

Sufficient Sacrifice and the Tithe

11/10/2019 Andy Figueroa

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Malachi 3:7-9 (ESV)

Most of you have not yet turned in a 2020 *Estimated Tithes and Offerings* card since they were only put out last Sunday. That's OK. I'm writing this for you. For the ten who turned one in last week, thank you very much, and know that revisions will always be gratefully received.

The words of the prophet Malachi sound shockingly strong to most Christian ears. Christians are not bound by Old Covenant laws like the Levitical Tithe and nowhere in the New Testament are Christians commanded to tithe. In fact, the standard for Christian giving is frequently referenced to St. Paul's 2nd letter to the Corinthians where he writes, "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Christians give to their local churches for the sake of the love of Christ, not because we are commanded to do so.

God gives us free will regarding our tithes and offerings. How good is that! Those who have been studying *The King's Highway* at Sunday Bible College already know that God's gift of free will is a two edged sword. "*We find the root of sin in the misuse by man of the free will that is his noblest power ... (p11)*" and that "*God's foreknowledge (of what we do with our free will) does not take away man's responsibility. (p13)*" So what should Christian givers do with their free will. It is a moral imperative to support the Church through the giving of money to and through local congregations. It is also true that God has revealed in His Word that the tithe is the one consistent standard of giving that pleases Him.

Ten percent is much less than most people pay in taxes, yet we know that on the average Christians give in the range of less than 2.5 percent. How important is this? Scriptures make clear there is a fundamental connection between a person's spiritual life and their attitudes and actions concerning money and possessions.

The most common answer to questions about tithing from early church fathers to present day is that the tithe represents a minimum standard of Christian giving. Anyone contemplating their own giving, who wants to make their gift of money in the offertory to be a **sufficient sacrifice** to accompany their worship of praise and thanksgiving, would do well to measure their practice of giving against what we know from His Word.

St. Paul also wrote, *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6 (ESV)*

You will find a copy of past articles at: <http://2chronicles36.org/>



Malachi: Duccio di Buoninsegna, c. 1310-1311