

MALACHI — LESSON FIVE

TITHING — THE LAW VS GRACE

“The common view of giving in churches is that Christians should give a 10 percent tithe. Some would argue that this is not required under the new covenant. A better way to term Christian giving would be as a free will offering. Many people have been locked into a legalistic tithing system where the amount they give is determined by the church. Instead, God wants Christians to give **FREELY, GENEROUSLY**, and according to their means.”

The word **TITHE** literally means to give a tenth of something, either voluntarily or as a tax. Lessons or practices on giving from the Mosaic Law are sometimes used to teach that Christians should tithe. The examples of Abraham and Jacob are sometimes used to teach persons to give 10 percent of their income.

The instances where Abram and Jacob gave 10 percent occur before the Mosaic law was given. Since their tithing was outside of the law, persons argue that we should follow such practices and we too ought to tithe 10 percent.

Genesis 14:18-20

“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.”

Genesis 14:18-20 NKJV

GOD DID NOT COMMAND ABRAM TO GIVE A TITHE TO MELCHIZEDEK. HE GAVE FREELY OUT OF THE SPOILS OF WAR.

A. Based on this passage alone, we are not required to give the tithe of our income.

Jacob gave 10 percent of what he received:

Genesis 28:16-22

“Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it. ” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!” Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.””

Genesis 28:16-22 NKJV

Reminder: This is a VOLUNTARY giving of a tenth to God. The Lord did not command Jacob to give 10 percent. Jacob gave FREELY of what the Lord had given him. Abram and Jacob were giving to worship God and honor God for His provision and protection. Abram and Jacob are examples, not of a commanded tithe, but of free will offerings to the Lord.

The TITHE was commanded of the Israelites by God. They gave not only the tenth, but in reality, they gave more. The actual amount the Israelites were required to give is about 23 percent. So, we cannot say that 10 percent is the biblical standard for giving because the Israelites gave more than this.

CONCLUSION: Christians are not under the mosaic law, so we do not have to follow any tithing requirements, unless they are reiterated in the New Testament!!!

FREEWILL OFFERINGS were also given by the Israelites.

Exodus 25:1-2

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “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 25:1-2 NKJV

Exodus 35:29

“The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring material for all kinds of work which the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.”

Exodus 35:29 NKJV

This shows us not everything the Israelites gave was a required tithe set by God.

BRINGING THE TITHE INTO THE STOREHOUSE

Malachi 3:8-10

““Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.”

Malachi 3:8-10 NKJV

Context is vitally important when interpreting any biblical passage and the context present is that God is speaking to Israel, not to the new covenant.

NEW TESTAMENT GIVING

1Corinthians 16:1-2

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

I Corinthians 16:1-2 NKJV

Acts 11:27-28

“And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a

great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.”

Acts 11:27-28 NKJV

A. Christians are to give regularly.

B. Christians are to give according to their means. Actual amounts given and percentages will differ between people as everyone has different financial situations. We must remember though that our giving needs to be generous:

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

“Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.”

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 NLT

THEY GAVE SACRIFICIALLY!!! They did so with a “wealth of generosity.” They gave according to their means but also beyond their means. We must be wise about our giving, but as Christians, we should NOT give a proportionately small amount or a comfortable amount. If we want to honor and worship God with our giving then we should give generously, even if it means we have less money to spend. Where our money goes shows where our hearts truly lie.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

“Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 NLT

A Christian should never give an amount they have not decided on with God. We are to give cheerfully having decided in our hearts what amount that is and not haphazardly. Our giving should be a free will offering to the Lord. Again, Christians should never let anyone else tell them how much they should give. As we give generously and bountifully to the Lord, He will give generously back to us. We will never lack material possessions and money we need, and God will grow us spiritually as well.

God literally blesses His obedient children that we might be a blessing to others. God gives to enable us to do good works and build His church. Financial and spiritual blessings from God are not just for us, but for us to pass on to others. We can give of our finances to support others, and of our spiritual gifts to build the church.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Do not let anyone lock you into a LEGALISTIC tithing system.
1. CHRISTIANS do not give 10 percent because the pastor orders it to be done. If you want to give 10 percent, that is great. Your giving ought to be generous, freely given, AND according to your means. Decide between God and yourself how much you will give to your local church.
1. Giving to God becomes a joy when we do it free from compulsion or obligation. God wants us to give cheerfully and generously. Our giving ought to be a FREEWILL OFFERING to the Lord that blesses ourselves and others!!!

MINISTRY LEADERS and TITHING AT CBC

- A. To model good stewardship

B. Commitment to God