

Tithes

Will a man rob God?

That's a question, I assume, you don't have trouble with.

Of course it is not allowed to rob God! Nevertheless it seems to happen, because God is asking this question to His people Israel.

Malachi 3:8

"Will a man rob God?

Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "

The answer of the Lord is:

"In tithes and offerings."

When you read this bible passage, we have to ask ourselves a few things:

1. From what wants God tithes?
2. Is this also for the New Testamental believers?

God wanted the Israelites to think first of Him and then to themselves

From what wants God tithes?

Proverbs 3:9-10

"9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

It's all about the first fruits of all your income.

What are that: first fruits?

The people of Israel were peasants. They cultivate fruits, wheat, corn, barley etc. But they kept also cattle. When look into the bible to find the meaning of first fruits, we always see it is about the first fruits of the cattle, the corn, barley etc.

Abel started with the giving of the first fruits of the sheep to the Lord. (Genesis 4:4).

In Exodus we read the commandment from God to Israel:

Exodus 34:26

"Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God. "

God wanted the Israelites to think first of Him and then to themselves.

We do know, of course, God didn't want to keep all those first fruits for Himself. He designated that for the priests and Levites. They were in His service. In detail God made it clear what He wanted to have and for whom it was.

Hezekiah was a king in Israel who found out Gods rules were not followed for a long time.

2 Chronicles 31:4-6

"4 He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and Levites so that they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. 5 As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the first fruits 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."

Where does our income (money) from?

We've seen the Israelites had to give their tithes from the first fruits the land yielded. Now you can think of course: that was natural then, but now it is different, most people have a different kind of job then farmer.

Let's think it over where our money comes from. Money is something we get when we are rewarded for our work we did.

For some it is not like that, they have for instance an unemployment benefit. There are reasons for that, there is for instance not enough work, through which there is no rewarding for that. Or the physical- or emotional condition of someone

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is in that way it is not possible or very difficult to take part in the labour process.

But what ever reason there is to get a payment, one get money. And this money is income.

All money comes in principle from selling materials which comes out the earth. A farmer cultivates the land and harvest at a certain moment. He sells the harvest. With that money he get he buys for instance a television set. That television has to be made. The materials are coming in principle out of the earth. But when the farmer didn't worked on the land and was rewarded for that, the television manufacturer did not get income either, because why should he made television sets when nobody wants to buy them?

It is all one big circle. Everything we have, everything we work with, everything which is produced, is coming from the soil.

This the same for people who has a job in the office. People in the office are doing work that has to do direct- or indirect with what others get out of the soil.

From who is that soil?

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Job 41:2

"Everything under heaven belongs to me."

Deuteronomy 10:14

"To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it."

Exodus 19:5

".... Although the whole earth is mine,"

Psalms 50:9-12

"I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it."

It is not only the whole earth is from the Lord, but everything of value.

Haggai 2:9

"The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty."

Though everything of wealth there is on or in this earth is from God.

Everything what is produced, money and what can be bought by money, comes from the soil. We are using our energy and mental efforts to make money from Gods property. Even our energy and efforts are given by Him. He created our thinking faculty.

So, our whole income is in principle from God.

But God is happily not selfish. He knows our needs. God cares about us. He is a God of love.

When you think it over well, you will see God gives nine-tenth from everything we make or produce, and that our thinking adds only one-tenth. But God doesn't want nine-tenth of the yield or from our income, but only one-tenth. God is very generous. God only want one-tenth.

And after we give God honest His tithe He says: the other nine-thens are you're now.

That's Gods law.

God said about tithes:

Malachi 3:10

"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."

And:

Proverbs 3:9, 10

"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

It is not we GIVE God one-tenth from what we earn, we can't give anything away when we are

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not the owner of it. Only when we hand over those tithes, He gives us what's left, the whole 90%.

As long as we didn't hand over that tithe, the money is from someone Else. Every penny is still from God as long as we didn't hand over the tithes. When we spend that money we're stealing from God!

In fact God is becoming a partner. To Him belongs the earth, the sources of energy, and everything which has value. He admits us, as His partner, to work on this earth under the condition we have to give Him one-tenth of everything we earn in whatever way. If we're not giving Him the tithes, we're stealing from our Partner. Then God will not continue to make it possible to get one hundred percent.

Were the tithes abolished?

Ho. Ho! Wait a moment!

First we read about the Israelites who had to give their tithes and now we are talking suddenly in the "we" form. Is this correct? After all the Israelites lived under the law isn't it? We are not!

Yes that's correct, the Mosaic law, where in the tithes paying is described was indeed for the people of Israel. But God made this rule before the law came. Abel understood this right, as we've seen in the beginning of this small study. Abraham too was informed about that rule. He paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High. This Melchizedek was God's priest from the beginning. He was, as we read in Hebrews identical to the Son of God. He was ever and will be ever.

Please read Hebrews 7 in your own Bible.

Here, in Hebrews 7, we read that during the time, from Moses to Christ, the priests of that time -the Levites- were collecting the tenth from the people.

The collecting of the tenth didn't start under Moses, it was continued.

In Hebrews 7 two priesthood's are named, the one of Melchizedek and the Levitical one. The

priesthood of Melchizedek was a higher priesthood than the Levitical one. (9-10).

Temporary God had arranged the paying of tenth should be given to the Levite priests. However since Jesus was resurrected and went to heaven, He has become the High-priest in the order of Melchizedek.

The temporary law according to the paying of tenth, the one of paying tenth to the Levitical priests, changed to the original instruction. The payment should be given now to the Priest, Who is Priest forever.

Hebrews 7:12

"For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law."

The system of tenth, like God had established under the priesthood of Melchizedek, is now in force again, in that understanding Jesus is the high-priest now, in the order of Melchizedek.

In other words, just like the tenth had to be given to Melchizedek, it should be given now to our high-priest Jesus.

God made this rule before the law came

Jesus is the head of His church.

Those who are working in His service have to be paid by the Head of that church. God never collected the tenth Himself, therefore we have to hand over our tithes to those from who God tells us in our hearts they

are in need of our tithes.

Our paying of tithes and our attitude against it is one way to show our devotion to the Lord.

1 John 2:4, 5

"The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:"

Summary

The Old Testament is teaching us, that from the first beginning, ever since Abel, men gave God a

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part of the best, from the first fruits. Abel did that in the form of a sacrifice. Abraham gave his tithes to Melchizedek. The people of Israel gave their tithes of the crop and from all their income to the Levitical priests, that is to say, they had to do that. God is very disappointed about His people. He even says they are robbing Him. That's the way He sees the not paying of the tithes. Still that's not the only thing God is thinking of. He would bless them eagerly. Abundant blessing. And he will do that for sure when the tithes are given again.

In our modern times most people get there income in an other way then working on the fields. However, in fact all our income comes from the soil, the earth. And the earth is from the Lord. So, everything we produce and everything we make money with is in origin from God. Yet God doesn't want it all, He asks us ten percent of our income, the rest He grants us.

Abraham gave his tenth to Melchizedek. That is written in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament. It is not only told that Melchizedek was priest in the time of Abraham, he was priest without beginning of days or end of life. In the New Testament he is equalized with the Son of God. To this priest Abraham paid his tenth, long before God established an other priesthood: the Levitical one.

In the letter to the Hebrews it is explained that the priesthood has been changed. The Levitical priesthood made way for the priesthood in the order of Melchizedek. This new high-priest serves in the sanctuary in heaven. He sits at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven.

Jesus is that new high-priest.

Of course there is a lot more to say about this subject, but for now we will stick to our subject: tithes.

So, Jesus is high-priest to the order of Melchizedek. The paying of tenth to Him is never abolished. We have to pay, even today, tithes to our high-priest. And just like in the Old testament the tithes must be paid to the servants of God. Those are not anymore the Levites, but now they are the workers of God who are working full- or part-time for the Lord and have to live from the gospel. The church where you come needs money. All kinds of organizations who are

occupied with the bringing of the gospel needs money.

Ask the great High-priest how you spend your tithes. He will make it clear. And God will bless you. You will see you can do more with the part God gives to you (those ninety percent) then you could do before with the hundred percent from which you thought they were yours.

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