

May 31, 2025

## The Art of Giving by God's Standard

We are approaching Shavuot and the concept of tithing offers no greater example in Scripture than the moadim in the context of Israel's culture and economy. We must keep in mind the distinctions between our culture and that of Israel as revealed through Scripture. There are not direct correlations but we are able to take the concepts and practices revealed in Scripture and apply them to our lives today.

**Deu 16:16** "Three times a year all your men are to appear in the presence of Adonai your God in the place which he will choose—at the festival of matzah, at the festival of Shavu`ot and at the festival of Sukkot. They are not to show up before Adonai empty-handed,

**Deu 16:17** but every man is to give what he can, in accordance with the blessing Adonai your God has given you.

Three times a year is associated with the Israeli culture being directly connected to an agrarian lifestyle. This meant that tithing was directly related to the harvest. In the case of Israel, there were three primary harvest seasons.

- The spring harvest
- The summer harvest
- The fall harvest

Today, we don't live according to an agrarian economy, yet have a financial economy of great diversity. So, how do we respond to this instruction pertaining to tithing? We live in a culture that is comprised primarily of...

Manufacturing and Services  
Farming and Resources

We have many ways of being compensated, and thus many sources of income are available.

Are we to tithe at all? Are we not only to bring offerings in that tithing is under the law. One might say the standard has been raised...

**Act 2:46** Continuing faithfully and with singleness of purpose to meet in the Temple courts daily, and breaking bread in their several homes, they shared their food in joy and simplicity of heart,

**Act 2:47** praising God and having the respect of all the people. And day after day

the Lord kept adding to them those who were being saved.

Yet God does not change...

**Num 23:19** "God is not a human who lies or a mortal who changes his mind. When he says something, he will do it; when he makes a promise, he will fulfill it.

We first learn of the element of tithing when Avraham goes to Malik – Tzedekh...

**Gen 14:17** After his return from slaughtering K'dorla`omer and the kings with him, the king of S'dom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley, also known as the King's Valley.

**Gen 14:18** Malki-Tzedek king of Shalem brought out bread and wine. He was cohen of El `Elyon [*God Most High*],

**Gen 14:19** so he blessed him with these words: "Blessed be Avram by El `Elyon, maker of heaven of earth.

**Gen 14:20** and blessed be El `Elyon, who handed your enemies over to you." Avram gave him a tenth of everything.

I have heard many things when it comes to tithing over the years.

We are no longer under the law therefore we no longer need to tithe.

The new covenant is about offerings and giving.

Yet, there is still a structure in place by which Adonai functions.

Where was Torah when Avraham tithed to Malik-Tzedekh?

So to say it is about Torah ignores this fact. We have been in Hebrews for a number of weeks and actually address that, in terms of what Avraham was doing...

**Heb 7:1** This Malki-Tzedek, king of Shalem, a cohen of God Ha`Elyon, met Avraham on his way back from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him;

**Heb 7:2** also Avraham gave him a tenth of everything. Now first of all, by translation of his name, he is "king of righteousness"; and then he is also king of Shalem, which means "king of peace."

**Heb 7:3** There is no record of his father, mother, ancestry, birth or death; rather, like the Son of God, he continues as a cohen for all time.

**Heb 7:4** Just think how great he was! Even the Patriarch Avraham gave him a

tenth of the choicest spoils.

**Heb 7:5** Now the descendants of Levi who became cohanim have a commandment in the Torah to take a tenth of the income of the people, that is, from their own brothers, despite the fact that they too are descended from Avraham.

**Heb 7:6** But Malki-Tzedek, even though he was not descended from Levi, took a tenth from Avraham. Also, he blessed Avraham, the man who received God's promises;

**Heb 7:7** and it is beyond all dispute that the one who blesses has higher status than the one who receives the blessing.

**Heb 7:8** Moreover, in the case of the cohanim, the tenth is received by men who die; while in the case of Malki-Tzedek, it is received by someone who is testified to be still alive.

**Heb 7:9** One might go even further and say that Levi, who himself receives tenths, paid a tenth through Avraham;

**Heb 7:10** inasmuch as he was still in his ancestor Avraham's body when Malki-Tzedek met him.

The tithe was used to support the service and operations of the Mishkahn and the Temple.

**Num 18:23** Only the L'vi'im are to perform the service in the tent of meeting, and they will be responsible for whatever they do wrong. This is to be a permanent regulation through all your generations. They are to have no inheritance among the people of Isra'el,

**Num 18:24** because I have given to the L'vi'im as their inheritance the tenths of the produce which the people of Isra'el set aside as a gift for Adonai. This is why I have said to them that they are to have no inheritance among the people of Isra'el."

Though we are not Levites and this isn't the Temple, nor the Mishkahn, God's work is still at hand.

A further question, do you trust in God that what we are doing is of Him, by Him and from Him?

He says to the P'rushim...

**Mat 23:23** "Woe to you hypocritical Torah-teachers and P'rushim! You pay your tithes of mint, dill and cumin; but you have neglected the weightier matters of the Torah—justice, mercy, trust. These are the things you should have attended

to—without neglecting the others!

We are not to neglect one aspect nor the other but to follow God.

I have heard justification after justification.

I have heard question after question as it pertains to tithing.

Net or Gross?

Are you to tithe on the net of your paycheck or on the Gross. Then the question comes up about your tax refund and whether you should tithe on that.

In simple terms, if you tithe on your net proceeds you are paying the government first. If you are tithing on the gross, you are paying God first.

Think of this. You earn \$1000 / week and your net is \$800. Honoring God conveys that we are to bring the "first fruits"...

The distinction...

Pay on the net and you are paying the government first.

Pay on the gross you are paying God first, hence the first fruits.

Yes, taxes are taken out of your pay check first, yet by tithing on the gross you are recognizing that that which is taken by the government is not first, but second.

Tithing on SS.

We have paid into the system with each paycheck and if we are tithing on the gross then we are tithing on that portion.

So consider this.

An average person over their lifetime of work say, from 20 – 65 (45 years) will earn approximately 1.85 million dollars. Of that, 6.2% is your SS contribution. SO that is \$114,700 over that span.

So you retire at 65 with the average life expectancy being 78 years of age. That is 14 years. The average SS monthly payment is approximately \$2000. Yearly that is 24,000. Over 14 years that is \$336,000. That is \$221,300 difference by what you contributed and what you receive.

God had said that what the land produces, the first 10<sup>th</sup> belongs to Him.

**Lev 27:30** " 'All the tenth given from the land, whether from planted seed or fruit from trees, belongs to Adonai; it is holy to Adonai.

Yet we are not in the land and we are not yielding from the land.

Yet, neither was Avraham.

I am not Malki-Tzedekh either. Nor am I a Levite, that I can tell.

I am not sharing this with you because we are lacking or people are not tithing but so that you understand what you are doing and the reasons for what you are doing. This is about building the Kingdom. God's Kingdom, not ours.

Each year we go over our financials and share every detail with you, making ourselves accountable to you the congregation that we are about God's work, not our own, not our own indulgences.

With investments, tithe on the profit not the entire amount, that is the increase.

Tithe when you realize your gain, that is you sell it or take it in the form of a distribution.

There is the tithe and there are offerings. Simply put your offering is over and above any tithe. Hence you are not offering an offering until you have brought you tithe.

Israel is to be a light to the nations by demonstrating how they are to live according to Adonai's Word. He revealed Himself and His ways to them. Thus, they were to be a model for the other nations.

Israel was guilty of robbing God...

**Mal 3:6** "But because I, Adonai, do not change, you sons of Ya`akov will not be destroyed.

**Mal 3:7** Since the days of your forefathers you have turned from my laws and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says Adonai-Tzva'ot. "But you ask, 'In respect to what are we supposed to return?'

**Mal 3:8** Can a person rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How have we robbed you?' In tenths and voluntary contributions.

It is Adonai who causes people to gain wealth...

**Deu 8:11** "Be careful not to forget Adonai your God by not obeying his mitzvot, rulings and regulations that I am giving you today.

**Deu 8:12** Otherwise, after you have eaten and are satisfied, built fine houses and lived in them,

**Deu 8:13** and increased your herds, flocks, silver, gold and everything else you own,

**Deu 8:14** you will become proud-hearted. Forgetting Adonai your God—who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you lived as slaves;

**Deu 8:15** who led you through the vast and fearsome desert, with its poisonous snakes, scorpions and waterless, thirsty ground; who brought water out of flint rock for you;

**Deu 8:16** who fed you in the desert with man, unknown to your ancestors; all the while humbling and testing you in order to do you good in the end—

**Deu 8:17** you will think to yourself, 'My own power and the strength of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.'

**Deu 8:18** No, you are to remember Adonai your God, because it is he who is giving you the power to get wealth, in order to confirm his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as is happening even today.

Sha'ul is concerned with the inner state of the giver and not merely with the fact of giving. The New Covenant emphasizes both the inner condition and the outward action; and that inner state is created not by oneself but by God.

**2Co 9:6** Here's the point: he who plants sparingly also harvests sparingly.

**2Co 9:7** Each should give according to what he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**2Co 9:8** Moreover, God has the power to provide you with every gracious gift in abundance, so that always in every way you will have all you need yourselves and be able to provide abundantly for every good cause—

**2Co 9:9** as the Tanakh says, "He gave generously to the poor; his tzedakah lasts forever."

Sha'ul urges the Corinthians not to fear for themselves, for God will supply plenty so that they may be generous, Quoting Psalm 112...

**Psa 112:1** Halleluyah! How happy is anyone who fears Adonai, who greatly delights in his mitzvot.

**Psa 112:2** His descendants will be powerful on earth, a blessed generation of upright people.

**Psa 112:3** Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness stands forever.

**Psa 112:4** To the upright he shines like a light in the dark, merciful, compassionate and righteous.

**Psa 112:5** Things go well with the person who is merciful and lends, who conducts his affairs with fairness;

**Psa 112:6** for he will never be moved. The righteous will be remembered forever.

**Psa 112:7** He will not be frightened by bad news; he remains steady, trusting in Adonai.

**Psa 112:8** His heart is set firm, he will not be afraid, till finally he looks in triumph at his enemies.

**Psa 112:9** He distributes freely, he gives to the poor; his righteousness stands forever. His power will be increased honorably.

**Psa 112:10** The wicked will be angry when they see this; they will gnash their teeth and waste away, the desires of the wicked will come to nothing.

We have a very generous congregation and I want to encourage you to not stop doing what you are doing.