

TITHE

**WHAT YOUR
PASTOR DOESN'T
WANT YOU TO
KNOW**

THERE ARE 2 COVENANTS

There are 2 covenants--2 testaments--2 "agreements" in the Bible.

Do you know the differences between the 2 covenants?

In the old covenant, Israel was given commandments--laws of God--that serve to show His perfect ways. (You know them--"thou shalt not steal--thou shalt not covet"---there are many others). But the commandments (if we honestly look at them) expose the fact that we are all sinners.

To "sin" is to "fall short" of God's perfection. The Bible (in the old testament) tells us that if we have broken one commandment, we are guilty of all.

The new covenant agrees with these concepts.

Romans 3:23 "For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God;"

Galatians 3:24 "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

Up to this point, the 2 covenants are basically the same

These commandments are in fact, reiterated in the new covenant...

Romans 2:21 "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not **steal**, dost thou **steal**?"

Romans 13:9 "For this, Thou shalt not commit **adultery**, Thou shalt not **kill**, Thou shalt not **steal**, Thou shalt not **bear false witness**, Thou shalt not **covet**; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

So, "commandment law" shows all of us, Christian and Jew, that we are sinners.

Now, what shall we do about our sin?

REPENT!!

"Turn away"--do the best you can not to do these wrong things, now that you know them!

"Repent" is found in the old covenant and the new.....

Ezekiel 14:6 “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; **Repent**, and turn *yourselves* from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.”

Mark 6:12 “And they went out, and preached that men should **repent**.”

Up to this point, the 2 covenants are basically the same.

Israel in the old covenant understood their sin, and new covenant believers understand sin from these same commandments.

Next question.....

What is the penalty for sin?

Romans 5:12 “Wherefore, as by one man **sin** entered into the world, and **death** by **sin**; and so **death** passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

Romans 6:23 “For **the wages of sin is death**; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Sin condemns all of us to death and hell.

So, what about the sin we have done?

Is there any way to be forgiven of sin?

Is there any way to be cleansed of this stain?

God has made a way.

He will accept a payment--and offering for sin.

I deserve to die for my sin.

But, if something will die in my place.....!

If innocent blood will be shed.....!

If something or someone will offer themselves in my place.....!

If someone will die for me.....

If someone or something will die the death I deserve for my sin.....

If.....!

Up to this point, the 2 covenants are basically the same.

Is there any way to be forgiven of sin?

I would hope, that anyone who is a Christian will know the answer to this question!

Of course, we know about the blood that cleanses our sin!

Of course we know of the offering made in our behalf at the cross of Calvary!

Of course we know that Christ died for our sin!

Of course we know of the atonement His blood makes for us!

Of course we know that He stands in the Holy of Holies, in God's house, in God's sanctuary, in heaven, and makes continual offering of our sin...

Hebrews 10:10 "By the which will we are sanctified through the **offering** of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*"

Jesus called Himself meat and bread and blood and offered Himself on the cross to forgive our sin.

John 6:55 "For my flesh is **meat** indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh *is* in the **blood**: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an **atonement** for your souls: for it *is* the **blood that** maketh an **atonement** for the soul."

But what about Israel in the old covenant?

Did they have a way to be cleansed of sin? Did they have a way of paying God for their sin--did they have an offering??

Leviticus 17:11 “For the life of the flesh *is* in the **blood**: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an **atonement** for your souls: for it *is* the **blood** *that* maketh an **atonement** for the soul.”

Note this scripture. To Christians it seems to be speaking about Jesus (and it is a prophecy of His work!). But the “atoning blood” is in the old covenant also.

In the old covenant God gave Israel other laws. Laws which were not commandments, but should be referred to as “sacrificial law”.

Have you ever heard of sacrificial law?

Probably not. Those are the parts of the Bible that we usually skip. (which is a shame, because if we did read them we might realize we are more familiar with sacrificial law than we think!).

Here is an example of sacrificial law.....

Leviticus 4:7 “And the priest shall put *some* of the **blood** upon the horns of the **altar** of sweet incense before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the **congregation**; and shall pour all the **blood** of the bullock at the bottom of the **altar** of the burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation”

Leviticus 4:25 “And the priest shall take of the **blood** of the sin offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the **altar** of burnt offering, and shall pour out his **blood** at the bottom of the **altar** of burnt offering.”

Leviticus 16:18 “And he shall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the **goat**, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about.”

Leviticus 2:14 “And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, *even* corn beaten out of full ears.”

Hebrews 13:11 “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.”

There are pages and pages of instructions on how to offer animals--how to offer grains and crops. Not all animals or crops, but certain specific “clean” crops and herd animals.

So why should we study this? After all, since we have Jesus we don't have to do this stuff--right?

Well, I have news for you. What you don't know, CAN hurt you!

So let's study this subject a little, get an overview.....

What did Israel have to do, according to the old covenant laws--in order to have their sin forgiven?

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SIN FORGIVEN--OLD COVENANT STYLE

Here is how it worked.

Israel had to build a big building.

This temple, the sanctuary, the “house of God” (since God's presence was in the holy of holies, only found here, behind a thick veil). In those days, God lived in this big building.

The Jews had to conquer and own the land of Israel, since sacrificial law required these crops and herds be raised in Israel.

These offerings were brought into the house of God.

To enter the sanctuary, you had to first go by a gate called “praise”.

Next there was an inner court called “worship”.

So, the format of the big building always starts with praise and worship.

In the temple, there was an altar.

On that altar was the “delegated--designated--appointed--anointed---ordained--authority”--who had the right to do the ministry of the temple.

The Levitical priest--the shepherds of Israel.

The pastor.

In the old covenant only one of the 12 tribes of Israel had the right to operate in ministry-- the Levites. Ministry was a birthright. The other 11 tribes of Israel were often referred to as the "congregation" (a term only found in the old testament).

The job of the congregation was to bring in the offerings and therefore support this structure and function.

Does any of this sound familiar to you?

The procedures that sacrificial law required sound somewhat familiar to the Christian. The fact is that 1700 years ago, the church decided to use these as the typological operational principles of the church meeting.

What we seem unaware of is that JESUS FULFILLED THE SACRIFICIAL LAWS.

Jesus called Himself all the parts of the old covenant sin offering (meat blood bread).

The new covenant is very clear that Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial laws. We certainly do not need to offer goats and rams and bullocks and grain and corn.

The new covenant tells us that there is "no more sin offering"..

Heb 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and **offering** and burnt offerings and **offering** for **sin** thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law;

Heb 10:18 Now where remission of these *is*, there is no more offering for sin.

Well, you may be saying--"What does this have to do with tithe?"

Answer: EVERYTHING!!

"Tithe" was the amount of the sin offering in the old covenant.

I'll say that again....

"Tithe" was the amount of the sin offering in the old covenant.

This is pure, simple, Biblical truth and no one can dispute it.

just a little aside.....

["tithe" is the tip of the iceberg of Christian disobedience. What is most hard to believe is that the entire functional structure of "church" is Biblically incorrect! The definition of "ministerial authority"--the format of meeting--the "congregation"--the "offering"--are all wrong structures. The rest of this study is going to focus in on "tithe"--but bear in mind that the real tragedy is the incorrect functioning that Christians have endured for centuries and the wrong definition of "ministry" we so readily accept--the results of which are that God is hindered from working all that He would like--in all of us!]

TITHE IS A NUMBER

"Tithe" means 1/10th.

That's all it means.

The question is this:

1/10th of what to whom???

Well we already answered the first question....

1/10th of what?

Leviticus 27:32 And concerning the **tithe** of the **herd**, or of the flock, *even* of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:30 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.

Deuteronomy 12:17 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:

Deuteronomy 14:22 Thou shalt truly **tithe** all the increase of thy **seed**, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

Nehemiah 13:12 Then brought all Judah the **tithe** of the **corn** and the new **wine** and the **oil** unto the treasuries.

2Chronicles 31:6 And *concerning* the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the **tithe** of **oxen** and **sheep**, and the **tithe** of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid *them* by heaps.

As we said....

“Tithe” was the amount of the sin offering in the old covenant.

God, in the old covenant, did not ask Israel for all of the animals or crops as a sin payment.

He was very specific. Only certain animals and crops in different seasons (God only wanted what was due Him--He did not want to bankrupt Israel!).

God did not ask Israel for money.

He only accepted the blood of clean animals, since this was the payment for sin.

God asked for 1/10th of the increase of the herds--this meant 1/10th of the baby animals (certainly if He asked for 1/10th of all the herds, they would be depleted in a short time!).

Not everything was “tithe-able”. Peter never paid a tithe of his fish--since fish was a “common food” (edible but not tithable)

Point #1

“Tithe” in the Bible was always animals of crops. (yes, once, God told Israel to convert the tithe to money--when they were traveling--once only. So--c'mon! Is this an excuse to ask for money from Christians every week!?)

What about the tithe Abraham paid to Melchisedek?

“Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the **spoils**.”(Hebrews 7:4)

He paid him “spoils”. Sounds like cash--but it was not. “Spoils”are crops--look it up in the Greek text....

ακροθινιον akrothinion {ak-roth-in'-ee-on}

- spoils 1; 1

- 1) top of the heap, the first fruits
 - 1a) best of the spoils or crops
- 2) the Greeks customarily selected from the topmost part of the heaps and offered this to the gods

[another little aside: Some churches ask for a “first-fruits” offering. What they say this means, is to take some extra money and give it to the church. Huh? Fruit is fruit! When Israel made a “firstfruits offering” they were taking real fruit, real crops, and making them as a sin offering to God.]

Point #2

“Tithe” in the Bible was always given to the high priest of Jerusalem. The Levites, those born of the tribe of Levi, collected tithe...

“And verily they that are of the sons of **Levi**, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take **tithes** of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:” (Hebrews 7:5)

The Levitical priesthood--the “birthright ministers” of Israel received the tithe and had a full-time job making the continual sin offering for the nation. They lived off the tithe. They were allowed to eat parts of the offerings and the shewbread...

Matthew 12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the **shewbread**, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

Now let's compare this to the new covenant bread offering....

1Corinthians 10:17 For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for **we** are all partakers of that one bread.

In the new covenant all may partake of the bread offering. This is very significant (but it may not be to us when we ritualize the Lord's supper!). The fact that all may partake of the bread offering is a clear change in the new covenant. In the new covenant, all the church is meant to be a priesthood.

1Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy **priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal **priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

In the new covenant, ministry is a "gift given to every one of us" (see Ephesians 4)--something which we are all meant to work in--as equals--with the Lord in authority.

question:--is that what you do in your church? If you pay tithe in your church, you have already set a definition of "ministry" as a type of authority over others. Pastor, do you stand in the pulpit every week and do all you can to try to get people to serve God--and not have much happen ever? Maybe it is because of these traditional formats and structures that we agree on so thoroughly and live out so repetitively. There is nothing wrong with you, pastor, but maybe it's the pulpit that is wrong!

Once again, if we look at Melchisedek (who is often used to try to bring tithe into the new testament) you will see that he is called the "highpriest of Jerusalem" and Abraham is said to have given him 1/10th of the "spoils". Spoils may sound like treasure or money to us, but in fact the Greek word used here means the top part of a load of crops

You see the Bible is consistent. "Tithe" is always either meat or crops of some kind.

Not money.

Not paid to the pastor of the new covenant church.

No.

"Tithe" was the amount of the sin offering in the old covenant.

..... and that is why it is not in the new covenant!

Tithe preachers can't seem to make up their mind....

About half of the tithe preachers say "tithe is of the law" so it has to be done.

The other half say tithe is a super-special "above the law" principle, since Mechsedeck's tithe pre-dates the giving of the law.

uh--if you will excuse me, I could solve the controversy.

Tithe preachers are functioning from a wrong definition of "tithe".

remember what we have said--

tithe is the amount of the sin offering.

Obviously, sin predates the giving of the law--right?

Sin came in with Adam and Eve--they ate the forbidden fruit and came to the knowledge of right and wrong--they were now sinners. But God is very merciful. Moses would not come around for many many years, with the sacrificial laws that would "make atonement for the soul".

God is very merciful. He gave the knowledge of sin offering to many people even before the giving of the law....

Adam and Eve made a covering of animal skins.....Cain and Abel made offerings of grain and animals.....Noah made offerings.....So did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...all before the Mosaic law was given.

Why did they make these offerings? Because sin predates the giving of the law, and God is a merciful and loving God and He desires all people to be cleansed of sin.

He gave all these people (and anyone who would listen to them!) the knowledge of sin offering--a way to be cleansed of sin. (and for us new covenant believers, these are an incredible prophecy of what Jesus would do for us on the cross!)

I prefer to read the Bible and see a loving and merciful God. I cannot read the Bible and see these actions of offering animals and crops as a way that Christian believers should operate together!

Why can't we simply look in the new covenant and see Jesus as our example?

So now, Abraham made a “prophetic offering” to Melchisedeck. How much of his grain did he offer? 1/10th. Tithe. It’s a prophecy of the future law-given offerings and a prophecy of Jesus’ one true great offering--made for all--His blood and body on the cross...

“For if the **blood of bulls** and of **goats**, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:13-14)

Hebrews 10:4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of **bulls** and of goats should take away sins.

John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the **Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.

A LITTLE HISTORY NEVER HURT!

Who invented the Christian tithe?

Well, as we said at the very beginning--“tithe” is an old covenant practice and not found in the new testament church. The new testament church, who were at first mostly Jews, would have felt a bit ridiculous “paying tithe”. Think about it. What were they preaching? Weren’t witnessing a Gospel that said “Christ died for our sins”---Christ is our “High Priest”.....

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and **High Priest** of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great **high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an **high priest** which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin.

Wouldn’t they have been hypocritical if they then, walked into the temple in Jerusalem, brought in an animal, and gave it to the priest as a sin offering? If they did this they would have been “paying tithe” according to the laws of the old covenant. Of course tithe was not a part of the new covenant church! It contradicted the Gospel!

Some look at Jesus telling a man to make an offering in the temple as a proper offering for his healing...

“And he put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the **priest**, and **offer** for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.” (Luke 5:13-14)

This was exactly correct to do, since the old covenant “Mosaic” law was still in effect for Israel. This event took place before Jesus death and resurrection. The new covenant sin offering had not yet been made, and Jesus did everything exactly correctly (no argument there!). Jesus told the man to do this also as a “testimony” to the priest. He wanted them to see that God healed outside the confines of their temple--their rulership--their experience.


Tithe is taught to Christians in a very deceptive way. Not to say that pastors are purposefully deceptive--most are only copying what they have heard others say. But copy-cattng can be a dangerous thing! Does anyone know who originated tithe teaching?

The Christian tithe goes back to the dark ages and the catholic institution.....



In those days the common peasants had no access to the Bible. They could only hear what was handed them by their leaders (and don't we still have this tradition in our churches today to some degree?) Remember, the entire format of the church is based on the old covenant concepts of the temple, offerings/tithe, congregation, and ministerial authority.

The format of church meeting, that says “only the pastor can teach” comes from the dark ages, when most people were illiterate. In fact, the Medieval origin of the word “clergy” means simply “someone who could read”.....

- clergy** (klér/ji), *n.*, *pl.* **-gies.** persons ordained for religious work; ministers, pastors, and priests. [< OF *clergie*, ult. < L *clericus*. See CLERIC.] 
- clergyman** (klér/ji mən), *n.*, *pl.* **-men.** member of the clergy; minister; pastor; priest.
- cleric** (kler/ik), *n.* clergyman. —*adj.* of a clergyman or the clergy. [< L *clericus* < Gk. *klerikos* < *kleros* clergy, originally, lot, allotment; first applied (in the Septuagint) to the Levites, the service of God being the priest's lot. Doublet of CLERK.]
- clerical** (kler/ə kəl), *adj.* **1.** of a clerk or clerks; for clerks: *Keeping records or accounts and copying letters are clerical jobs in an office.* **2.** of a clergyman or the clergy. **3.** Often used in an unfriendly sense. supporting the power or influence of the clergy in politics. —*n.* **1.** clergyman. **2.** Often used in an unfriendly sense. supporter of the power or influence of the clergy in politics. **3. clericals, pl.** clothes worn by clergymen. [< LL *clericalis* < L *clericus*. See CLERIC.] —**cler/i cal ly**, *adv.*
- clericalism** (kler/ə kəl iz/əm), *n.* Often used in an unfriendly sense. **1.** power or influence of the clergy in politics. **2.** support of such power or influence.
- clericalist** (kler/ə kəl ist), *n.* person who favors clericalism.
- clerk** (klèrk; *Brit.* klärk), *n.* **1.** person whose work is waiting on customers and selling goods in a store; salesman or saleswoman. **2.** person whose work is keeping records or accounts, copying letters, etc., in an office. **3.** official who keeps records and takes care of regular business in a law court, legislature, etc. **4.** layman who has minor church duties. **5. Archaic.** clergyman. **6. Archaic.** person who can read and write; scholar. —*v.* work as a clerk. [partly OE *clerc*, *cleric*, partly < OF *clerc* < L *clericus*. Doublet of CLERIC.]
- clerkly** (klèrk/li; *Brit.* klärk/li), *adj.* **1.** of or like a clerk. **2.** of the clergy. **3. Archaic.** scholarly.
- clerkship** (klèrk/ship; *Brit.* klärk/ship) *n.* position

It is sad to say that most “tithers” were people who didn’t truly study the Bible themselves.

Think honestly.

When you read the Bible yourself, did “tithing” stand out to you anywhere as much as tithe-teachers say it does?

Tithe was definitely not a part of the new covenant church. The Christian tithe turns up in the Dark ages catholic church. Yet actually it was the Roman empire that gave the church an “extreme make over” in the 4th century.

The Romans were famous for taking foreign religions and turning them into money-making machines for themselves and their hierarchy. They did exactly this to the Christian church.

No more of that messy apostleship!

Make sure that no one could read the Bible by locking it up in a monastery!

Build big buildings--take over the pagan basilicas--imitate the Jewish synagogue--create a new “priesthood” (pastor)--turn ministry into authority over others (which is exactly what Jesus warned of in Matthew 20:25-26, Mark 10:42-43 and Luke 22:25-26!).

You see, the 4th century church had a very unusual problem. One they had never faced before. A Roman emperor (theodosius by name) had suddenly declared Christianity to be the official religion of Rome.

Imagine! Suddenly everyone was a Christian! (well, not really, but whatever the Roman emperor said, was law--since he was the god above all gods).

What would YOU do?

Imagine, someone with that much power, walks into YOUR church---

“Hey, I really like your church. Tell you what I’m going to do! I’m going to force everyone to believe like you!”

What would YOU do?

There certainly is a lot of work to be done--teaching teaching teaching all these millions of new converts. Certainly no need to work in apostleship. No more need to work together in small groups and spread the Gospel together.

We’ll just have to re-invent things.

And what did they invent?

“Sunday church”.

An authoritarian priesthood, hierarchy, a strict format of worship and teaching and land acquisition. (sound familiar? the fact is the church hasn’t changed much in these goals and ideas for centuries!)

Masses of people joined the church. Their registration and care required completely new forms of organization and ministry.

the state, Christianity, only recently threatened in its very existence by the state during the last and most cruel persecution and still numerically only a small minority, was suddenly in the position to preach its belief publicly, to develop its religion, and to make known its maxims. Masses of people joined the church. Their registration and care required completely new forms of organization and ministry. The internal and external expansion of the catechumenate, the new attention paid to preaching and Christian instruction, the liturgical development, and the controversy with the still existing paganism gave valuable impulses to Christian theology. These people who now became Christians

Who can think ill of the bishops of this religiously agitated time for welcoming the aid of the state? They could only be glad if ecclesiastical canons, which now were worked out more explicitly, found official recognition as well and were supported, if necessary, by the "secular arm". Soon council decrees were published as imperial laws and thus incorporated into the political life. Constantine's sons continued on his course. Con-

1 Emperor Theodosius the Great

(379-394) in the eastern half (394-395 in the whole empire) finally raised Christianity to the exclusively legitimate religion of the Roman Empire. In the year 380 an imperial edict demanded that all subjects accept the religion "which the saintly apostle Peter transmitted to the Romans and which Pope Damasus (in Rome) and bishop Alexander (in Alexandria) practise". Conversion to paganism was made punishable in 381 and the Roman Senate, so far a refuge of the old state religion, solemnly had to disavow the belief in the gods. In 392 an imperial ordinance declared participation in pagan sacrifices in the temple as high treason. After that, paganism rapidly disappeared from public life. Christianity had become the official religion and the church had become an imperial church. The tide had turned.

3. Was the church right in agreeing to such close union with the state? The question raises a grave age-old uncertainty which to this day has not been resolved.

Somebody in the dark ages, took a Bible and looked for who made the most money.

“Hmmm--yeah--those Levitical priest had it nice! They got that 1/10th thing. Well, we could turn it into money, kind of a new way to collect taxes--and we could claim it comes from God. Let’s make it into a good deal for the poor people. You pay 1/10th of your income and we’ll build you a cathedral (or shall we call it a mulit-media worship center-?). We’ll supply some far-out music-- a huge choir (or maybe an all-electric hip-hop band) and we’ll teach you some stuff. We’ll make “ministry” into show-business and the church can be whatever makes Christians happy (and are willing to pay for!)”

The catholics enforced this stuff on all of Europe for 1,000 years--and the protestant didn’t do much to changes any of it. Slowly the Bible became more read and understood, and slowly believers moved in the direction of a clearer understanding of it, and who they are as believers. Perhaps this is why the church keeps breaking up into smaller and smaller pieces. Maybe some day we will finally be in the very small groups that the new covenant asks for!

So some where along the line the “tithes” became money, the priest/pastor became the head of the church (youch is that blasphemy!!) and Christians got broke! But not so much broke of their money, much more importantly they became broke from who they truly are as new covenant believers. We are very short on ministry because of this. And because all of us are not serving God (which is what new covenant ministry is!!) God is broke. He does not have all the earthly help He needs. And so, since we are not doing our job--people are going to hell--dying for the ministry that we all have, since the new covenant says God gave it to us all. But our experience (and our pocketbook) says the church leader is the minister and we are not!.

Tithes and offerings

Some churches ask for “tithes and offerings”. It is true that in the old covenant, Israel was asked by God to make special offerings at various times. But does this translate to mean that the new covenant Christian church should make special money contributions whenever the leaders ask!

Of course not!

Israel had written intructions from God to follow, and if we actually followed these instructions fully we would have to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and bring in animals and/or crops in the seasons that the Bible states. The purpose of the offerings would be as payment for sin. All offerings have this purpose, and we *should* know that Christians have a different “better” offering--the blood of Jesus Christ!

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.” (Collosians 2:16-17)

Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a **shadow** of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

The new testament specifies that these practices from the old covenant are “shadows”. The truth is we operate the Christian church on these shadows, and to some degree ignore the substance of what we are meant to be doing together.

We are meant to work together as equals in the Lord, meet in small groups and share the Gospel.

We are meant to give God every opportunity to lead, and all our giving should be decreed by Him, through prayer.

THE MALACHI MYSTERY

This book of the Bible is where most “tithe preaching” comes from. Rather, it comes from these specific out-of-context verses.

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

10 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*.

11 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 3:8,10-11)

These are taught as threats and blessings. The “threat” this is you do not tithe you “rob God”. If you don’t “pay tithe” you are not doing your part to pay the electric bill on the church building--or you are not giving that money that the work of the church “requires”.

On the other hand, if you tithe--God will “open the windows and pour out a blessing”. In other words, if you pay tithe, God will pay you back--somewhere--somehow--the check is in the mail---(and superstition will take care of the rest!).

The third big tithe teaching is that if you tithe, God will “rebuke the devourer”.

In other words you have to pay for God’s protection from Satan.

Wow. Let’s just stop and think a minute.

Okay--the “devourer” is Satan. He certainly comes to “steal kill and destroy”-- to devour our blessings in life.

Now let’s take this into reality....

Let’s say Satan tries to destroy your life--to “devour” your family--your possessions--he is attacking you and it is serious!

What do you pray by?

I hope you know to pray by **the blood of Jesus!!**

I hope you know that **the blood of Christ rebukes Satan!!**

I hope you know this!!

Now let me ask you--do you pray by your tithe?

I don’t think so!!

But hold that thought--because it is the example that is going to unravel the mystery of the book of Malachi.

But first--why not start at the beginning.....

Trivia question:

What is the least read chapter in the Bible?

Answer: Malachi chapter 1.

Everybody who goes to a “tithe-preaching church” has heard Malachi chapter 3 over and over and over again--but did you ever read Malachi chapter 1?

Do you dare to read what pastor never cares to share with you?

Let’s break the rules and do so...

1 ¶ The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob,

3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.

5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.

6 ¶ A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.

8 And if **ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil?** and if **ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil?** offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.

This is what tithe-preachers don't want you to know.

The book of Malachi is a prophetic message to the priests of Israel (not a book of new covenant Christian church operation!!!!).

The priest were doing something wrong--they were offering blind and lame animals--and God was mad--so He gave Malachi this message.

Since they were offering blind and lame animals (instead of the healthy animals that God asked for) they were "robbing God". Now, does the "robbing God" verse make sense? Of course it does, when you read whom this book is directed toward (which is in chapter 1-- which no one ever reads!).

The prophet then goes on to say that if they will make proper offerings

(remember--**"tithe" is the amount of the sin offering!!**)

God will then pour out a blessing and rebuke the devourer.

Now maybe we can understand the true message of the book of Malachi (for us Christians).

The book of Malachi is actually a prophecy of Jesus.

In the old covenant, before Christ--before the cross--God honored the blood of slain animals (if done properly!) but only because it was a prophecy of what Christ would do on the cross. These offerings as a "shadow " of what Christ would accomplish was to rebuke Satan.

The old covenant offering (the blood of animals) rebuked Satan for Israel.

The new covenant offering (the blood of Jesus) rebukes Satan for Christians.

Question: which do you rely on?

Heb 10:1 For the law having a **shadow** of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

The book of Malachi, for us new covenant believers, is a very meaningful prophecy of Jesus and the power of His blood.

It is the blood of Jesus that rebukes the devourer for us.

For Israel, it was the shadow of Christ's blood--the tithe--the blood of animals--that would cleanse sin and enable God's power to come against Satan.

It's a pretty wonderful prophecy.

You miss it completely is you believe Malachi is talking about money.

You see it's all about Jesus.

It's a prophecy about Him--NOT a book of operational principles for Christians--no--that stuff is in the new testament.

But the church has ignored most of that stuff for centuries.

WHAT ABOUT T GIVING?

Yes absolutely Christians should give--the new covenant tells us how to give--BUT--first we need a "crash course" in how the new covenant church should work (since we are so accustomed to the old covenant typology!)

Here is how the new covenant church worked....

1. small groups (why?--because Jesus did it!)
2. meeting largely in homes (why?--because Jesus did it!)
3. praying in the Spirit (why?--because Jesus did it!)
4. asking God to lead them (why?--because Jesus did it!)
5. praying for His direction to further the Gospel (why?--because Jesus did it!)

"Ministry" was in all believers--in fact the "ministry gifts" are a description of the functional plan of operation.

No one but Christ has authority....

1 Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and **only Potentate**, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

Ephesians 1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the **head** over all *things* to the church,

And we are not to exercise authority one over another among ourselves....

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise **authority** upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
(Matthew 20:25-28, KJV)

So--what about giving?

Simple.

Like all things it is lead by God.

Spirit-lead giving.

Understanding these concepts of function--here is one of the few new covenant scriptures which is often used to enforce "tithes"....

1Corinthians 9:9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

1Timothy 5:18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

Yes, someone who is doing ministry has the right to ask for support from other believers--- BUT---"ministry" according to new covenant principles (and not the old covenant Levitical proportion) is a "gift given to every one of us" (see ephesians chapter 4--please!!) So anyone at any time could be called upon by God to minister. Maybe it's your turn this today--maybe it's my turn tomorrow. I'll support you and you'll support me.

But read further in the "muzzle the ox" teaching...

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 ¶ But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

Paul makes a point that he did not ask for money from the Corinthian church--why? Because it would have hindered them from receiving the Gospel.

How did Paul know this?---God told him!

He prayed about it!!

You see?---God-lead giving and God-lead asking for money.

The purpose of the Gospel is first in God's mind--and should be in ours.

Interesting thing to note---it actually does not take any money to operate as the church by new covenant principles. This is something that is actually very well-known in many poor countries. It is absolutely amazing how our wrong Western tradition, which is centered on money, makes us believe that money is central to the operation of "the church". When people get together as believers--they ARE the church--but our messed-up tradition makes us put money first. We believe we need to raise funds to build the church when we really need to raise people. And it is all because we have this wrong, old covenant idea as our definition of "the church". We so strongly believe that we NEED to build our selves a big building--a sanctuary--a "house of God" along the lines of the old covenant--and function by the rituals that have been handed us by tradition--rituals based on the old covenant.

Wouldn't a new covenant church be appealing? One of the first principles of a new covenant church should be: money is not important. You think this is naive? Well don't argue with me, argue with Jesus...

25 ¶ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (Matthew 6:25-33) 24

Jesus certainly lured many people away from the Levitical/temple/tithe establishment with this as one of His operational ideas!

I think it certainly would be appealing to people today!

Operating by the new covenant methods gave the church the easy ability to follow God's instructions (the "small ministry group" called apostleship)

The church did "collect" money and goods--but not for itself--or rather not for a big building.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. (Acts 2:44-45)

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. (Acts 4:34-35)

Galatians 2:10 Only *they would* that we should remember the **poor**; the same which I also was forward to do.

1Co 16:1 Now concerning the **collection** for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

Since the church wasn't building buildings they were free to use what they had to minister to others and part of spreading the Gospel is to feed the poor (both within and without the church)

"The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."
(Luke 4:18-19)

The collecting of money in the church was not for itself, but for the poor.

The new covenant church was all about ministry--all about serving others--and doing the best you could to work together as equals (which is a whole lot easier in small groups than in a big building!).

The object was to spread the Gospel--to get together and make yourself available for God to lead you.

Not have everything "pre-ordained"-----just let God lead.

We have a Gospel of salvation--healing--deliverance, all by faith in the name of Jesus.

He was the highest example.

Jesus was who they were trying to imitate.

What about us?

Are we striving to do so?

Do we collectively attempt to imitate Jesus?

Jesus is the highest example--and "tithing" is not part of His church.