

A Higher Standard

Read Hebrews 7:4 ...

Often when the subject of giving is mentioned in a church discussion or Bible class someone will chime in with, “We are not under the law of tithing.” Of course, the inference being that since we are no longer under the Law of Moses Christians can give as and how we please. It is certainly true that Christians are now under the law of grace and not under THE Law; but when it comes to giving, Christians are often well under those that *were* under the Law of Moses.

Often it is taught that the law of tithing, which is formalized in the Law of Moses, began with Jacob. Looking back to Genesis 28 we find the record of Jacob journeying to a place called Padan Aram where his uncle lived – there Isaac had told Jacob to take a wife. While Jacob is on that journey he has the dream of the ladder, with angels going up and down, and with God standing at the top. God repeats the promise He made with Abraham and applies the promise to Jacob, and Jacob (in response to that promise) makes a vow to return 1/10th of *everything* that is given from God.

But where did Jacob come up with this number? Did he just pull it out of the air, so to speak? No, Jacob did as he had learned of his grandfather. It was Abraham, as recorded for us in Genesis 14, that showed his progeny the way to show respect for God. When returning from the battle with the Kings that had sacked Sodom and taken his nephew Lot, Abraham was met by Melchizedek the King of Salem and the priest of the most high God. In response to the blessings of rescuing Lot and defeating the Kings, Abraham returned 1/10th of the spoils to God via Melchizedek.

But, where did Abraham learn the lesson of giving back to God? How did Abraham know it was the right thing to do to return a portion of

his goods to the Lord? Maybe we should go even further back to Genesis 4. It’s a terrible chapter; well, a sad chapter in the history of the Scriptures. It’s the chapter where we find Cain becoming the first murderer on record, and its his own brother that he murders. Yet, what precipitated this murder is an act in which both brothers were *returning of their goods* to the Lord. Those sacrifices the brothers gave was a way of honoring God. From the beginning, returning a portion to the Lord meant more than returning simply money, it meant returning of what the Lord had prospered.

Today, Christians are no longer under the Law of Moses, but we have never been released from returning to God a portion of what God has prospered us with (1 Cor. 16:2). Where the Law of Moses taught tithing, Jesus teaches that to those that much has been given, much will be required (Luke 12:48), and Christians have been given more than we can ever repay (Isa. 53:4-6). As bro. Black notes, “To say that the proportion for Christian giving should be less than the tenth, is to say that Judaism has a higher standard than Christianity and that a Christian may be more selfish than a Jew” (42).

It is a shame to know how lightly some treat the subject of giving. Where those under the Law were responsible for the small nation of Israel (Num. 18:21-24), Christians are now responsible for bringing the Gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:18-20). God removed the law of tithing from the Christian for the simple reason that 1/10th would not be enough for the task. What keeps Christians from evangelizing the world is not a lack of time or those willing to do the work the God, what holds us back is a lack of liberality.

Self-Image/Self-Sacrifice

** The book of _____ is an adequate
_____ of our age!

_____ says I don't need God.

_____ says **we** don't need God.

_____ says, "Sure, but what does it **matter**."

** The classic parable – the _____
_____ (Luke 10:25-37).

Unless we show the _____ that was shown to us, we are in
_____.

The love shown to us was most completely expressed in the
_____!

** How then do we ... become a _____ of God?

First, we must _____ we are a _____.

Second, we have to _____ to become an
_____ people.

It's easy to have a _____, all you have to do is
nothing _____; to have a _____ takes
_____ on our part.

A _____ is the one that replaces the need to gratify
the _____ and instills in himself the need to
_____ others in the service of his _____.