

Tithing Principles in the Bible II New Testament

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We're going to talk about money, and also as we finished up in part one in Mal. 3, you see the applications coming clear down to the return of Jesus Christ and the reward of the saints when God is making up His jewels for their crowns. To say that is only for the Levitical priesthood we will find today that is not necessarily so. In fact, we will find that it is not so.

I want to talk about money and the ridiculousness of this society as in sports. There have been headlines about a pitcher Barry Zito. He was an ace pitcher for the 'A's' and he became a free agent at the end of the season, so he just signed a seven-year contract for \$126-million for the seven years, which averages out to almost \$18-million a year.

Let's think about this in real terms. It means that if he wins 18 games it costs \$1-million a game for him to win. We also figured out the number of pitches. The A's get along on a budget for about \$50-million for the whole team every year, and they do well. How much is this per pitch? So, we reduce it down from \$1-million to /\$750-thousand because he's going to lose some games. So, we'll throw that in the mix, too.

That means \$750-thousand for each game. If he pitches 100 pitches it means every pitch is worth \$7,500. Also, he's the kind of pitcher that when he pitches the batters know how to bat him, so they can have a good chance to get a hit, which is if the pitch is something that they can't really hit, they foul it off—especially after two strikes. He's noted for that. He's gone as high as 15 pitches on a batter.

Let's just say for every batter that he goes 10 pitches, that's \$75,000 for that at bat. If he's pitching to a high-priced batter, you can figure out the reverse going the other way, because there are some batters/players that make \$15-million a year as outfielders. So, every at bat and every strike and ball has a value, too.

Everything is all skewed today. Everyone is all wrapped up in money, merchandizing and the goal is to receive as much money as you can and somehow you are successful.

We're going to talk about not only the laws of God, but we're also going to talk about the principles that are important for us to understand and realize. A lot of people debunk the Old Testament from the New Testament and say this:

- it's not in the New Testament
- Jesus never collected tithes
- Jesus never told the disciples, when He was teaching them in His 3-1/2-year ministry, to collect tithes

Psalms 119:123 shows the attitude and this has to be our attitude. Delores and I have been discussing this and how it's been used: They've had special on the History Channel all about hell and all the other religions, and how it came into Christianity and so forth.

The way they keep people in line is with *fear*. That's been held over the people of God, too, for a long time. 'If you don't do this you're going into the Lake of Fire.' Well, not necessarily! Maybe some of the ministers who have preached that may be at the head of the line. We'll just have to see in the long run.

God wants us to operate in this manner, with this attitude, toward everything. Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

Psalms 119:123: "My eyes fail for Your salvation... [that's the whole focus of our lives; that's why God has called us; that's the most important thing] ...and for the word of Your righteousness"—to understand the Word of God, His Truth. When you think about it, and you think about the message to the Laodiceans (Rev. 3), what's their problem? *They're all focused on physical things and getting money, riches, and all this sort of thing!* They don't know the Word of God.

Here we have the two things that we really need to concentrate on in our lives. This is the goal! We understand that:

- God is love!
- He loves us!
- He cares for us!
- He watches over us!
- He's giving us salvation!

There is nothing that God would ask us to do that would not be for good and for a blessing.

Verse 124: "Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy..." Note sermon series: *Keys to Answered Prayer*; this is what we are dealing with on a daily basis: 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive others who sin against us.'

“...and **teach me Your statutes**” (v 124). Many of the things that are included in the Word of God are the statutes of God; this is important, too.

To help anyone who is confused as to what it is to understand about how Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, note: *A Harmony of the Gospels* and Appendix H in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version: How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?* He did, and it means that certain things such as the rituals, physical things that they were to do, such as the blue threads in the bottom of their hems. These have been superseded by the spiritual standard that God has given.

You need to understand that because those have been fulfilled does not mean that God has fulfilled the Ten Commandments to where they're no longer applicable.

Verse 125: “**I am Your servant...**” Which you might say, ‘God has called me.’ You are God’s servant! You are serving God! We’ll talk about this later in relationship to some of the things that Jesus said about ‘whom you serve.’

“...**give me understanding...**” (v 125). This is why having the whole Bible today, we have the greatest opportunity of any people in the history of the whole world, at this time to know and understand the Word of God. This ought to be right in the forefront of what we are doing.

Yet, what do we see? *Even in the Churches of God we see all kinds of different* doctrines, fighting, arguing, quarrelling, and the one-God theory, Docetism theory, the wrong calendar, etc., etc. All within the Church of God because they're not asking for the true understanding of the Word of God.

We need to understand that no man has a monopoly on the understanding of the Word of God—*no one!* God does! If we come to God with this attitude: Will He not delight in giving us understanding? Will He not want to give us the understanding of His Word?

“...that I may **know Your testimonies...** [everything that God says] ...It is time for the LORD to work... [think about this as a prophecy for today]: ...for they have made void Your Law” (vs 125-126). That’s surely what’s happening in the world today. Think about that!

Verse 127: “Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold.” I’ve said many, many times: If you have big pile of fine gold in a dark room and an old beat up Bible next to it and you bring a contestant in (like on a TV show) and say, ‘I want you to choose what you think is the most valuable thing that you can have.’ You open the door and turn on the spot light—one on the

huge pile of gold and one on the Bible—and you say ‘Choose the most valuable.’ They’ll choose the gold 999 times out of a thousand because they don’t realize that *the Bible contains the words of life, so you can receive eternal life*, and that no amount of gold in the whole world is going to bring you eternal life.

Verse 128: “Therefore, I esteem [consider] all Your precepts... [everything about God] ...concerning **all** things to be right... [notice it’s not *some* things; not concerning just the ones ‘I agree with’] ...and I hate every false way.”

That’s also a part of our righteousness in hating sin. You think about this: If you have particular sins in your life that you need to overcome, the first step in overcoming is asking God to give you a hatred and revulsion for those sins, and ask Him to take it out of your mind. He will do that! That applies for whatever it may be.

We’ll look in the Old Testament because we’re going to talk about Abraham and his love and obedience for God. When God was passing on to Isaac the promises that He gave to Abraham, He said this. This is important for us to understand because we know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are going to be in the Kingdom of God. They, in a sense, were under the New Covenant ahead of time.

God told Isaac, Genesis 26:3: “Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you...” Do you want God with you and to bless you? Think about that! Whenever we go through any one of these things, remember that **God loves you! God will bless you!** And even some of the trials that you go through are going to turn out for a blessing in the long run if you constantly put it in God’s hands.

“...for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands...” (v 3). Unto you and to all of those who have the seed of begetting of God the Father, *God has given the kingdom!* Isn’t that what Jesus said? **‘It is God’s pleasure to give you the kingdom!’** We have something to look forward to better than owning land and owning properties and having cattle and all those sort of things—which Abraham did. Abraham was a very wealthy man, and so was Isaac.

“...and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens...” (vs 3-4). In *The Christian Passover* book and also in *The Day Jesus the Christ Died* we have an excellent explanation of the true origin of the Passover, which really began with Abraham and not just the children of Israel.

“...and will give to your seed all these lands.

And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (v 4). We are living with those blessings.

You talk to anybody who has traveled overseas, when they come back to America and they see all the wealth here and all the things that we have, it’s just an absolute stark contrast. When you go down to San Diego and go on into Mexico—before it was as dangerous as it is now... Years ago we went down there and there was just like there was a curtain that fell right at the border. Here you go from these six-lane highways, lots of cars, big buildings, wonderful homes, great property, wonderful everything, and you go through the gate at Tijuana and you start driving south, you have little two-lane roads with holes, ruts, poor people and things like this.

They don’t have the blessing given to them that was promised to Abraham, and we have received that blessing. I want you to think about it in relationship to this, since we have that blessing: Don’t you think that we ought to be thankful to God in the physical things, because we need all the physical things to live. We have an excess and abundance way beyond, but let’s also understand, as the Apostle Paul wrote: *You have nothing you didn’t receive!* Everything you have comes from God!

If you tried to write about every little thing that Abraham did, how big would the book be? This is a summary. This is what we have to learn to understand about things in the Bible—and this is part of spiritually understanding it.

He gives the key, v 5: “**Because Abraham obeyed My voice...**” Do a study about *obey My voice* and *not obey My voice* and tie that in with Matt. 7 where Jesus said, ‘Everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, will be like a man who built his house upon the rock. The floods came, the winds came and beat upon that house and it didn’t fall, because it was founded on the rock.’

But ‘the one who hears the words and does not do them is like a man who built his house upon the sand.’ River bottom—we see it every year! ‘The winds come, the rain comes and beats upon it and the house falls’ because it sweeps it away!

It’s a breathtaking thing to see a big beautiful house that had a wonderful view over this river—they’re a whole batch of them in Utah—and they hadn’t had a flood there in decades. Last year they had the rain and the floods and a whole bunch of these multimillion dollar houses just collapsed in the flood and went on down in the water. “...obey My voice...” Jesus said very clearly in Matt. 7 about that.

“...and **kept My charge...**” (v 5). Whatever

that may be. You can read in there and maybe divide out charge, commands, etc.

“...**My commandments...**” (v 5)—which means the Ten Commandments were in effect from the beginning. Abraham kept the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath, the Holy Days in the form that God revealed to him then. You go back to Heb. 11 and it talks about Abraham twice:

1. he dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob—a type of the Feast of Tabernacles
2. he was looking for the city of whose Architect and Builder is God

Abraham was told all about New Jerusalem. We’re not told here everything that God told him and showed him and revealed to him. But those two things tell us an awful lot.

“...**My statutes, and My laws**” (v 5). One of the statutes that God has is tithing.

Genesis 28:18: “So, Jacob rose up early in the morning... [after God said that He would bless him and be with him] ...and took the stone, which he had put at his head, and set it *as* a memorial pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place [Bethel] The House of God... [the gate of heaven (v 17) because of the vision that he saw and what God told him] ...But the name of that city *was* Luz at first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘Since...’” (vs 18-20).

There is no ‘if’ in the Hebrew; there are no conditions on God. How many times have I said that all the conditional *ifs* are upon men? God cannot lie! God will not lie!

“...‘Since God will be with me...’” (v 20). That is the proper translation and is in the Hebrew. God promised to be with him:

Verse 15: “And, behold, I *am* with you, and will keep you in every *place* where you go...” It’s not *if* God will be with me. It’s “...Since God will be with me...”

Verse 20: “...and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the LORD be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar shall be God’s house. And of **all** that You shall give me...” (vs 20-22).

People like to divide it down, and in the paper I mentioned earlier, he says, ‘You only tithe on animals and the land and crops, but you don’t tithe on anything else.’ I showed in Deut. 8 that is not correct. Just think how Israel would have been if everyone who grew crops and had animals were the only ones required to tithe.

- What about the merchant who made shoes?
- What about the merchant who made implements of agriculture?

You mean, they would be off the hook? Then that would mean that God is partial.

Verse 22: “And of **all** that You shall give me...” Remember what I said: **You have nothing you didn't receive!**

“...**I will surely give the tenth to You**” (v 22). This shows the knowledge of tithing goes all the way back to creation.

Hebrews 7:1: “For this Melchisedec... [identified in Heb. 6:20 as Jesus Christ] ...King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, Who met Abraham *as he was* returning from *his* slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, and to Whom **Abraham gave a tenth part of all...**” (vs 1-2).

In analyzing that with v 4: “But consider how great this one *was* to Whom even the patriarch **Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.**” In reading this in v 2, you may think that is referring to the spoils. But what it is really saying is that Abraham faithfully gave and divided out a tenth of **all**, not the spoil from this raid, but of **all** of everything that he had. How can we understand that that is true? *By what we just read in Gen. 26:5!*

Verse 2: “...on the one hand, being interpreted King of Righteousness; and on the other hand, King of Salem, which is King of Peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but having been made like the Son of God, remains a Priest forever” (vs 2-3). That could only describe Christ.

Verse 4: “But consider how great this one *was* to Whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.” There is a difference between a tenth of the spoils and to whom he gave a tenth of **all**.

Now he talks about tithing in a very different way, v 5: “For on the one hand, those from among the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood are commanded by the law to collect tithes from the people...”

This is why as long as Jesus was alive in the flesh, during His ministry, He didn't take tithes and He didn't command people to give tithes. Why? *Because as Lord God of the Old Testament He had given them to Levi!* The covenant that He had Israel had not yet come to an end, and that did not come to an end until He had died. That ended, officially, the Old Covenant, then He was free to begin developing the Church, etc.

“...—that is, *from* their brethren—even though they are *all* descended from Abraham; but on the other hand, He Who was not descended from them **received tithes** from Abraham... [not of the spoil] ...and blessed him who had the promises” (vs 5-6).

Did God only bless Abraham when he brought the tithes of the spoils? *or* Did He bless him in Gen. 12, 15, 17, 22 and also through the whole life of Abraham? *Absolutely!*

Verse 7: “Now, it is beyond all doubt *that* the inferior *one* is blessed by the superior *one*. And in the first case, men who die receive tithes; but in the other case, *He received tithes of Whom it is* witnessed that He lives *forever*. And in one sense, Levi, who receives tithes... [at the present time he did] ...also gave tithes through Abraham; for he was still in his forefather's loins when Melchisedec met him. Therefore...” (vs 7-11).

Paul is drawing a contrast here. Like everything we're going to see: you have the Old Covenant, you have the New Covenant. What is it that we have found concerning the New Covenant that Jesus did in Matt. 5-7? *and* all the way through His teaching? *He taught the spirit and intent of the Law!* Very important to understand! He also said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.’

Verse 11: “Therefore, if perfection was indeed *possible...*” Let's understand about *perfection*. In the New Covenant we are to be *perfected with the character of God, the mind of Christ*, through the Spirit of God. It was not possible with the covenant that God gave Israel because God didn't give the Holy Spirit. That's why He said in Deut. 5, ‘Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear and obey Me always and keep My commandments.’

So, it wasn't possible! God did not mean for spiritual perfection to come “...through the Levitical priesthood—for *the law that* the people had received was *based on it*—what further need *was there for* another priest to arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and not to be named after the order of Aaron? For since the priesthood has changed...” (vs 11-12). This has a great meaning.

“...it is obligatory *that* a change of *the priestly law* also take place” (v 12). That means **all the law!** That's what Jesus did.

- He changed the covenant
- He changed the meaning of the law
- He changed the meaning of everything

In sacrifices, Christ became the sacrifice, and we have a comparison of that in the Old Testament

between the Old and New Covenants. {Note: Appendix I: Comparison Between the Old and New Covenants (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*)}

Verse 13: “Because the One of Whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no one was appointed to serve at the altar.” That’s why Jesus never went to the temple to be a priest there. He is a heavenly priest.

Verse 14: “For *it is* quite evident that our Lord has descended from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning *the* priesthood. And it is even more evident because a different Priest arises according to the order of Melchisedec; Who was not invested according to *the priestly* law of a fleshly commandment, but by *the* power of indestructible life. For He testifies, ‘**You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.**’” (vs 14-17).

A lot of people argue that the tithe was only for priests, and since the ministers are not priests they should not collect tithes. A spurious argument as we will see.

Here is the verse that the Protestants really, really love, v 18: “For there is indeed an annulment of the earlier commandment *delivered to Aaron...*” That’s everything concerning the priesthood not just tithing. Tithing and offering are included in that. If you *annul* the covenant with Levi and it goes to the covenant with Christ, do you eliminate the Law—all the Laws of God? *Of course not! Jesus made that clear!*

“...because of its weakness and unprofitableness” (v 18). It didn’t give them the heart to obey and love God the way that you do when you have the Spirit of God. It didn’t lead to eternal life; it led to physical life. Let’s understand something about law: **law cannot make you do anything!** It has no power to do so.

- You *choose* to obey God and keep His laws!
- You *choose* to disobey God and not keep His laws!

His laws are still in effect!

Verse 19: “Because the *priestly* law...” [the Old Covenant] ...brought nothing to perfection...”—because the law *defines* what sin is. What brings you to perfection is repentance, the forgiveness of sin and the Holy Spirit of God; and this is what He’s working today.

“...rather, *perfection* is brought about by a superior hope, through which we draw near to God” (v 19). Then it goes on talking about the New

Covenant, which is important for us to understand.

It seems like in almost every sermon that I give on tithes and offerings I go through 1-Cor. 9 and guess what? Almost every year someone comes back with another little technical argument about something because either they didn’t understand it, or I didn’t fully explain it the way that it needs to be understood. That in itself I’ll admit that I probably help create the problem.

But there are some people who are so turned off in giving tithes and offerings because of the stealing by the ministry.

- Whenever men sin, **does that void the Law of God?**
- If ministers misappropriate and misuse tithes and offerings—which we’ve seen a lot of that—**does that do away with the Law?**
- *No!*

It’s the same way if brethren turn around and say, ‘Oh, the ministers have stolen money, I’m not going to send them anything.’

- **Does that do away with the Law?**
- What should you do in a case like that?

If you have doubt, put it in the bank, because that belongs to God (Mal. 3).

- How can you rob God if you take from Him something is not His?

You can’t rob God in that case. But God says, ‘You have robbed Me.’ You say, ‘How?’ God says, ‘In tithes and in offerings.’

(go to the next track)

Let’s go through this again: When did Jesus tell the apostles that they could collect tithes and offerings? We will see, going back to the book of Acts, that from the beginning they dealt in money, not in the offerings of animals and so forth.

{See book: *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey and parts 1 & 2 of this series where it shows the economy of the Roman Empire was actually a merchandizing economy much like we have today.}

Now, sometimes you have to defend yourself, because people come against you with all kinds of things.

1-Corinthians 9:1: “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in *the* Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, without a doubt I am to you. For you are the certification of my apostleship in *the*

Lord. My defense to those who are examining me is this” (vs 1-3).

We will see that Paul did not take tithes and offerings from the Corinthians, and he did that for a purpose, to show them how carnal they were. The reason he didn't do it was because they were so carnal and he didn't want to take it from them lest they would say, 'Oh, he takes money from us.' So, he gave it to them free.

Verse 4: “Do we not have a right to eat and to drink? Do we not have a right to take with us a sister, a wife, as also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working?” (vs 1-6).

I just got a paper from a woman that said ministers ought to work, and that we're only entitled to what food is set before us when we go visiting. Well, pray tell, how am I going to come and visit you? She said, 'Paul worked!' We'll see that Paul did work.

I worked as a loan broker from 1983-1995 and did *the work*, which was much less than we have now, so that's, inclusive counting, 13 years. I did work.

- How much was I able to produce? *Not very much!*
- How much of the Gospel was able to be preached? *Not very much!*

If that's the way all ministers should be, let's go back to what I covered in # 1 of Tithing Principles:

- How are you going to preach the Gospel to the world unless there's some means of support? *'Well, you can have other means of support.'*
- Should you setup a system that is different from what God has given in the Bible?

if you do

- Are you living by every Word of God?

Think about that!

- Why did God give the system of tithes and offerings?
 - ✓ *So that each person could decide in his heart to obey God or not!*
 - ✓ *So that ministers could not extort—though many of them do—above what God has given!*

The truth is that there were times when Paul worked because there were no brethren to support him. There were times when he didn't work, when there were plenty of brethren to support him. And we will see that the brethren tithed to the Church and the Church sent Paul a wage. That's exactly what I

do; I take a wage and I count everything that God sends as *His money* and it has to be administered properly; it has to be accounted for.

Therefore, I have an outside, independent accountant who accounts for all the money and at the end of the year I give you a full detailed Income and Expense Statement. Everything is transparent and aboveboard.

One man came out here for the Feast of Tabernacles and was anxious to see our building. He thought we had a big metal building. He thought we had all kinds of people working for us. We have two small offices of 800 sq. ft. a piece. He was flabbergasted! We operate at perhaps the lowest cost possible, because those who work for the Church, many of them work at home. Jim and Betty Hyles work in their house. Just think how much more they would have to be paid if they lived here in Hollister and how much more rent we would have to pay for all of us to be in the same place? It's likewise with others who work for us.

Raymond Scott who has sent out series for 13 years and is in the process of retiring from it; he worked in his own home. We wanted to give him some enumeration for doing it, but he didn't want any. Think of the space that would be necessary for that.

That's how we operate and why I have jokingly said, 'We are the Church that is, and is not, and yet, is.' That's why we are able to produce what we produce, because we hold the tithes and offerings that God sends in as *His!* We need to make the most of every penny that comes in. That doesn't mean that we aren't generous for those who need help, etc., etc. We do help them! But we don't beg and ask for money, and we're not going to.

In going through these sermons I'm not doing this so I can compel you to send money. If you do it under compulsion—Paul says that God doesn't want it by compulsion—then it's not from the heart. It's the same thing in everything else that you do. If what you do for God is not from the heart, then of what value is it? *Everything!*

- the Sabbath
- the Holy Days
- loving each other
- forgiving each other
- growing in grace and knowledge
- study

Whatever we do! We're to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being. As I started this message, the central focus of what we do is the salvation that God is giving us. He commands us to preach the Gospel. I think when you see the statistic

for the website, *God has increased* the number of visitors many times over from last year. That is a very effective way of reaching people.

1-Corinthians 9:7: “Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense?...” *NO!* They sign you up. You give your life to them. They give you food, housing, clothing and weapons!

“...Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it?...” (v 7). Of course not! Even Noah drank the wine and got drunk. He was so happy and cheerful to be on the other side of the Flood and living that when he was celebrated, he probably drank it when it was new wine. New wine will knock you out flat real soon, real quickly!

“...Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock?... [Of course!] ...Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things?” (vs 7-8).

What we’re going to see here is how Paul applied the Law. It’s very interesting, a very broad interpretation, which means he not only used the Law, but he also gave the overall principle behind the Law—which is important for us to understand.

Verse 9: “For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.’ Is it because God is concerned for oxen? Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes?...” (vs 9-10). Notice how he transferred that to him and those who are working.

“...For our sakes it was written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it a great thing* if we shall reap your physical things?” (vs 10-11).

Physical things include whatever they may give him; whatever *money* they may give him. If you’re going to go on a boat around the Mediterranean Sea, you’re not going to go up the ship captain and be carrying a recently killed goat and say, ‘Here’s a goat for my passage.’ He will say, ‘How dare you bring that to me, it’s not the age of refrigerators, I can’t keep this.’ *No!* You paid him money; they dealt in money! They had gold, silver and copper coins. The physical things would include whatever they would give.

Verse 12: “If others participate in this authority over you...” Who gives the authority? *God is the One Who gives the authority!* He commanded Levi to take it, and we will see that He commanded the apostles and ministers to collect tithes and offerings. Someone will surely say, ‘When did He do this?’ We will come to a close approximation of

when He probably did it. But the fact is, He did do it!

Verse 12: “If others participate in this authority over you... [those were the false ministers; same thing today] ...much more surely *should* not we? Nevertheless, we have not used this authority; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ.”

Paul wanted them to be converted, which was the most important thing. He said, ‘You’re carnal and we can’t teach you spiritual things’ (1-Cor. 3). He wanted them to be converted so that they would understand that everything came from God; but that they would *freely* give rather than having to be reminded.

Verse 13: “**Don’t you know...**”—means that he taught the previously. What did Paul do? *He taught them what God said!*

“...that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple...” (v 13). What are the things of the temple?

- all the tithes
- the offerings
- the gifts
- the temple tax
- the vows what were given
 - ✓ land
 - ✓ an animal
 - ✓ money

All of this would be called a ‘heave offering’; even the land.

They could also vow the land by coming to the priest and saying, ‘I want to vow the land; how much is it worth?’ The priest would say, ‘thus and such.’ Then he would say to the priest, ‘I want to redeem it so I can continue using it.’ God says that if you redeem it, you can add 20% to it. When you vow something, God expects you to pay, to give.

What is the most important thing that you have vowed to God? **Your life! Though baptism!**

“...live *of the things* of the temple, *and* those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel” (vs 13-14).

If you’re so turned off that you cannot give money to any man, then what you need to do is get right with God. ‘Two wrongs never make a right.’ Stealing from God, whether a minister or a member, doesn’t do away with the Law of God. Example: The Protestants point out the way the Jews keep the Sabbath, so therefore, they say, ‘We don’t want to Judaize so we keep Sunday.’ It’s exactly the same

principle.

Verse 15: “But I have not used any of these things. And I have not written these things in order that this might *now* be done to me. For *it would be* better for me to die rather than to have anyone make my boasting void. For though I preach the Gospel, there is no *reason* for me to boast because an obligation has been laid upon me. And woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel!” (vs 15-16). Paul understood what he was to do, and certainly feared God in the financial matters.

Verse 17: “For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if *I do this* against my will, I have been **entrusted** with a ministry.” Everyone who is a minister, elder or teacher understands that. You’ve been *entrusted* with a ministry to serve the people of God!

Verse 18: “What then is my reward? That in preaching the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without expense...”—which we do. It says in the Old Testament, ‘buy the Truth and sell it not.’ Yet, even one man wrote in and said, ‘Why don’t you not have a non-profit corporation, just set it up as a business and charge for everything that you send out?’ I wrote him back and said, ‘That’s merchandizing the Truth.’ Anyone who writes in, we send it free!

Granted, there are some people out in the world who do not want to get involved in a church until they check it out. That’s why we have an arrangement with amazon.com so people can buy it from York Publishing through amazon.com—York Publishing is *me!* All the money that comes in through York Publishing—which is not very much—we use it for postage expense for the Church. I get no profit from it.

“...so that I may not abuse my authority in the Gospel” (v 18)—which means that Paul was well aware of the things that we have been talking about.

Since Jesus commanded that these things be done in the same way, when did He command it? He didn’t do it while He was in the flesh. He could not do so until He ended the covenant with Israel and ended the covenant with the Levitical priesthood, though there was an overlap of 40 years to give the Jews final warning before God destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

When did Christ do it? He had to do it after He was resurrected and received of God the Father. What do we have? *In Acts 1 He showed Himself the apostles and disciples for 40 days!* That had to be the timeframe in which He did it. Couldn’t be any other time, because it says, ‘The Lord commanded...!’ That means it was a direct

command from the Lord.

Since we don’t have a temple, since we don’t operate in agricultural products. That’s why Deut. 8 includes gold, silver, copper and everything from the land—as well as the agricultural products—and he connects that with the wealth, therefore, those things need to be tithed upon.

Let’s look at something else that’s important for us to understand. This is after the apostles—Peter and John—were released. They were punished for speaking in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:23: “Now, after being released, they came to their own *brethren* and reported to them all *that* the chief priests and elders had said. And when they heard *this*, they lifted up *their* voices to God with one accord and said, ‘O Master, You *are* the God Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that *are* in them, Who by *the* mouth of Your servant David did say, “Why did the nations insolently rage, and the people imagine vain things?”’” (vs 23-25). Also, we need to realize that’s a prophecy for our age today, too.

Verse 26: “““The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.” For of a truth they did gather together against Your Holy Son, Jesus, Whom You did anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with *the* Gentiles and *the* people of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your counsel had predetermined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threatening, and grant that Your servants may speak Your Word with all boldness, by reaching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Son, Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness” (vs 26-31).

When you start doing that and God starts acting, backing it up with signs and wonders and healings:

- Do you think that the apostles were making tents?
- Do you think they were making pottery?
- Do you think they were tailoring clothes?

Remember, even though Jesus told them when they went on their original mission, ‘Don’t take any money, script, food, two sets of sandals, two coats, but you go preach!’ Later He said, ‘Now you buy a sword, you take your purse’; so He changed that commandment.

Let’s see what happened, what had to transpire, and how the New Testament Church was

built financially.

Verse 32: “And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common.” They were willing to really pitch in and help make things go. Much like when they had the offering for building the tabernacle. They all pitched in like it is here.

Verse 33: “And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. For neither was anyone among them in want; for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold *them and* brought the amounts of those *things* that were sold.” That’s more than a tithe. You talk about a ‘heave offering,’ that’s something!

How valuable was it to preach the Gospel for them? Everything that they had and what they were doing, they were following the words of Jesus Christ Who told the rich man who didn’t want to do as Jesus said, ‘Go sell all that you have and come and follow Me.’ That’s what they were doing.

I tell you, if you want to hear an uproar, just think what it would be if I, or any minister, said, ‘Sell everything that you have and send it in’? There would be the news, the media, the accusations, newspaper articles and everything. Think about it!

Verse 35: “And laid *the money* at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was made to each one according to his need.” They took care of food, housing, clothing. Why? *Because many of the brethren who were there came to Jerusalem from other countries to keep Pentecost!* They hadn’t gone home, yet. They had to take care of them; so they were.

Verse 36: “And Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which is, being interpreted, “son of consolation”), a Levite, born *in the country* of Cyprus, had land; *and he sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet*” (vs 36-37). Apparently, he went back to Cyprus, he sold the land, brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet. What did they do with this? *They took care of everyone!* But also preached the Gospel.

Here’s a lesson, and here’s a fearful lesson. That’s why God wants us to do ‘as we purpose in our hearts.’ And the whole thing that Jesus taught back in Matt. 5 was, ‘Let your *yes* be yes, and your *no* be no.’ If you say *yes*, you do it. If you say *no*, you don’t do it. We have that principle right here.

I’m not using this as a fearful thing to say that if you don’t give your tithes and offerings you’re going to drop dead; please understand that!

However, it’s been my observation that through the years that those *who don’t tithe and give offerings* still tithe and give offerings. In what way? *Because they don’t have the blessing of God and they have to pay for the curse!*

One man wrote, ‘I quit tithing and I tithed myself into bankruptcy by paying everything else, because I brought upon myself the curse of God.’ He was able to repent. Ananias and Sapphira did not have that opportunity.

Acts 5:1 “Now, a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price *for himself...*” (vs 1-2). Why? *Because they sold it for more than they intended!* They said, ‘Well, we got more than we figured, so let’s keep back part of it.’ But what was their pledge? *Whatever we sell it for, we’ll give!* Who was their pledge really to? The apostles? *or To God?* ‘As you purpose in your heart, so do.’

“...his wife also being aware of *it*; and he brought a certain portion *and laid it* at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *part* of the price of the estate?’” (vs 2-3). Aren’t you thankful that God hasn’t given ministers today that kind of perception? This was to establish the authority of the apostles, to establish the power of the Church. And in order to preach and in order to reach out, you have got to have money to do it. The Church has always operated on money.

Verse 4: “‘Before it was sold, was it not yours? And after you sold it, was it *not* in your own authority? Why did you contrive this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.’” You can lie to men, but God knows your heart!

Verse 5: “And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired; and great fear came upon all those who heard these things.” I imagine that the scribes and Pharisees, when they heard about this, ‘Oh, man, what is this thing coming to?’ They were probably envious of that and said, ‘Boy, we wish people who withheld tithes and offerings from us would drop dead, too, and then we’d get it.’

Verse 6: “Then the young men wound him up, and carried *him out and buried him*. Now, it came to pass about three hours later *that his wife* also came in, not knowing what had taken place. And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me if you sold the estate for so much?’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘Why *is it* that you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of *the Lord?*.... [they had the Spirit of God in them, and also Peter having the Spirit of God] ...Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband *are* at the door, and they shall carry you out.’ And she immediately fell down at his feet

and expired. And the young men came in and found her dead; and they carried *her* out *and* buried *her* by her husband. Then great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things” (vs 6-11).

What happened? Of course, a short time later persecution came upon the Church because of these things.

Verse 12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them; and believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women), insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them” (vs 12-15). It did and they were healed.

Can you imagine the envy and jealousy of the scribes and Pharisees with this happening? They were Levites—John was of the house of Aaron; Barnabas and Matthew were Levites.

Verse 6: “And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they were filled with anger. And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, ‘Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life’” (vs 6-20).

You know what happened then. They were brought before the Sanhedrin the next morning. They said, ‘Okay, we’re all assembled here, now you guards go get them and bring them in here.’ The guards went to get them and said, ‘They’re not there!’ Someone came and said, ‘Guess what? They’re out there preaching in the temple area. The doors are locked. We opened them and there was no one in there.’ This was really a startling thing!

What I want you to understand is that in order to preach the Gospel it takes money. Using any other system but tithes and offerings given to the Church is not right.

Let’s answer the question concerning the Apostle Paul and not collecting tithes and offerings. After he talks about the false apostles and so forth that are coming and preaching a different gospel. Isn’t that true today. Someone comes along with a

‘good idea’ and you say, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea; that’s a wonderful thing.’ That’s how people get into things that are contrary to God’s Word.

2-Corinthians 11:5: “But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles.... [They weren’t apostles!] ...For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet, *I am* not in knowledge; for in all things I have demonstrated this to you. Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you freely?” (vs 5-7).

What did he have to do? Verse 8: “I robbed other churches...”—meaning other churches received tithes and offerings and they had a treasurer, someone who handled it] ...receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you. And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone (for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs)...” (vs 8-9). Here he wasn’t working; though when he first came to Corinth he was with Annanias and Sapphira and they were making tents.

“...for I kept myself, and will *continue to* keep myself, from being burdensome... [to receive money from you] ...to you in anything. *As the Truth* of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows *I do*. But what I am doing, I will do, so that I may cut off *any* occasion from those who are desiring an occasion; so that in the things they boast of, they also may be found even as we *are*” (vs 9-12).

He was saying, ‘Now, let’s prove who is an apostle here.’ That’s why he did this. ‘These other false apostles coming in using this authority over you and you gladly use it, gladly give to them, let them do it. Let them give it up and let’s see what they preach.’ Then he talks about false apostles (v 13) and Satan and so forth.

2-Corinthians 12:10: “For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing. Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what *way* was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? **Forgive me this wrong**” (vs 10-13). So, he admitted that it was wrong, trying to do something to help them.

Let’s understand that even the Apostle Paul

admitted that when he did not follow the way that God had laid out, it became a wrong.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 119:123-128
- 2) Genesis 26:3-5
- 3) Genesis 28:18-20, 15, 20-22
- 4) Hebrews 7:1-2, 4, 2-19
- 5) 1 Corinthians 9:1-18
- 6) Acts 4:23-36
- 7) Acts 5:1-20
- 8) 2 Corinthians 11:5-12
- 9) 2 Corinthians 12:10-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 3
- Matthew 7
- Hebrews 11
- Genesis 28:17
- Deuteronomy 8
- Hebrews 6:20
- Genesis 12; 15; 17; 22
- Matthew 5-7
- Deuteronomy 5
- Malachi 3
- 1 Corinthians 3
- Acts 1
- 2 Corinthians 11:13

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- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
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- *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey (amazon.com)

From: *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*:

- Appendix H in *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?*
- Appendix I: *Comparison Between the Old and New Covenants*

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