

The Bible & Money ... The New Covenant Doctrine of Giving: Does tithing apply to Christians?

1) Passages Directly Referencing the “tithing” in the New Testament

Two Conclusions:

1) None of the passages have tithing as their **primary** subject

2) None of the passages **command** tithing for Christians

* **Mentioning** tithing and **commanding** tithing are *not* the same thing

a) Matthew 23:23 (see also Luke 11:42)

a. Jesus never **prohibited** the act of tithing

b. Jesus considered tithing to be a **less** central aspect of the Mosaic Law

c. However, tithing was **still** part of the Mosaic Law

d. The main point of Matthew 23:23 is that justice, mercy, and faithfulness are **required** basic **responses** to God in the Old Testament (see Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:8–10)

e. The command of this verse was meant for the **scribes** and the **Pharisees**.

i. Two Examples

1. Jesus celebrated **Passover**; Christians do not have to

2. Matthew 8:1–4; these commands are not prescribed for Christians

f. To advocate tithing based upon Jesus’ endorsement of it to the scribes and Pharisees is endorsing [at least] a **twenty** percent contribution, not ten percent

g. The Implications of Using Matthew 23:23

i. Christians must give at least 20%

ii. This includes items from a garden

iii. To tithe correctly you would have to live in Palestine (Israel)

b) Luke 18:9–14

a. Hermeneutics and Parables

- i. One main **point** for every major **character**
- ii. This parable has two main characters:
the tax collector and the **Pharisees**
- iii. The main points: He who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted

c) Hebrews 7:1–10

a. Only **build** doctrine on primary meanings

b. Hebrews 7:1–10 in context

- i. Hebrews is arguing that Jesus' sacrifice is superior to those in the Old Covenant, so don't turn back to your **former ways**
 1. Jesus is demonstrated as superior to the angels, even though he was temporarily made lower
 2. He was temporarily made lower so his priesthood could be made superior to the Levitical priesthood
 3. Jesus' priesthood is then shown to be greater than Aaron's based on election
 4. Then, Melchizedek's priesthood is shown as greater than the Levitical priesthood
 5. Then, Jesus' priesthood is declared to be of the same kind as that of Melchizedek
 6. Since Melchizedek's is greater than the Levitical priesthood, so is Jesus' priesthood.

Of what part is Hebrews 7:1–10? Number **FOUR** above.

c. Three proofs on Melchizedek's superiority

- i. Hebrews 7:4: Melchizedek is **greater** than Abraham because Abraham **gave** him an offering
- ii. Hebrews 7:7: Melchizedek is greater because he **blessed** Abraham
- iii. Hebrews 7:8: Abraham's descendants paid tithes to priests who would **die**, Abraham paid his tithe to a priest who **lives on**: Melchizedek

- d. Since Melchizedek was able to perform the functions of a **priest** without being in the Levitical lineage, Jesus, likewise, is also able to be a priest **without** the necessary lineage
- e. The one theological truth the author was intending: Melchizedek was **greater** than Abraham and thus **greater** than the Levitical priests
- f. The Argument from Hebrews 7:8 is problematic because the phrase **receives them** and the word **he** does not occur in the Greek.
 - i. Who is the implied “he”? **Melchizedek**
- g. Some argue **against** tithing based upon Hebrews 7:12

2) The “Concept” of Tithing in the New Testament

Many have been suggested:

Matthew 22:17–22

1 Corinthians 9:13–14

1 Corinthians 16:1–4

2 Corinthians 8:8

2 Corinthians 9:7

a) 1 Corinthians 9:13–14

a. Paul’s main point is in verse 4: Do we not have a **right** to eat and drink?

i. “eat and drink” refers to **financial support**

b. The Context: 1 Corinthians 8 is about food sacrificed to **idols**

c. The overall context is that of **foregoing rights**

d. Refutation

i. Paul’s teaching in this chapter is not **consistent** with tithing as discussed in the Mosaic law

ii. Paul does not refer to this support as a **requirement** of the people in all circumstances

iii. Instead, Paul says that he has the **right** to receive support; if he forgoes that right, they are not **required** to give it

iv. Therefore, tithing would become optional

- depending on if the preacher wanted to **accept** it
- v. This is completely at odds with an understanding of tithing in the **Old** Testament
 - vi. In the Mosaic law, not paying tithes was equivalent to **robbing** God; it was not an **option**

SUMMARY

- 1) No text in the New Testament commands Christians to tithe
- 2) All direct references to tithing in the New Testament were incidental
- 3) No passage contains the concept of tithing and thus implies that Christians should tithe

MORE INFORMATION

EMAIL:

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WEBSITES:

- 1) groups.yahoo.com/group/Tithing-Study
 - Chat room on tithing
 - Good resource, but I do not ascribe to all views posted
- 2) slaveoftheword.blogspot.com
 - Blog I started this year
 - Starting to include some more historical discussions on tithing