

Straightening the Twisted Tithe

By David E. Thiele

Perhaps some preliminaries are in order. Many would ask why even bother with this? People have various opinions on the subject. Why not just leave it up to the individual to decide what they should do? After all this doesn't have any direct bearing on a persons salvation. While at first that may seem reasonable and rational, I am reminded of what Paul said of the Bereans.

Acts 17:10-11

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

KJV

Here the King James Version calls the Bereans noble. One of the reasons was that they searched the scriptures to see if these things were so. They had the right authority – the scriptures – the Word of God. Would they still have been called noble if they searched the scripture and uncovered error but then just winked at it or ignored it? I doubt it very much!

Then too I am reminded of what Paul wrote to Timothy.

2 Tim 2:15

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

KJV

The New King James renders this verse as follows:

2 Tim 2:15

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

NKJV

Paul tells Timothy to study – to be diligent to rightly divide the word of truth. Rightly dividing or correctly interpreting scripture may take some effort on our part.



Many today are being told that Christians are to 'tithe'. They are being instructed that they must give ten percent of their income to the church. Is this true? Does the Bible command Christians to 'tithe'? Tithe comes from a root meaning tenth. A tithe or tenth part is 10 percent. Tithing was commanded in the Old Testament law given to Israel.

Lev 27:30-34

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 to the LORD. 31 If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. 32 And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. 33 He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.' "

34 These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.
NKJV

From these verses we can see that the tithe applied to grain, fruit, and livestock. It didn't refer to money. Those that gave the tithe were farmers and husbandmen. Certainly in their society that would have been a large percentage of the population. However it was not required of all Israelites, it was required of all that had an increase in their crops and flocks. Notice too, that when it came to herds and flocks it was the tenth one passing under the rod that was set apart for the Lord – not the first one as many would say today.

Who was to receive the tithe? Was it anyone that claimed it? No, God specified who should receive it.

Num 18:21

21 "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.
NKJV

The Levites were to receive the tithes. This particular group was designated by God to receive the tithe in return for the work they performed. Yet some today would claim they are to be given this tithe.

Num 18:26

26 "Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe .
NKJV

Here we see that when the Levites, the recipients of the tithe were to then take a tenth or tithe of the tithe and offer it to the Lord. Were they offering God money? No, they offered Him grain and animal sacrifice burnt offerings.



Deut 12:17

17 You may not eat within your gates the tithes of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstlings of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand.

NKJV

Again we see what kind of things the tithe included – grain, new wine (fruit of the vine), and the newborns of the herds and flocks.

Deut 14:22-27

22 "You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23 And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24 But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, 25 then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26 And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. 27 You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

NKJV

Ah Ha! Some would say here the tithe and money are mentioned together. Yes, but notice the context – only if you are going on a long journey and it is not practical to carry your grain or livestock tithe. What are you to do upon your arrival? Turn it back into foodstuffs – eat it and rejoice and share it with the Levites. Another thing should be pointed out. No mention is made of tithing by fisherman, potters, weavers, carpenters, tentmakers or any other occupation other than farmers and husbandmen. Also it says year by year. This would indicate an annual tithe.

Deut 14:28-29

28 "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. 29 And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

NKJV



This passage may indicate a special tithe taken every third year. Here the tithe refers to produce – ever been to a produce section in a supermarket? What do you find there? Stacks of money? No, you find food. How do we know this word “produce” is talking about food? Notice verse 29. What are the Levites, strangers, orphans and widows

invited to do? They are invited to eat and be satisfied. The Levites were not landowners and as such they were to be provided for by those that did own land.

Deut 26:12-14

12 "When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year--the year of tithing--and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, 13 then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the holy tithe from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them.

NKJV

The tithe was on their increase. Linking this together with Leviticus 27:32 if someone's flock increased by nine, there would be no tenth animal to tithe. Who was the tithe given to? The Levites, and those in need such as strangers, orphans and widows.

Neh 13:12-13

12 Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse.

NKJV

What was the storehouse? It was a place to store the food that was to be distributed to the Levites, strangers, orphans and widows. Yet today many would say the storehouse is the church. Is there any indication here that the storehouse was anything other than a storehouse? No, there is not.

Matt 23:23

23 **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.**

NKJV

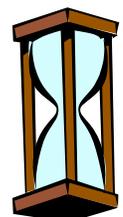
Luke 11:42-43

42 **But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.**

NKJV

Jesus who lived under the law encouraged the Pharisees to keep the law. What were they tithing? Was it money? No, it was foodstuffs.

Some would say the tithe predated the law. Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek. It's hard to argue with that one. Look at the following passage:



Gen 14:16-20.

16 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. 17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. 18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said:

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
20 And blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."
And he gave him a tithe of all.
NKJV

But, what do we know of this? Abram tithed from the spoils of war – not his income. It was a one-time act never to be repeated. So Abram gave a tenth to Melchizedek and what did he do with the rest? Look at Gen 14:21-24.

21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'--
NKJV

Abram gave all the spoils away. That's 100 percent. This historical record becomes very important later on as the writer of the book of Hebrews is explaining the New Covenant. Heb 7:1-13

7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. 11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of

whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

NKJV

The writer of Hebrews is showing that the New Covenant is better than the old. He is explaining to the Jewish Christians that there is no need to cling to the old ways. This passage in no way is teaching the importance of Christians tithing. That is a clear distortion of what it says and undermines the importance of the teaching found in Hebrews of the superiority of Christ.

Heb 7:14-19

14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies:

"You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek."

18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

NKJV

We no longer need to keep the things of the law like tithing. It has been annulled. Christ has provided a better way. Think of it this way. The law of the tithe given to the Israelites was to support the Levitical priesthood. Jesus came and made the final sacrifice. There is no longer a need to support the Levitical priesthood. Jesus fulfilled the law.

Matt 5:17-19

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

NKJV

Jesus is the final High priest.

Heb 7:22-28

22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. 23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For

the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

NKJV

Another mention of tithing in the Old Testament that predates the law of Moses is found in Genesis.

Gen 28:20-29:1

20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. 22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

NKJV

I think it is interesting that this passage is rarely mentioned by those promoting Christian tithing. Jacob says if God blesses him first, then he will tithe. But, modern day solicitors of your so-called tithe money tell you to give first and then God will bless you. It is easier to ignore verses that don't fit your pattern when you start with a conclusion and then try to support it with scripture taken out of context. Notice too that this is a one time event and never recorded as an ongoing thing done by Jacob.

Here is another passage dealing with tithing under the Old Testament law.

2 Chron 31:5-6

5 As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything. 6 And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God they laid in heaps.

NKJV



Again we see foodstuffs mentioned – grain, wine, oil, honey, oxen and sheep. Here however a tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the Lord is added. Why? What was going on here? Remember context is important. What we have here is a revival. Under King Hezekiah the places of false worship were destroyed. Hezekiah instructs the Israelites to support the Levites so the nation could return to legitimate worship. This is a onetime event never to be repeated. Listen to how it is described:

2 Chron 30:23-27

23 Then the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast another seven days, and they kept it another seven days with gladness. 24 For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. 25 The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. 26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.

27 Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.
NKJV

Hezekiah set the example for giving, then he commanded the people to fulfill their obligation under the law to support the priests and Levites.

2 Chron 31:3-4

3 The king also appointed a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts, as it is written in the Law of the LORD. 4 Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD.
NKJV

So whom did Hezekiah give this abundant tithe to? Lets look at the following:

2 Chron 31:17-19

17 and to the priests who were written in the genealogy according to their father's house, and to the Levites from twenty years old and up according to their work, by their divisions, 18 and to all who were written in the genealogy--their little ones and their wives, their sons and daughters, the whole company of them--for in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in holiness. 19 Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, who were in the fields of the common-lands of their cities, in every single city, there were men who were designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.
NKJV

He had it distributed to the Levites and their families. Why? Because that's what the law decreed.

So can we arbitrarily take this passage and somehow make it apply to the church today? Not without twisting the original intent and meaning. One of the most commonly used passages in an attempt to support Christian tithing is found in Malachi chapter 3.

Mal 3:8-10

8 "Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
'In what way have we robbed You?'
In tithes and offerings.
9 You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.
10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,



And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.
NKJV

Here is the usual presentation. You don't want to rob God do you? No, of course not! If you do not tithe you may be cursed for robbing God. So what do you need to do? Bring your tithe to the storehouse. The storehouse is the church. We will receive your tithe on God's behalf. Try it and see. If you do, you will be greatly blessed.

Sound familiar? You've probably heard it more than once. Now, let's really examine this passage.

Who is it addressed to? Let's look back just a few verses and find out.

Mal 3:3-4
3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And purge them as gold and silver,
That they may offer to the LORD
An offering in righteousness.

4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
Will be pleasant to the LORD,
As in the days of old,
As in former years.
NKJV

Who is mentioned? The descendants of Levi, The tribe of Judah and the city of Jerusalem. Do you see the church included anywhere? This is not addressed to Christians. The historical context has to do with those that returned from the Babylonian captivity. They rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple and reinstated the sacrificial system. Because of this it was necessary once again to reinstate the tithe to support the Levites as well. Times were tough and the Israelites were not tithing as they were supposed to under the law, so God reprimands them through Malachi the prophet. Do not let people twist and distort this passage to lay a guilt trip on you in an attempt to put you back under the law. Remember it was Christ that set us free from the curse of the law.

Gal 3:13
13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),
NKJV

Sometimes it is significant what the Bible does not say. There is no record in the New Testament of Jesus tithing. He worked as a carpenter, not a farmer or a herdsman. Most of us would agree that He gave enough – He gave His very life for us. There is no record of any of the twelve disciples tithing. Many of them were fisherman. There is no record of any New Testament church being commanded to tithe.

It is also significant what the New Testament does say. It does talk about Christians giving. Another passage that is frequently quoted as a way to get Christians to support the church organization is found in 1 Corinthians 16.

16:2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Even if this were to apply it should be noted that it depends upon God having already caused them to prosper. But, a closer examination of this verse in its context reveals even more.

1 Cor 16:1-4

16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. 4 But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

NKJV

This was a special collection. There were poor believers in Jerusalem that were suffering. Paul saw a real opportunity here to help unite the church. It could be disastrous to have two separate churches develop, one for the Jews and one for the gentiles. Here was a way to draw them together. The gentile believers would sacrifice to meet the needs of the Jewish believers. Is there a principle here for us today? Yes, we should be willing to help our brothers and sisters in Christ that are in need.

Paul who wrote to the Corinthians emphasized that he was not trying to enforce the letter of the law.

2 Cor 3:4-6

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

NKJV

One very good passage on giving is found in second Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he



purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.
NKJV

Here we find the apostle Paul addressing the subject of Christian giving, yet there is no mention of the tithe. We should be following the leading of the Spirit, not the letter of the law. Christ calls us to a higher standard. Attitude is very important. We are to give because we want to not because we have to. We are to give out of love not fear or guilt.

But what of those that today try to put us back under that law. Are we simply to accept it as a valid position or opinion? Is this a case of everyone having their personal view so let's not be judgmental or critical? Let's look at Galatians. Paul is writing to the Christian churches scattered throughout the area of Galatia. There were a group of men going around trying to tell the Galatian believers that they were obligated to keep the law. Paul had run across a similar situation in Antioch. He was compelled to confront the Christian leaders.

Gal 2:11-21

11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

NKJV

Was this a big deal? Peter was just being selective of who he ate with. Wasn't that his personal choice? Shouldn't Paul just overlook it? It had no direct bearing on Peter's salvation. Yet, Paul tells the apostle Peter that by his actions he is pointing to the vanity of Christ's sacrifice. This was obviously wrong, and while it may have no affect on the salvation of those that were already believers, it could very well have an affect on others that might come to the wrong conclusion that justification comes by keeping the law rather than through faith in Christ. Some of the strongest language Paul uses is to try to get these Galatian believers back on track, living by faith and not according to the law. They were being told it was necessary to be circumcised. That was another form of legalism.



Gal 3:1-9

3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain--if indeed it was in vain? 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit

to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?-- 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Paul's argument is that the Galatian believers were being told if they failed to keep this portion of the law they would be cursed. Sounds a lot like the Malachi passage doesn't it. So Paul points out that the curse only applies to those living under the law.

Gal 3:10-14

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

NKJV

Yes, we are to live by the Spirit not the law. Christ bought us back from the curse of the law. Paul thought this to be very important. This is his admonition to the Galatian Christians:

Gal 5:1

5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

NKJV

A few sentences later he calls for some introspection on their part.

Gal 5:7-11



7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. 9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

NKJV

Paul writes to these believers to get them back on track. He didn't simply ignore what was happening and adopt the Rodney King philosophy, "Can't we all just get along?" He saw the danger of legalism and confronted it head on. We would do well to listen to what he said:

Gal 5:18-26

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

NKJV

Our very life comes to us through the Spirit of God and not the letter of the law. We need to be sensitive to the Spirit's leading. If we do this the fruit of the Spirit will be manifest in our lives. Love, kindness and goodness will enable us to give joyfully to the orphans and widows and those in need. Our giving is to be according to the leading of the Spirit and not according to Old Testament law that applied to someone else. It is clear from Paul's writings that we are able to quench and grieve the Spirit of God.

1 Thess 5:18-19

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

NKJV

Eph 4:30

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

NKJV

It is quite possible we are guilty of both when we substitute the letter of the law for the leading of the Spirit. Paul also wrote to the church at Rome the following:



Rom 7:5-6

6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.
NKJV

There are those in the world today using the name of Christ and building earthly kingdoms on the backs of well meaning Christians who have become victims of distorted teachings about the tithe. I hope this will encourage you to follow the leading of the Spirit when it comes to giving rather than the twisted tithe being foisted upon you by legalistic men. May you serve our Lord in the power of the Spirit so that Christ would be glorified through your life.

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