

The Tithe

1. **EXO 23:19** The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.
2. **DEU 18:4** The firstfruit also of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, shall you give him.
3. **LEV 27:30** And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. Numbers 18:24 But the tithes of the people of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit; therefore I have said to them, Among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance.
4. **DEU 14:22** You shall truly tithe all the produce of your seed, that the field brings forth year by year.
5. **LEV 18:26** Thus speak to the Levites, and say to them, When you take of the people of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up an offering of it for the Lord, a tenth part of the tithe.
6. **DEU 14:28-29** At the end of three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall lay it up inside your gates; And the Levite, because he has no part nor inheritance with you, and the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are inside your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.
7. **DEU 26:13** Then you shall say before the Lord your God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them to the Levite, and to the stranger, to the orphan, and to the widow, according to all your commandments which you have commanded me; I have not transgressed your commandments, nor have I forgotten them;
8. **DEU 26:5-11** And you shall speak and say before the Lord your God, A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous; And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard slavery; And when we cried to the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression; And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great awesomeness, and with signs, and with wonders; And he has brought us to this place, and has given us this land, a land that flows with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which you, O Lord, have given me. And you shall set it before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God; And you shall rejoice in every good thing which the Lord your God has given to you, and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the stranger who is among you. You shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an offering; as you do the offering of the threshing floor, so shall you present it.

I remember a few years ago, meeting a man who told me very earnestly that if I was paying a 10% tithe, I was paying three times too much. I remember also that he was a very literal person, that he grew produce for the express purpose of paying tithe - through vegetables. This shows how some people can be very confused about something the Bible takes for granted. The Tithe is an example of textual proof of Agrapha, or "Not Written". I'll not get into debates about Oral Torah; I feel such debates are fruitless. Surely, the time of Messiah's return is probably so immanent that we simply have run out of time to ascertain what Oral Torah is, and how much of traditional Oral Torah is actually the original Oral Torah. (I'll also state that I will not answer e-mail on this subject, on the grounds stated above; I feel it is fruitless). Whenever the Torah states, "You shall do this..." and does not explicitly say what "This" is, it constitutes proof of Agrapha.

I'm sure that Moses explained to the people very carefully what the Tithe was, and how they should endeavour to keep it. However, this was not written down (because it was of Moses and not of God - (2 Tim 3:16-17 NIV) "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, {17} so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.")

The Church has determined that the verse in **DEU 14:22**, "You shall truly tithe all the produce of your seed, that the field brings forth year by year", is the key to understanding the Tithe. Many have objected to this, disagreeing with this interpretation. Probably for financial reasons. **DEU 14:22** "You shall truly tithe all the produce of your seed, that the field brings forth year by year", works only for agrarian societies. Shall we then not tithe because I teach guitar for a living, and because I'm not a shepherd/cattleman/farmer/vineyard owner? These were often the professions of the very wealthy.

What about Carpenters? Shall we assume Jesus never tithed? He was literally "A (wood)cutter and son of a (wood)cutter", the Israeli equivalent in those days as "Sanitation Engineer". He was not rich, contrary to some teachings I've heard. The "Produce of your seed" in my case covers the "Seed" I "produce", which is cash (American dollars, shekelim in Hebrew). I tithe (or try to), and I've noticed that instead of being short in money, I'm slowly prospering (This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes). This is the First Tithe, payable weekly. If all you make is fifty cents, tithe five cents. The question is not wealth, but rather, obedience to God's word. Paying your synagogue in Groceries could work if the country you live in obeyed the Torah, and appointed free land for houses of worship. But they don't, so there's building budgets, mortgages, rent, utilities like sewage, water, light, heat and electricity, phone, vehicles and maintenance, the Rabbi's housing costs and food, computer payments, Cantor's cable bill for the cartoon network, etc. So it is Biblical to pay a full tenth of your income in tithe to your synagogue. Leviticus 27:30 "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord.

" This commandment teaches us that the tenth of the produce we pay in the First Tithe was not ours to begin with anyway. Withholding this Tithe from the Lord can be seen as stealing from Adonai. Leviticus 18:26 "Thus speak to the Levites, and say to them, When you take of the people of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up an offering of it for the Lord, a tenth part of the tithe." Thus the Rabbi also has to tithe, to the synagogue at this point, since the Levitical system-Cohenim is not in place at the present time. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 "At the end of three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall lay it up inside your gates; And the Levite, because he has no part nor inheritance with you, and the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are inside your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do." This commandment is the Second Tithe. Every third and sixth year of the seven-year cycle one pays an extra tithe to: the Levite the stranger the orphan and the widow

Why the Levite? It is assumed that the Torah would be kept, and the Levites would not be working for a living as a consequence. Why the Stranger? It was understood in those days that a convert would have left home, family and job to live in Israel, and convert to Judaism. They would be mistrusted at first, and would not have ancestral lands to help them. They would be alone, and pretty close to homeless. Why the Orphan and the widow? You have to ask? All that remains is the third tithe, which was the money you saved for your travel to Jerusalem during the High Holy Days, to travel there, live there, and return. The first and second tithe should be kept, even today. It may be too much for most people to do both tithes on the 3rd and 6th years, but it's a lot harder on the poor when you don't. I'd advise praying about it. The Third tithe you can probably forget, unless you'd like to keep the commandments and visit Israel at least once. That tour package is literally for most people cheaper than the holy day tithe! But as always, pray about it, and don't take my word for it.

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The Tithe: YHVH's Remedy for Poverty

In G-d's Word humanity is given the remedy for many ailments of the body, soul and spirit. Concerning the condition of poverty G-d gave the remedy in the principle of the tithe.

RULE OF THE TITHE

Tithe means tenth, and the commandment is this: "I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation . . . the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto YHVH, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance"(Numbers 18:21,24).A tithe is a tenth of every person's increase, but even more correctly, it is a tenth of all Israel's (the Ekklesia's) increase. In truth, all the tithe has been paid only when all of Israel (every person of them) has paid their tenth. The tithe belongs completely to the L-RD. "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is YHVH's. It is holy unto YHVH. And if a man will redeem any of his tithes, he shall add unto it the fifth portion thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto YHVH" (Leviticus 27:30-32).When a person "borrows" (redeems, takes back) any portion of their tenth, then that person owes ("shall add unto") another twenty percent

("fifth portion")of their income to YHVH. So, if their tenth is not paid in due course, then the borrower must pay thirty percent in order for their requirement to be satisfied. If a person, or Israel as a whole, does not pay their proper tithe, it is robbery of YHVH. "Will a man rob Elohim? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi3:8). Therefore, failure to pay tithes is equal to breaking the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." The person or the nation that will not pay tithes to YHVH is a thief and must repent of larceny (see Revelation 9:21). YHVH has the right to collect it by any means He deems fit. The tithe is a tenth of "all the land." It must be paid on the fullness of our increase.

REASON FOR THE TITHE

Poverty, like sin and disease, is the result of the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden. From then on mankind had to make his living in pain and fear because, "Cursed is the ground for your sake. In sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3 :17-19). The ground is divinely cursed, for which reason there is normally famine and disease. Food contamination brings every form of plague. Any society with out enough good food is eventually destroyed. The "cursed ground" problem fosters ripples of strife in all segments of the economy and has eventually brought poverty and general hardship to every nation and person. Therefore, G-d provided His covenant people with a way to overcome this curse, just as He has provided us with covering for sin. The way out of the poverty curse is to give back a portion of the "cursed ground" to Him. When we pay tithes Yahweh blesses the "ground" and brings forth an abundance of provision, thereby overturning the curse! This is what is being talked about in the famous "tithes" verses in Malachi 3:9-12, "You are cursed with a curse, because you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. You must bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now with this, says YHVH of hosts, if I will not open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, says YHVH of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, because you shall be a delightful land, says YHVH of hosts. "You see, the "curse", that the prophet says they are cursed with, is already in place because of the fall of Adam. Because of the curse the "fruit of your ground" is destroyed. This is a prior condition placed on every person on earth. Tithing to Yahweh overturns this curse! Tithing is the remedy to the poverty that is due every person because of the fall. So, an individual or a nation is not specially cursed when they do not tithe. Instead, they fall back under the prior curse placed on Adam. G-d gave us a way out of that curse and it is the tithe!

RELATIONSHIP IN THE TITHE

Through Abraham G-d demonstrated the tithe to be a dynamic principle, held in a special relationship between YHVH and those He is in covenant with. In the event of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek, Abraham pays a tithe of the booty He received from warfare (Genesis 14:16-20). Abraham understood a principle, which is that the tithe is not only to be paid from the ground, but from every possible source of economic supply. In essence, all sources of income are "cursed ground" unless tithes is paid from it. Also, through Abraham and Melchizedek, G-d demonstrates that the tithe is only properly paid to Him when it goes to an ordained representative of Him for the representative's own sustenance. This tithing relationship is continued in the commandment to Israel to tithe to/through the Levitical Priesthood. The tithe never went to an institution; not even the Temple received the tithe. The tithe is always to go directly to the representatives of Yahweh's ministry, of which Melchizedek and the Levites were the forebearers, so that there "may be food in My house," says YHVH. In this way the minister is to make his living from the tithes. Because of the tithe the Yah-ordained servants are be able to continue to provide spiritual up-building to the covenant people, who are His house. YHVH's ordained representatives are those who provide spiritual food to His flock.

This is what Apostle Sha'ul (Paul) said, "Who goes off to war anytime at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat of its fruit? Who feeds a flock, and does not eat of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things from man's viewpoint, or does not the Torah say the same also? For it is written in the Torah of Moshe, 'You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn. ' Does G-d worry about oxen alone, or does He say it all for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that plows should plow in hope, and that he that threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is ita great thing if we shall reap your material things? If

others be partakers of this power over you, shouldn't we more so? . . . Do you not know that they who minister concerning holy things live of the things of the Temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar? Even so, Yahveh has ordained that those who proclaim the good news should live from the good news" (1 Corinthians 9:7-14). Sha'ul directly links the tithe that was commanded for the Levitical Priests, "they who minister...things of the Temple", with sustenance for New Covenant ministers, "those who proclaim the good news."

He says they both operate from the same principle. Notice Paul does not say any church, synagogue or institution receives the sustenance. The minister is to personally receive it (and pay his tithes from it also, Numbers 18:26-28). Some stumble over this because they fear ministers will abuse the tithes. Surely there are some that have abused the power of the tithe, but not only today. At the time of the Prophet Malachi there were ministering priests that were abusive of their position. YHVH said there were priests that "despise my name" (Malachi 1:6); that say "the table of YHVH is contemptible" (Malachi 1:7). YHVH goes on to say of the priests, "you are departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the Torah; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi" (Malachi 2:8); and "you have dealt treacherously" against your wives (Malachi 2:14). Yet, even after exposing such a contemptuous priesthood, G-d still commands Israel to bring all their tithe into the priests' storehouse (Malachi 3:10). This is because the tithe's greatest immediate effect is to break the curse on the land, even if the priests are not as they should be. Getting the tithes paid is more important for the one who pays than it is for the one who receives. In fact, the book of Malachi implies that by paying the tithe, G-d's people (Israel) can eventually turn around its wayward priests/ministers, and become a "delightful land" which all other nations will call blessed (Malachi 3:12). The tithe is an avenue of relationship between G-d and His people, not between people and G-d's ministers. Yet, by YHWH's design, His ministers are the ones rightfully ordained to receive and live from the tithe of Israel (the Ekklesia). One should tithe to and through the minister who provides them with spiritual food in the form of the truth with love.

REWARD FROM THE TITHE

The tithe is a transaction. Melchizedek brought Abraham bread and wine (Genesis 14:18), actually a spiritual Kiddush or Holy Communion. Then, Abraham brought Melchizedek the tithe. The minister brings his spiritual goods and the one-in-covenant brings his material goods. This is the first part of the transaction. The second part of the transaction is YHWH's return or reward for obedience to the tithe. This transaction proves to be a wise investment when Yahweh blesses the one-in-covenant abundantly. If you read the account of Abraham and Melchizedek (Genesis 14) you will note that Abraham refused to receive any prize from the King of Sodom. Abraham was not looking for a material payoff. "I have lifted my hand unto YHWH, the most high G-d, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelace, and that I will not take any thing that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich" (Genesis 14:22,23). Instead, Abraham received something far greater. "After these things (the tithe to Melchizedek) the word of YHVH came unto Abram in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, Abram. I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward.'" (Genesis 15:1). Thereafter YHVH promised Abraham and Sarah a son of their own flesh. There is much more to the tithe reward than monetary wealth. Aware of this, Abraham tithed with much bigger things in mind. The reward of the tithe includes material abundance, but that is not the ultimate objective of tithes. Apostle Sha'ul said, "Know therefore, that those which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Galatians 3:7). So then, all New Covenant believers are supposed to be children of Abraham. Now, add to that what Yeshua said, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). Since Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, it is absolutely necessary for anyone claiming to be a child of Abraham to do the same! How can we tithe to a priest like Melchizedek? By tithing to Yeshua! Yeshua is the 'priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Yeshua alone is worthy of the tithe of Abraham's children. Yeshua is the one who has brought us the bread of His body and the wine of His blood. When we tithe to His ministers we tithe to Him. Just as our father Abraham, our reward will exceed material wealth (though it does not exclude it). Our reward is eternal life in the united Kingdom of Israel, the holy nation to come that will be miraculously born in a day. Tithing is the greatest investment of one's material goods that can be made. "Bring all the tithes . . . [then] I will open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, such that there will not be room enough to receive it."

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