

Tithing is Unscriptural Under the New Covenant

[A Scriptural Exposition on the Fraudulent Fleecing of the Flock]

By L. Ray Smith

Since first posting this tithing paper on bible-truths.com, we have had hundreds of thousands of visitors seeking information on this topic. Many have written me personally thanking me for freeing them from this illegal and abusive practice of the Church. I have also received emails from some who are sure that tithing is a bonafide legal obligation for members of the New Testament Christian Church.

Objections to my paper range from simply quoting the prophet Malachi sent to the priests and nation of Israel: "**Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse....**" While others who can find absolutely no Scriptural authority for Christians to tithe, invent clever little doctrines like this:

"Tithing was a form of worship to God, and since we still worship God, we must still tithe."

I will answer this one in one sentence: Since burnt offerings were a form of worshipping God, and since we still worship God, must we still offer burnt offerings to God? ... Ridiculous.

Part II of this paper covers the Malachi prophecy more thoroughly as it concerns the subject of tithing.

PART I

"Will a man ROB God?" How many untold tens of thousands of men will give account one day for teaching this verse in Malachi 3:8 totally out of context for their own sordid gain. I couldn't count the times I have heard self-appointed ministers of the gospel berate their congregations and listeners for "robbing God" in tithes and offerings. This verse in Malachi certainly means what it says. Someone *was* defrauding God of tithes and offerings, but wait until you find out *who* it is that God blames for this act.

On any given Sunday morning there will be numerous men-of-the-cloth who will be bellowing out over the air waves that people are being "cursed with a curse" because they have failed to pay God ten percent of their paychecks. And should such a gullible listener decide to repent and give God ten percent of his salary, just how would he do that? Just keep reading. These men of the cloth who often have unquenchable worldly desires of the flesh, will be sure to give you an address where you can send them (or, ah, rather God) your tithe. And do they have a right to quote these Scriptures in this manner? No they do not, and furthermore they themselves know better.

SOME SHOCKING TRUTHS ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN TITHING DOCTRINE

1. Abraham never tithed on his own personal property or livestock.
2. Jacob wouldn't tithe until God blessed him first.
3. Only Levite priests could collect tithes, and there are no Levite priests today.
4. Only food products from the land were tithable.
5. Money was never a tithable commodity.
6. Christian converts were never asked to tithe anything to the Church.
7. Tithing in the Church first appears centuries after completion of the Bible.

ALL SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES TO TITHING

We will now go through all the Scriptural references in the Bible on tithe, tithes, and tithing:

[1] Gen. 14:20, "**And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abram] gave him [Melchizedek king of Salem, the priest of the most high God, Ver. 18] TITHES of all [all the goods of war, Ver. 16].**"

We read again of this same event in the book of Hebrews:

[2] Heb. 7:1-10, "**For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who meets with Abraham returning from the combat with the kings and blesses him, to whom Abraham parts a TITHE also, from all... Now, behold how eminent this one is to whom the patriarch Abraham gives a TITHE also of the best of the booty. And, indeed, those of the sons of Levi who obtain the priestly office have a direction to take TITHES from the people according to the law... And here, indeed, dying men are obtaining TITHES... And so, to say, through Abraham, Levi also, who is obtaining the TITHES, has been TITHED, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek meets with him.**"

There are a number of things we can learn concerning tithing from this section of Scriptures. In this, the first mention of tithing in the Bible, Abram gives to Melchizedek (a priest of God who was also the king of the city of Salem) a tithe of the best of the booty taken in war. Notice that this was *not* wheat, corn, wine, oil, or cattle from Abram's personal possessions, but rather booty taken from conquered nations.

There is nothing stated here that would cause us to conclude that Abram (later changed to Abraham) ever tithed on a regular basis on his own person possessions. Although

Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of the booty of war, he told the king of Sodom that he would take none of it for himself.

In this same account recorded in the seventh chapter of Hebrews, we learn that the priests of Levi, from the family of Aaron (although far inferior to the priestly order of Melchizedek) also receive tithes from the people according to the law. This tells us little more about the actual tithes other than they received tithes.

Christian scholars claim that Abraham's tithing of the spoils of war predated the Law of Moses, and therefore even if the Law of Moses is done away with, tithing is still binding on Christians because Abraham predated the Law of Moses. Is this true?

And Christendom teaches that this Scripture is the first proof from the Word of God that Christians are to tithe ten percent of their salaries to the church. But what have we really learned from these Scriptures?:

Abraham went to war on behalf of Sodom (SODOM, mind you), to rescue his nephew, Lot. He then gave 10% of these spoils of war to Melchizedek, and allowed Sodom to keep 90%, while he himself kept NOTHING!

Now then, is there a Scholar alive anywhere on earth that can explain to us how this one single unparalleled and never-again-to-be-duplicated event, is Scriptural proof that Christians should give 10% of their annual salaries (not the spoils of war, but their money, their salaries), not once, but year after year after year, not to Melchizedek, but to Clergymen who claim to be ministers of Jesus Christ? If anyone can see a similarity here, I will show him the similarity between an elephant and a fruit fly.

Next we will observe a Scripture that you will probably never hear a sermon on. No tithe-preaching clergyman would use the example of how Jacob tithed. Remember, Jacob is the grandson of Abraham, the father of the faithful, whom God also blessed tremendously. Not only did God *approve* of Jacob's tithing proposal, but, He made it the foundational principle upon which all future tithing would be based. Here it is.

[3] Gen. 28:20-22, "**And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, IF God will be with me, and [if God] will keep me in this way that I go, and [if God] will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; THEN shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shall GIVE ME I will surely give the TENTH unto thee.**"

Wow! This one Scripture pretty much contradicts 99% of all sermons I have ever heard on the subject of tithing! This is the very first Scripture in the Bible that gives an account of someone giving a tenth or tithe of his personal possessions back to God. But, oh how different it is from the teachings of most Christian Churches.

First Jacob truly recognizes God as God. He then begins to proposition God. He states that "IF" God will do this and "IF" God will do the other things, "THEN" Jacob says, "shall

the Lord be my God." Jacob concludes his proposition to God, should God meet all of his requirements, by saying that of all the things that God will first give to Jacob, Jacob will give God back a tenth. Now don't laugh. God honored Jacob's proposition, and furthermore, God continued to honor this same principle of tithing all through Israel's history. As Paul said, "**Now what have you which you did not *obtain*?**" (I Cor. 4:7) All that we possess comes from God.

And so, once more, we learn that Israel was not to tithe on what they did not first possess, unlike those today who teach that it is required to tithe on that which one does not already possess.

God is not partial and God is not a hypocrite. This example of Jacob proves that God doesn't expect a tithe until He blessed the tithe payer first. Everyone should put down this paper, call his minister, and tell him you want to hear a sermon Sunday morning on how Jacob paid tithes to God. Now hold your breath.

Let's ask ourselves a reasonable question: Just how did Jacob actually give a tithe to God? Did he personally hand it to God? No, no one has ever even seen God. Did Jacob tithe to an angel? No, angels do not need and can't use tithes. Did Jacob send his tithe to Heaven by Celestial Express? No. Did he take it to the local church? No, there was no local church. Did he take it to the Temple? No, there was no temple. Did he give it directly to one of the Levitic priests? No, there were no Levites as yet. Well how then did Jacob tithe to God? Was it even possible? Yes, there were actually two different ways that Jacob could tithe to God:

1. **"And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your TITHES, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, YE and YOUR HOUSEHOLDS, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee"** (Deut. 12:6-7).
2. **"And even though there were no Levites in Jacob's day, nonetheless, there were "...the STRANGER, and the FATHERLESS, and the WIDOW, which are within thy gates, shall come, and SHALL EAT AND BE SATISFIED; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thin hand which thou doest"** (Deut. 14:29).

That's how God acknowledged a tithe from Jacob: By partaking of a portion himself and his family in communion and thanksgiving to God, and by sharing his fortune with those who were unfortunate, poor, strangers, etc.

[4] Leviticus 27:30-33, **"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 unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part 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 the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it..."

We learn a great deal about tithing in this section of Scripture:

1. The tithe comes from the "land," not the air or the sea. Fishermen were *not* required to tithe *fish*.
2. It was the "seed" or agricultural products from the fields that was holy to God and tithable.
3. Products from "trees" were to be tithed. This not only included the fruit, but oils, etc.
4. Of "herds or flocks" it was the "tenth" that passed under the rod that was holy and dedicated to God.

Here is exposed another lie of modern clergymen. It was not the *first* tenth, but rather the *tenth* tenth that belonged to God, contrary to every minister I have ever heard, who insists that the *first* tenth always belongs to God. Unscriptural. Untrue. Read your bible-- it's the *tenth* one of a herd that belongs to God.

Another interesting point is this. If a herdsman had but *nine* cattle, *he didn't tithe his cattle at all!* Also notice that God did not even require the *best* of the cattle, just the tenth one to pass under the rod even if it was the runtiest of them all. Remember, we are talking about tithing and not sacrificing (animals for sacrifice always had to be without blemish).

Did you notice that this summary at the very end of the book of Leviticus does not mention the tithing of *money*? Interesting. But just maybe we will find the tithing of money in some other Scripture?

[5] Numbers 18:24-28, "**But the TITHES of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.**

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the TITHES which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a TENTH part of the TITHE. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord of all your TITHES, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest."

According to the above Scriptures, could just *anyone* claim to be a representative of God and therefore have Israel pay tithes to him? Let's read it again, "**But the TITHES of the children of Israel ... I have given to the Levites to inherit.**" Now in order to be a priest one not only had to be of the tribe of Levi, but he also had to be of the family of

Aaron. In fact, if one could not trace his genealogy back to the family of Aaron, he could not be a priest of God. This is the whole point of Hebrews seven. Jesus Christ is a priest for the eons of the rank of Melchizedek because Melchizedek predated the law which stated that only sons of Aaron could be priests. Therefore Melchizedek's genealogy is not given in the Scriptures, and Christ, who according to the flesh is of the line of Judah, *can* and will be God's High Priest in the Kingdom of God.

A warning to all charlatans and would-be tithe extractors and collectors: There is NO temple of God being officiated in Jerusalem today. There is NO Levitic priesthood to officiate at such a temple. There is NO NEED for such a temple or priesthood at this time. Only Levites could collect tithes at the temple. Therefore, EVERYONE collecting tithes today is a charlatan and a fake. If one cannot historically trace back his genealogy generation by generation with no lapses to the family of Aaron, he IS NOT and CANNOT be a priest authorized of God at this time to collect tithes for the temple services and sacrifices. (Of course Jesus IS our Sacrifice, and therefore that whole system funded by the tithes of the law is no longer applicable).

Yet today we have tithe collecting preachers like James Kennedy and John Hagee, with whom I am a little familiar, collecting tithe monies by the millions and millions of dollars annually. Yet by years end I heard them begging for more multiple millions of dollars to get them out of all the financial debt they had accumulated during the year. And then, (so help me, if I'm lying, I'm dying), John Hagee has the unmitigated gall to offer his followers (excuse me, *sell* to his followers--three video tapes, \$60 US/\$87 CAN) entitled *The POWER to get WEALTH*, by which Mr. Hagee assures us that we can learn to "STAY OUT OF DEBT"! Can you believe it? Would the word "hypocrite" be too strong or out of place here?

The whole system changed under the New Covenant. Notice what happened:

1. Jesus said the temple would be utterly destroyed

"And, coming out, Jesus sent from the sanctuary. And His disciples approached to exhibit to Him the buildings of the sanctuary. Yet He, answering, said to them, 'Are you not observing all these? Verily, I am saying to you, Under no circumstances may a stone here be left on a stone, which shall not be DEMOLISHED.'" (Matt. 24:1-2).

2. Under the New Covenant, God does not dwell in temples made with hands,

"The God Who makes the world and all that is in it, He, the Lord inherent of heaven and earth, is NOT dwelling in temples made by hands..." (Acts 17:24).

3. The true believers under the New Covenant are now God's temple,

"For YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD, according as God said,

that I will be making My home and will be walking in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (II Cor. 6:16).

See also, (I Cor. 3:15 and I Cor. 1:19).

4. All theologians know that when the temple ceased, the priesthood officiating at the temple CEASED!
5. Each individual believer under the New Covenant forms a NEW priesthood,

"Yet you are a chosen race, a 'ROYAL PRIESTHOOD'..." (I Peter 2:9).

How then, under the New Covenant, does a believer give a tenth, when he is supposed to give his all (Rom. 12:1), to a priesthood that does not exist, but now he himself is part of a priesthood (I Peter 2:9), at a temple that does not exist (Mat. 24:1-2), but rather he himself is the temple wherein God dwells. No longer do we have priests with spiritual infirmities interceding for us, but rather we have Christ Jesus as our perfect intercessor and High Priest seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens (Heb. 7:28-8:1).

At this time in history, Israel owes no tithe to anyone. And, of course, we Gentiles (who are a new creation and the *true* Israel of God--Gal. 6:16) were never instructed to tithe in the first place. Read all thirteen books of the apostle Paul to the gentiles and find one verse where he instructed Gentiles to pay one cent of tithe money to anyone.

[6] Deut. 12:6, 7, 11, 12, 17, 18, **"And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your TITHES, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flock.**

And there, ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.

Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your TITHES, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord.

And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, YE, and your SONS and your DAUGHTERS, and your MENSERVANTS, and your MAIDSERVANTS, and the LEVITE that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

You may not eat within thy gates the TITHE of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of the flocks, nor any of thy vows which thou vow, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of your hand: But YOU MUST

EAT THEM before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose..."

Let us learn. Who was to partake of all these tithes and good things of the herd and of the land and of the trees? Everyone (yes, the Levite was also included) was to rejoice before the Lord. Did anyone see "*money*" in the list of things they were to bring before the Lord to rejoice? Was it just the ministers (the Levites) who were the recipients of these tithes and offerings, or was not *everyone* to partake of these things? Rejoicing and eating one's own tithe before the Lord, was a very personal and reverend act of worship and communion with God. Not unlike prayer. Others may share and profit from our prayers, but we offer them to God, not to men.

The following verses deal with a practice initiated by God Himself to accommodate those traveling long distances to the Festival Sites where they were to eat and rejoice before the Lord to learn to fear Him. They could sell their tithes of the land for MONEY, and carry that amount of money rather than the bulky and heavy tithes themselves, to the Festival Site. There they were to purchase whatever their hearts desired and to share it with the Levites and the less fortunate. These verses will be further explained in Part II of this paper

[7] Deut. 14:22-29, "**Thou shall truly TITHE all the INCREASE of thy SEED, that the field brings forth year by year.**"

"And you shall eat before the lord your God, in the place which He shall choose to place His name there, the TITHE of thy CORN, of thy WINE, and of your OIL, and the FIRSTLINGS OF THY HERDS and of thy FLOCKS: that thou may learn to fear the Lord thy God always.

And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set His name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee:

Then shall thou turn it into MONEY, and bind up the MONEY in your hand, and shall go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose:

And thou shall BESTOW THAT MONEY FOR WHATSOEVER YOUR SOUL LUSTETH AFTER, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for WHATSOEVER YOUR SOUL DESIRES: and YOU shall eat there before the Lord thy God, and THOU shall rejoice, THOU, AND THINE HOUSEHOLD.

And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shall not forsake him; for he has no part, nor inheritance with thee.

At the end of three years thou shall bring forth all the TITHE of thine INCREASE the same year, and shall lay it up within thy gates:

And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the STRANGER, and the FATHERLESS, and the WIDOW, which are within thy gates, shall come, and SHALL EAT AND BE SATISFIED; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of your hand which thou doest."

This third year of tithing is mentioned again:

[8] Deut. 26:12, "**When thou hast made an end of TITHING all the TITHES of your INCREASE the third year, which is the year of TITHING, and has given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled."**

Again we notice that Israel never tithed from their poverty, but on their INCREASE. Contrary to all the deceiving "Shambachs" in the world, God never intended for people to tithe on what they didn't have, but only on the increase of what God gave them.

For those who don't know, Mr. Shambach is a character on TBN who told everyone on international television, via 25 communication satellites and reaching about 50,000 major cities around the world, that God *personally told him* to tell everyone that in order for them to get out of debt and be blessed of God, everyone needed to send Paul Crouch \$2000 each, even if they didn't have the money! He said God would bless them even if they had to pay the \$2000 in smaller monthly increments. Unbelievable!

TBN's teaching on tithing are totally unscriptural even if Christians were to tithe. Time and again God told Israel that they were to tithe on their increase from their abundance, not on their decrease or their lack.

Paul never taught the Gentiles to tithe, but he did teach them to give freely from what they had, not from what they didn't have:

"I want to suggest that you finish what you started to do a year ago, for you were not only the first to propose this idea, but the first to begin doing something about it. Having started the ball rolling so enthusiastically, you should carry this project through to completion just as gladly, GIVING WHATEVER YOU CAN OUT OF WHATEVER YOU HAVE. Let your enthusiastic idea at the start be equaled by your realistic action now. If you are really EAGER TO GIVE, then it isn't important HOW MUCH YOU HAVE TO GIVE. God wants you to give WHAT YOU HAVE, NOT WHAT YOU HAVEN'T" (II Cor. 8:10-12, The Living Bible).

Oh, let me give you one more prosperity example while I'm at it. Some time ago I critiqued two sermons by Dr. Kennedy and Dr. Hagee. As I sent for one of Hagee's cassette tapes so as to quote him correctly, I got put on his mailing list. In August of 1999 I got a magazine in which he announced a proposed celebration. It appears that he needed seven or eight million dollars in new video equipment and facilities of which he still owed 3.5 million on this debt. Anyway, to commemorate this huge debt and a

proposal to get someone else to pay it off for him, he announced "Millennium Miracle 2000 by 2000"! "What in the world is *that*?" you ask. Well, since you asked, I'll tell you.

To commemorate this huge debt and Mr. Hagee's plan to get other people to pay it off for him, he came up with a plan to mint a one ounce sterling silver coin which would then have printed on one side: "*Millennium Miracle 2000 by 2000*," and on the other side: *Your Name!*

The plan was for 2000 people to send John Hagee \$2000 dollars each for the next few months so that by the year 2000 Mr. Hagee would be DEBT FREE! Why it's a "Millennium Miracle"! (Wait a minute, isn't 2000 people times \$2000 each \$4,000,000, not \$3.5 million dollars? Oh well, a \$500,000 error in John's favor should come in handy for something).

Each contributor of \$2000 would then get a coin commemorating his contribution: "What a *precious heirloom* that can be *passed from one generation to the next* honoring your commitment to the Lord" (Emphasis mine). WHAT A PRECIOUS CROCK...! Do you think the word "hypocrite" would be appropriate one more time?

How stupid do they think the American people are? These are full-grown men. Some of them highly educated people. And yet they shamelessly hawk and huckster their ridiculous religious doctrines, trinkets, and wares over the air waves, like PEDDLERS, in the name of God!

Now don't think I take credit for coming up with that word "peddler." The apostle Paul told the Corinthians (and now it's in our Bibles for the whole world to see) that:

"For we are not as the MAJORITY, who are PEDDLING THE WORD GOD..." (II Cor. 2:17, *Concordant Version*).

The word translated here "peddling" in the *Concordant New Testament* comes from the word "*kapeleuo*" which the spirit of God inspired to be used in the original Greek text of this verse of Scripture.

Here is the meaning of the Greek word "*kapeleuo*" translated "peddler." "To sell at retail, with the insinuation of improper profit, either by overcharging or adulterating" (*Greek-English Keyword Concordance*, page 220).

And notice please that it is not just a few who "peddle" the Word of God, but Paul says, "...**the MAJORITY...**" are peddling the word of God! Contrast this insincere merchandising of the word of God with Paul's motive:

"For we ARE NOT as the majority, who are peddling the word of God, but as OF SINCERITY, but as OF GOD, in the sight of God IN CHRIST, are we speaking."

Just a few chapters later Paul informs us that one day we all will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of our lives, (II Cor. 5:10).

This next section in Chronicles tells us the same things we have already learned concerning what products were to be tithed.

[9] II Chronicles 31:5, 6, 12, "**And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in ABUNDANCE the firstfruits of CORN, WINE, and OIL, and HONEY, and of all the INCREASE of the field; and the TITHE of all things brought they in abundantly.**

And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the TITHE of OXEN and SHEEP, and the TITHE of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps.

And brought in the offerings and the TITHES ..."

This next section of Scriptures deals with a special tithe and offering given to NEW priests and Levites set up by Hezekiah after cleaning house in the cities of Judah by destroying the idols and altars to pagan gods.

[10] Nehemiah 10:37-38, "**And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God and the TITHES of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the TITHES in all the cities of our tillage.**

And the priest the son of Aaron shall be the Levites, when the Levites take TITHES: and the Levites shall bring up the TITHE of the TITHES unto the house of our God, to the chambers into the treasure house."

Again, no mention of money, only agricultural products of the fields, and only the Levites and priests could have access to these tithes and offerings in the house of God.

[11] Nehemiah 12:44, "**And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the fruitfruits, and for the TITHES, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited."**

Nothing new in this verse that, we have not already discussed.

[12] Nehemiah 13:5, 12 "**And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the TITHES of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests."**

"Then brought all Judah the TITHE of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries."

Same story: ONLY agricultural products, and ONLY to the Levites and priests.

[13] Amos 4:4, **"Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your TITHES after three years."**

[14] Malachi 3:8-10, **"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings..."**

This Malachi Prophecy is covered in much greater detail in Part II of this paper, and so I will give just one more Scripture to help us understand how the priests of Malachi's prophecy may have been living so as to bring upon them the condemnation of God's judgments:

"And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the PRIEST'S servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh hook of three teeth in the hand;

And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the PRIEST; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desires; then he would answer him, Nay, but thou shall give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for MEN ABHORRED the offering of the Lord." (1 Sam. 2:13:17).

Don't these verses sound as if they came right out of the book of Malachi?

[15] Matt. 23:23 and Luke 11:42 are discussed in greater detail in Part II of this paper.

CONCLUSION

Now I'm going to preach at you for just a few minutes, and then I'll let you go. Turn to Gal. 6:14-16:

"Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For

in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a NEW CREATION. And whoever shall observe the elements by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God."

What is "...*this* rule...?" We are no longer doing things according to the flesh. Circumcision was the single most important ritual for a man in Israel to do. Yet circumcision is physical (of the letter and of the flesh), even water baptism is physical (of the letter and of the flesh), sacrificing animals is physical (of the letter and of the flesh), tithing is physical (of the letter and of the flesh), etc., etc., etc.

"...God, Who also makes us competent dispensers of a NEW covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter is killing, yet the spirit is vivifying [giving life]" (II Cor. 3:6).

The physical is but a tiny microcosm of the spiritual macrocosm. Cutting a few centimeters of skin from a boy's penis does not make him a spiritual man! But all of these rituals and ceremonies of the Old Covenant pointed to a future SPIRITUAL reality. True circumcision is not of the flesh, but of the heart, mind, soul, and spirit—it virtually has nothing to do with a few centimeters of physical skin.

"For not that which is apparent is the Jew, nor yet that which is apparent in flesh is circumcision; but that which is hidden IS the Jew, and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose applause is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:29).

Jesus Christ is not interested in the letter, in the physical, in the flesh.

"Now those who are *in the flesh* are not able to please God" (Rom. 8:8).

Even baptism is of the heart. The thief on the cross was not baptized in water, yet Jesus said he would be with Him when He comes in His kingdom. "...whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His DEATH" "His death," not water.

"We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

It's all about the SPIRIT--not water, foreskins, and money!

God doesn't need or want ten percent of anything we have. God wants one hundred percent. Christ died for ALL OF YOU, and He wants ALL OF YOU, not just a percentage! *God doesn't want your money; He wants YOU!*

You are already bought and paid for in full by Christ Jesus -- don't try to add your two cents. We are now to live on a standard far above what we ever knew before Christ

called us to become new creatures in the spirit. This can only be done through the power of God's spirit. Our flesh is profiting NOTHING.

"Yet you are not in flesh, but IN SPIRIT, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you" (Rom. 8:9).

One living in the spirit is not all concerned about physical things of the letter and of the flesh. The apostle Paul wasn't called to "baptize," "circumcise," or "collect tithes." The kingdom of God is not food and drink. Paul's whole ministry was proof of that--see my paper, *"Paul's Splinter in the Flesh."*

If people feel they need to give something to God, something physical, something they can see and feel good about, then try this:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove that is that good and acceptable and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

The Apostle Paul said:

"Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of NECESSITY: for GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER." (II Cor.. 9:7).

I would not give another penny to televangelists who peddle the word of God like some cheap merchandise for money. And the amount of money they extort from the public is colossal. What in the world do they do with all that money?

Never have SO MANY... accomplished SO LITTLE ... with SO MUCH!

The real missionaries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ have not flown first class to cushy hotels in exotic lands to teach the natives while dressed in their \$3000 suits! The real missionaries were often down in the trenches with few if any luxuries. And there are still to be found such dedicated dispensers of God's Word. These are the ones that are in need of financial support, for sure. These are those who truly are "worthy of their hire."

HELP THE NEEDY, NOT THE GREEDY

Give to the fatherless, the orphans, the strangers, the widows, the poor, and the needy, the homeless, and the beggar on the street, as God gives to you, the wherewithal. Give to reputable charities if you have extra. Give to your family members and relatives in need—don't humiliate them by making them ask you first. Give to a neighbor in financial

distress. Even when tipping someone, let it be a reflection of the One that you are representing in your Christian walk. Our God is a generous God—may you become generous also. Develop a "love for giving." Paul tells us in Acts 20:35b to:

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

Part II

Scriptural Proof that Christian Tithing is a Hoax

and

The Malachi Prophecy

I marvel that more people are not totally embarrassed by the way the world of Christendom exacts money from the poor and peddles the Word of God like so much merchandise for sordid gain. It is an international disgrace. I will not mince words, so get ready for some startling revelations.

WHAT WE WILL LEARN

What is the real message of Malachi's prophecy for believers today?

Did Paul finance his international ministry through the tithing system?

Is there even one example of Christians paying tithes in the Bible?

Why did Jesus not pay tithes or the Temple tax commanded by the Law of Moses?

Will you or anyone be "**cursed with a curse**" for not tithing?

THE SCRIPTURES KNOW NOTHING OF "CHRISTIAN TITHING"

Jesus Christ's followers did not pay tithes to Him from farm products or herds; neither did His followers pay Him ten percent of their salaries from other sources of income.

"Christian tithing" is an oxymoron—it is a contradiction of words. Nay, it is more: it is, in fact, a Christian hoax! "Christian tithing" is about as Scriptural as "Christian burnt offerings," "Christian stonings," or "Christian synagogues." The leaders of Christendom have bamboozled millions (billions) of unsuspecting laity into believing that "Christian tithing" is a Scriptural command from God Himself, and can easily be found and supported in the pages of Divine Scripture. Oh really?

Of the 613 laws contained in the first five books of the Bible written by Moses, why is it that aside from the ten commandments, "tithing" is virtually the only other law that the modern Church tries to retain? They retain it in name only, however, since there is nothing similar between Moses' law of tithing" and "Christian tithing" except the aspect of ten percent. Christian tithing is an extra-biblical concept and doctrine—aside from the ten percent it has nothing in common with the tithing law of Moses, and was never practiced by the New Testament Church.

Not only is Christian tithing taught to be needful, it is taught as if it were a divine, binding LAW. But there is no such thing as a "Christian tithing law" in the New Testament Scriptures. It is a heresy, used by the Church, independent cults, and charlatans of every description, as a club to beat and threaten parishioners into surrendering ten percent of their salaries in obedience to this phantom law. All are forewarned that failure to pay this 10% Church tax will cause them to be "**cursed with a CURSE!**" There is indeed "**a curse,**" but it is not God Who pronounces it.

NO TITHING IN THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES

We have Scriptural proof that no such law or custom as Christian tithing was taught or practiced in the Church by the early apostles. Their epistles are totally devoid of any such tithing custom or law. Gentile converts were never taught to tithe to anyone. Although the temple and priesthood in Jerusalem remained until 70 AD, not even Jewish converts were taught to give their tithes to the Apostles rather than to the temple priests.

In the Acts 15 Jerusalem Conference we find outlined what the apostles all agreed was necessary for the newly converted Gentiles to practice, and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, tithing is conspicuously missing. Some believing Pharisees *wanted* the apostles to teach the Gentiles to keep the Law of Moses (which certainly contained the law of tithing, Acts 15:5), but the apostles headed by Peter, James, and Paul would not hear of it (Acts 15:28-29)! Yet, what is one of the very first legislated duties taught to Gentile converts by the Church today? It is that they must tithe their annual salaries to the Church. Where did this unscriptural law of Christian tithing come from?

Notice this telling bit of history from the my *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "**Tithes in Christendom**—The earliest authentic example of anything like a law of the State enforcing payment appears to occur in the capitularies [ecclesiastics] of Charlemagne at the end of the 8th or beginning of the 9th century. Tithes were by that enactment to be applied to the maintenance of the bishop, clergy, the poor, and the fabric of the church. In the course of time the principle of payment of tithes was extended FAR BEYOND its original intention. Thus they became transferable to laymen and saleable like ordinary property, in spite of the injunctions of the third Lateran Council; and they became payable OUT OF SOURCES OF INCOME [not just farming and herding, but other trades and occupations and salaries paid in the form of money] NOT ORIGINALLY TITHABLE." (1963, volume 22, page 253, 'TITHES').

The Catholic Church knows its own history. Here is how tithing got back into the Church after being absent for nearly five centuries:

"As the Church expanded and various institutions arose, it became necessary to make laws which would insure the proper and permanent support of the clergy. The payment of tithes was adopted from the Old Law... The earliest positive legislation on the subject seems to be contained in the letter of the bishops assembled at Tours in 567 and the [canons] of the Council of Macon in 585."—*The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

They "extended" their base of tithe collecting to eventually include all forms of income. All Christian scholars know that although money was in wide use in ancient Israel, it was never a titheable commodity. But modern Christian pastors of God's sheep don't want tithes of goats or oil or corn—they want money—cold hard cash. God has a word to the "shepherds of the sheep," and it is the very same message that He had for the Levites in the book of Malachi. And it is this:

"My people have been lost sheep [Why? How did they get that way?] their SHEPHERDS have caused them to go astray" (Jer. 50:6).

Was Israel consciously aware of the fact that; they were being led astray by their spiritual leaders? Not most, and neither is the world of Christendom today aware that they are being lead astray by their spiritual leaders.

THE MYSTERY OF MALACHI REVEALED

It is the book of Malachi that today's clergy uses as their main authority for promulgating the doctrine of "Christian tithing." Christian tithing means that everyone must give 10% of their gross income (which is in the form of MONEY, 99%+ of the time), or they will be "**cursed with a curse.**" It will be well worth your time to read the real meaning of Malachi's prophecy.

Mostly one will hear only three verses of Malachi quoted by those attempting to wrest a doctrine of Christian tithing from this prophecy.

Here are the "cursing" verses:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation" (Malachi 3:8-9).

Here is the "blessing" verse:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat [bread] in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that thee shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10).

Their interpretation of these proof texts are as follows: Rob God of His ten percent of your salary and be CURSED, or pay God ten percent of your salary and be BLESSED.

Before we go any further, just who is **cursing** whom in this Malachi prophecy? Does God, indeed, say, "**You are CURSED with a curse**" (Mal. 3:9)? This definitely sounds as if it is GOD Who is doing the cursing, doesn't it? But say, did you notice that the word "*are*" in your Bible is in *italics*? That means that the word was supplied by the translators and was not in the original manuscripts. Remove it, and the verse says: "**You cursed...**" rather than "**You are cursed...**"

Is it God, or Israel, who is doing the cursing in this verse?

The Sopherim (Jewish Scribes) understood this verse to say that it was Israel "cursing God" rather than "God cursing Israel." I have a few translations that make this correction:

"With the curse YOU are cursing [me], and me YOU are robbing—the nation in its entirety."

And:

"With a curse you curse Me, and Me you are defrauding—the nation, all of it" (Mal. 3:9, *Concordant Version of The Old Testament*).

We must always keep in mind that when the Bible says "tithes" it means products from the land—as grains and cattle. But when the Priests of Christendom say "tithes," it always means money. Because the clergy prefers to be paid in money, it therefore, became necessary to change the Biblical use of the word "tithes" to now include money. And if "money" can now be shown to be a tithable commodity, guess what? Abracadabra, hocus-pocus, open sesame—every believer, of every occupation in the whole world (not just the farmers as in the Law of Moses), now is required to pay ten percent of his income to the Church. They increased their base of productivity a hundred fold.

What then is the 21st Century application of this Malachi Prophecy? Are we now to tithe money? Let's read Malachi 3:10 very carefully:

1. WHAT were they robbing God of? "**tithes AND offerings.**" Tithes of what? Products from the land—grains and cattle.
2. WHERE were they to bring the tithes? To the "**storehouse**" [Hebrew: '**garner**'-- a granary for grain].
3. WHY did God want these tithes of the land brought to the "storehouse" (the granary)? "**That there may be meat [bread] in Mine house** [God's house, Not the granary]."

If there is no spiritual application of these statements and we rather take them literally, there appears to be a contradiction here. Why should the people bring the tithes to the **"storehouse"** (a granary for storing grain) when what God wanted was **"bread in His house,"** (the tabernacle/Temple, and not the "storehouse")? The only food in God's house—the tabernacle, was a dozen loaves of bread. And that bread was for the Priests only, not for the tribe of Levi. Since there were only twelve loaves of bread in the Tabernacle/Temple of God, are we to believe that the whole nation of Israel did not bring enough grain to the storehouse to make even twelve loaves of bread?

God does not contradict Himself, there needs to be something other than a need for enough grain from the whole nation of Israel to make twelve loaves of bread! Just what does God mean, **"that there may be meat [bread] in Mine house?"** Is God really reprimanding Christians of the 21st Century through Malachi's prophecy to bring our checkbooks to church, **"that there may be money in Mine house?"** Yet this *is* the teaching of the Church regarding Malachi's message. What is the Truth?

Does God ask Israel to bring all the tithes and offerings into the storehouse, or treasury, or granary, so that there will be "tithes and offerings in Mine house?" No. God says so, **"that there may be meat in Mine house?"** We know that they did not bring the tithes and offerings into the holy place of the tabernacle. Only bread was kept in the holy place. The "bread" in the holy place was a type of something future, just as everything that happened to Israel and all of their offerings and ceremonies were a type of something future (I Cor. 10:11). He must indeed be spiritual blind who cannot see that the "bread" in the holy place foreshadows **"The True Bread of Life—Jesus Christ."**

If God wanted more money in His house, why did Jesus do what He did in the House of God?

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the MONEY changers... and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:12-13).

THE CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF BRINGING IN THE TITHE

The Christian interpretation of Malachi 3:10 is this: "Bring ye all the tithe MONEY and extra offerings of money to the church bank, that there may be money in the Church." Granted, they might not enunciate it that crudely, but that is what they teach. Ask virtually any pastor of any church, "How do I, starting today, actually obey this prophecy of Malachi to stop **"robbing God of His tithes and offerings?"** and he will tell you to write out a check in the name of his church, for 10% of your salary (plus an offering), and that check will then be deposited into the church bank account.

Then ask these same pastors what kind of blessings you will receive for obeying this procedure, and they will probably tell you stories where people received huge amounts of material goods and even huge amounts of more money. This is their interpretation of

God "**opening the windows of heaven and pouring out a blessing.**" And there are ministers by the tens of thousands at this very moment preparing more stories and more yarns on how blessed one will become in every imaginable physical, earthly, and material things for giving them (they would say, giving God) your money.

Is this really how God wants us of the 21st Century to apply Malachi's prophecy to our lives? I speak as a fool.

This prophecy has absolutely nothing to do with tithing money to the Church.

Does God suggest somewhere in this prophecy that there isn't enough "money in His house?" Is Jesus Christ coming back to this earth to judge these "priests" because the "people" failed to bring enough money to the storehouse so that there would be money in God's house? Is it a lack of money that concerns God in this prophecy? No, it is both the people and the priests who have corrupted themselves according to this prophecy. But like always, God holds the priests to a much higher standard and therefore they receive the greater condemnation. There are two groups of judgments in this prophecy:

[1] **"Behold I will send My Messenger... But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall PURIFY the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness"** (Mal. 3:1-3).

[2] **"And I will come near to you to judgment [not just the priests, but many of the people as well]; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, says the Lord of hosts"** (Mal. 3:5).

It is amazing how the clergy make most people think that the only thing of value in the book of Malachi are these three verses on "robbing God" and "receiving a blessing." There are four whole chapters in this book, and maybe it should behoove us to see what the rest of this book has to say. Here are just a few more things contained in Malachi:

"You offer polluted bread upon My altar... if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil..." (1:7-8).

"And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you... I will curse your blessings... Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your face..." (2:1-3).

"But you have departed out of the way... ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi... therefore I have also made you contemptible and base before all the people..." (2:8-9).

"Behold, I will send my Messenger... But who may abide the day of His coming... He is like a refiner's fire [like the lake of fire] ...And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi... that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (3:13—See Isa. 6:29).

"Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them... And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I made up my jewels; and I will spare them... Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God and him that serves Him not [‘Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world?’ I Cor. 6:2]]" (3:16-18).

"And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (4:6)

MALACHI AND THE BREAD OF LIFE

Malachi contains a prophecy and information **"for OUR admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come"** (I Cor. 10:11). There is no tabernacle/temple administered by the priests of Levi today, nor for two thousand years. Malachi is not speaking to Christians about tithing money to the church. The literal physical circumstances extant in the Church in Malachi's day is but a type, a shadow, of a spiritual reality for our day and for all those called since the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was from the tithes that the Priests of Levi selected the "sacrifices." There lies the problem for ancient Israel and the problem for the Church today.

Let me explain the problem with Israel and her priests in a nutshell:

God says: **"I have LOVED you..."**

Israel asks: **"wherein have you loved us?"** (Mal. 1:2).

God said: **"If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? My fear? O priests, that despise My name."**

The priests ask: **"Wherein have we despised Thy name?"** (1:6).

God says: **"Ye offer polluted bread upon Mine alter..."**

The priests ask: **"Wherein have we polluted Thee?"** (1:7).

God says: **"And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? ...the sick and the lame... is it not evil?"** (1:8).

God says: **"I have no pleasure in you... NEITHER WILL I ACCEPT AN OFFERING AT YOUR HAND"** (1:10).

Let's stop here a minute and consider what we have read. The Priests **despise** God's name, and their sacrifices are, **blind, sick and lame**. And so God says He will not even accept their **offering**. So really, the people were tithing. But the quality of their tithes (from which they selected the sacrifices) was of an unacceptable quality. But was it this poor quality of sacrifices that really angered God? Not really. The sick and lame sacrifices were but a symptom of a much larger problem. God used their polluted sacrifices only as a physical, visual illustration to show them their sins and polluted hearts. For much of the remainder of this book, God unfolds to them their many sins and weaknesses.

God says: "**Ye are gone away from Mine ordinance, and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you...**" (3:7).

The priests ask: "**Wherein shall we return?**" (3:7).

God says: "**In tithes and offering**" (3:8).

God uses "tithes and offerings" to illustrate their attitude of mind and heart behind their giving. Tithes and offerings were all that God asked of the people to give Him. Everything else they could keep for themselves. But how much did they love God. How much did they appreciate God and all His goodness to them? What was their attitude of heart and mind toward God? Their "**tithes and offerings**" say it all: "**You offer POLLUTED BREAD UPON MINE ALTAR**" (1:7).

All that was included in their "tithes and offerings"—firstfruits, tithes of the land, tithes of the herds, and altar offerings of every sort, were to God: "**polluted bread upon Mine altar.**" They gave offerings (they WERE TITHING), but they were totally unacceptable. "**...NEITHER will I accept an offering at your hand**" (1:10).

THE TYPE AND SHADOW IS FAR INFERIOR TO THE REALITY

Malachi was a "prophet." Moses was also a prophet, "**And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses**" (Deut. 34:10). And Jesus Christ did not come to destroy the "prophets," but rather to "**fulfill [the prophets]**" (Matt. 5:17).

Under the Prophet Moses, God fed the nation of Israel bread in the wilderness.

"**Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat**" (John 6:31).

Under the Prophet Malachi God said they should bring the tithes into the storehouse so that there would be

"**...meat in My house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of HEAVEN, and pour you out A** [keep in mind that this

blessing is *singular*—*a blessing*] **blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive IT [again, *singular*]" (Mal. 3:10).**

This may well be one of the most misunderstood and wrongly preached verses in the Bible.

The word "meat" in this verse comes from a Hebrew word **taraph**, and means "to pluck off or pull to pieces; to supply with food (as in morsels)" (Strong's Hebrew Dictionary, p. 105, #2963).

From this pulling to pieces, plucking off, and morsels, comes the phrase "breaking bread." There undoubtedly was, more grains in the storehouse (to bake bread), than any other food commodity. Now then, listen and learn what I have to show you next, and you will know and understand more about the Old Testament Prophets than do most theologians. What did Jesus have to say to the Jews about the "**bread from heaven**" which they said their fathers ate in the desert?

"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, [truly, truly], I say unto you, Moses gave you NOT THAT BREAD FROM HEAVEN; but My Father gives you the TRUE BREAD from heaven. For the bread of God is HE which comes down from heaven and gives life unto the world" (John 6:32-33)!

What? How can Jesus say that?

The Jews said that their fathers ate "**bread from heaven.**"

Moses said that, "**He gave them bread from heaven to eat.**"

But Jesus said, "**Moses gave you NOT that bread from heaven; but My Father gives you the TRUE bread from heaven.**"

Is Jesus contradicting the very Word of God? No, a thousand times No: He is fulfilling the words of the prophets just as He said in Matt. 5:17.

The bread in the desert was only the type of bread from heaven, which in reality, and in fulfillment, pointed to Jesus Christ, the "**TRUE bread from heaven.**" The same is true for Malachi. The "**polluted bread**" of Malachi is but the type of the unpolluted, pure, "**TRUE bread from heaven,**" which is Jesus Christ. But to receive this "**blessing from heaven,**" we must bring all our tithes, all that we have to offer God, into the storehouse so that there will be "**meat [unpolluted bread] in Mine house.**"

Now then, does God want unpolluted animals? No. Does God want unpolluted produce from the land? No. Does God want unpolluted money? No. Well what kind of sacrifice does He want then? God wants you! All of you! You, yourself, are the sacrifice that God wants.

"I beseech [invitation, invocation, imploration, exhortation] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice holy [not polluted], acceptable [not like in Malachi where God says, '*neither will I accept an offering at your hand*'], unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

As it is our 'bodies' that house our mind, heart, and spirit, we will also cover those attributes which are necessary in order for our "living sacrifice" to be acceptable unto the Lord.

Seriously, dear readers, of what value are physical material offerings to God, if the ones making the offerings are themselves, "**polluted bread?**" Does God really desire physical things? God has already created BILLIONS OF GALAXIES full of "physical things." Billions of galaxies do not fulfill God's desire for the love, obedience, and admiration of children. God wants children. God wants children—Sons and Daughters in His Own image. But God will not accept children whose character is likened to "**polluted bread.**"

We will cover the quality traits of spiritual character that God desires of all His sacrifices.

FIRST THE PHYSICAL AND THEN THE SPIRITUAL

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is SPIRITUAL" (I Cor. 15:46).

Now then, was that bread that the fathers ate in the desert the "TRUE bread from heaven?" No, it clearly was not, Jesus said it was not! And so, can we not see, can we not believe, can we not understand, that Jesus Christ IS

"...the TRUE bread from heaven. For the bread of God IS HE which comes down FROM HEAVEN and gives life unto the world" (John 6:32b-33).

Hold this thought

And now back to Malachi again:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat [bread] in Mine house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi, 3:10).

This is vital to understand: God does not berate the people or the priests for the lack of quantity in their tithes and offerings and sacrifices, but rather a lack of quality. Here is absolute Scriptural proof of what I say. They brought offerings, but why would God not accept their offerings? Because they offered "**blind, lame and sick sacrifices.**" And why did they do that? Because they themselves were spiritually blind, lame and sick. There was quantity to their offerings, but not quality.

"And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto your governor; will he be pleased with you, or accept your person? Says the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 1:8).

FINE FLOUR AND PURE FRANKINCENSE VS. POLLUTED BREAD

And how is it that God views these evil sacrifices:

"Ye [all of you] offer polluted bread upon mine altar..." (Ver. 7).

There is the whole ball of wax! And so it is in today's Church. The problem is not a lack of money, but offering polluted bread upon the altar of God. God wants "Pure and Fine Bread":

"And you shall take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes... And you shall put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread... And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; [the priests] and they shall eat it in the holy place..." (Lev. 24:5-9).

Remember: first is the natural, the physical, and then comes the spiritual.

And so the children of Israel ate the "bread from heaven" in the wilderness. There was sufficient quantity, but it lacked quality. It did not possess the quality of True LIFE—they all DIED in the desert except for Caleb and Joshua in that generation. The spiritual fulfillment of this type of physical bread in the desert is that Jesus Christ is **"The True Bread of LIFE."** Likewise, the quantity of bread being offering by the priests on the altar of God was not the problem, but rather the quality of those offerings.

The spiritual bread (the spiritual food for the people) being offering in the Church today is not lacking in quantity, but rather quality. There is "bread," yes, but it is **"polluted bread."** The opposite of "polluted" is "pure." God's religion is PURE:

"PURE religion and UNDEFILED before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows IN THEIR AFFLICTION, and to keep himself UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD" (James 1:27).

This verse does not say: "Take ten percent of the Social Security checks and welfare checks of the **"fatherless and widows IN THEIR AFFLICTION,"** and then take that money and spend it for all the **"spotted materialism of this world."** Yet that is exactly what all too many of today's priests and ministers are doing. And furthermore, they shamelessly boast about their material possessions! They **"love the world and the things that are in the world."** And, therefore, is it little wonder that, **"the love of the Father is not in them"** (I John 2:15)? Neither do they have a **"love of the Truth"** (II Thes. 2:10).

God used a physical, outward, visible, type, of sick, lame, and blind sacrifices, which He then calls **polluted bread** to show Israel and their priests what He was really angry

with, namely, their "**polluted**" hearts, minds, and spirits! Malachi's prophecy is about the sin WITHIN, not sacrifices WITHOUT!

THE ENDTIME CHURCH AS PETER SAW IT

Peter describes the church in the latter days:

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily [secretly] shall bring in damnable [destructive, fatal, disastrous, ruinous] heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And MANY shall follow their pernicious [lascivious, licentious, wanton] ways; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness [greed, lust] shall they with feigned words MAKE MERCHANDISE OF YOU" (II Pet. 2:1-3). Other renderings:

"Motivated by greed, they will exploit you with their counterfeit arguments" (*Berkely Version*).

"...in their lust they will exploit you with cunning arguments" (*Moffatt Translation*).

"In their greed for MONEY they will trade on your credulity with sheer fabrications" (*The New English Bible*).

ALL PHYSICAL TYPES FORESHADOW SPIRITUAL REALITIES

Everything that happened in the Old Testament was a TYPE of future, spiritual things.

"Now ALL these things happened unto THEM for examples: and they were written for OUR admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11).

And Malachi is no different. The people of Israel tithed sick, lame, and diseased animals to Levi. The Priests took those evil beasts and offered them as sacrifices to God. The reason that the people and the priests offered sick (polluted) sacrifices is because they themselves were sick and polluted with sins. Isaiah describes them well:

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more, THE WHOLE HEAD IS SICK and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head THERE IS NO SOUNDNESS IN IT..." (Isa. 1:4-5).

Much of what the clergy disseminates from the pulpit as "wholesome spiritual food," God calls "**polluted bread.**" And just WHY do they offered polluted bread? Because:

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the ABUNDANCE OF THE HEART, the MOUTH SPEAKS" (Matt. 12:34).

There it is! There is the message of Malachi! That is why Israel brought sick and blind sacrifices and that is why the priests did not correct them, but went ahead and offered them to God. Both the people and the priests were polluted in their hearts, and it is of the abundance of the heart that determines men's actions.

Today's "**polluted bread**" is served up in such doctrines as exact ten per cent of the parishioner's salaries in the form of a church tax called, *tithing*. And the threat of eternal torture in fire if one does not follow the dictates of a specific denomination or religious teaching that is deemed necessary to avoid this eternal hellhole of terrorism.

The type and shadow of Jesus Christ, the True Bread of life, was the physical bread that Israel ate in the desert. The desert doesn't produce enough food to sustain an army of people—it had to be supernaturally supplied by God. The desert and wilderness of our carnal nature does not produce enough spiritual food to sustain us either. Only the **True Bread of LIFE from Heaven in the person of Jesus Christ** can supply our spiritual needs. We must eat this spiritual bread in order to have spiritual life.

The sacrifices spoken of in Malachi were not suitable for God's house. They offered

"POLLUTED BREAD" and we saw some of the many sins that that constituted this polluted bread. Here are the only sacrifices that are fit for God's storehouse:

"The sacrifices of God are A BROKEN SPIRIT: a broken a CONTRITE HEART..." (Psalm 51:17).

And in Psalm 34:18 David reverses the order:

"The lord is nigh unto them that are of a BROKEN HEART; and saves such as be of a CONTRITE SPIRIT."

It is all about attitude: **REPENT, HUMBLE YOURSELF, and OBEY!** Then follows the Blessing:

People always want to do physical things to prove their spirituality. But God doesn't want your physical things. God wants a broken heart and a contrite spirit and a willingness to OBEY:

"Behold, to OBEY is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22).

The sacrifices of a broken heart, a contrite spirit, and a willingness to always obey are always acceptable to God.

BRINGING GOD YOUR SPIRITUAL TITHES WILL REAP A SPIRITUAL BLESSING

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat [*bread—pure and fine bread—not polluted bread of a carnal mind filled with evil deeds and doctrines*], and prove Me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of HEAVEN [**For the bread of God is He which come down from heaven... For I came down from heaven... I am the bread which came down from heaven... John 6:33, 38, 41] and pour you out a blessing [Jesus Christ, The Bread of Life is this blessing], that there shall not be room [**Now unto Him that is able to do EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY {Gk: SUPEREXCESSIVELY—superabundantly, superexceedingly, superaboundingly} ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK' Eph. 3:20] to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).****

God is saying to us: "Give Me your pure bread offerings of a **"broken heart, contrite spirit, and attitude of obedience,"** and I will give you, **"The TRUE BREAD OF LIFE from HEAVEN."**

Now there, dear reader, is a blessing beyond our ability to make **"room to receive it."** Jesus Christ is the True Bread in God's house. Jesus Christ is the personification of LOVE, LIGHT AND LIFE. Jesus is the ultimate, the apex, the primer, the zenith, the HIGHEST OF EVERYTHING! Jesus Christ is the **Tree of Life, The Hope of Glory, The Saviour of the World**—all that we and the entirety of the universe will ever need for all eternity is found in **Him!** But God demands purity. All the polluted bread has got to go:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the SONS OF GOD: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

Beloved, now are we the SONS of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And every man that has this hope in him PURIFIES HIMSELF, even as He [Jesus] IS PURE" (I John 3:1-3).

And the priests of Christendom would have us believe that God's message through Malachi is a quest for MORE MONEY! Unbelievable!

THE LESSON OF MALACHI FOR THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

Obedience to the Law of Moses, the Sacrifices and the many Ordinances was to bring *physical prosperity, safety from enemies, healthy children, and a long life in the land,* followed by DEATH. Malachi brings us from obedience to physical laws in the land, all the way down to the return of Messiah in fiery judgment upon mankind. God never really

did want animal sacrifices, but the sacrifices of a **"broken and contrite heart and spirit."**

God tells us through Malachi that we should bring all our tithes (spiritual tithes and offerings) to Him and He will bless us with a blessing that cannot be contained.

The physical tithes that were brought to the storehouse from which portions were sacrificed to God, brought temporary, physical blessings on Earth. For all those who will bring all their spiritual tithes and offering to God's house, God promises One permanent, SPIRITUAL Blessing from heaven. Jesus Christ is that One and only **True Bread** of never-ending life.

WE OBEY A SPIRITUAL LAW AND OUR SACRIFICES ARE SPIRITUAL

As Christians are not under the Law of Moses in this New Testament dispensation, accordingly, the end-time fulfillment of Malachi does not pertain to the Law of Moses, which is the oldness of the letter rather the newness of the spirit. Just as there is no more sacrificing of animals at the Temple, likewise there is no tithing of animals at the Temple—nor is there tithing of any kind. Christians are not under the Law of Moses, nor a twisted, modified version of it.

"For the law of the SPIRIT of LIFE in Christ Jesus [this is not the Law of Moses] has made me FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH" (Rom. 8:2).

The law of the letter **"engraven in stone tablets"** assuredly was a **"dispensation of death and condemnation"** (II Cor. 3:4-11). Here are but a few more sacrifices of the spirit which are always acceptable in God's presence:

"...therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of JOY..." (Ps. 26:6).

"Offer the sacrifices of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and put your trust in the Lord" (Ps. 4:5).

"And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of THANKSGIVING, and declare His works with REJOICING" (Ps. 107:22).

Yes, these are the sacrifices, these are the offerings, these are the tithes of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

O what a clever piece of legislation the Church enacted when they changed a law regarding the tithing of farm products for the Levites only to a law that exacts ten per cent of EVERYTHING FROM EVERYBODY.

LOVE NOT THE WORLD NEITHER THE THINGS IN THE WORLD

Instead of following the Apostle Paul's example of humility and service, all too many priests of Christendom have become the very personification of materialistic exhibitionism.

Once content with a good quality \$200 watch, now they need a \$2000 Rolex. Once happy with \$300 suits, now they need \$3000 suits. Once content with a brand new \$30,000 car every year, now they need an \$80,000 top-of-the-line luxury car. Once happy with a beautiful and roomy \$150,000 home, now they need a \$1,500,000 mansion on the hill. Once happy that the \$500,000 mortgage on their church building got paid, now they need a \$5,000,000 cathedral with gold-gilded everything. Once happy to fly first class everywhere they traveled, now they need their own private \$10,000,000 executive jet. Just look at how many men of the cloth are building their own kingdoms on earth? And it seems like the next generation coming behind them have even greater appetites.

Granted, there are tens of thousands who do not believe it possible to aspire to such dizzying heights of materialism and are content to have sizably smaller kingdoms, but it is still the same foul spirit of lust, power, and worldly materialism at work in many of their lives. Teaching God's people that it is God's law that they must tithe ten percent of their salaries to the Church or God will curse them is not only unscriptural, it is a SIN!

Have you ever heard one of these prosperity ministers give a powerful sermon on I John 2:15:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

MONEY AND THE BELIEVER

There is not one example of anyone tithing MONEY to anyone in the entirety of the Bible! The only reference to "money" with regards to tithing has absolutely nothing to do with paying tithes ON money. It is found in Deut. 14:24-26, which we shall now read in it's entirety:

"And if the way be too long for thee [to the place where God placed His name to be worshipped, especially during the fall feast harvest of tabernacles] so that you are not able to carry it [the tithe of their farm produce] or if the place be too far from you, which the Lord your God shall choose to set His name there, when the Lord your God has blessed you: Then shall you turn it [the tithe of their farm produce] into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and shall go unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose: And you shall bestow that money [to the preachers? to the church? NO...] ...for whatsoever thy soul lusts after [Heb: 'for whatsoever your heart desires'], for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong

drink, or for whatsoever *your* soul desires: and *you* shall eat there before the Lord *your* God, and *you* shall rejoice, *you*, and *your* household."

Farm products could be sold and turned into money when long travel was necessary. But at the destination where God placed His name, the money was spent on *food* for the Levite, stranger, fatherless, poor, etc. It was not presented to the Levites as a monetary gift.

Here is an easy to understand Scripture explaining what the purpose of the tithe was:

"And the Levite, (because he has no part nor inheritance with you), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within your gates, shall come, and shall EAT [food from the land] and be satisfied; that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do" (Deut. 14:29).

The Church would prefer you not know the following:

- The tradesmen who made the baskets for harvesting, did not tithe.
- The cobblers, who made the shoes for the servants of the field, did not tithe.
- The carpenters, who made the wagons used for harvesting the fields, did not tithe.
- The potters, who made the jugs for carrying water to the servants in the fields, did not tithe.
- The women, who made the garments for the field-workers, did not tithe.
- And certainly, the servants who worked in the fields for wages, did not tithe.

Here are the simple facts regarding the Biblical teaching of tithing:

ONLY LANDOWNERS TITHED

ONLY PRODUCTS OF THE LAND WERE TITHED

ONLY LEVITES COULD RECEIVE THE TITHES

TITHING WAS A LAW OF MOSES

CHRISTIANS ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES!

Does anyone have a Scripture that contradicts what I have just said?

By the way, Jesus Christ was a carpenter by trade, and as such, JESUS DID NOT TITHE!

JESUS CAME TO FULFILL THE LAW, NOT TO RELIEVE THE LAW

Christians believe that Jesus came to FULFILL the Law of Moses by RELIVING the law of Moses in His own personal life. He assuredly did not. This is an entire study of itself, however, I want to prove to you from the Scriptures that Jesus did not concern Himself with Tithes and Taxes, and restrictions of the Law of Moses.

THE TEMPLE TAX

Not only did Jesus not tithe, because He was a carpenter and carpenters were not obligated to tithe, but neither did He pay the Temple tax, which was commanded by the Law of Moses for all men in Israel to pay annually. Of the 613 laws of Moses, this is Law # 404:

"This they shall give, every one that passes among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs): an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord.

Every one that passes among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord.

The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.

And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle [in Jesus' time, to the Temple] of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls" (Exodus 30:13-16).

Jesus Christ did not pay this yearly tax to the Temple, for the same reason that Jesus did not keep the Sabbath day commandment. Jesus Christ is **Lord of the Sabbath**, (Matt. 12:8). And likewise, Jesus is not only Lord of the Temple, **Jesus is the Temple**,

(John 2:19). And, furthermore, Jesus was the Lord to Whom Israel gave the half shekel as an offering. Jesus does not need an atonement for His soul; **Jesus Christ is the Atonement**, (Rom. 5:9-11).

Notice this remarkable story of the only time the temple tax came up in the ministry of Jesus. Most Christians will never hear an explanation of these verses as long as they live! These verses are highly incriminating to those who teach the tithing of money to the Church:

"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Does not your master pay tribute [Greek: 'pay the double drachma' which was the exact amount of the annual Temple tax]?"

He says, Yes [Peter was embarrassed and apparently not honest with his answer]. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him [Greek: 'prophthano,'—'to

get an earlier start of, 'forestalls' or 'anticipated him'], **saying, What do you think, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute [taxes]? Of their own children [sons] or of strangers?**

Peter said unto Him, of strangers. Jesus said unto him, THEN ARE THE CHILDREN FREE.

Notwithstanding, LEST WE SHOULD OFFEND THEM, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when you have opened his mouth, thou shall find a piece of money [Gk: 'statar' –the exact temple tax for two]: that take and give unto them for Me and thee" (Matt. 17:24-27).

What an amazing story! What a telling teaching truth from Scriptures we have here! No wonder most Christians have never heard this Scripture explained in Church.

The reason Peter said "yes" to the tribute collector is because it was embarrassing to Him to say, "NO, my master does NOT pay temple tax." It was such a small amount of money (less than a dollar). But now Peter has to go into the house give Jesus an appraisal of what just happened. Jesus being merciful to Peter does not reprimand him for not being honest with the tribute collector, but rather, cuts him off [**forestalls** him] before he can speak and saves Peter the embarrassment.

The point is this: Jesus did not pay temple tax because Jesus is the King of the kingdom. And if **the children are free**, certainly the King Himself is free.

Might I add that, neither did Jesus stone or condone others to stone, the woman caught in the very act of adultery even though the Law of Moses demanded it:

"And the man that commits adultery with another man's wife, even he that commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer AND THE ADULTERESS SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH" (Lev. 20:10).

Now then, did Jesus come to "fulfill" this Law of Moses by living, teaching and carrying out that law? He surely did not. He rather said, **"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."** (John 8:7). If we are to believe that **"fulfilling the law"** of Moses can only be accomplished by living, teaching and enforcing the law of Moses, then something is wrong with that theory because Jesus obviously did NOT carry out many commands of the law of Moses in His own life!

The theologians have debased the **New Covenant** as being nothing more than the **Old Covenant**, with a few added twists. Jesus **"fulfilled the law"** not by adding a few spiritual twists to it, but by keeping a MUCH HIGHER SPIRITUAL LAW that actually contradicted much of the letter of Moses' Law.

One doesn't need a physical law of the letter chiseled in stone, to **"keep the sabbath"** when he has entered into **"God's SPIRITUAL REST"** in his heart.

One doesn't need a physical law of the letter to **"swear by His name"** when in his heart his desire is to **"swear NOT at all."**

One doesn't need a physical law chiseled in stone telling him **"thou shalt not commit adultery"** when in his heart he no longer **"even looks on a woman to lust after her."**

One doesn't need a physical law telling him to **"HATE his enemies"** when now in his very heart, he **"LOVES his enemies."**

For you newcomers to the world of theology, LOVE is lot different than just putting a spiritual twist on HATE. Not swearing at all is more than putting a spiritual twist on the commandment TO SWEAR. Am I going too fast for anyone?

And neither did Jesus take the commandment to **"bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse"** and spiritually twist it into **"bring ye all the money into the pastor's bank account."**

And so what is it that Jesus is teaching us with regards to money? Simple, neither the king nor his children pay tax—any tax (including even Temple tax)! **"...then are the children FREE."** Need I remind anyone that we are the children of God's kingdom? And neither our King, nor we, pay taxes or tithes to our own kingdom.

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He [Jesus] IS, SO ARE WE in this world" (I John 1:17).

And so the reason... the only reason, that Jesus paid this tax was, **"...lest we should offend them."** Not because it was a LAW OF MOSES and Jesus had to keep the law of Moses, but only because, **"...lest we should offend them."**

Furthermore, where did Jesus get the money (the very small amount of money) to pay this temple tax so as to not offend them? From His own pocket? From the treasury held by Judas? From Peter's house? No. He had God provide for it in a fish from the sea. Jesus did not even deign to pay this tax from His own money. And say, did you notice that Jesus paid for Himself and Peter only? He did not even pay for the other eleven.

Do you suppose we are sinning if we follow His steps by not tithing? Should we follow His steps, or commandments of the clergymen?

"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

GIVING IS VOLUNTARY

The New Testament teachings on giving are unpretentiously simplistic involving the heart and not some law:

"...freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8b).

"Give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow of you turn not thou away" (Matt. 5:42).

"The churches in Macedonia and Achaia, you see, have thought it a good thing to make a contribution towards the poor Christians in Jerusalem. They have decided to do this, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the gentiles have had a share in the Jews' spiritual good things it is only fair that they should look after the Jews as far as the good things of this world are concerned" (Rom. 15:26-27, *J. B. Phillips Translation*).

"Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over..." (Luke 6:38).

"I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

"But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes *in his heart*, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity [Gk: 'compulsion' as in a commanded law]: for God loves a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:6-7).

Follow these admonitions on giving and you will be blessed of God.

There is one more very important Scripture that should go in this group and that is I Tim. 5:8,

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith, and worse than an infidel."

Now I have emails and letters from elderly and disabled people who were told by their pastor that they are expected to tithe on their meager income regardless as to whether there is sufficient left over to care for the family. This is disgraceful beyond comprehension. And this is one of the main reasons that I write the material that I do for our bible-truths web site.

Numerous times I have heard ministers intimidating TBN viewers to contribute money that they did not have. Even if they owed more money to creditors in monthly payments than their salaries could possibly pay, they were still asked to make huge donations to TBN. Some contend that the more money one needs to meet his already staggering obligations, the more money he needs to send in. They are even told to pledge huge

amounts (TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS was the asking pledge when last I saw this reprehensible carnival sideshow chicanery) of money that they did not have, and then to send in ten percent of the pledge and pay the rest off in installments. Have they no shame?

"HOW ARE WE TO PAY THE CHURCH BILLS IF THE PEOPLE DON'T TITHE?"

I get asked that question regularly. I tell them all the same thing: "Pay your church bills the same way I pay my living expenses—with a check." Here's the thing: You don't need to lie and deceive and pervert the word of God in order to pay church expenses.

Why doesn't your pastor just ask the people to contribute toward paying the church expenses? I can tell you why. A few do, but most don't. And why is that? It is because those who teach false doctrines to exact money illegally from their congregation don't have faith to trust their people to contribute voluntarily out of love. They only know how to teach the Old Testament laws, which are carnal, and therefore don't know how to teach the New Testaments laws, which are SPIRITUAL.

Most pastors see two options:

1. Teach that people will be cursed if they don't tithe ten percent of their annual salaries,
2. Trust God in faith to provide the money from voluntary gifts given from the heart.

If, in reality, trusting would bring in more money than pronouncing curses, no one would ever hear a sermon on tithing again, anywhere on earth. And if anyone suggested to any of these same pastors that tithing is an Old Testament law that Christians must keep or be cursed, those same pastors would ridicule you to scorn for ever suggesting such an obvious unscriptural doctrine that is not binding on New Testament Christians.

They will do whatever brings in the most money. And it is a proven fact, unscriptural threats of curses for no tithing, and blessings for tithing brings in more money than trusting the people, in faith, to supply the needs of the Church.

It is our hope and intention here at bible-truths to free as many as possible from the unscriptural hypnotic tactics of these TV auctioneers who peddle the Word of God like so much merchandise for sordid gain. But what about those small congregations that don't even want huge cathedrals and the pastor doesn't want to be rich or drive a \$80,000 Mercedes. All they want is to preach the gospel and care for a local congregation and all that that involves. Surely it is not wrong for them to teach their congregation to tithe their salaries to the church, is it? Of course that is wrong. That's like saying, I don't want to rob a bank: I just want to take a few small things from the super market without paying for them! IT'S THE SAME CRIME, with the only difference being the amount stolen.

GIVING VERSUS TITHING

Do any of these Scripture references quoted above regarding voluntary giving, have anything to do with "tithing?" Absolutely not. Notice what the definition of Christian tithing is:

"tithe (*tith*) *n.* **1a.** A tenth part of one's annual income contributed voluntarily or due as a tax, esp. for the support of the clergy or church." (*The American Heritage College Dictionary*, p. 1444).

Tithing was commanded by the LAW.

Giving is voluntary from the HEART.

THE APOSTLE PAUL VERSUS CHRISTIAN TITHING

The Apostle Paul never tithed, never taught Gentiles to tithe, never collected tithes, and never accepted tithes. Can anyone imagine what Paul would have said had someone come up to him and offered him \$100 saying: "Here Paul, here is my payment according to the tithing law with regards to my thousand-dollar paycheck." I don't know what his exact words would be, but I have studied the writings of Paul, and I can tell you what he would have said in principle:

"Sir, MONEY is not a tithable commodity. Furthermore, tithes can be paid to the Levitic priests only, and I am not a Levite, I am from the Tribe of Benjamin. Furthermore, as a believer in Jesus Christ, you are also freed from the law of Moses. Jesus Christ has taught us that, **'FREELY you have received, FREELY give.'**" One cannot give 'freely' that which is demanded by law. I am sorry, but I cannot accept money that is given out of obligation to a law. Jesus has freed us from carnal ordinances, and whom Jesus has freed, **'is FREE indeed.'**"

Now then, give that same \$100 to any number of priests of Christendom, and one might receive this retort: "Well, if this \$100 is your tithe, where is your offering? Don't you know that the tithe is commanded and demanded by law? You have only given me what is commanded by law of you to give. You have not really giving me anything until you give me money in excess of your tithes"

Well, what more can I say about that?

CHRIST'S ONLY TWO EXAMPLES OF TITHERS

Paul was inspired by God's Holy Spirit to declare that "God *loves* a cheerful *giver*" (II Cor.9:7). Why was not Paul inspired by God's Holy Spirit to declare that, "God *loves* a cheerful *tithe-payer*?" In fact, why does not Paul mention the words *tithe*, *tithes*, or *tithing* in any of His thirteen epistles—not once? (Paul did not write the book of Hebrews, II Thes. 3:17). Why does not Peter, James, John, or Jude mention *tithing* in

any of their epistles? Why didn't the early Christian Fathers mention tithing as a doctrine of the New Testament Church? Therefore, why are innumerable thousands of evangelists, theologians, teachers, preachers, and clergymen teaching the world that if they don't tithe ten percent of their salaries, that God will curse them with a curse?

The only two times in the New Testament that Jesus mentions tithing is in condemnation of the Pharisees. At the time of Jesus' ministry there was a temple and there was a Levitic Priesthood, hence tithing was still in effect for the Jews. Hear now the only words ever recorded of Jesus mentioning tithes:

1. **"But WOE [deep distress, misery, grief, misfortune, calamity, sorrow, dismay] unto you Pharisees! For ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs [some had farms; some had gardens], and pass over JUDGMENT and the LOVE OF GOD: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"** (Luke 11:42).

And just what kind of a blessing did Jesus pronounce on these Pharisees for their "**tithe of the mint and herbs**"? No blessing, just a startling "**WOE**"!

2. **"And the Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God... I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess"** (Luke 18:12).

And just what kind of a blessing did Jesus pronounced on this Pharisee for his "**tithe**"?

No blessing, no justification, just a promise that people like him will be "**abased**" (Ver. 14).

What does being an utter hypocrite and passing over "**Judgment and the Love of God**" have to do with "tithing?" That's the whole point. These gross sins have virtually nothing to do with tithing!

Tithing to Jesus was so absolutely insignificant to the gross sins of failing to properly Judge the widows and orphans and fatherless and poor, and to not show any Love of God toward them. Tithing was the smallest most inconsequential thing Christ could think of to show the utter hypocrisy of this Pharisees. They were very meticulous about tithing (a law of virtually no spiritual consequence what so ever), and yet... and YET they would do the tithe thing and neglect judgment, love and mercy.

Now please don't all write me at once telling me that I have missed the whole point of these two sets of Scripture by not realizing that it was their very gross sins that will bring "woes" and "abasements" on them, and not that they are being condemned for what they did do correctly, namely "tithe." That is quite true. However, it appears that most have missed the very reason why Jesus gives two examples of two Phariees, who were gross sinners deserving the worst possible chastisements, and then says that they were both tithe-payers.

Christ's attention to the fact that they were both meticulous tithe-payers, proved the hypocrisy of these two Pharisees. They would pay strict attention to very minor details of a law, and yet totally abandon a very reason and purpose for the whole existence of the law—LOVE, MERCY, JUDGMENT.

The Law of Moses regarding tithing produce from the land was still in effect during Christ's ministry, and therefore, all of the nation of Israel who had land were to tithe from their land and give it to the Priests and Levites, strangers, fatherless, widows, poor, and even consume some of it themselves at God's annual festivals. However, this system with its laws and temple were all part of the original church of God in the wilderness. Jesus, however, did not tithe. Likewise, His apostles, did not tithe. Furthermore, neither Jesus, nor His Apostles, nor Paul, ever taught new Christian converts to the newly established Church of Christ, to tithe to this new church!

Here then is the bottom line: Neither, Jesus nor His apostles tithed themselves or taught tithing to others. And within a generation God pronounced to the entire world by the total destruction of both the nation of Judah, and their city of Jerusalem with its temple, that the church established in the wilderness, was now superseded by the Church of Christ. The nation of Israel was gone, the temple was gone, the priests were gone, the Levites were gone, and concerning the very Law of Moses containing the law of tithing, we read this:

"In that he says, A NEW covenant, He has made the first OLD. Now that which DECAYS and waxes OLD is ready to VANISH AWAY" (Heb. 8:13).

But the Church today doesn't want the New Covenant to replace the Old. They want to put the **New Wine** (of the New Covenant), in the **Old Bottles** (of the Old Covenant). And they want to put the **New Cloth** (of the New Covenant), on the **Old Cloth** (of the Old Covenant). And what did Jesus tell us would be the result of such an unharmonious and unequal yoking?

"And no man puts new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled and the bottles shall perish."

However, in two thousand years, the church is still trying put the Old and the New together as One, and the results are always disastrous.

Just why is it that they like the Old covenant better than the New? Here's the answer from the lips of our Master Himself: **"No man also having drunk old wine [lived by the Old Covenant] straightway desires new [the spiritual New Covenant]: for he says, The old is better" (Luke 5:39).**

But not only is the Church blinded by the new wine, they are also intoxicated from the old wine to the point that they have no idea what it's purpose was in the first place. Jesus said, **"You blind guides, which STRAIN OUT A GNAT [are attentive to TINY insignificant things like paying tithes on mint and pepper pods], and SWALLOW A**

CAMEL [totally neglect the weightier matters of the law which are of HUGE consequence, like judgment, faith, mercy, and the love of God]" (Matt. 23:24).

How many millions of sermons are geared toward "**straining out gnats**" on Sunday morning, so that the Pastors can "**swallow camels**" all week long?

HOW THE APOSTLE PAUL FINANCED HIS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY

Worldliness in the Church today is not looked upon as shameful, but rather as being chic. Power, wealth, and notoriety are not things to be repented of, but are rather to be lusted after and pursued with great vigor. Young aspiring ministers are not thought to be vain or ambitious when seeking worldliness, but are rather thought of as being enthusiastic for the work of the Lord. Let's see how Paul did things.

"For yourselves know how you ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you: Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail NIGHT AND DAY, that we might not be chargeable to any man. Not because we have not power, but to MAKE OURSELVES AN EXAMPLE UNTO YOU TO FOLLOW US" (II Thes. 3:7-9).

But how many truly follow Paul's example? You be the judge.

"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for LABOURING NIGHT AND DAY, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God" (I Thes. 2:9).

Imagine that: Paul could not only walk and chew gum at the same time, but he could work "**night and day**" and "**preach the Gospel of God**" at the same time! Just maybe there is a lesson in there somewhere. Paul travels to Corinth:

"And because he was of the same craft [trade], he abode with them, and wrought [worked]: for by their occupation they were tentmakers" (Acts 18:3).

"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye [all of you] yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:33-31).

Don't kid yourself, there's a whole army of men of the cloth out there coveting your gold and your silver. Many television ministries are little more than highly sophisticated Hollywood-produced, tithe-collecting infomercials. They make me ill watching them.

One final example of how Paul ministered and financed his ministry:

"For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honorable, but we are despised.

Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

And labor, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Therefore I beseech you, BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME" (I Cor. 4:9-16)!

Cheerfully giving from the heart is a virtue. However, fraudulently fleecing the flock by exacting ten percent of parishioner's paychecks under fear of breaking an Old Testament law of tithing is a sin!

It is far past time that we offer a little comfort to the millions of people in our nation and around the world who are chafing under the constant burden of supporting ministers and televangelists who live lifestyles so materialistic and worldly that even Hugh Hefner would be envious. I'm not trying to be humorous about these characters; I'm dead serious.

Well I certainly don't begrudge any minister an honest living. However, I do believe that when many of these modern televangelists (and others) feel the need to have everything they own gold gilded, just maybe their greed and vanity starts to destroy their effectiveness as dispensers of God's Truths.

There is no need for people to feel guilty over any religious doctrine. It is time we rid ourselves of guilty consciences. Hopefully, by the time you have finished reading this paper your guilt over tithing or non-tithing will be gone forever!

It is our sincere desire that all who have been chafing under the unscriptural burden of Christian tithing will feel free at last to follow their heart in giving to whomever they desire as God prospers them. John 8:32 tells us that Truth is Freedom:

"And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you FREE."