

The Truth About Tithing

John 8:32 NKJV - "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Yes, and we are about to enter the Matrix. Will you take the red pill, or the blue?

Let me first begin by saying that giving to your church is commendable. Giving sacrificially is even more so... but only if it is with a willing heart and a clear understanding of just how God set down His precedent for giving.

Exodus 25:2 NKJV - "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.

Exodus 35:5 NKJV - "Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze;

2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJV - So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Most, and I say that with a heavy heart because of all the "making the Father's house a house of merchandise" (John 2:16) that goes on in today's modern churches makes me ashamed to be called a Christian sometimes. Every time I am speaking with someone and I tell that person(s) that I am a Christian, I feel I have to qualify it. I have to add something like, "but not like the Christians you hear about every day." And depending on the conversation, I have to continue explaining to try to set myself apart from today's Christian.

I don't easily point a finger or judge someone incorrectly because I, too, once traveled the wide path. After finding the narrow path and walking it for quite some time, I now see things as they truly are. That is a burden. That makes a heavy heart. And for those of you that have similar feelings, we are in good company. See Ezekiel 9; Revelation 7.

As we get closer and closer to the Second Coming, I see more and more people are beginning to see the problems in the Christian church and especially in their own particular denomination. The things I used to speak out about 25-30 years ago seem to be common knowledge to many today. I see a lot of people exposing the fraud of modern pastors now. At this point, I don't think those pastors are misled, but rather deceiving. See Matthew 24:4.

I spend a lot of time in a "Christian" coffee shop here in Nacogdoches, Texas. I hear and see things from professing Christians every single day that impugn God's character. The coffee shop itself plays music with all kinds of profanity from time to time. I know of two people who have complained to the owner. Still, nothing has changed. I know, I know, go someplace else if you don't like it. I agree. But in this case, it's a lot like politics, I have to choose the lesser of two evils. Take a "scroll" down the pages of christianpost.com and look at all of the injustices and decadent behavior coming from prominent pastors and churches all over the nation, and the world. Check out Barna's numbers of 65% of "Christian" women having abortions as opposed to 35% of non-Christians. Or 50-52% of divorces happening within the professing "Christian" community. Do your own research. There is almost no

difference between believers and non-believers... in any category. What it must look like to the unbelievers... that makes me ashamed.

And that brings me back to the tithing issue. It is the modern day church's version of past Catholic indulgences... not that they are all that past. So let's dive in and see what we can learn about it. And maybe make a small positive change somewhere.

One of the first things you want to do when you start to really study something is to define your terms. The way that we study at AWA (Apostles Way Assembly) is to follow a set of basic rules for interpreting the Scripture of the Bible. We do not hold to any doctrine that Scripture doesn't clearly support. We let the Bible define its own terms. The Bible defines sin as the transgression of law (1 John 3:4; 5:17). And in the Bible the use of the word 'sin' has to do with violating any law that God has past down for people to observe and/or honor. When someone breaks a law(s) that God has decreed for certain people to or not to do, that person(s) is sinning.

With this being the definition of 'sin,' there are a lot of pastors, priests, evangelists, theologians, whatever you want to call them, who are 'sinning' on a daily basis in regard to their use or better yet, misuse, of the biblical tithe. Although an old English word, both the Hebrew and Greek words for "tithe" simply mean "a tenth." The Bible tells us who were to pay tithes. It tells us who were to receive it as well. It tells us the things that were to be tithed, which was only ever food stuffs, never money. The people of Old Testament times had and used money, but it was never something that was given as a tithe. Next time your church sends around that collection plate toss in a ham and cheese sandwich and wait to see what happens. If nothing comes of it right away, next go around throw in some chili dogs. You see where I'm coming from. It's bound to get you a chance to speak up on the topic of tithing. Maybe then you can then ask some questions. The Bible tells us everything we need to know about this topic. Yet it is still done contrary to scripture. In so doing, they are deliberately committing sin. It's greed.

The Biblical Tithe

As we all undoubtedly already know, tithing is an Old Testament biblical law handed down in the Law of Moses. But as you also know, so is circumcision, the sacrificing of animals, stoning of women found committing adultery, or men committing homosexual acts. Does this mean that today's Christians should ritualistically circumcise their male children or sacrifice animals during service, or publicly stone people because these laws were once ordained in Scripture? Most Christians know that such Old Testament commandments are not obligatory for Christians today.

Tithing, on the other hand, seems to be one of those things that pastors like to hold on to... I wonder why? Of course that is a rhetorical question, with a hint of sarcasm. Could it be something akin to what the Levitical priesthood was doing in Malachi, for which God brought down cursings and destruction? We are going to look at the book of Malachi, because it is the most often used Old Testament book, Malachi 3:8-10, to be more precise, which modern day pastors use to deceive their congregations... at least in my experience. **Woodland Christian Church** in Timpson, Texas is really bad about this one. And I have sat down with the elders behind closed doors and discussed this issue with them. To which they could **not** defend their position biblically when the correct context was pointed out. Still they relentlessly tell the congregation, with every opportunity, that they are stealing from God if they don't

tithe first and foremost before anything else. Needless to say, I don't attend that church anymore. My family and I were given "the cold shoulder".

And I know that some are going to say that my approach to things don't seem too Christian at times. I think they are very much so. Paul is the absolute perfect example. See Galatians 2:11-12.

Anyway, it's often argued that God still demands tithing and that a person who doesn't give 10% of his income for the maintenance of some Christian ministry is stealing from God. My blood temperature begins to rise when I hear this preached from pulpits. Pastors that use such threats do not have the slightest biblical authority to support their dogmatic assertions. The tithing laws of the Bible are no more valid today for Christians than the act of offering up animal sacrifices was back in the day. In fact, even if all the legal factors governing tithing laws were in force today, Pastors still would not have the authority from God to use even one red cent of such a tithe for their own ministerial functions or to line their own pockets. There is no temple. There is no Levitical priesthood... which are requirements. So we can't worship God in the Old Testament manner... but we'll keep the tithing part? That one gives me pause.

Let's not beat around the bush. The Bible makes it clear, from the time of Moses, that the Israelites were to pay a tithe. But in so doing, they were strictly ordered by God to pay the tithe to one group of people, and only one group. It was the Levites; who in turn gave to the Levitical priests, who ministered in the Temple.

Numbers 18:20 NKJV - Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

Numbers 18:21 NKJV - "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

They, that is the Levites, weren't allowed to even have any other possessions. Yet today's pastors own homes, and property, sometimes they have very great wealth. Totally against God's commands, as we will see. "Hypocrites!" "Brood of Vipers!"... just quoting Scripture.

Outside of the Levites no one else had the slightest authority to receive that tithe. Even Jesus, while He was here teaching, did not use nor demand a penny of the biblical tithe to fund His ministry or preaching activities or those of His apostles. He couldn't according to the Law of Moses because He was from the tribe of Judah (Isaiah 11:1; Hebrews 7:14). He was not of the tribe of Levi. This made him ineligible to receive any part of the biblical tithe. That's why Jesus didn't use any tithe offerings to support his ministry.

And since there is no Temple in existence, there can be no Levites and/or Priests serving **in** the Temple. Makes sense, right? The tithe was at first brought into play by Moses to maintain the service of the Temple. With no Temple, the major factor for tithing doesn't exist as far as the biblical laws of tithing are concerned. I cannot stress that enough. Today's "churches" are **not** the Temple of God. There were synagogues, other than that, the Temple itself. For preachers and church leaders to change the direction of paying the tithe from that of the Temple to the service of a Christian ministry is to do so **without any authority whatsoever from God**. In fact, to use the tithing laws in a manner not sanctioned by the Word of God is to sin against biblical law. And that is what the preachers, priests and evangelists are

doing today. Let me give a modern example of how they violate the law of God. Now we are told in the Bible to pay all our debts to whom any debt is due. Romans 13:7-8 spell that out pretty clearly. The Old Testament talks about having to go into slavery until the debt is paid. That's everywhere in the Old Testament.

Let's look at it this way. Suppose I bought a car, we will say it's a Chevy, which would never happen in real life, and I have to make payments on it based on the particular deal I made with the dealership. Then on some particular morning I wake up and find that I have actually regained my sanity. So I walk, notice I say walk, to the Dodge dealership and get myself a Mopar instead. Preferably a 1970 AAR Cuda 440 six-pack with a manual tranny and 4.10 gears in sassygrass green that was left out in the back and forgotten about yet in mint condition.... I'm just saying. So I call up Chevy and explain that I fell off the roof of the house and hit my head and was a little out of it for a while, but I'm feeling better and I'm going to be paying the remainder of the money I own on that Chevy to the Mopar Man. Not only would Chevy not like it, they would take me to court. I wouldn't be too worried. I think the judge would understand. Who wouldn't? But you get my point.

It is precisely the same thing in paying the biblical tithe. A person must pay the Levites the debt owed to them, and not to pay it to Mopar. No one has the right to choose to whom they pay the tithe that God has ordained to be paid to the Levites. Remember that an argument came up in the time of Moses over who were to be the Priests. Korah and his group felt they had the right to be Priests just like Aaron and his sons, but God made the people of Israel see, very clearly, that when He chooses certain people to do something, and to be paid for it, no other person has **the privilege** to claim that right (See the book of Numbers, chapter 16). Korah and his group found out that God does **not** like others taking on the role that He gave to someone else. It is time that the pastors and evangelists of today heed the teaching of this example of Korah and refrain from collecting tithe that belongs to the Levites.

I would like to quickly address the book of Malachi. The **entire** book of Malachi is a rebuke from God on the Levitical priesthood, **NOT** the "congregation". The priests were the ones stealing from God. If you find a King James 2000 Bible you will find that almost the entire book is in red. The words of Jesus or the Father in the Old Testament are written in red in that version the same as the words of Jesus are in the New Testament of the King James and New King James bibles. If you read the book in its **entirety** you will find that God is speaking directly to the priests through the prophet Malachi. See Malachi 1:6.

Malachi 1:6 NKJV - "A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? **Says the LORD of hosts To you priests** who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

In this verse, the pronoun "you", which God uses for referring to the priests, **remains constant throughout the book**. Everywhere you see the word "you", it is God still talking to the priests. Then continue reading. In Malachi 2:1 God again points out that He is speaking to the priests.

Malachi 2:1 NKJV - "And now, **O priests, this commandment is for you.**

In verse 8 of chapter two God points out that the priests were the one that corrupted the covenant He made with Levi.

Malachi 2:8 NKJV - But you have departed from the way; You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi," Says the LORD of hosts.

In Malachi 3:3 God says the He is sending His messenger (vs. 1) to purify the sons of Levi and purge them, that they would offer Jehovah "an offering in righteousness".

The book continues all the way through with God directing his anger at the priests (pastors of today) and NOT the people of Israel or congregation, in today's lingo. Yet today's pastors want to point the finger at the congregation and tell them that if they don't tithe they are the ones stealing from God. Then they point out Malachi 3:8-10 and say, "You only have to pay me and God will bless you." It is a lie. Read the entire book for yourself. It is a short book.

Remember, "the truth will set you free," (John 8:32). Also remember that there is a truth and that the Father, God seeks those who will worship Him as such (John 4:23-24). The world won't like it. But we are absolutely running out of time. So you have to begin making a stance now. We will all have to give an account. So always search for the truth. The Bible has the answer to every question you can think of for this life, if put in the correct context. Go with God. Don't go with the world.

John 3:21 NKJV - "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

John 17:13 NKJV - "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

John 17:14 NKJV - "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John 17:15 NKJV - "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

John 17:16 NKJV - "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 NKJV - "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

The following passages include every tithing text in the Bible. There are many other verses pertaining to giving, offerings, or firstfruits (and firstfruits are NOT the same as the tithe) but the Bible references below are all of the ones that strictly refer to tithing.

Genesis 28:20-22; Genesis 14:17-20; Leviticus 27:30-34; Numbers 18:19-28; Deuteronomy 12:1-19; Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Deuteronomy 26:12-13; 1 Samuel 8:14-17; Amos 4:2-6; 2 Chronicles 31:1-12; Nehemiah 10:37-38; 12:44; 13:5, 12; Malachi 3:7-12; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; Luke 18:9-14; Hebrews 7:1-19

This study will continue to grow. I will add to this topic as time goes on, as there is much, much more to address. For now, I have other topics and things that require my attention. So please be patient with me. Thank you.