

CHRISTIAN TITHING

Discovering the Tithe

*Seven Shocking Secrets About The
Old Testament Tithe Revealed!*

Written By Lewis J. Tauzeni

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Christian Tithing

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Preface

How I wrote this book...

This is essentially an analysis of the doctrine on Christian Tithing. The book examines the tithing system under the Old Testament setting and relates this to its usage under the New Testament Church. No one should take offense when a certain teaching or doctrine is placed under the microscopic lens of theological scrutiny. Granted that tithing is in the Bible and that it's a direct command from God. I don't dispute this biblical fact, however, *it is the interpretation and usage of the tithe or this command from God under the Old Testament Israelite Society that is under theological scrutiny.*

For the inquiry to be more enriching, thorough and practical, I used a lot of references from authors or preachers from both sides of the argument. I then proffer my own opinions and assessments on these diverging views so that the reader can have a more balanced view on the matter. That's primarily the reason why I used lots of reference throughout the book. I didn't want this book to be just about me or my individual opinions on the subject.

However, all the assertions and opinions that I share in this book are entirely my own and all the other citations of like-minded people are merely for reference.

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Why I wrote this book..

The primary purpose of this book is to unravel the perceived '*deep and hidden mystery*' concerning the enigmatic Tithe. There appears to be a lot of polarization regarding the usage of the tithe under the New Testament Church. Two very important scriptures come to mind. "*My people perish for lack of **knowledge***" Hosea 4:6 and "*you err because you don't **understand** the scriptures or the power of God*" Matt 22:29. Thus, where there is want of knowledge, even the sincerest of believers, will go astray!

I have done extensive and intensive research on the subject and came to this very conclusion: The reason why there appears to be a lot of confusion on the subject of tithing is simply that the body of Christ lacks a *proper* understanding of the Old Testament tithe and its purpose. *Where a thing is misunderstood and its purpose equally misconstrued, chaos and abuse are inevitable*, as echoed by the words of our Lord Jesus "*you err because you don't understand the scriptures...*" As shall be revealed in this book, It's either the people in the congregation don't understand what a tithe is or the person standing on the pulpit preaching and writing books on the subject, is equally as ignorant.

So, before we can even begin to hold debates on whether to tithe or not to tithe. *It is imperative that we first understand the tithe and how the tithing system functioned or operated under the Old Testament Israel Society.* One needs to at least get the basic biblical facts about tithing right! Once we

possess this understanding, *it is only until then* can we accurately determine whether or not Christians must tithe. After carrying out a careful study of all the biblical texts on tithing and meditating upon them, reading books written by different authors on tithing/giving, and historical books on Church history. It became obvious that there is a whole lot of ***misinformation*** and ***misinterpretation of the Holy Scriptures*** that is going on unabated.

“The general perception of tithing during the Law is too simplistic and inaccurate. That misunderstanding contributes to the wrong conclusion that Christians must tithe”¹

As shall be revealed in this book, texts such as Genesis 14:20, Leviticus 27:30-32, Malachi 3:10 are all misinterpreted. A lot of information is strewn around in trying to explain why God required a tithe of grain, fruit, and livestock. This ranges from assertions that Israel was an agro-based society hence the people were farmers so their only source of income was the Land (farming); they didn't earn wages; they didn't use money in Ancient times; the tithe is God's way of financing his work; to mention but just a few! Using all the resources that we have at our disposal now that we living in the information era, all these claims must be thoroughly investigated in line with the scriptures.

The Bible says, *“Now the Bereans were more excellent than the Thessalonians, for daily, they thoroughly examined the scriptures in their homes, **to see if what Paul said was true**”* Acts 17:11. It is the last part of that verse that knocked my socks off. These Berean-Jews were commended for not

dismissing what Paul was teaching as falsehoods but they actually went home and diligently examined the scriptures to assert the validity of Paul's teachings. The reason for the search was to ascertain the veracity of Paul's message. Just try doing that today! One would be promised brimstone and fire, unimaginable curses, leprosy that once plagued Miriam, etc. for just questioning what the MAN OF GOD says or teaches!

Unlike the Thessalonian-Jews, the Berean-Jews chose spirituality over emotions/beliefs. People tend to be emotional when it comes to dealing with spiritual matters. However, being emotional and being spiritual are two different things. The Jews had their specific beliefs towards worship or serving God. Yet Paul's message seemed to contradict those beliefs. The Berean-Jews decided to search the scriptures to ascertain whether or not Paul was teaching the truth. They could have dismissed him outright and clung to their beliefs, but they didn't. The Bereans were not rebuked but were commended for this!

They chose to study the scriptures because it was the only basis upon which they could ascertain the authenticity of Paul's message and not their beliefs. Doctrine isn't verified by one's beliefs but by the scriptures! What we can take away from all this is that, it is not your belief alone that can help you determine the authenticity of any doctrine. Therefore, it's your sole prerogative to study the scriptures so that you may assess the correctness of everything that you have been taught or believe about Christianity. No one can take away

that right from you. If Paul could commend the Bereans for verifying his message, let no minister of the Gospel vilify you for doing the same regarding their message.

This book was written to provoke you into seeking the truth with regards to the **definition** and **usage** of the tithe under Ancient Israelite society. As we interrogate every text and explanation that has been handed down for centuries now. One would then be equipped with the knowledge that is required to unravel the mystery behind the tithe. Once one possesses this understanding everything falls into place.

If one carefully studies the scriptures, one will discover the shocking truth that Christian tithing is one of those well-meaning but misguided traditions handed down by man. The doctrine of Christian tithing has been mindlessly taught and accepted for so long by some of the most outstanding evangelists and Pastors over the centuries². However, it is not what these reputable Man of God taught or believed to be true that should shape our doctrine or walk of faith but what the Apostles instructed.

Whatever man teaches that escapes the scope and ambit of the teachings of the Apostles must be treated with reservation if not disdain. The chilling warning or command that was given by the Apostle Paul still rings a bell;

"If any man is preaching to you a gospel other than the one you accepted..."Galatians 1v8

If we must possess an accurate understanding of the Tithe or tithing system under the Old Testament, this understanding must be underscored by the correct *interpretation* of the scriptures. The sphere of Bible interpretation is governed by **Hermeneutics**. By definition, *this is the theory and methodology of interpretation of biblical texts...* *Hermeneutics is more than the interpretive principles or methods used when comprehension fails and includes the art of understanding and communication.* The primary **need** for Hermeneutics is to **determine** and **understand** the **meaning** of the biblical text. The purpose of Hermeneutics is to bridge the gap between our minds and the minds of the Bible writers through a thorough knowledge of the original language, ancient history, and the comparison of scripture with scripture.

There are fundamental rules that govern the interpretation of a biblical text. One does not need to be fully acquainted with all these rules per se, but it is expected of those who teach the Bible to be cognizant of these principles and adhere to them. There are two general approaches to how one may interpret scripture namely; **Exegesis** and **Eisegesis**. These may appear to be abstract or too technical but they help us understand why we end up with so many biblical interpretations that can't be remotely supported by the text. In other words, these two help us determine which interpretation of the given text is the correct one.

Exegesis, on the one hand, is the critical interpretation of the biblical text to discover it's intended meaning, based on a

careful, objective analysis. Ideally, the word exegesis means **“to lead out of”**. This is when the interpreter comes to all conclusions by strictly adhering to the text. The interpreter allows the text to speak for itself.² Whereas;

Eisegesis is the subjective approach to scripture, this is the process of interpreting the text in such a way as to introduce one's preconceived ideas, agendas, or biases into the text. It is widely referred to as reading into the text. The word eisegesis literally means **“to lead into”**. Or to put it differently, this is when the interpreter injects his own thoughts or ideas into the text, making it mean whatever he believes or wants. Here the interpreter goes out of his way to align the text with his presumptions and scriptures merely serve only as a prop to his own preconceived ideas.²

“Exegesis allows us to agree with the Bible. Eisegesis seeks to force the Bible to agree with us”²

That being said, in this book, I am going to reveal how some preachers great and small, obliviously apply Eisegesis and not Exegesis when it comes to all the proof texts on tithing. At the end of the day, they then sincerely believe that what they are teaching is what the word of God actually says in so far as Tithing is concerned. However, twisting the scriptures or the word of God is when one injects his thoughts and introduces his or her own ideas into the text. Then he or she sincerely believes that's what the Word of God is saying. This can happen to anyone, this could be your beloved Pastor, Bishop, Spiritual father, Reverend, or even Prophet!

Last but not least, some may say I believe in the tithe! However, it must be understood that belief has a basis. Like it or not, that belief is predicated on what we have been *taught* about the tithe and not necessarily what the Bible *actually* says or teaches about the tithe or tithing. Our belief must therefore be founded on the *correct understanding* of the scriptures. It must be held in place by nothing but the truth of God. Your belief must be based on the *correct* placement of the truth of God.

This belief that you have now is derived from the information that you had when you first developed it. Belief is so powerful that when it has taken root, even if you were presented with opposing facts that shows that information isn't correct. You will still continue with that understanding, because you now believe in it. Just because you believe it, this then infers that it must be true! That's all because of the information that you used to develop that belief. This book seeks to supply you with more information that probably wasn't availed to you when you first developed your belief. The book doesn't challenge your belief per se, but rather the information that you used to develop that belief.

If nobody had ever instructed or taught you that the tithe was never a part of the Law of Moses, would you ever get that impression from merely reading the bible? If nobody had ever taught you that you must give ten percent from every source of your income to God, would you ever get that from simply reading the bible? If nobody had ever mentioned that you should tithe in keeping with the example left by

Abraham or to receive the blessing of Abraham, would you have got this from merely reading the bible? As one can see, no-one can ever come to this conclusion unless these ideas or thoughts were injected by someone.

When the Word is left to speak for itself, it is next to impossible for anyone to ever come to such conclusions or convictions. Thus when one's beliefs are derived from the misplaced truth of God, they will labor and harbor to earnestly serve God in error. This book was written to make sure that this doesn't happen to you. The whole basis of this book is to establish what the Bible actually says about the Tithe or tithing. We now have on the one hand what people are asserting about the tithe or tithing and then what the Bible actually says. The primary object of this book is to equip you with knowledge so that you maybe in a position to draw the line between the two given scenarios.

“A False teacher is anyone who misplaces the truth of God”

¹ Matthew E. Narramore: *Tithing: Low-realm, obsolete defunct.* pp.28

² Bertie Brits: *Jesus is the tithe:* . pp.170-172

INTRODUCTION

What is a tithe?

“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord...

“Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd’s rod—will be holy to the Lord”

Leviticus 27v30 and 32

After doing much research on the matter at hand, I have noted that those who teach Christian tithing loosely put together words from commands from the Law of Moses to come up with the a definition of the tithe that they want. They then use texts or verses from the Law to enforce *this tithe* or assert that this is what God said or commanded. So it is only proper that we first understand what a tithe is according to the Law of Moses and how it was applied. Since most teachers use texts from the Law to define and enforce the Christian Tithe. Therefore, it’s befitting that we all understand the true meaning of the word *tithe* or tithes as it was understood and applied under Israelite Society!

We need to take cognizance of the fact that words don't have a static meaning or definition. All words are given meaning by their context or the way they are applied within a certain context. If one were to affix a certain static definition of a

word into every context the word appears, that would inevitably distort the meaning of those contexts. That's called misreading the text, because we must always understand words according to the given context. The meaning of a word is a bit dynamic hence it's always derived from the given context!

More often than isn't the case, when most people define the *tithe*, they tend to place so much emphasis on *the technical definition of the term Tithe*. However, the term *tithe* as per God's given command didn't just imply the technical **ten percent**. It was rather a **compound term**, signifying three things; the percentage(ten percent), designated items(crops, fruits, and livestock), and the source(from the land) that constituted *The Tithe*. As is evident from the scriptures, the tithe was defined by how it was applied and not just the technical implication of the term.

From the foregoing facts, I postulate that these three are the definitional elements of the Biblical Tithe that God required when he gave the command to tithe. These three elements defined the Biblical Mosaic Law Tithe, the one that is mentioned and referenced throughout the Bible;

- I) **Percentage**
- II) **Designated items**
- III) **Source [the Land(of Canaan)]**

It is the combination of all these three elements that constituted The TITHE, that God required from the Israelites. The one wasn't complete without the other! In other words,

merely applying the percentage i.e. ten percent to something didn't automatically imply that something is now sacred or the Tithe that belonged to God because one had applied the ten percent principle! This would be just like dedicating the tenth pig to the Lord as a *tithe*. Simply because one had satisfied the percentage part of the requirement didn't imply that the "*pig*" automatically becomes acceptable or holy before God or belonged to the Lord!

Furthermore, since the law did not mention or prohibit the Israelites from dedicating a tenth pig to the Lord, didn't infer that they could *freely choose* to do so! However, in harmony with all the scriptures, it is beyond doubt that no sane Israelite would ever dare to go that far. Simply because the Law did not expressly forbid them to dedicate the tenth pig to the Lord as a tithe. This did not at all infer that this was acceptable. As God had expressly communicated his mind on what was acceptable, it was vital that they followed what God had required.

*Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine, and olive oil... But if that place is too distant ...you **cannot carry your tithe** (because the place where the Lord will choose to put his Name is so far away), then **exchange your tithe** for silver, use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, **wine or other fermented drink**, or anything you wish..." Deuteronomy 14:22-27*

While going through biblical texts so that I could better understand the true meaning of the tithe, the above-captioned text in Deuteronomy 14 caught my attention. It is

the wording of the given text that piqued my ever-inquisitive mind. The words **tithe**, **silver**, and **carry** are all used in this text. I wish to draw your attention to these particular phrases '*...cannot carry your tithe...*' and '*...exchange your tithe for silver...*' I'm hoping that we can all agree that *tithe* here was not money or that money was not a genus of the tithe. The distinction is very much pronounced. Silver(money) was not and was never a *tithe* or a *form of tithe* in Israel!

Then secondly, the phrase "*cannot carry your tithe*" reveals that the *tithe* was indeed agricultural produce only. *If* they could not carry the "ten percent" of all that their fields would have produced including livestock to the designated places of worship to feast with their families. It was only under this exceptional circumstance that they were allowed to exchange the *tithe* for silver(money). Please note that this option was only applicable to the festival tithe. Interestingly, most preachers completely ignore the context of this text and claim that this text shows that tithes were also paid in money! This is also after claiming that God required a tithe of agricultural produce because money was not in circulation!

The text in question evidently reveals that silver was neither a tithe nor that the Israelites were required to give this silver that they got in exchange for the tithe to the Levites. But they were to **spend** the money on whatever their hearts desired at the designated places of worship. They were even given the option to buy wine with the money! Shall we drink wine or any kind of alcoholic beverage and merry in the presence of the Lord because this text said so? Why then just

uproot the money part and completely ignore the circumstance that necessitated such an exchange and what the money was for?

Furthermore, Matthew 23:23 also confirms that tithes or the tithing Laws were only applicable to food or the direct produce from the land. The Pharisees in their zealous quest for upholding the Law had apparently started tithing produce from backyard gardens or ***everything that came out of the land***. This resulted in them tithing herbs and spices. Even though this could be construed as taking the Law to the extreme. That was the furthest the Pharisees could ever go in stretching the tithing Laws because tithes were strictly from the direct produce of the Land.

Are Tithes and firstfruits offering the same thing?

*"This is the share due to the **priests** from the people... **You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep,**" Deuteronomy 18v3-4*

Lastly, it is quite disturbing to note that most preachers conflate the Mosaic Law Tithe with Firstfruit offerings. These were two distinctly separate things that were regulated by two different commands. Firstfruits were freewill offerings from the first crops from their fields or vineyards and were for priests only and not the whole tribe of Levi. The Law never required Israel to give a tenth of the firstfruits.

*"Take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the **soil of the land** your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name" Deuteronomy 26:2*

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