

Should Christians Tithe?

I wish there was no need for me to write on this subject because it has caused me to experience hardships and even persecution from those who place money above biblical truth. However, because I am a servant of the God Jesus Christ and a passionate defender of His gospel of grace and of the Christian freedom, my Christian conscience does not allow me to be passive. I am not happy when I hear pastors preaching on the twisted doctrine of tithing by which they enslave Christians under the old testament law and **place them under its curse**. This unacceptable situation exists because many Christians have not spent time to examine the word of God on this subject and, for this reason, have allowed their religious leaders **to lead them into religious captivity**. Whether these leaders know it or not, they are trying **to undo the work of the Great Deliverer, Jesus Christ**, who came to bring freedom to the captives (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18,19).

Those who have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, know that they are not under obligation to keep the old testament law which **became obsolete** with the establishment of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:7,8,13). They know that they cannot be justified before God through the works of the law which God had given to His **circumcised** people, Israel (Colossians 2: 13,14; Acts chapter 15). However, the leaders of some Christian groups, ignoring the words of Paul in Galatians 3:10-13, and without considering the dreadful result of their request, **pressure their followers to keep parts of the Mosaic law, such as the law of tithing, the keeping of the Sabbath and the acceptance of a special priesthood**. In Galatians 3:10-13, Paul wrote:

- 1.

“Because as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: because it is written, ‘Cursed is every one who does not continue (persist) IN ALL the things which are written in the book of the law, in order to do them.’ The fact that no one is justified by the law before God, is manifest; because ‘The righteous will live by faith.’ And the law is not of faith; but, ‘The man who does them (the works of the Mosaic law), will live through them.’ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law....”

Let us reason on this subject

From the above verses, we understand that before the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, one could receive everlasting life **by keeping all the works prescribed by the law of Moses!** In other words, **the person who would be able to keep the law of Moses to perfection, would live by the works of that law** (Matthew 19:16,17). However, **an uncircumcised person was not allowed to keep any part of the Mosaic law (Acts 15:5) --- not even the smallest of the ordinances** (Exodus 12:43,44,48). Why? Because **the circumcision was the “initiation ceremony”, so to speak, which gave to the circumcised person the right to enter the first covenant and to keep its law!**

But, from the words of Paul in Galatians 3:10-13, we understand that **a person who keeps only part of the law, is cursed!** Whether we like to hear this or not, Paul preached biblical truth! Therefore, those who teach their Brothers to **keep certain parts of the law** of Moses,

- a) **do not respect** the requirements of that law (because they are teaching them to keep it **without being circumcised in the flesh**), and

- b) **do not love their brothers** (because they know that **whoever keeps only part of the law will be cursed!**)!

Since the time our Savior God became flesh (John 1:1,14) and died on the cross for the transgressions of men according to the Scriptures (Isaiah 53:5,8) and was buried in the tomb of a rich man according to the Scriptures (Isaiah 53:9) and on the third day He was raised **bodily** from the dead according to the Scriptures (Isaiah 53:10; Acts 2:31), **God will give everlasting life** to all those who will:

- a) **recognize** who Jesus Is (Isaiah 53:11; John 6:40; 8:24), in other words, **to all those who will believe and confess with their mouths that Jesus is the “LORD”, the “YHWH”** of Joel 2:32 (HOT) and Romans 10:9,13,
- b) **believe** in their hearts that God raised Him **bodily** from the dead (Romans 10:9; Acts 2:31), and
- c) **pray to Him**, in other words, **call on His Name** (Romans 10:13,14). The person who will not pray to Jesus (because prayer is worship), has not believed that He really is the **“LORD”, i.e., the “YHWH”** of Joel 2:32 and Romans 10:13, whose Name one must call upon to be saved!

The words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8,9, are clear: We receive salvation by grace through faith (in the right object of faith) --- **not by keeping the law of Moses!**

One of the requirements of the Mosaic law was that all those who were under the first covenant had to give **one tenth** of their income **to help the poor and to support a special priesthood**, the Levites and their families, because God had forbidden them to inherit any part of the promised land (Numbers 18:20,21).

The truly born-again believers, have entered Christ's **new covenant** and, for this reason, **they do not need a special priesthood**. The Christian Church of the first century did not have a special priesthood. The Lord Jesus is not a High Priest according to the order of Aaron but according to the order of Melchizedek --- **outside the Levitical priesthood** which was appointed by God (Hebrews 7:11). **The Lord Jesus Christ did not establish a special priesthood in His Church, neither did His apostles after Him** (Matthew 23: 8-12). They did not establish a special priesthood for the following reason: **All those who by faith enter the new covenant which the Lord Jesus established with His blood, become priests** (Revelation 1:6). Those believers make up **a kingdom of priests** (1 Peter 2:5,9) whose High Priest is the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:22-26). Therefore, **the doctrine which exacts from a Christian to tithe as a fulfillment of the Mosaic law, is alien to the new testament and places the Christian under the curse of that law!**

The apostles did not introduce the law of tithing in the Christian Church, neither did they use that law as a guideline for the minimum amount that a Christian must give. Clearly, they advised the believers to remember the poor (Galatians 2:10) and that they were free to give as the Lord had prospered them (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Those who introduce the law of tithing to the Christian Church are guilty of heresy.

In their love for money they use **Malachi 3:8-10**, which was written for the circumcised Israelites who were to keep the Mosaic law. They preach that the Christians who do not give one tenth of all their income to their religious institution every month, rob God and that, for this reason, God will curse them! **By doing so, they alter the gospel of grace and thus, they bring upon them the curse of God** (Galatians 3:10-12). **Malachi 3:8-10 does not and cannot apply to Christians!** In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul assures us that, “... *there isn't any condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 8:1)!

An interesting point

A Christian who tries to fulfill the Mosaic law or any part of it, has not entered God's rest and is guilty of **disobedience** (Hebrews 4:11).

A warning to pastors

If you dear Reader are a pastor of a Christian church and you are placing the servants of the Lord under the curse of the Mosaic Law, remember one thing:

The Lord of hosts, who died on the cross so they can enjoy freedom, cannot be mocked! Consider your position before Him! Either you are a real pastor of His flock and a preacher of the true gospel, **or you are a hired manager who looks after his own financial interests**, “*feeding* (Greek: “*shepherding*”) *yourself without fear*” (Jude 12), **or you are a hired manager who looks after the financial interests of some religious investors!** Each one of these positions offers the appropriate payment! If you fit in the second and/or in the third category that I mentioned above, I

encourage you to read the word of God objectively; **let it speak to your heart and repent before the Lord of hosts because He is against those who try to undo His work on the cross (Colossians 2:14)**. Do you really wish to be one of them?

I am perplexed

I have discussed the subject of tithing with many Christians. It is perplexing that when I say that those who keep part of the Mosaic Law are under the curse of that Law, some of them change their story!!! They say that the Christians must tithe not as a fulfillment of the Mosaic Law, but **to follow the example of Abraham who tithed to Melchizedek** (Genesis 14:18-20)! They say that because Abraham gave one tenth of the loot to Melchizedek **before** the law was given to the Israelites, the giving of the one tenth (tithing) must continue even **after** Christ fulfilled the law of Moses with His eternal sacrifice! However, this line of reasoning generates the following thoughts and questions:

1. If it is only for the sake of following Abraham's example and not for fulfilling the law of Moses, then, **why do they use Malachi 3:8-10** which instilled fear in the Israelites, so they would fulfill the Mosaic Law?
2. Did Abraham tithe to Melchizedek **monthly**? The answer is "No!" Abraham tithed to Melchizedek **only once!**
3. Did Abraham give to Melchizedek **the one tenth of all his yearly income, or only the one tenth of the loot** he collected after a battle? The answer is,

“No!” Abraham did not give the one tenth of all his yearly income. **He gave only the one tenth of the loot he collected after a battle!** (Hebrews 7:4)

4. Then, how could Abraham’s case become our example? Why is this case used to convince the Christians that they must give **the one tenth of all their income, every month,** to the religious institution they belong?
5. How is it that Jesus and the apostles did not use Abraham’s case to teach the Christians of the first century that they must tithe?
6. **Do the Scriptures say that Melchizedek symbolizes the religious institutions of our time?** If not, then, why should Christians tithe to them? Clearly, the Scriptures indicate that **Melchizedek symbolizes the Son of God and His eternal priesthood** because he was *“without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life”* (Hebrews 7:3).
7. If we take the case of Melchizedek in a symbolic way, as **Jesus is High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek** (Hebrews 7:11), then, **our priesthood as priests of God and of Christ (Revelation 20:6) is also according to the order of Melchizedek!** Thus, what should we say? **Melchizedek must tithe to Melchizedek?** How ridiculous!

8. If the Christians must tithe because Abraham tithed **before** the law, then, what will we say about circumcision? **Is it possible that the Christians must also circumcise because Abraham was circumcised before the law?** God forbid! (Galatians 2:2-4)

Obviously, **the doctrine of tithing is not in harmony with the gospel of the New Testament, the gospel of grace, of which we are sharers! The monetary needs of the Pastors and of the local churches, could be covered by free-willed offerings of the flock of God** (1 Corinthians 9:11-14; 16:2; Galatians 2:10).

I hope that all the evangelical Christian churches which have adopted the law of tithing will follow the excellent example of the Worldwide Church of God (Grace Communion International), who, in order to uphold the truth of the gospel, **abolished the law of tithing** although they knew that their decision would lower significantly the income of their institution. May the Lord God bless them for their decision to stand for the truth on this subject!

In any event, I have presented and supported the serious subject of tithing with the written word of God. The decision of how each one of the Readers of this article will react, is as personal as is the reward which each one of us will receive from the Lord when He comes (Revelation 22:12)!