

RUSSELL SANDERS

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TO GIVE AND BE GIVEN – LESSON 4

THE TITHE – PART 2 – THE LAW

Yesterday we wrote of Abraham's tithe given to God's high priest Melchizedek, an early incarnate manifestation of Yeshuah (Jesus). Today we look at the law of God given to Moses called the Mosaic Law, or simply "the law."

Israel's tribe of Levi was separated on purpose from the other tribes. They received no land like the other tribes received. They were set apart for priestly functions. They took care of the tabernacle/temple. With no land, they could have no crops, no herds, and no way to sustain themselves in the normal ways of life and support. So, how did they live?

All the people of the other tribes were commanded to bring their tithe, the tenth part of all their resources to the house of God. This tithe supported the Levitical priesthood and the needs of the house of God. Exodus 18:21 says, ***"Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth (tithe) in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."*** Verse 22 adds, ***"...it shall be a statute (a law) forever throughout your generations..."*** The command for the tithe to support God's work is a never-ending instruction of God; it is God's portion to advance His works.

The Levites were also instructed to give a tithe of their own from what they received from the people. Yes, they had to tithe from the tithe which they received.

Exodus 18:26 says it. ***Thus, speak unto the Levites and say unto them, 'When ye take...the tithe I have given you...then shall ye offer up a heave-offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.'*** The people's tithe came to the Levites for their support and service, but they in turn took a tithe (a tenth) of that and gave it as an offering directly to God.

Leviticus 27:30-34 lets us know that we are to tithe on everything that comes to us. For Israel that meant even the very seed, which is sown in the ground, the harvest from the ground, the animals born to the flocks, or anything that came into their possession. Verse 31 says that if a man were to "redeem" (withhold for his own use) the tithe, then he must add an additional twenty percent to it when it is given.

The twelve tribes of Israel (Joseph was split into two tribes) were scattered about in Canaan. This meant it could be a long journey to the "tabernacle of the congregation" to give the tithe, especially when you had to drive animals there to be given. God made allowance for this; they did not have to go there with the tithe every year. They could save it up and take it every third year. All the increase from the three-year period would determine the tithe to be taken. This is written in Deuteronomy 26:12.

The tithe still belongs to God today. This is the primary support for His work on earth through His church. Offerings are to be added over and above it, often designated for specific purposes or organizations.

Tomorrow we will go to the New Testament to see what Jesus said about it and Paul's comments.