

## Hebrews 7:8 study

If you were to talk to a pastor or leader of a traditional Church and try to explain to them the idea that in the New Testament the temple is redefined they would likely agree with you and in fact say that they teach this concept to people all the time. And I am sure that they genuinely believe in this new covenant change. They are trying to encourage people to truly be the temple of God, to allow the presence of God to function within the individual Christian. They are genuinely attempting to empower people with this important teaching and understanding from the Bible. But at the same time they are practicing something different. They are practicing the Old Testament temple. They are speaking this teaching into a structure and practice that is strongly based on the old testament temple. And therefore there is an hypocrisy. They are teaching one thing and doing another, its the leaven that Jesus describes and warns His followers of in Matthew 23.

In the new testament, when something is changed or redefined we need to understand and view the old testament from that standpoint. The new testament specifically changes the sacrificial laws of the old covenant. The practices that Israel had to repetitively do, in order to make atonement for their sin. These practices are changed by the new offering we have of the blood of Christ. So in the new testament we have a redefined temple, a new priesthood, a new offering, and a new High Priest.

As I say there are many many leaders of churches who are teaching these ideas to their congregations--but correct doctrine is not enough! When Jesus warns us about the leaven of the Pharisees He is warning of not practicing what we preach. Jesus taught love and compassion, He taught about freedom and release, and He practiced what He taught! His actions perfectly matched His teaching. But the fact is that many old covenant practices have been placed into Christianity over the centuries and have become well-expected traditions. So modern ministers of the Word of God are placed into this position of teaching the new covenant into an old covenant practice.

Most New Covenant changes are found in very simple verses in the New Testament.....

1Co 3:16\* Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Heb 7:12\* For the **priesthood** being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the **law**.

Heb 9:11\* But Christ being come an **high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

In the New Testament there is a new high priest. Again I am sure there is not one Christian teacher who will not immediately say of course Jesus is the High Priest of the New Testament. But we do not see or I should say many do not see the common Christian practice does not allow Him to function as High Priest. Think about the pastor of a traditional church. He stand on an altar, collects and utilizes tithes/offerings, has authority over a congregation.....these are exactly the description and position of the Levitical high priest. So there is the teacher/leader, perhaps teaching the concept that all Christians have a priesthood, that all are now the temple of God, that Jesus is the High Priest....and yet standing in a physical position which denies all of these things. He is practicing a likeness of the old testament temple and Levitical high priesthood.

We may easily apply Jesus' advice....

¶ Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. (Matthew 23:1-3)

I beg you to understand however that I am not condemning others who are my brothers and sisters in the Lord. All of us are hypocrites. We all fall short of God's glory, we are all imperfect. Every one of us (and let me place myself at the head of the line!) have believed and said right things of God and at the same time practiced wrong. Hypocrisy is the basis for all forms of sin--we see and know Gods' laws and yet disobey.

We think wrong is right. Thank God we are saved by faith in grace. I am not claiming heresy by any means--but if only someone could simply stop and consider our practices as Christians, if only someone could stop and think before we continue into the next church service, and the next and the next.....

Let's take a look at one new testament change that is little understood or taught..

And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. (Hebrews 7:8)

Hebrews 7:8 says that "here men that die receive tithes".....this is speaking about the Old Covenant high priesthood which came from the Levitical tribe. Now we know that the Levitical priesthood is done away with in the New Testament in favor of a priesthood in all believers. However do we understand the change in the high priesthood? As I have said, I am sure that every teacher of the Word of God will of course say that Jesus is the High Priest of the new covenant. But do we understand the ramifications of His Priesthood? Do we understand how to utilize and access all His leading and do we further understand the reformations we may need to do in order to truly see the High Priesthood of Christ show forth through us?

Remember that the traditional positioning of the pastor/leader has a very strong Biblical basis on the Levitical /temple priesthood. The Levitical high priest ministered in the House of God/Sanctuary, worked upon an altar, handled and lived off the tithes/offerings, had authority over the congregation....do we truly see and understand all the reformations needed to take us closer to the new covenant practices? (remember the new testament church met mostly in small groups of equals, in which anyone could pray, prophecy, teach and the highest purpose was spreading the Gospel as God lead them.)

And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. (Hebrews 7:8)

This verse explains the Old Testament high priesthood and the New Testament high priesthood and how that changes. It is very simply stated (as are all the new testament changes in sacrificial law). "here men that die receive tithes" this is the Old Testament Levitical high priest. The second half of this verse is speaking about Jesus' new covenant High priesthood by saying....."but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth."

In the Bible, only the High Priest received and handled the tithes/offerings. Jesus, as High Priest needs a tithe. But what?

The Old Testament practice of tithes/offering (tithe is simply an amount of certain specific offerings) was in part to physically store up earthly goods in a storehouse (much of the tithes/offerings were destroyed--that is to say offered to God for sin). This physical/earthly practice became, in history, the Christian definition of tithe. But like all the old covenant sacrificial practices, the new covenant clearly and specifically changes them.

The New Testament gives us a spiritual tithe to replace the old one and it is simply gospel witnessing!

"but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth."

There (in heaven) Jesus receives of them of whom it is witnessed that He lives.

In other words we have a High Priest in the true Temple, the true arena, that we as Christians in the earth are ordained to fill. Not with earthly goods and treasures but rather with the souls of men! Gospel witnessing is the replacement of the Old Testament tithe. Gospel witnessing is the New Testament tithe.

Now many people might say we use the money collected from the tithe toward the gospel. This seems like a good intention and perhaps some of that money does go to the gospel, and I would say to you that the percentage of money that truly does go to the gospel is a good start. However the truth is that most tithe is Christians giving to themselves. Some people are of the opinion that the new testament Church gave mostly to themselves, but this is not the case at all. They were giving 100% to the Gospel (just as Jesus had done). They were giving to those who were actively called at any time to witness, to pray for the sick, to do

deliverance ministry. A part of the Gospel is to feed and help the poor and needy, and yes of course the poor and needy might possibly be within the church. Of course we ought to help those that are in need who are our brothers and sisters in the Lord. But if we see with open eyes the example of Jesus, there is absolutely no priority given to provide for those needy within the group over the needs of those who are outside. We love to teach that God loves everyone, but the clear way to example this is to give equally to those poor who are believer and non-believer.

Because we are defining tithes through the Old Testament eyes and into the Old Testament practice, we are storing up money in a storehouse. We are building a sanctuary, the house of God, in old covenant terms. And to that degree we are not building the Temple in the heavenlies, filled with the souls of those who have received the witness that Jesus Christ is alive.

Tradition tells us that the great goal of the church ought to be to fill the sanctuary--the physical building we have built. If only we could catch onto the true spiritual tithe, the concept of filling the Heavenly Temple with souls!

We should always view the Old Testament in light of the revelation of the New Testament. So now let's think of the book of Malachi chapter 3 which is often used to encourage people to pay physical tithes. Plug in the New Testament change. The tithe of Malachi chapter 3 is now, for the Christian, Gospel witnessing. Malachi says "you rob God" if you do not tithe. Of course you do! If you do not witness the gospel you rob God of the souls that He desires in heaven!

We ought to be encouraging one another to witness the gospel in those terms rather than trying to teach people to give money to themselves within the system of a church group. How often have you ever heard that message? "Christians! You must be witnesses of Jesus Christ! You must do all that you can, and follow the leading of God in every way, to carry the Gospel to the unsaved! You must let people know that Jesus Christ lives--if you do not do this, you rob God!"

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." (Malachi 3:8)

Malachi also says that you will be blessed if you tithe-- well of course! God will bless you if you take on the ministry of witnessing the gospel to people, or praying for the sick, or praying for people who need deliverance, or helping the poor and needy. He will bless you if you do the New Testament tithe of furthering the gospel. This is the offering God needs! Why not test God on this? Why not prove out for yourself if this is true...

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith 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)

Jesus is the High Priest and the offering of the New Testament.

"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" (Hebrews 10:9-12)

Jesus blood does away with the "first" covenant, it takes away the old testament sacrificial laws, and establishes "the second" a new set of goals, through this new offering and Priesthood.

His blood is the full and permanent and ongoing payment for all sin. Much of the tithe was used in the Old Testament as the payment for Israel's sin. Now look again at Malachi chapter 3 the tithe rebukes the devourer.....

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither

shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:11)

Of course it does! The blood of Jesus rebukes the Devourer! Witness the gospel! Witness the resurrection power of the blood of Jesus to people and you also will have that power, that blood offering, to rebuke Satan!