

Christian Giving

Revealing the Truth About Tithing

by J.P. Vayler

"...the truth shall make you free."

John 8:31

Christian Giving

The 26th February 1978 was the turning point of my life. That night two people responded to an altar call at a Pentecostal service, and before the congregation we publicly received Jesus the Son of God as our personal Saviour. Later that year, on 4th July, several others and I passed through the waters of baptism in obedience to the Scriptures.

Thus began a new life, not only for myself but also for my wife and three sons. We began to take tentative steps in our newfound relationship with the Living God, Who reveals Himself in His written Word, by His Spirit, and in many other ways.

The workers in our first church did a good work with their "Babes in Christ." They held regular Bible studies for beginners, they conducted home visitations to encourage and teach, and they strongly emphasised the need for each one of us to develop our relationship with Jesus by prayer and study of His Word and by attending as many church meetings as possible.

There were so many questions, so many problems, so much renewing of the mind required, as my wife and I had come out of a denominational church which placed it's traditions above the Bible.

That was almost 22 years ago. During this time God has proved Himself, over and over, to be a faithful and loving Father. We began to grow in knowledge of Him and of His Word, and in confidence of our relationship with Him, and our love of Him has steadily grown. (How precious, Lord, is the touch of Your Spirit day by day. Thank You for Your love, Your provision, and Your grace in every area of our lives.)

However, not all problems have as yet been solved. Not all questions have as yet been answered, but we have endeavoured to cast all our cares on the Lord (**1 Peter 5:7**), for we know that he who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks, it shall be opened (**Luke 11:9**).

Why Is It So?

One area of "Christianity" has been a puzzle to me almost from the beginning of my new life, and as I have shared it with others I find that I am not alone. This is regarding the subject of giving, or to be more exact, "**Tithing**", in the Church. The practice of giving one tenth of our salaries to the Church we are attending.

We have attended various churches in the past 22 years, all of them Pentecostal, all of them espousing to be following God's Word, and all teaching the principles of "Tithing" to their flocks.

The emphasis within this teaching varied between churches. One said, "It is the Christian way" to tithe. Another said we could not become members unless we signed a document promising to tithe faithfully. Yet another said we would be "under a curse," unless we tithed. In a particular church the pastor rarely spoke on the subject, but visiting speakers hammered the congregation mercilessly to tithe. Another pastor, although preaching tithing from the pulpit, told me personally that I was free to believe what I liked, and in our most recent church we were told that "God requires us to tithe."

Opinion within this subject is definitely varied, but also, despite the pro-tithing emphasis from the pulpit, many people with whom we have discussed this topic, are not convinced, seeing a different message in the Scriptures.

On one side are the Church “Leadership” and their following, which strongly advocate tithing, with various emphases depending on the denomination and interpretation of the pastor. On the other side are the rest of the church members who do not believe in tithing but largely, for a number of reasons, remain silent on the issue.

Somewhere in there is the Bible, the Word of God, the Creator’s Handbook to Life. What does it say? Is it ambiguous and difficult to understand on this subject? Is it to be interpreted by a “Chosen Few” who have special insight into the things of God? Or is it an open book authored and preserved for us by the Holy Spirit to readily provide us with guidance as we walk our walk of faith?

Why This Confusion?

On the issue of tithing for New Covenant believers I see the Bible giving clear and unmistakable guidelines. So why is there such a difference of opinion within the Church? Why are our leaders taking a commandment from the Mosaic Law and thrusting it upon those who place their trust in the New Covenant?

I have several opinions as to why this anomaly exists in the Church. One opinion is really a hope that it is due to the lack of understanding between the Old and New Covenants, that those who set themselves up as teachers within the Church have merely passed down a tradition from previous respected ministers. They say that since pastor “So and so” advocates tithing it must be right, since he is a mature man of God with much knowledge of the Word. They have not personally delved into the full teaching of the Bible on this issue, nor have they received that rhema from God, which is so necessary for every article of faith.

Paul, in **2 Timothy 2:15** instructs us to be diligent in our study of the Word so that we may accurately handle the truth. With this in mind I have endeavoured to put together a study on this issue, in which I encourage you to participate. I firmly believe that as we seek the Lord’s guidance in any area He is faithful and will provide what we need (**James 1:5**).

This study has not come together overnight, but has been conducted over several years. As you enter in, please do so prayerfully, asking the Holy Spirit for His guidance, and above all, if possible, try not to allow preconceived ideas to cloud your understanding.

The Bible is the Lord’s handiwork, and only He knows all the truth within its pages. It is by His grace that our knowledge increases, and we are instructed to boldly come to Him in our need (**Hebrews 4:16**), and we can be confident that the good work He has begun in us will be brought to perfection (**Philippians 1:6**).

Mind-sets caused by erroneous teachings are not necessarily dissolved instantly as the truth is presented. Often the road to freedom can take some time, and prison walls must be dismantled stone by stone.

So much in life is a process of growth. As we are diligent to study and apply the Word to our situations, the anointing of the Holy Spirit does His work within us, the truth becomes a living reality in our hearts, and we see with clear eyes and are set free.

Out of Context

I believe that much wrong understanding of the Bible comes from taking Scripture out of context. One reference in the Bible is taken and an entire doctrine is formed on the strength of this single Scripture, resulting in distortions and inaccuracies.

We must endeavour to study the Bible as a whole, comparing reference with reference, being accurate in our distinction between Covenants, discerning what the Spirit of the Word is, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (**2 Corinthians 3:6**).

This is not difficult. It does not require immense intellectual prowess. But it does require diligence, patience and the readiness to **accept** revelation as the Holy Spirit illuminates His Word.

With this purpose in our hearts, and with faith that the grace of God is overflowing on our behalf, let us now take the plunge into the Living Waters of the Word and see what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

To begin, let us briefly examine the commandments given to the Jews, under the Old Covenant, regarding Tithing.

Old Testament Observation

The Bible tells us that the two main forms of giving observed by the Jewish nation were in the form of:

- (a) Tithes
- (b) Offerings

These are referred to in:

Malachi 3:8, “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!” But you say, “How have we robbed Thee?” “In tithes and offerings.”

(a) Tithes

Malachi chapter 3, although the most frequently quoted reference on tithing, is not alone on this subject. To get deeper insight into God’s instructions read the following:

Deuteronomy 14:22-29 and **Deuteronomy 26:1-12**. In these verses God explains in more detail His requirements as referred to only *in part* in **Malachi 3**.

The tithe was to be used for the following purposes:

- (a) **Deuteronomy 14:23**, “...that you may learn to fear (reverence) the Lord your God always.”
- (b) **Deuteronomy 14:29**, “that the Levite, the alien, the orphan, and the widow, be provided for.”

The **whole** tithe was surrendered into “the storehouse” at the end of every **third** year, the “**year of tithing**.” (**Deuteronomy 14:26 and 26:12**)

At other times **the tithe was eaten by the producer himself**, and his entire household, **in a celebration feast to reverence God** for His goodness and provision. (**Deuteronomy 14:23**)

Deuteronomy 26:2 and 11 indicate that at these other times (not the third year) “some” of the first of all the produce was taken and offered to God and used by the Levite and the needy.

Also **Deuteronomy 26:12** states, “When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing...”

This indicates that God’s requirement of the Jews was to tithe their increase, or their profits, or, in modern terms, their net income, not their gross income. This demonstrates the caring heart of the Father in safeguarding their seed and ensuring sufficiency for His people.

The above verses do not contradict **Malachi 3:10-12**, which refers to bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse, but rather, the references are complementary, one throwing light on the other, similar to the two creation accounts in Genesis.

It is important, as far as we are able, to take the Bible as a whole, and not to allow individual references to produce unbalanced viewpoints.

So we see that the purpose of the Tithe was not for the benefit of the priests and Levites alone, but the producers also were partakers of it, as they revered their God and supplied the need of their community.

(b) Offerings

The Jews also received instructions in the Law regarding offerings.

Offerings were given in addition to tithes, but their amount was determined by the individuals and was not set down by Law. That is, they were permitted to follow their consciences.

Exodus 35:21 shows that the fitting out of the House of God, the Temple, was provided for, not by tithes, but by offerings from the people as they were moved in their hearts.

Offerings could also include the giving of alms to the poor or any donations to the Temple or the needy, as the opportunity arose.

Taxing the Jewish Nation

Deuteronomy 6 - Deuteronomy 30 includes some of the Law of commandments as passed on from God, to the angel, to Moses, to the Jewish nation.

Instructions on tithing and offerings are included in the Law. The tithe as observed by the Jewish nation was much the same as our present taxation system. Their contributions of tithes went, in part, to support the government of that time, the offices being held by the Levites and priests.

These instructions were specifically for the Jewish race and their observance was “righteousness” for them before God.

Deuteronomy 6:25 “And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the Lord our God, just as He commanded us.”

In other words, their right standing before God, or their peace with God, depended on their careful fulfilment of all the commandments of the Law.

That the commandment was specifically for the Jewish nation is demonstrated in **Malachi 3:9** - “You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you.”

The decisions and actions of leadership effect the whole nation, so the failure of Levites and priests to comply with the Law resulted in a curse coming on all the people. (Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law - **Galatians 3:13**).

Implications

The Implications were very grave:

Deuteronomy 30:19-20, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants...”

Here the Nation of Israel was presented with the solemn word of God as to the importance of the observation of the **whole** of His commandments to them, and that blessings or curses would descend upon them according to their choice.

Deuteronomy 28:1-68 gives great detail as to the blessings and curses confronting those under the Law.

The Tithe is God’s

It is correct to say that under the old Law the tithe of the Jews net income belonged to God (**Leviticus 27:30**). But even in this straightforward commandment we see the nature of our Father shining through, in that the producer, at certain times consumed the tithe himself, he and his household, in order to reverence, love, and worship their Creator God. The Fathers heart, longing for the fellowship of His people, is strongly evident.

The principle of reverencing God through His provision is an important one from which we, in the New Covenant, can gather much insight.

More Light on Malachi

On examination of the **entire** book of Malachi a far different emphasis is obtained than by focusing on **Chapter 3:8-12**.

Malachi 1:6, “A son honours his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honour? And if I am a master, where is My respect? Says the Lord of hosts **to you, O priests** who despise My name...”

And in:

Malachi 1:10, “...I am not pleased with you,” says the Lord of hosts, “nor will I accept an offering from you.”

Much of the first chapter is a sharp rebuke, by the Lord, of the priests for misusing their office and bringing dishonour to Him.

Chapter two continues along the same lines, and the Lord commands them to adhere to the directions and spirit of the Law.

His rebuke continues strongly, and in **Malachi 3:6** he refers to them, not as descendants of Abraham, but of **Jacob**, whose name was changed by the angel to **Israel (Genesis 32:28)**.

The literal meaning of Jacob is “**Deceiver**,” so the Lord’s rebuke of them is very evident.

With this emphasis throughout much of Malachi, new light is thrown on the Lord's reference to tithing in chapter **3:7-12**.

Nehemiah

To get additional background information on this subject look at **Nehemiah 10:34-39**.

Here we see that after the Babylonian Captivity, Nehemiah was seeking to restore the nation of Israel to a full observation of the Mosaic Law.

With reference to tithing, we see that the Levites were to receive the tithe from the people, and then were to take a **tenth of this tithe** and deposit it in the storehouse where it was to be used by the sons of Aaron and the needy.

The failure of the Levites to obey this directive is the reason for the Lord's rebuke in Malachi chapter three.

The essence of Malachi is summed up in:

Malachi 4:4, "Remember the Law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb **for all Israel**."

The Lord makes it very clear that these commands were for Israel. It is a grave error to extend them to the present day Church living under grace in a different covenant, as will now be demonstrated.

New Testament Observations

John 8:31-32 - Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed in Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The word of God, spoken directly by Jesus, and passed on by His disciples, provides infallible guidance as to what we are to believe and observe.

The question is: Are Old Testament regulations on giving, binding on Christians living under a New Covenant under the Lordship of Jesus?

Let the Word of God reveal the truth of this matter.

What Say The Scriptures?

Deuteronomy 6:25 states that the Jews earned their right standing (righteousness) before God by the careful observance of all the commandments handed down in the Law, including those on tithing and giving of offerings.

Paul, in Romans, makes this observation:

Romans 3:20-22, "Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (made righteous) in His sight, for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now, apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God **through faith in Jesus Christ** for all those who believe."

In **Acts 13:38-39** Paul casts more light on this subject: “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.”

And also:

Romans 5:1, “Therefore, having been justified by faith **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The letter by Paul to the **Romans** gives much information on how the Law has been superseded by the New Covenant.

Man, because of the weakness of his flesh, is unable to save himself by the observation of the Law, and therefore our loving Father provided the Messiah as the Saviour in an otherwise hopeless situation.

For those who believe, there is peace with God **through faith in Jesus Christ**. No further actions or works are required to enter into the most intimate relationship with God our Father.

Galatians 3:26, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Yes, But

James 2:20 says, “...faith without works is dead.”

Previous Scriptures make it abundantly clear that right-standing with God comes through faith.

James, however, says that this kind of faith is made evident by works. In other words, faith produces works.

What Are These Works?

The Scriptures provide the answers:

Galatians 3:2-3, “This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by believing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

The obvious answer is NO! The obeying of the commandments of the Law are not the works that has caused God’s Spirit to abide in us.

Therefore, what works do we do?

The answer begins to unfold in:

Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works, which God prepared beforehand**, that we should walk in them.”

And also in:

Romans 8:14, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.”

Followed by:

1 John 3:23, “And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, **and love one another**, just as He commanded.”

New Versus Old

There is a radical difference between followers of the Old and the New Covenants.

Under the Old Covenant, because of the sin problem, God by His Spirit lived apart from His people, and manifested Himself in the Temple.

The Jews performed many works, as listed in the Law, to provide a covering for their sins and to be acceptable before Him.

Under the New Covenant, as we receive Jesus into our hearts, His shed blood eternally cleanses us, and the Spirit of God now resides **in us**, not because of works **but through faith in Jesus**.

1 Corinthians 3:16, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

But, you ask, what is required of us? Just what the Scriptures say:

(1) Believe in Jesus.

(2) Love one another.

(3) Be sensitive to the indwelling Spirit of God and perform those works that His bidding instructs.

Remember that the Holy Spirit dwelling within us is not only our Comforter, but He also leads and guides us in the way God requires us to go. **(John 16:13)**

We do not follow legalistic rituals, but we have a **living relationship with a living God** whose Spirit within us directs our paths.

2 Corinthians 3:6, “God...made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

Yes.....But.....

This sounds good and also exciting, you say, but are there any other Scriptures to substantiate this theory that we are no longer bound to tithe, or to perform any of the works of the Mosaic Law?

Definitely. Let's proceed. Read **Hebrews chapter 7**, the **whole** chapter.

We see that the main thrust of the teaching is that Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, and as such, is of a higher order than the priestly order of Levi, to whom tithes

were paid by the Jews in obedience to the Law, and who, through Abraham, paid tithes, themselves, to Melchisedec.

The core message of this chapter is not the paying of tithes but the fact that the “old order” has been surpassed and replaced by another of far greater stature.

Verses 18 and 19 are wonderfully strong:

“For on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its **weakness and uselessness** (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand, there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”

By reading the whole chapter and getting the meaning in its right context, we see that the “commandment” which is set aside is the same as that referred to in **verse 5**, that is, the commandment to tithe.

In other words, the Law as a whole, including the commandment to tithe, has been set aside and replaced by a better covenant.

Hebrews 8:6, “...He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.”

Supplement this with the following:

Acts 15:5-11, Peter’s response to the Judaisers is highlighted in **verses 10 and 11**:

“Now therefore, why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way as they also are.”

In other words, the early Church made no demands of its followers except to believe in Jesus.

Tithing Before the Law

But, you say, tithing was seen to be practiced before the Law was given. It is therefore beyond, or above the Law, and even though the Law is clearly seen to be removed, the command to tithe still stands.

To answer this let us take a parallel case:

Circumcision

Question: When was the command to circumcise given?

Answer: The command to circumcise was given to Abraham hundreds of years before the Law was introduced.

Now, what does Paul instruct the Galatians who were confronted by Judaisers demanding they be circumcised?

Galatians 5:3-4, “And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the **whole** Law. **You have been severed from Christ**, you who are seeking to be justified by law; **you have fallen from grace.**”

Paul clearly states that circumcision has, with the Law, passed away, even though it was instituted before the Law was given, and much more importantly, Paul clearly and dogmatically states, that **the Law and faith in Jesus are categorically opposed to one another.**

Sabbath Observance

Similarly:

Colossians 2:16-17, “Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a Sabbath day, things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Here Paul explains that we are under no obligation regarding Sabbath or other observations even though God declared the Sabbath holy long before the Law was instituted.

Genesis 2:3, “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

Our freedom in this matter is further substantiated:

Galatians 4:9-11, “But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have laboured over you in vain.”

To be bound to one part of the Law makes us bound to all of the Law, and because we are unable to fulfil it adequately, we are under a curse.

Galatians 3:10, “For as many as are under the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, cursed is everyone who does not abide by **all** things written in the book of the Law to perform them.”

But then he goes on to say:

Galatians 3:13, “**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law** having become a curse for us...”

And also:

Galatians 5:1, “**It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**”

This is also emphasised by Jesus in person:

Matthew 17:25-26, “...What do you think, Simon? From who do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll tax, from their sons or from strangers? And upon him saying, from strangers, Jesus said to him, **Consequently the sons are exempt.**”

Galatians 3:26 says we are sons of God through faith in Jesus.

The King places no poll - tax upon His sons. His only requirement is that, as sons, we follow the leading of His Spirit, and emulate His nature, by walking in love.

Does the N. T. Endorse Tithing Anywhere?

Let us examine **Matthew 23:23** and **Luke 11:42**.

Probably these two accounts are of the same discourse given by Jesus, and these alone in the New Testament seem to promote tithing, but as we will see, they are conditional in their application.

Luke 11:42, "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others." (**Matthew 23:23** is almost identical)

Here we have instructions given by Jesus to Jews still living under the Old Covenant, for His death and resurrection had not yet taken place, therefore the commandments of the Law were still in force.

Matthew 5:17-18, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfil. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, **until all is accomplished.**"

Jesus came and offered the Kingdom of God to the Jews, under the Law, with Him the Messiah as King.

When He was rejected (**John 5:40**, "And you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life") and crucified and risen from the dead, He brought in a New Covenant, sealed in His blood, the Guarantor of which is the Holy Spirit. (**Ephesians 1:13-14**, "... having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.....")

With the above verses in mind new meaning comes to light as Jesus uttered these words:

John 19:30, "...It is finished."

No where in the New Testament is the "born again" New Covenant believer instructed to tithe or to perform any of the commandments of the Mosaic Law.

With this in view there is a new perspective on this verse:

2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come."

Neither Paul, Peter, John, James or any of the other authors of the Epistles gave any instructions as to the requirement of the believers in Jesus to tithe.

Giving

However, there are considerable instructions in the Epistles as to the requirement to give and guidelines as to how this may be performed.

On reading the following Scriptures it is very encouraging to note that the "spirit" of the teachings is always in accord with the Spirit of grace and never of law.

2 Corinthians 3:6, “(God), who also made us adequate as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

We see that in our New Covenant with God, in Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are moved from the realm of legalism to the realm of grace.

Each person stands before God as an individual. Each person must believe in Jesus, receive Him as Lord, and walk in the guidance of the Holy Spirit to perform the works that God has prepared for him.

We have an individual responsibility to study the Word of God and to grow to maturity, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach and to guide us along our individual paths which God Has ordained that we should follow.

The ministry gifts (**Ephesians 4:11-13**), are solely to encourage and assist the believer to reach out to God for himself and to become mature in his walk in the Spirit, hearing from Him personally and walking in faith.

What About Giving?

1 Timothy 5:8, “But if any one does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and **is worse than an unbeliever.**”

Also in, **Matthew 15:3-6** Jesus very strongly upholds the importance of family care.

These verses show what great importance God places on care of the members of our family, and say that caring for ones own family is of foremost importance, **above all else**, for what other transgression declares the offender to be **worse than an unbeliever?**

The following, and other Scriptures, indicate that we are required, in addition to the upkeep of our families, to contribute to the needy outside our families and to support those the Lord has called into ministry:

Romans 12:13, “Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.”

1 Corinthians 9:7, “Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?”

1 Corinthians 9:11, “If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?”

1 Corinthians 9:14, “So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.”

Galatians 6:6, “And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.”

Paul shows, in **2 Corinthians 8:13-15**, that in our giving we are to use wisdom so as not to place ourselves in need. That is, we are to give of our surplus so that sufficient remains for the needs of our families.

In **2 Corinthians 9** we see that God is the source of all that we have, and through right attitudes His grace abounds to us and we are greatly enriched in all areas.

Also in **Philippians 4:17** it is shown that to give, especially for the work of God, results in great benefit to us, and he states in **verse 19**, “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Emotional Compulsion

In **2 Corinthians 9:7** we are instructed to give cheerfully and not under compulsion. A form of compulsion can come in the form of emotional pressure, especially for new Christians as they are persuaded to give by skilful words coming from the pulpit.

Before committing ourselves to any promise to give beyond what we have already determined as appropriate, we must take the time to clearly hear the voice of the Spirit, and not be swept away by a wave of emotion, and then find ourselves in a situation that is not of God and have to repent of our haste. (**1 John 4:1**)

What Is This All About?

But why have I raised this issue of Tithing? Why have I entered into this matter? Why make all this fuss about a few dollars? Why risk incurring the wrath of much of the established church leadership?

If this study is nothing more than another topic to cause division within the Church then I am much to be pitied, for I would be a negative rather than positive influence, and I would be working contrary to the Spirit of God Who came to set the captive free, to shine His light into the darkness and to proclaim the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus the Christ, Who shed His blood so that a new and better way be established by which we draw near to the One True God, Whose magnitude is such that He encompasses His entire creation, and Whose love, though beyond measure, we are encouraged to experience (**Ephesians 3:19**).

Let us examine what has been my motivation in this issue.

The following is the heart of the matter:

Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:18 says that we have been **reconciled** to God through Christ Jesus, and we are **sons** of God through faith in Jesus (**Galatians 3:26**).

This relationship with Father God, our Abba, is the most precious thing Jesus accomplished for us through His suffering.

Anything that hinders this relationship, that inserts a barrier between the Father’s love and us, must be avoided at all costs.

Look again at **Galatians 5:2** and **5:4**. We see that the acceptance of circumcision is an admission that the redeeming work of Jesus is not enough. That as well as believing in Jesus we must also rely on a work of the flesh to ensure our peace and right standing with God.

This is completely contrary to the Gospel of Jesus.

The full intent of Galatians is not a rebuke against circumcision alone, but against every aspect of the Law which determined the Jews relationship with their God under the Old Covenant.

If we take any precept of the Law, or of any other teaching, and believe that it must be carried out, **in addition** to believing in Jesus, then as Paul says, **we have fallen from grace. Christ is of no avail to us.** He is of no use to us. In other words, **we have lost our salvation.**

The reason that Jesus came to earth and died on our behalf was because we were not able, by any other means, to be reconciled to God.

As Paul says in **Galatians 2:21**, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."

Jesus suffering and death, the shedding of His life's blood, was and still is, **the perfect and only means** by which we are eternally reconciled to God.

Jesus resurrection is the proof that God Almighty was with Him in all that He did and claimed.

To now turn around and say that God requires us to do anything else to make Jesus sacrifice more effective is a contradiction and denial of the Christian faith.

At best, a hindrance is inserted between the Father and us, and at worst, as Paul says, "You have been severed from Christ."

In other words, our salvation has been cancelled out, we are still in our sins for the grace of God has been thrown back into His face, and mankind has once again denied its Creator God.

Now Apply This to Tithing

In tithing we have, as has been clearly shown in this study, a commandment of the Law which has passed away because the perfect sacrifice of Jesus is the only way to the Father.

Just as in Old Covenant times the Jews were unable to perfectly perform the tithe, as also the other commandments of the Law, even so in our present time we cannot carry out this or any work with the perfection that a perfect God requires. If we were able to do so, then Jesus died needlessly, for we could earn our salvation by our "good works."

And this is what we would have to do, and we would be under obligation to keep the **whole Law (Galatians 5:3).**

As the present day Tither went about his daily affairs, he would be required to tithe every thing he earned, or was given as a gift, or grew in his garden, and so forth, to comply with the command to tithe. And not Tithing only, but every other commandment of the Law would require similar observation. The consequences are mind boggling.

The end result is guilt, condemnation and separation from the Father as he sees how futile are his works before a perfect God Who now must be appeased **by works and not grace.** He has no hope. He is again eternally lost, and must again come to repentance and the acceptance of Jesus for his salvation.

The tither has been separated from the grace of God. Reconciliation no longer exists for him. He has no hope unless he repents and turns again to the mercy of God through Jesus our Saviour.

Someone may say that they give a tenth of their salary alone and nothing else. This is fine if they so choose, and they are at liberty to do so. But there is no precedent for this in the Bible, and is purely a personal decision. **It certainly is not commanded by God and is not Tithing as described in the Scriptures**, and they should feel under no obligation in altering this practice if family needs arise.

God is a God of grace. If we stray from His path He is always waiting with open arms to welcome us back. We need only repent, confess our sins to the Father, and our sins are placed under the blood of Jesus and forever erased (**1 John 1:9**).

Summary

The Scriptures clearly show that in our New Covenant with God in Jesus, faith in His shed blood gives us peace, sonship, and **the guarantee of eternal life** through His indwelling Spirit.

Paul explains in **Romans 8:1** that there is now **no condemnation** for us who are in Christ Jesus as we walk in the ways of His Spirit.

We are to be careful to follow His prompting for “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life,” for He is love and His plans are for His sons to follow in His steps.

We are no longer under Law but under Grace, for (**Galatians 5:1**) “it was for freedom that Christ set us free, therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

We are free, in Jesus, to follow the prompting of His Spirit, for He is Lord.

With respect to giving, His Lordship must extend there also, and as we are obedient to Him we can be assured that blessings result, not that we seek the gift but to please the Giver, in Whom we trust to supply every need.

With respect to tithing, we are free to tithe, if we believe the Spirit desires us to do this, but as has been shown, there is no longer a legal requirement to do so, and our relationship with the Father is no better or worse whether we do, or do not, for we have peace with Him through faith in Jesus, Who has freed us from every curse, for in Christ Jesus we have the Way of eternal Life for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and in Him we are complete. Praise His holy name. Amen.

A Word for Pastors

Many Pastors instruct the sheep entrusted to their care to use faith in God to enable them to tithe so that their needs and the needs of the Church are met.

The New Testament certainly gives support to the teaching that Ministers of the Gospel should be supported by the people, but would God institute a New Covenant in His Son and then revert back to Old Covenant commands to implement His blessings? Definitely not.

On hearing several testimonies of Tithers claiming to have received unusual returns, I find there is invariably a common denominator in their experiences. Those concerned show admirable

Christian character by exhibiting a **giving heart**, which they demonstrate by their Tithing. The Lord, wishing to bless their good attitude comes on the scene through a **special instruction** from the Holy Spirit. Obedience to this command opens the door to God's blessings.

The Holy Spirit has blessed the givers, not because they tithed, but because they responded to His instruction.

This is the action and reaction we can expect as believers led by the Holy Spirit. The sons of God are led by the Spirit of God (**Romans 8:14**), and as a result of our obedience to Him blessings always result.

The people should be encouraged to develop faith in the principles of the New Covenant.

As the Church leadership shares their plans and concerns with the people a spirit of unity is fostered within the Church. The people become involved and develop a heart of compassion for the Leadership, and eagerly contribute towards the intended goals.

I believe the answer to prosperity of Churches lies in the Leadership merging with the congregation in all aspects of the ministry. In all these affairs it is important to encourage the people and foster spiritual growth in them. **Condemnation and coercion must be far removed from the pulpit.**

Our Father God draws us to Him by love, and He has no condemnation for His people who are in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:1**), and it is a revelation from Him that reveals His desire for His people, **not to work for Him, but with Him**, as they open their hearts to His Spirit.

A Word of Encouragement

Exodus 25:2 and **Exodus 35:21** tell of God's command to Moses to permit the people to contribute to the fitting out of the Sanctuary as they were moved in their hearts, not through tithes.

The result of this is shown in **Exodus 36:5-6** where the people responded with such overwhelming generosity that **Moses had to tell them to stop giving, as there was more than enough.**

In our New Covenant we are the Temples of the Holy Spirit. We must receive the teaching from the pulpits to encourage us to develop our sensitivity to the gentle voice of the Lord and follow His bidding, and I truly believe that this will result in **true** prosperity for the **entire** Church in **every** area.

We must allow the Spirit to be Lord, for such He is (**2 Corinthians 3:17**). Let us respond to Him while the days of grace are still upon us.

To many of the readers this study will be a test of Christian character as they come to terms with its message.

Please submit it to the Lord. Be slow to anger and quick to hear the voice of encouragement and instruction which is seeking the perfecting of a Bride whose garments are soiled and stained, whose hair is in disarray, and who is curled up asleep with little oil in her lamp as the sound of the Bridegroom's approach is imminent.

Prayer

Father God, in Jesus name, we confess to You that we have erred in the way the Gospel of Your Son, with respect to Tithing, has been proclaimed to the people. Forgive the pain and fear and guilt and separation from You that this wrong teaching has produced. Help the Church to come to that place where we are indeed perfect, without spot or wrinkle, but Lord, please do so by your grace and mercy as You continue to stretch out Your hands of love, and make this study a source of true life to those who are hungry to draw closer to You and desire to know You more intimately. Raise up true shepherds who will teach Your **uncompromised** Word to Your people for whom Your Son Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, paid the ultimate price. **Amen.**

The Author

The authors name is John Vayler, and his contact number is 92793480. He has no qualifications except a burden in his heart to see God's people cared for according to God's Word. This burden has been with him for many years, and in faith this study has now been put together.

"I am entrusting this work to You, Holy Spirit. In faith I declare that You have been my Source and Encouragement in this study. Prepare the path for this work, Lord. Grant the readers an open heart to **receive** Your truths and thereby be set free. **To God is the Glory.**"

Christian Giving was first printed in January 2000, in the city of Perth,
Western Australia.

All Scripture quotations in this study are taken from the
New American Standard Bible.

This work is dedicated to the Glory of God and is intended for the
edification of all that have an ear to hear.