

## MINI STUDY Gods Law of TITHING

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course (Department, presents brief monthly excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development and increased understanding of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to t! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Few today realize that God lays claim to the first 10th of all our increase -- wages, produce, etc. Still fewer really believe God's promise to bless those who obey His law of tithing, as revealed in the Bible.

No one can afford to be in ignorance of this fundamental financial law of God and its spiritual implications!

1. Does God reveal Himself as the Creator and Owner of everything we see around us? Ps. 24:1; Job 41:11. Does all the gold and silver also belong to God? Hag 2:8.

God created everything and by virtue of that creation He owns it all. God therefore has a prior claim to ownership of all that is produced out of His earth. Yet God requires us to return to Him only 10 percent of what our efforts produce and earn. Notice why.

God uses the 10 percent He claims as His own for proclaiming His Gospel message - the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and the peace, joy, happiness and prosperity it will bring to mankind!

God's law concerning what we produce and earn can be compared to a contract. He wants us to understand that we are working with Him in a partnership. God allows us to live and work on His

earth - to cultivate the land and produce the food we eat, He allows us to use all His resources in producing thousands of products for our own personal use.

But God is a generous partner. He gives us 90 percent of all that we receive, gain or produce and charges us a meager 10 percent for using His earth. That 10th in turn is spent for man's benefit - in bringing the knowledge of the blessings of God's government to mankind.

At this point in our study let's notice a few facts about the history of tithing.

2. How did the patriarch Abraham honor the Creator, Owner and Sovereign over all things? Gen. 14:17-20; Heb. 7:1-4. Did God bless obedient (Gen. 26:5) Abraham? Gen. 13:2.

Abraham was a tither. In this instance he gave a 10th part of the spoils of battle (Gen. 14:18-20) to Melchizedek, God's representative on earth. The context of these verses in Genesis shows that God received His due before any further disposition of the goods was made to others.

3. Was Melchizedek God's minister? Gen. 14:18; Heb. 7:1.

Tithing is revealed in the Bible as God's system for financing His ministry. Hundreds of years prior to the beginning of the Levitical priesthood, the ministry was that of Melchizedek. (Melchizedek was none other than the member of the Godhead who became Jesus Christ! He was God's representative on earth at that time, and He received tithes from God's faithful servants.

4. What did Jacob, son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham, promise God he would do with all his increase? Gen. 28:20-22. Was he prospered? Gen. 30:43.

5. Before the time of Moses, the tithe had been paid directly to Melchizedek, high priest of God. But after Israel's deliverance from Egypt, notice what God commanded regarding the tithes. To whom were the people to pay tithes? Num. 18:21, 24. What use was the Levitical priesthood to make of the tithe? Verse 21.

Melchizedek (Christ, the Lord of the Old Testament) selected the Levites to be His ministers. But there was no commission to spread the Gospel at this time. God's plan for that dispensation merely called for the Levites to teach the people God's law in the letter and to administer the physical rituals and sacrifices as a reminder of their failure to obey His laws. And the people were commanded to bring the tithe of their produce to them. Christ (Melchizedek) thereby transferred receipt of the tithe to the Levitical priesthood for their support.

6. Does the seventh chapter of Hebrews (the priesthood chapter) make it clear that tithing is not Levitical (not having originated with Levi's descendants) or ceremonial? Heb. 7:5, 8-10.

Hebrews 7 clearly shows that tithing had long been an ongoing financial principle by the time God instituted ancient Israel's civil law through Moses. It was then that tithe paying was formally commanded. And since tithing did not begin with the administration of the Levites, it therefore is not ended now that the Levitical priesthood is no longer extant in the world.

Rather, according to verses 11-17 of Hebrews 7, God changed the priesthood back to the spiritual priesthood of Melchizedek. The Levitical priesthood was superseded by the priesthood of Jesus Christ -- the Melchizedek priesthood restored. And so there was also a change as to who should now receive the tithe (verse 12). Christ has authorized His New Testament ministry to accept the tithes in order to do the spiritual Work of God.

The New Testament era was ushered in when Melchizedek (Christ), who abides as our High Priest continually (Heb. 7:3; 4:14-16), became a mortal man so He could be sacrificed for the sins of all mankind and make the Holy Spirit available to those whom God calls.

7. What is Christ's commission to His New Testament ministry? Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15. What Gospel would be preached by His Church in this end time? Matt. 24:14.

Christ came to inaugurate a new kind of ministry -- a spiritual ministry. It is a ministry of salvation - a ministry of prophecy - a ministry of warning, as well as good news - of prophesying His glorious return as world Ruler to rescue mankind from self-imposed annihilation.

In these critical, chaotic days approaching the end of an age, the message of God's Church is reaching millions of people around the world. It is a huge undertaking requiring not only the financing of the personal needs of hundreds of ministers and other

laborers, but the employing of tremendous facilities - radio, television, printing presses - for proclaiming Jesus' Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God "unto all nations"!

Today, God provides for the financing of His globe-girdling Work by the same system He has used for millennia - the tithing system.

8. Did Jesus uphold God's law of tithing? Matt. 23:23. (Notice the last part of this verse.)

9. Did the apostle Paul clearly show that Christ's New Testament ministry is to be supported just as were the Levites in ancient Israel? I Cor. 9:7-14, especially verses 13 and 14.

10. How does God show that both nations and individuals have been literally stealing from Him? Mal. 3:7-12, especially verses 8 and 9.

Can anyone afford to rob God? Stealing from God is a very serious matter!

God has put a no-trespassing sign on the first 10th of our earnings - it is reserved unto Himself. It is only after we acknowledge God's prior claim over that first 10th of our income (by paying it to Him) that we have a legitimate claim to the other nine tenths.

11. What does one come under when he or she breaks this fundamental financial law of God? Mal. 3:9. How does one come out from under this financial curse? Verse 10.

12. What does God challenge us to do to prove Him - to see if He really will bless us? Verse 10.

The simple equation is: Pay to God what we owe Him -- the 10th that is His - and He will reward us with blessings. God does not promise to make you a millionaire, but if you work diligently and are faithful in returning His portion to Him, He works with you, blesses your effort, causing your partnership with Him to prosper.

13. What should be our attitude in paying God's representatives the 10th that belongs to Him and even giving offerings (Mal. 3:8) in addition to the tithe as we are able? II Cor. 9:6-7.

A generous attitude is foundational to God's give way of life. God is a generous giver! He wants His children to reflect a like generosity within their comparatively limited means.

14. What does God promise us if we seek to do His will? Matt. 6:31-33, especially verse 33.

15. What precious spiritual principles did Christ reveal about the use of our treasure? Matt. 6:19-21 .

If you are not already doing so, why not invest in this Work of God and begin storing up spiritual "treasures in heaven"? Make God your financial partner. Put God's tithe and your heart into the Work that He is doing today.

Why not prove God? - "repared by Richard H. Sedliacik