

Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005

## **The Tithe is the Lord's – Part 1**

1). Ge 14:18 *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*

a). Last week as we studied this account of Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek we noted the last sentence of verse 20, but did not expand on it.

b). This week the Lord has given us the grace to do just that and to reveal to us the significance of the tithe.

2). I am mindful of the enormous abuse that has been done to the tithe as it has been used a means of manipulation through guilt to swell the coffers of churches. And by others as a means of denying any sort of giving.

a). What we need to remember is that this situation has come about because of the corrupted word of the kingdom, through the leaven placed in the three measures of meal at the beginning of the dispensation.

b). The purpose as you know being to prevent Christians entering the kingdom age as coheirs with Christ.

c). And one thing is clear, money is a contentious issue, even for Christians, especially through the rape of the bank book that has been done in the name of Christ. And the embrace of covetousness in the name of grace.

3). What we must do, as we have with so much else, is to put away the traditions of men, set aside our hurts from abuse we may have suffered and turn to the word of God. Aligning ourselves completely with what it says.

a). What we will look at today is not about money; it is, as always, about entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom of the Heavens.

b). 1Co 6:10 *nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.* (Teach in relation to above)

4). Let's begin with Abraham and Melchizedek and the context of the tithe as we see it here.

a). Melchizedek blesses Abraham in respect of both realms of the kingdom

b). He makes it clear that God has delivered Abraham's enemies into his hands, and within the context this would have to be in regard of the heavens and the earth. Let's remember what scripture says concerning that - Ge 22:17 *"blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

c). And let's also remember that Abraham looked beyond the earthly realm to the heavenly Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

d). It is in response to what Melchizedek says about the earth the heavens and his enemies that Abraham gives him the tithe of all. Let's refresh our memory with the record of the account in Hebrews

e). Heb 7:1 ¶ *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*

f). How would we view this act?

g). The context of Hebrews - Heb 3:1 ¶ *Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,*

h). Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

i). Heb 4:11 ¶ *Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*

j). In relation to Abraham specifically –

Heb 11:8 *By faith Abraham obeyed....*

Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt.....*

Heb 11:17 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested,.....*

5). Abraham's action in giving the tithe is an act of faith

a). As we know only too well, faith is believing what God has said and then bringing that faith to completion by acting upon it.

b). Heb 11:1 ¶ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.*

c). Now Abraham giving the tithe was the substance of ‘things hoped for’ – which was the possession of the earthly and heavenly realms of the kingdom in respect of their rulership. It was ‘the evidence of things not seen’ as at the time of meeting Melchizedek these things were still in the realm of promise, just as they are today. But his giving of the tithe was a tangible confession of his expectation of the realization of what he hoped for. And his absolute trust in God fulfilling His promises.

d). And he certainly did obtain a good testimony - Jas 2:23 *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

e). Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

f). So then as no faith comes apart from the word of God we must conclude that the giving of the tithe was not an arbitrary act in response to what Melchizedek had said, but an act based on what God had at some point previously said.

g). We would do well to remember that although God’s words to Abraham in respect of this are not recorded that does not negate them being said. There is no record of Abraham’s spirit salvation either within scripture and yet it clearly took place as Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeas by faith

Heb 11:8 *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance.*

h). We can also note the significance of ‘the tenth’ (Why the KJV) (Teach this)

i). There is apparently nothing in either the Hebrew text of Genesis or the Greek text of Hebrews to suggest that Abraham only give a tithe of the spoils of war. It seems rather that he gave a tithe of all – all he possessed.

6). To sum up then Abraham’s giving of the tithe of all is an act of faithful obedience and is inseparably connected with the kingdom promises he received. Confessing that not this earth but the future kingdom was his focus.

7). We find an almost identical event recorded in the life of Abraham’s grandson, Jacob

a). Remembering - Heb 11:9 *By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;*

b). Heb 11:21 *By faith Jacob,....*

c). According to Hebrews 11, Jacob also is a man of faith.

Remembering what he would have been taught by his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham.

8). Let's look in Genesis 28 - Ge 28:10 ¶ *And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 ¶ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee. (Teach this)*

a). In relation to the promise

b). The stone – the Cornerstone – on this rock – living stones

c). The tenth/tithe

d). What we see here with Jacob is identical to that seen with Abraham.

e). The giving of the tithe is a concrete confession of Jacob's faith in the fulfillment of God's promises – promises to do with a land and an inheritance.

9). Now even without examining anything else we should be able to clearly see the implication for us in this.

a). Ga 3:5 *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? -- 6 ¶ just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. (Teach this)*

b). Ga 3:9 *So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

c). Ga 3:11 *But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."*

d). Ga 3:26 *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Teach this)*

e). Ro 4:13 *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. (Teach this)*

f). Php 3:9 ¶ *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (Teach this)*

10). Our giving of the tithe, just as with Abraham and Jacob, is an act of faith. A righteous act, a good work. A tangible commitment to our total belief in what God has said concerning our inheritance in the heavenly kingdom. It is one of many actions that bring our faith to its goal in respect of this. And we remember the outcome of our faith being brought to its goal - 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

11). And I want to stress that this is an act of faith, not a legal requirement. A fact that is further emphasized by realizing that God spoke about the tithe long before He gave Moses the Law. The tithe was not something added by Moses, it was already in existence. Both Abraham and Jacob were under grace when they gave the tithe.

a). Ga 3:18 *For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19 ¶ What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;*

b). We see then that the Law was added because of transgressions – added to what? That which God had already said - note v18.

c). And it was that which was added that remained ‘till the Seed should come’. Then that which was added was fulfilled in Christ.

d). Moses did in fact add two additional tithes, that were part of the Law. But these were only ‘till the seed should come’. And we are no longer obliged to keep them. But that which was already set in place, requiring faith remains, just as the promise to which it is attached remains.

Heb 4:1 ¶ *Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.*

12). We would do well to remember the basis on which the Lord instituted the tithe. Made very plain for us in - Le 27:30 *'And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S. It is holy to the LORD.*

13). Now we would understand that the Lord does not need the tithe because He is short of resources - Ps 50:10 *For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.....12b For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.*

Rather we can see the tithe as being of great benefit for us, affording us the enormous privilege of honouring Him through it.

1Sa 2:30b..... *for those who honor Me I will honor,*

Eph 6:8 *knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

a). All that we have comes from Him and we are wise to acknowledge His sovereignty. He has given us time and has reserved one seventh for Himself - Ex 31:15 *'Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD.*

b). He has given us material possessions and has reserved one tenth for Himself - Le 27:30 *'And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S. It is holy to the LORD.*

c). And His desire in this is that we should receive a blessing Mal 3:10 *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.*

d). That blessing, I can tell you from personal testimony, is present in this age and will be brought to its fullness in the age to come.

14). The tithe is indeed the Lord's – it is not a fundraiser for the church, nor is it excused by grace. It is a concrete expression of our acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and our absolute commitment to believing God for what He has promised concerning the reward of the inheritance in the kingdom which is to come. And we being the spiritual descendants of Abraham by faith, should act in faith just as he did.

a). Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

15). To those who faithfully tithe let me encourage you, by what we have learned today, to be even more steadfast and resolute in the faith.

a). And for anyone who has not before seen the significance of the tithe, let me encourage you to change your mind and embrace this portion of God's word just as you would any other.

16). There is still much to say about the tithe, especially as it relates to the church – but that will have to wait for another time.