

The Truth about Giving.

Part 1: The Tithe

Acts 2:42-47

42They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 4:32

32All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

In this series we are going to look at:

- What was the tithe
- Who benefited from it
- Where did it go
- Christ's perspective on the tithe
- God's provision for the poor in Old Testament times
- Giving in the New Testament
- Application for today.

What was the tithe?

The Tithe

The Hebrew word for tithe means: "tax". It was a "tenth". (10%)

Numbers 18:21-26

²¹ "I give to the Levites all the **tithes** in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting. ²² From now on the Israelites must not go near the Tent of Meeting, or they will bear the consequences of their sin and will die. ²³ It is the Levites who are to do the work at the Tent of Meeting and bear the responsibility for offenses against it. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. ²⁴ Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the **tithes** that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.' "

²⁵ The LORD said to Moses, ²⁶ "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the **tithe** I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering

Deuteronomy 12:17

17 You must not eat in your own towns the **tithe** of your grain and new wine and oil, or the firstborn of your herds and flocks, or whatever you have vowed to give, or your freewill offerings or special gifts.

Deuteronomy 14:22-28

22 Be sure to set aside a **tenth** of all that your fields produce each year. 23 Eat the **tithe** of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose

as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. 24 But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your **tithe** (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), 25 then exchange your **tithe** for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. 26 Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice. 27 And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

28 At the end of every three years, bring all the **tithes** of that year's produce and store it in your towns,

Deuteronomy 26:12

12 When you have finished setting aside a **tenth** of all your produce in the third year, the year of the **tithe**, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.

2 Chronicles 31:5-6

5 As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a **tithe** of everything. 6 The men of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah also brought a **tithe** of their herds and flocks and a **tithe** of the holy things dedicated to the LORD their God, and they piled them in heaps.

Nowhere does it say that the tithe was money, this was never included in the biblical definition of tithing.

Who benefited from the tithe?

Hebrews 7:11-19

¹¹If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ¹²For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. ¹³He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar.

¹⁴For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷For it is declared:

"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."

¹⁸The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

Where did the tithe go?

Nehemiah 10:37-39

37 "Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work.

³⁸ A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. ³⁹ The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and

*where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay.
"We will not neglect the house of our God."*

Nehemiah 13:12

12 All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms.

Malachi 3:10

10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Christ's perspective

Matthew 23:23

23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Luke 11:42

42 "Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.

Summary

So tonight we have learned

- What the tithe was in the Old Testament times;
- Who benefited from it;
- Where it went and
- Christ's perspective on it.

Galatians 6:10

10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (“household of faith”)

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 25th August at 7.30pm.