

# **Never Let It Be Said, You Have Robbed Yahweh!**

## **–The tithing principle for today –**

A letter reached our office recently requesting some of our mini-studies. The solicitation ended with the words, "Send them if they are free." The implication was, if they are not free then don't send them.

Our ministudies explain the teachings of Yahweh. Among this person's requests was a study on proper baptism into Yahshua's Name – a priceless truth that is central to salvation itself. Rather than "free," this information is invaluable. It is precious. Yet the nature of the request revealed how little value was actually placed on it.

Obviously, publications, media, and even ministerial trips don't just happen without many sharing the burden of the expense. Nothing that is produced comes without cost. Someone must bear the expense of materials, labor, and distribution even when they are provided free of charge, 'Free' Truth?

The salvation that comes through Yahshua was purchased at the highest possible price – the very life of the Son of Yahweh. Even the Word of Yahweh has come to us at the highest of costs. Countless saints down through history have suffered torture and even death to pass on the truth given ultimately to us, including the Scriptures themselves. We have the Bible today because zealous, totally devoted people paid with their very lives to preserve it!

Some do not esteem the truth of the Word as highly as others do, even though their very salvation hinges on it. In contrast, Yahshua spoke of a merchant who, in dealing in pearls, found a special one and sold all he had – including all other pearls – in order to possess the most valued: "*Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it*" (Matt. 13:46).

This special pearl refers to the Kingdom of Yahweh and the truth that leads to it. Once we find the truth about the Kingdom, we seek it with all our hearts. We are willing to sacrifice whatever it takes for the Kingdom's sake. Nothing is more important.

### **A Few Sacrifice for Many**

Our work and efforts depend entirely upon the dedication of those seeking to spread the truth that Yahweh has entrusted. We are able to send literature free of charge because of a relatively faithful few of Yahweh's people. It takes untiring dedication and discipline to finance and send the Good News of the Kingdom to others.

Because we do not place a price tag on this Bible truth literature, we can only do as much as Yahweh's people allow through their support.

We are encouraged when new inquirers include funds enough to cover their postage. But we truly rejoice when we are provided support beyond the immediate costs, which allows us to reach out to many others.

### **Tithe: The Way and Means**

Knowing that our duty is to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28, the question becomes, how does Yahweh expect us to carry it out? The answer is, He has provided a financial program for His people by which they are able to reach the lost sheep. It is called the tithe. The tithe is the veritable key to spreading the truth.

Some may be thinking that the tithing is an Old Testament institution that is no longer applicable.

A reliable criterion for determining which commands of our Heavenly Father Yahweh are still binding upon us is to look at the first time a command or practice appears in Scripture. Then trace it down through all the various Scriptures and note any importance attached to it and how it was observed. Did Yahshua uphold it? What does the New Testament say about it?

Significant as well is whether the precept or practice will be observed in the future Kingdom. If it will, then it obviously is eternal and is also binding on us now. Let's analyze the law of the tithing by this proper method. We'll examine its initial appearance and trace it down through the Scriptures.

### **Melchizedek Took Tithes**

Tithing is first mentioned in Genesis where Abram, the father of the faithful, is recorded as giving tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High:

*"And blessed be the Most High EL ELYON, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. And he gave him tithes of all"* (Gen. 14:20).

Giving of the tithing to Melchizedek reveals two things: First, that the Melchizedek priesthood preceded the Levitical priesthood of Aaron who came later. Second and most important, that Abraham honored this priestly order and tithed to it long before the Levitical priesthood and its tithing system was established.

As we will see, the Melchizedek priesthood still supercedes all others today and will in the future as well. We today are under the order of Melchizedek through Yahshua our High Priest, and not under the Levitical system.

*"Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, [even] Yahshua, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec"*) Heb. 6:20; see also 5:10; 7:17). The point is, if faithful Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, the priestly order of which Yahshua is chief, what should WE be doing?

### **Levites Tithed to Yahshua**

The Book of Hebrews makes much over the fact that the patriarchs Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils to Melchizedek. The Levitical priesthood descended from Abraham. Even though the tribe of Levi was to take tithes of their brethren, they in actuality tithed to Melchizedek THROUGH Abraham (Heb. 7:4-10), which is clear from verse 9: *"And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham."*

An important point made by the author of Hebrews is that Yahshua is our High Priest in the Melchizedek priesthood. This priesthood has authority over the Levitical system established under Moses. Yahshua's ministry is superior and He is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises, Heb. 8:6.

Therefore, we should take to heart the fact that although the sons of Levi received tithes in the Old Testament, still they were subservient to Yahshua's priesthood and actually tithed to Him. In essence, all of Israel ultimately tithed to Yahshua.

If they paid tithing to the order of Melchizedek, should not we as spiritual Israelites do the same? We look to Yahshua as our High Priest and the Head of the Body, tithing to His order of priesthood – the ministry of Yahshua – and receiving the blessings as did faithful Abraham.

Returning What Is Yahweh's

As we have just seen, tithing is not an invention of Moses. Abraham preceded Moses and yet was tithing to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High El was possessor of all the earth, Genesis 14:19 (see also Ex. 19:5, Ps. 24).

Yahweh owns everything! He allows us to use some of what belongs to Him in our present but temporary journey in life. He tells us what He expects a tithe (10 percent) of all that we produce to be given back to Him:

*"And all the tithe of the land, [whether] of the seed of the land, [or] of the fruit of the tree, [is] Yahweh's: [it is] holy unto Yahweh"* (Lev. 27:30). In other words, the entire tithe or tenth is His, not ours. He graciously allows us the use of what is His, but at the same time requires a tithe of it to be returned to Him.

The word "tithe" is an Old English word meaning "tenth." A "tithing" was an administrative district in which were ten families. The word tithe means of "tenth" or "ten percent." The Biblical use of the tithe was to support the Levites, the priests, according to Numbers 18:21-32.

If one wanted to keep or redeem for money any of the tithe, one was to add 20 percent to its value.

### **Priests Received the Tithes**

Because of the tribe of Levi was the priesthood, they were not to inherit any of the Promised Land. Today's Bible maps showing the division of the land among the tribes accurately omit the Levites.

However, the priests were given 48 Levitical cities. Instead of an inheritance of land, the Levites were given the tithe for an inheritance.

*"And Yahweh spake unto Aaron, you shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any part among them: I [am] your part and your inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, [even] the service of the tabernacle of the congregation"* (Num. 18:20-21).

Now that we are under the New Covenant made with the Messiah, we find the priesthood changed from the Levitical to that of Melchizedek, and those who are called of Yahweh serve as his ministers, His priests.

Paul does not specifically mention tithes in the following passages, but he does expect support for those teaching Yahweh's Word.

*"Even so has Yahweh ordained that they which preach the evangel should live of the evangel* KJV. *"In the same way, Yahweh has commanded that those who preach the evangel should receive their living from the evangel"* NIV (1Cor. 9:14).

*"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And, The labourer [is] worthy of his reward"* (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

*"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teaches in all good things"* KJV. *"Anyone who receives instruction in the words must share all good things with his instructor"* NIV (Gal. 6:6).

Remember that the Apostles were of the tribe of Judah, with Paul being of Benjamin. Luke may have been a gentile, yet all of the Apostles carried out the work of proclaiming the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom, though they were not Levites.

The task of the Levites was that of offering the sacrifices and cleansing of the congregation so that the people could offer worship to Yahweh. They also taught the laws and precepts of

Yahweh to Israel. Now that the Savior has paid the complete sacrifice of Himself, we no longer offer animal sacrifice, but are to sacrifice our bodies in our daily living:

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of Elohim, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Elohim, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).*

By being obedient to His Word, we sacrifice our time, efforts and life itself in compliance. Through this obedience we are sanctified and cleansed as we obey His word in our daily walk through faith in the Messiah (Eph. 5:26).

### **Savior Advocates Tithing**

As a part of the Body of Messiah, we may not be from the tribe of Levi. The *ekklesia* is made up of people from the nations (Greek *ethnos*) and among the gifts given to the Assembly will be found ministering and teaching, Romans 12:7.

*"And Elohim has set some in the Assembly, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1Cor. 12:28)*

Yahshua put His finger on the typical behavior of the Pharisees who emphasize their righteousness by obedience in minutiae, allowing trivia to occupy their time and attention.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone," Matthew 23:23.

They tithed of mint, anise, and cumin – little garden herbs. However, they neglected the weightier matters of justice, mercy, and faith.

Notice that Yahshua says that tithing is something He said they SHOULD do, but not to neglect being just, showing mercy, and strengthening the faith of others. He did not condemn them for tithing, but for neglecting other important matters as well.

### **Support for the Workers**

Tithing is clearly carried over from the Old Testament to the New. It is Yahweh's method of financing the Kingdom Message, which is to be preached in all the world as a warning before the return of the Messiah, Matthew 24:14. Those who have their minds on spiritual things will be deeply concerned that this be carried out.

Notice the thrust of the following verses, which point out the obligation that we have in providing for those doing the work of the ministry so that others may also hear, learn, and benefit from the teaching of the Good News:

*"And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourers is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7).*

*"It has pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (Rom. 15:27)*

*"The husbandmen that labors must be first partaker of the fruits" (2Tim. 2:6).*

*"Even so has Yahweh ordained that they which preach the evangel should live of the evangel" (1Cor. 9:14).*

Aiding and supporting those proclaiming the Good News allows them to devote themselves entirely to their calling of teaching the Word.

### **Tithing in New Testament**

Our focus must be on the Old Testament as well as the New. Many Bible readers are surprised to learn that the Bible teaches that our salvation is to be found in the Old Testament. Notice:

*"And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yahshua" (2Tim. 3:15). Also see John 5:47; Romans 3:1-2; Acts 7:38.*

The Apostles drew their message from the Old Testament, for the New had not yet been written. We also know that the New Covenant is based upon what was written in the Old as we see in Hebrews 8:8-10:

*"For finding fault with them, he said, Behold, the days come, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says Yahweh. For this [is] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them an Elohim, and they shall be to me a people."*

Notice that the New Covenant offers the same laws as given in the Old, which including tithing. And in the Kingdom the Levitical priesthood will again be established, Ezekiel 44-48. The Levitical priesthood was established on and was always supported by tithes and offerings from the people.

### **Support Only the Truth**

We should be very careful that we support only those who are preaching the truth, the whole counsel of Yahweh. Some outlandish doctrines today include teachings like: Yahshua did not pre-exist; Satan is a woman; polygamy is Scriptural; worship of a Trinity; immortal soul; we immediately go to heaven or hell upon death, and many more.

The Bible warns that there will be false prophets (Matt. 24:11), who will appear meek and righteous, but who are ravening wolves at heart, Matthew 7:14.

The true congregation will be restoring forgotten truth and ignored laws, pointing us back to the Old paths of righteousness, Isaiah 58:12. True believers will gladly accept hardships 2Tim. 4:5; realizing that we will suffer shame for His great Name, Acts 5:41. The true followers of the Great Shepherd will indeed be a little flock, Revelation 12:17, Luke 12:32.

The fact that there be but a small group of people engaged in proclaiming the good news of the coming Kingdom should not deter us. If we are faithful and sincerely seeking to serve Him, Yahweh will be with us. Even a little flock of dedicated people can do great things in successfully proclaiming this vital message in the end time.

The true Philadelphia Assembly in Revelation is described as being small but devoted: "I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a LITTLE STRENGTH, and have kept my word, and have not denied my NAME" (Rev. 3:8).

### **Where Is YOUR Heart?**

When doing His will, we are promised all the help and courage needed. Yahweh will see us through. Yahshua began with twelve disciples and turned the world upside down, Acts 17:6. If we do not accomplish the same, Yahweh will raise up a group that will.

To place the kingdom first in our lives is the command of our Savior: *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break*

*through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).*

Take special note that Yahshua declared that where your treasure is, there is where your heart will be found. That is to say, that which you desire, that which dominates your thinking and is your goal in life – that is where your heart is. Your heart can be on earthly gains, possessions, the social whirl, a house, car, country club, gems, the stock market – almost anything on earth. If these things influence, control, direct, or consume most of your thoughts and attention, you are building castles in the sand. You have a problem with idolatry.

Physical gain in this life is but temporary gain. We have been warned that we can gain the whole world and lose our soul or life (Matt. 16:26). We are promised but 70 years on this earth (Ps. 90:10), and we will one day appear before the judgement seat of the Savior.

We each have just one life, and it will soon be past; only what is done for the Messiah will last. Yahshua says we should lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven, Matthew 6:20. Yahweh commands that we take 10 percent of our income (increase) and turn it into spiritual treasure by helping others find the truth that leads to salvation. These spiritual treasures are eternal and will last forever.

But exactly how can I do that? You ask. Simply by setting aside a portion of your income, 10 percent, and seeing that it is used to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. Yahweh in turn will enable you to do more with 90 percent of your earnings and His blessings than you could do with 100 percent minus His blessings. It is a fact proven over and over in the lives of those who love Yahweh and obey the principles of the tithe.

### **An Awesome Responsibility**

Yahweh's plan is that each one who is converted to His way of righteousness should do what he or she can to get the message of salvation to others. To give back some of what we have been given is fundamental to Yahweh's methods.

Each believer should pay his or her own way, and not take without giving something back. That is the principle Yahweh teaches us through the tithe. As we partake of the grace freely given, we take a portion of Yahweh's blessing and bestow it upon others so they might also be partakers of the salvation which in Yahshua.

Through giving and sacrifice we are able to invest in the coming Kingdom and bear fruit unto life eternal. Tithing is a way to put Yahweh first in our lives. By giving ten percent of our income, we show Yahweh that our treasure and heart are focused on Him and in His coming Kingdom on earth.

As we showed at the beginning, tithes were given to Melchizedek. In a sense we are already the New Testament extension of the Melchizedek priesthood, being that we are under Yahshua. The Bible calls us a nation of priests:

*"And hast made us unto our Elohim kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). See also Revelation 1:6 and 20:6.*

### **Not Robbing but Sharing**

The man said, I'd tithe, but I just can't afford it." Knowing that the Scriptures says that ten percent of what is given us belongs to Yahweh and is not ours to keep, we must respond, "Then you prefer to steal from your Heavenly Father?"

Yahweh plainly says we are ROBBING Him when we don't pay our tithes:

*"Will a man rob Yahweh? Yet you have robbed me. But you say wherein have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation" (Mal. 3:8-9).*

We are glad to send literature without charge to those requesting it. The tithes and offerings of the brethren make it possible.

We as loving and concerned believers show that we are worthy of that high calling we have in the Messiah by reaching out to others. Both the stingy giver and the generous will be rewarded in kind:

*"Give, and it will be given unto you, A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measure to you" (NIV Luke 6:38).*

Through tithing we can show that our heart's desire is to be with Yahshua in that Kingdom, for He said, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21).*

We are given the example of Paul chiding the Corinthian brethren for their selfishness is not providing him and Barnabas with their sustenance, 1Corinthians 9:5-14. Paul goes on to point out that soldiers do not pay their own expenses; one who plants a vineyard eats the fruit from it; he who shepherds a flock, does he not get a living from the milk? Paul reminds us that even the priests in the Temple sacrificing were given a part of the animal, verse 13.

If Yahshua could give up His life, Paul in kind could also surrender his right for the support of the brethren, verse 18. After admonishing their neglect in not supporting him, Paul concludes this chapter by saying he will continue to carry out the mandate to preach the word even if the Corinthian brethren fail to support him.

Imagine standing before Yahweh's judgement throne and having to explain to your Heavenly Father why you robbed from Him by withholding the tithe. Your very neglect testifies about you – that other things have come between you and your desire for the Kingdom.

Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Yahweh Almighty..In this passage we return to Him through tithing, Malachi 3:7-9 (NIV) and lay up treasure in heaven.

By withholding tithes and offerings we come under a curse. On the other hand, the promises of wonderful blessings for tithing are given in Malachi 3:10-18.

Our works will follow us into the Kingdom: Yahshua said, *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).*

Consider this scene: some day in the Kingdom we will have the opportunity to meet other saints, who will be there in part because someone (perhaps you) provided the avenue and way for them to come to a proper understanding of the truth that brought them to accept the salvation of Yahshua. What a wonderful thought!

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