing process is eye-opening, because we see that Christianity does not - and actually cannot - honestly follow it. The only other place to go with this is to examine what Jesus directed his followers to do and what the Apostles directed Christians to do after Pentecost.

The following is one of a few New Testament texts used to support Christian tithing:

Luke 18:10-12: (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.

- This is a parable to show whose heart was in the right condition to be blessed of God - and it was NOT the one giving the tithes!
- Was Jesus speaking to Christians? NO! They were Jews, and the person doing the tithing was a Pharisee. Jesus used Jewish culture because he was speaking to a Jewish audience who knew their own Jewish Law. He used this to teach them.
- This is not promoting tithing - again, the one who was tithing was the one with the bad attitude. The one who was not tithing was the one who was blessed!





 **It takes money, *Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions***

- *In the gospels alone it says an amazing one out of every ten verses deal directly with the subject of money. Just in the gospels alone. So there's something about it.*
- *You know what, practically speaking, it takes money to build the church. Practically speaking, it takes money to build an organization. We're about God's business on earth, and I love the Scripture from King David, "Zeal for His house consumes me." What about whenever he's giving it all over to his son Solomon, and he says, "With all of my resources I have provided for the house of my God." Let's come to God's house with that kind of heart. My dad did the same thing as a mechanical engineer. He said, "With all of my resources, I'm going to build God's house," and with that same passion that's what we do. We don't give because we have to; we give because we get to.*

We like that last phrase, "We don't give because we have to; we give because we get to." But if we are building the house of God, we are supposed to be building Christlikeness, inward character, the fruit of the spirit...we are to build up the people.



In the New Testament *tithe*, *tithes* and *tithing* are only mentioned by Jesus relating to the Jewish people and the Law, and in Hebrews recounting the same.

Tithing does not come up in all of the writings of the Apostles.

1 Timothy 6:3-5: (NASB) ³*If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions... out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.*

The Apostle Paul never brought up tithing. He was the apostle to the Gentiles who would have had no Jewish background. All of these hordes of people coming into Christ would have no experience with Jewish Law and Jewish tradition. If tithing was a Christian principle, it would have been first and foremost in all of his teachings. Instead, it was about developing the understanding of truth, godliness, mercy and sacrifice. It was not about money; it was about them - they were the church he was investing his time and effort to build.

There is not a word in the Epistles about tithing. Why is that so?

James 1:27: (NASB) *Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*

There is a generosity factor but also a sanctifying factor for us to keep away from the mess and dirt of the world.

 **Don't eat the seed, *Why Do Pastors Ask for Money, Hard Questions***

- *As we close this segment, here's the truth. If you're in financial distress, it's because you're not managing the assets that God has given you. One of the biggest ways the devil gets you in financial distress is by you holding on to*



your resources. You're holding onto the seed. You're eating the seed. You're not planting the seed in the garden of faith. In the garden of faith, Pastor Jay, is where the return comes.

- *Amen, and if you eat the seed all that is left is the dung. (laughter) I'm just being real. There's nothing left, but if you sow the seed the harvest will come forth.*
- *What you learn - the secret of giving and receiving - once that becomes real to you - it's real to me - I know that I can't out-give God, because God's proven it to me.*



They are talking about "seed" and applying that as money. When Jesus talks about the seed it was a metaphor for the word of God in the Parable of the Sower. The word, the Gospel, the Good News is the seed. Turning the gospel of salvation for all mankind into dollars and cents is wrong.

Give a little, get a little. Give a lot, get a lot. What and to whom?

For the TRUE church:

2 Corinthians 9:6-15: (NASB) ⁶Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

The context is about taking up a collection for destitute Christians - not about supporting a ministry. At that time, there was a serious issue with the Christians in Jerusalem who were literally starving and needed help.

⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;...

This is all about the poor and our support for those in our fellowship in difficulty. He encouraged those in Corinth to give generously. God promises to reward us with spiritual lessons, growth and maturity - not money!

¹⁰Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; ¹¹you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.

Aha! Enriched in everything - so I DO get something, right? If we are looking at Christianity with that kind of thinking, we are in the wrong religion. Christianity is about living like Jesus.

Here is the result of giving:

¹²For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God.

It is not just helping those in need who are literally starving, but it is creating a wave of praise and thanksgiving. It is about creating internal change, looking up to God in honor, glory and thanks.

Here is the payoff for the givers:

¹³Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, ¹⁴while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!



The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians to give generously. The reward was not multiplied money back; it was prayers and in turn spiritual maturity and blessing. This is what comes from our giving - the provoking of praise, faithfulness and fellowship.

"Tithing Takeaway"



Christian giving and support is not in any way defined by tithing; it is a matter of the heart driven by the spirit of God.

Any support for any ministry is only to supply BASIC NEEDS.

Tithing is a wonderful Old Testament teaching, but the New Testament tells us to give from the heart. The connection of tithing to Christianity is simply the principle of giving. There is no specific percentage of income or tithe required.

*So, do tithes and offerings belong in Christianity?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on October 1, 2018:
Ep. #1041: "How Do You Bloom Where You Are Planted?"





Bonus Material

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. – **Winston Churchill**

Jesus did NOT teach tithing for the Christian.

Another New Testament text that confirms that Jesus could NOT have perpetuated such a ritual:

Hebrews 7:11-13: (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? 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 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.

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.

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

- Gentiles were being converted in droves.
- Gentiles were pagan and had no sense of the Jewish Law, including tithing.
- This caused many major conflicts, especially concerning the rituals of the Law relating to the Gentiles.
- The conference in Acts 15 targeted the most major conflicts between the two cultures.
- Tithing was NEVER even mentioned at this conference.
- Gentiles had never tithed and were NOT being asked to tithe.

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.

Galatians 5:18-21: (NASB) ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just



as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Why isn't lack of tithing mentioned?

Next text partially quoted in the podcast:

1 Timothy 6:3-12: (NASB) ³*If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, ⁴he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.*

We really need to ask ourselves, what is the clear will of God regarding the tithing question?

⁶*But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

The evidence has become undeniable against seeking earthly gain under the umbrella of Christianity. Undeniable that is, if we take the New Testament in its context:

¹¹*But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

Let us place our unwavering faith in the righteousness of God:

James 4:1-4: (NASB) ¹*What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Whom do you serve?

James 4:6-10: (NASB) ⁶*But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁷Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

God's grace will win in the end, not our emotions or our attempts to get.

One other example of Jesus talking about tithing - again, context matters:

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 cummin. 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.*