

**SERMON: Tithes plus Offerings: A Christians' Service****GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House**

Today, we will look at what the Bible says about the Christians service through financial giving to God through His Son's Church. Every Sunday service here at OIC we give people the *opportunity* to serve God by financial donations to Christ's Church with *Tithes & Offerings*. I want to show that God intends this as an *opportunity*, and not meant to be a *burden of Law*. We will look at the origin of the *tithe*, and how it continued for thousands of years with the Jews' Worship of God. We also will wrestle for understanding about what that means for *each of us* today. I call this wrestling for TRUTH, an *Adventure in the Bible*. Let us begin.

When you search on the computer for *tithes* the first thing that pops up is the Words of God from the Older Testament Prophet Malachi.

**MALACHI 3.7-9**

*7 Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.*

The Bible makes it clear how important financial service is to God Almighty in this verse.

Disobedience is reason for separation in one's relationship with God then and with the Lord Jesus now.

**{You Have Robbed God}** *8 "Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!*

*"But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' "You have cheated me of **the tithes and offerings due to me.** 9 You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! 11 Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 12 "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.*

God makes it clear in both the Older Testament of the Faith of Abraham, and the Newer Testament of the Blood of Christ, that His love is a relationship bound by Love. As I have preached before,

it is a Marriage between God and Man. Since Jesus came, we Christians are His espoused Bride awaiting the final ceremony in Heaven. God's unconditional love has "conditions" of spirit and attitude as with a betrothed man and woman. Marriage without love is no marriage at all in God's Heart and Mind!

To those who give God His due financial gifts He says: *"I will open the windows of heaven for you."* This is a promise of God for financial prosperity {not necessarily wealth by today's standards with million and billionaires....but bountiful provision in a more rural economy}. In our Adventure, we will later see and seek to understand what God expects from us now in the New Testament of Jesus' Blood. *But first things first.....*

Malachi also promised from God: **12** *"Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.* National pride these days seems a scary or fearful thing. So many wars have started over such pride. But we must remember that Israel was actually the Nation of YHWH, the Great I AM. Pride in the Nation was pride in God! God wanted all nations to come to Him in the Temple in Jerusalem to see what "god" could make such a prosperous nation in a world of chaos and wars? In fact, this did happen under King Solomon when Israel was the richest, and wisest led nation in the world. We see this in the **Visit of the Queen of Sheba in (2 Chronicles 9.1-9)**

**9.1** *When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. She arrived with a large group of attendants and a great caravan of camels loaded with spices, large quantities of gold, and precious jewels. When she met with Solomon, she talked with him about everything she had on her mind. 2 Solomon had answers for all her questions; nothing was too hard for him to explain to her. 3 When the queen of Sheba realized how wise Solomon was, and when she saw the palace he had built, 4 she was overwhelmed. She was also amazed at the food on his tables, the organization of his officials and their splendid clothing, the cup-bearers and their robes, and the burnt offerings Solomon made at the Temple of the LORD.*

**5** *She exclaimed to the king, "Everything I heard in my country about your achievements and wisdom is true! 6 I didn't believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I had not heard the half of your great wisdom! It is far beyond what I was told. 7 How happy your people must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! 8 Praise the LORD your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne as king to rule for him. Because God loves Israel and desires this kingdom to last forever, he has made you king over them so you can rule with justice and righteousness." 9 Then she gave the king a gift of 9,000 pounds of gold, great quantities of spices, and precious jewels.*

It is note worthy in (**verses 8-9**) that the Presence Of God sensed and seen by the Queen of Sheba moved *her heart* to give wealth to the wealthiest man on earth! Was this the Queen's Salvation testimony according to the Older Testament's requirement of faith in YHWH? Maybe! But it might be called a Queen's Tithe or Offering as it came **from the heart in awe of God, not just of Solomon.**

So now, let us look at the origin or beginning of the word *tithe*.

### **Tithes and the LAW**

Many Christians think of tithes only as a command from God's Laws given to the people of Israel through Moses in the Ten Commandments. Bible scholars estimate this happened about 1440 B.C. (Before Christ). This is seen in (**Deuteronomy 14.22**): *You must set aside a **tithe** of your crops—one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year.* But the Bible tells us that the *tithe, a one-tenth gift*, began when the “Father of our Faith,” Abraham, gave a gift of one-tenth the “income” to a mysterious and unknown priest. This happened in Canaan about 2090 B.C.(Before Christ). The priest was called King Melchizedek, the King of Salem (Peace). We read this historical meeting in (**Genesis 14.17-20**) *17 After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). 18 And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine.*

*19 Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:*

*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,*

*Creator of heaven and earth.*

*20 And blessed be God Most High,*

*who has defeated your enemies for you.”*

*Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.*

Notice how the Bible, God's Word, clearly declares *Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a **priest of God Most High.***

The Newer Testament repeats this historical account in (**Hebrews 7.1-3**) *1 This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. 2 Then Abram took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means “king of justice,” and king of Salem means “king of peace.” 3 There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.* Wonderful Words of Life..Amen. But, the Apostle Paul

wrote this to preach and prove that **Melchizedek and Jesus are Greater Than Abraham. Amen!** Paul quotes David's Messianic prophecy in **(Psalm 110.4)** *The LORD has taken an oath and will not break his vow: "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."* **Yes, wonderful Words of Life! But this is no help to find what God expects of us New Testament Christians in our financial service to Him!**

### **Our Adventure continues....**

You might ask, were there other mysterious priests like Melchizedek? And, What's the mystery? **(Hebrews 7.3)** says: *There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.* King Melchizedek had no family connected to the Family of Promise by God, the Family of Abram as shown below in **(Genesis 17.1-5)** *1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am El-Shaddai—'God Almighty.' Serve me faithfully and live a blameless life. 2 I will make a covenant with you, by which I will guarantee to give you countless descendants." 3 At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, 4 "This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! 5 What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations.* Melchizedek's not having any family ties to Abraham is the mystery! The Bible also tells us that God revealed Himself to Abram and gave this unique and special Promise. It includes the Promise of Messiah, the Birth of Christ in Abraham's Family. Both Joseph and the Virgin Mary, to whom Jesus was born, were direct descendants of Abraham. Yet, Abram called Melchizedek. Yet Abram knew that this King Melchizedek, was in the most pagan and sinful "Promised Land of Canaan." But he did not hesitate but as in **(Genesis 14.20 and Hebrews 7.4)** *Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.*

### **Are there Other Priests like Melchizedek?**

I wondered why the Holy Spirit led me to one of my favorite books, *Eternity in Their Hearts (ETH)* by Don Richardson. Anyone who has studied the history of *Missions* knows Don Richardson as a Spirit anointed and brilliant missionary. His book, *Peace Child*, teaches missionaries by his experience in Irian Jaya. This is the western half of the island of New Guinea, which is now part of Indonesia. Don found a *redemptive analogy* in ancient mythology. . His mission was to a violent warring tribal culture. They proudly fattened up other tribes with friendly food gifts. Then they killed them and ate their flesh. An ancient myth had a rule that exchanging a son with your enemy demanded peace between the tribes. Of course, Don encouraged these tribal chiefs to their own tradition. Then he shared the Gospel of the Son of God, Jesus Christ and Him

crucified.....salvations and eternal peace. These cannibals believed that Father God had exchanged His Son for them!

I often say to you dear OIC Saints: “We are all missionaries at OIC!” Please realize that that is the highest compliment in my mind. A famous missionary, of the many I met personally, once said: **“Missions is God's heartbeat!”** Heeding any call to cross-cultural mission is hearing God's heart beat for the lost and dying. We are all crossing cultural barriers here at OIC!

As I looked back at the Book *Eternity in Their Hearts* by Don Richardson I read of the amazing history of true priests to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all around the Earth. These men had God revealed to their hearts! In fact, Don chose a particular tribal culture, the Incas of Peru, to illustrate God's Revelations outside of Father Abraham's bloodlines. The following facts are from *Eternity in Their Hearts*:

PERU , 15<sup>th</sup> Century ---Pachacuti was the king of the Inca shortly before the Spanish Conquistadors arrived. To the Inca, the sun god was the chief of the gods. However, Pachacuti realized that the sun could be covered by a mere cloud and was only visible half the time. He discovered there was a single omnipotent God who was above and beyond all the others. Unfortunately the Incas had no one who brought the Gospel of Jesus to them before the Conquistadors wiped them out. But these invaders never found Pachacuti and some of the upper class Incas who embraced his revolutionary discovery. Pachacuti had hid with his family in a secret mountain. The “Good News” of a single Creator God with the same characteristics as the True God, was cut off from the world! The Incas were all but erased from the face of the earth by murderous Conquistadors .

The Single Creator of All Things “Viracocha” had revealed Himself to Pachacuti's father. He had a dream form Viracocha. Pachacuti realized his heart had also heard from this Creator God and called a congress of Inca priests to spread this “good news.” He proposed that the Incas no longer worship the sun, but the invisible Creator God, Viracocha.

Some noteworthy quotes by Richardson: “...how ironic that Spanish Catholics, on their zeal to abolish Inca “idolatry,” destroyed a monotheistic belief which, in effect constituted an interim Old Testament to open the minds of thousands to the good news of Viracocha's incarnation in the Person of His Son. Notice that I said “interim” Old Testament, not “substitute” Old Testament....Discovering a man like Pachacuti in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Peru is as startling as finding an

Abraham in Ur, or a Melchizedek among the Canaanites! If only it were possible to travel back in time, Pachacuti is one man I would like to look in on. I like to call him the Incan Melchizedek.” But then....the Spanish Conquistadores came!

### **What about Tithing in the New Testament – the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church?**

Our adventure continues as the actual word *tithe* does not occur in the Newer Testament!

Well, I am asking God to help us all to hear His voice to answer our hearts desire to please Him.

The Apostle Paul paints a clear picture of what he believed would please God in **(2 Corinthians**

**8.9-13 )** *9 You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. 10 Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. 11 Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. 12 Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. 13 Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality.*

Let us look closely at Paul's **(v. 11) Give in proportion to what you have.** We might want to say that *in proportion* must be 10%, one-tenth, the *tithe*. But not so according to, the Greek **(NTG)**. *So now finish doing it, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it, as your means allow.* There is no hint of any percentage, tithe or other.

We see Paul's appeal with **A Call to Generous Giving** to these Corinthians in

**(2 Corinthians 8.1-5 )** *1 Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. 2 They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.*

*3 For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4 They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. 5 They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do.* Paul is kind of “humbling” the Corinthians by the acts of the Macedonian Church. **(verse 2)** *They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.* Was Paul avoiding anything that might lead a Hebrew Christian back to being under the Law? That may have been part of his thinking. The Jewish mind would connect the

word *tithes* with the Law, and not likely with Father Abraham and Melchizedek. But, we see Paul's depending on the Holy Spirit, not rules nor laws. Souls set free from Satan and sin would give 100% gift if it were possible in utter Thanksgiving! Paul knew this and lived it himself. Missionaries don't tithe for they have offered Jesus 100% of their life, body, and finances, to answer their calling. But, Paul worked as a tent-maker to lighten the burden for his supporters. (2 **Corinthians 8.4**) tells it all: **4 They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.** Christ's Crucifixion set us Believers free from the curse of the Law. The Newer Testament's records on financial service is always presented as offerings, not tithes. The heart of the matter is the *heart of the Believer*. The Macedonians **begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift.** So I will attempt to close this Adventure on Tithing & Offerings with:

### **DO CHRISTAINS GIVE OFFERINGS OR TITHES? OR BOTH?**

You may in reason ask: What has Peruvian History and Missionary Don Richardson in Irian Jaya got to do with our tithes and offering at OIC? The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christians were actually in an environment more like the warlike Irian Jaya tribes. For terror from war and physical danger was all around. The brutal Roman Army kept the laws to stop crimes. But, it was also a crime to not worship Caesar. The life expectancy of a 1<sup>st</sup> Century man was about 40 years. But...what are years when you have just received the gift from God of everlasting LIFE IN CHRIST. These Believers got that! They saw giving to keep the Church alive as a privilege, not a burden of Law. They counted it more important to keep the church alive than to keep themselves alive!

Pardon your pastor as I play the "What if Game."

What if in 1945 Hitler had conquered the United States. He would have murdered the Jews and the Christians. Billy Graham would not have been on television the night that Jesus used his program to deliver me from Satan's harsh grasp?

What if in 1952 the United States had dropped an atomic bomb on North Korea. The Chinese likely would have expanded their invasion through Korea and into Japan. Would many here have had opportunity to hear the Gospel to save their souls after Mao murdered all the Christians in Japan? He led the Communist Army to murder more Christians in his bloody war to take all of China than Hitler had murdered Jews in Europe! Who would have been here to lead you to Christ after the 1950's?

How grateful are you and I for *this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak?* in **(Hebrews 2.3)**.

Our donations to support our local church must be our response to this *great salvation*  
**I believe the adventure in seeking tithing & offerings ends with it all must be offerings from a thankful heart. Paul staked his missionary support and support of the churches he pastored on this. I am too.**

I know many Christians use the tithe or ten percent of income as the “guideline” before “offerings.” This is not Paul's teaching in the Bible at all. I agree. How can a numerical percentage fit a man's heart? Is the first ten percent under Law and the rest of a gift out of the heart?

Paul did not even use the word *tithe*. As we read in **(2Corinthians 8.11-13)** *11 Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. 12 Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. 13 Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality.* Let us look closely at Paul's **(v. 11) Give in proportion to what you have.** We might want to say that proportion must be 10%, one-tenth, the *tithe*. But not so, the original Greek **(NTG)** *So now finish doing it, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it, as your means allow.*

#### **KEYWORDS FOR OUR HEARTS IN (2 Corinthians 2.11):**

- *finish what you started*
- *eagerness you showed in the beginning*
- ***Give in proportion to what you have.***
- *Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly*
- *I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves*
- *there should be some equality.*

As far as *equality*, I believe Paul meant equality in sacrificial giving. He had used the poor Macedonian Church as the guideline, not ten percent! Only the Spirit of God and your heart can really know what this is. God does not measure our love by the percentage but by the eagerness to support His Son's Church.

I am an ordained minister as both a pastor and missionary with the International Ministerial Fellowship (IMF) in America. They don't point to the one tenth guideline. Many of their members are missionaries or pioneer pastors. Most are not in prosperous countries or regions. IMF suggests each pastor or salaried member “tithes” from 1% and upwards. The word *tithe* is no longer fitting. It is really an appeal for *offerings*. I agree with this approach as being closest to what Paul taught.

We also must check our attitude from the Old Testament on prosperity. Charles Haddon Spurgeon spoke the truth when he said: “Prosperity was the mark of a faithful servant of the Lord of Heaven and Earth in the Old Testament. Adversity is the mark of a faithful servant of the Lord of Heaven and Earth, Jesus, in the New!”

God has promised in **(Philippians 4.19)** *And this same God who takes care of me will supply **all your needs** from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*

God searches our hearts as in **(1 Corinthians 2.11)** *No one can know a person's thoughts except that person's own spirit, **and** no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit.*

**(Ecclesiastes 3.11/NIV).** *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set **eternity in The Hearts** of men; yet, they cannot fathom what God has done for them.*

**The Christian's heart hunger for Eternity has been filled with Jesus. He should give to his local church with that thankfulness and eagerness from that, and from that alone.**

Let Us Pray,

## REFERENCES

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