

Questions asked by Christians

Tithing

The action of tithing did not start with the Mosaic Laws, [Genesis 14:17-20](#), neither was it special only to the Hebrew Nation. The practice was quite common amongst other ancient nations.

What does it mean to Tithe?

A tenth of the produce by a person from the earth was to be set apart and consecrated for a special purpose or action. The dedication of a tenth to God was common practice before the time of Moses. For example Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek, why is not explained, [Genesis 14:20](#); [Heb 7:6](#); We also find that Jacob vowed unto the Lord and said, "*Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*" [Genesis 28:22](#). The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives. [Deuteronomy 14:22-23](#).

The first Mosaic law on tithing is recorded in the Torah in [Leviticus 27:30-32](#). "*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.*". The method used to tithe the live-stock was that the owner counted the animals as they passed him into a field, every tenth animal was given to the Lord. Using this method prevented the farmer selecting ill or poor animals as his tithe.

If the farmer produced fruit or cereal then he was allowed to give money instead of the produce but had to increase the value in money by a fifth. He was not allowed to exchange money for his live-stock herd tithe.

To who were the tithes paid?

Later the rules on the destination of the tithes was issued, they were to become an important part of the Jewish religious worship, the tithes were to given to the Levites, [Numbers 18:21ff](#). The Levites were the priesthood, they had no means of income or inheritance because of their duties, therefore they were to receive the cereal and fruit tithe. They were not allowed to keep all of the tithe, they had to "make an Heave offering," which was taken out of the tenth they had received, this offering was created from a tenth of the tithe they had received.

Where were they to offer the tithes?

[Deuteronomy 12:5ff](#). "*5) But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: 6) 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:*" ie Jerusalem. If Jerusalem was a distance from the persons locality then transport could be a problem, but he could always use equivalent money instead.

Some additional references to the Tithing laws.

[Numbers 18:21-24](#):

"20) And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

21) 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.

22) Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.

23) But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

24) 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."

Deuteronomy 12:6-7:

"5) But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

6) 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:

7) 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."

Deuteronomy 12:17-19:

"17) Thou mayest 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 thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:

18) But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou putteth thine hands unto. 19) Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth. "

Deuteronomy 14:22-29:

"22) Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

23) And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

24) 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:

25) Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

26) And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

27) And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

28) At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:

29) 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 thine hand which thou doest."

Deuteronomy 26:12-15

"12) When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

13) Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them:

14) I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

15) Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey."

The collection and payment of tithes was an important part of the Jewish religious worship. For example, following the restoration of the Mosaic Law's during the reign of Hezekiah one of the first results of this reformation by the king was that the people were happy and willing to bring their tithes, [2 Chronicles 31:5-10](#).

One of the problems of the act of tithing was that it affected a persons wealth and if you were not interested in worshipping God then tithing was not attractive and so did not take place. In the Old testament the prophets complained bitterly if the people neglected paying their tithes, [Amos 4:4,5](#); [Malachi 3:7-10](#)

Tithing in the New Testament.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world means that the original Covenant and Law has been replace by the New Covenant, the blood of Jesus, forgiveness for sin is not through the blood of animals but through His death on the cross. The Law still sets a pointer to the standard of God but forgiveness is through the Blood. The New Testament does not directly mention that the Christian Church should continue with the tithing Laws, but at the time the Jews were still following the Law and so fulfilling the action of tithing. This meant that the early Jewish Christians would be use to the idea and commitment of tithing.

Jesus used two incidents which involved the tithe situation:-

The Widow in the temple:

[Mark 12:41-44](#), While sitting in the temple Jesus called his disciples to him and pointed out, *"That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44) For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."*

Parable of Pharisee and Publican.

[Luke 18:9-14](#), Jesus used the action of the Pharisee showing his fake righteousness and his tithing as one who will not be justified in the eyes of God. See also [Matt 23:23](#); [Luke 11:42](#);

It cannot be stated that the Old Testament law concerning the action of tithing still applies to the Christian Church, but the idea of worship and services to God will involve the consecration of ourselves, our abilities and substance to serving God, so the principle of this law remains, and is part of the gospel, see [1 Cor 9:13,14](#), where the leaders of the church are to be supported by the church members, the service of God must now be greater now than in the Old Testament period, Christians should be willing to go beyond the ancient Hebrew way of worship in consecrating both themselves and their wealth to God.

[2 Corinthians 9:6-9](#).

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: "