

BIBLE

PARALLEL

LINES

Parallel lines Pt.1: The Tithe

Genesis 14:20 *“Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.”*

We owe people in so many ways. I got married and the pastor said it was free because we go there. Something deep inside me did not like that. It took me 15 years but I sent him money for our wedding. It never sat well in my heart. I do believe that the book of Leviticus teaches that there is a price for everything. Sin has its price. So does marriage, death, and babies. God required payment to drive us to be honest in our actions. Beyond that is taking care of Gods house. The tithe was for the repairs and the food for the priests. Nothing is really free.

Leviticus 27:30 *“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.”*

The parallel lines are obvious. You can't escape them. In Matthew 17 we find Jesus being asked if He pays the temple tax. Jesus did pay it. It's ironic because Jesus made a quip about kings' children not paying the tax. Yet, Jesus, a child of God, went out and paid tax to His own Fathers temple. Yes, Jesus had an opinion on the Tithe. It might not be what you expected.

Matthew 23:23 *““Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”*

Jesus told the religious rulers to pay to Cesar what is ceasers in regards to tax. He also told the temple religious rulers that He would pay to God what is owed. Yet, Jesus threw these very same rulers under the bus for treating the tax like a rod of iron. They took from everyone, but themselves. These men would give a tenth of spice and a tenth of their flock (probably the sick animals) and made sure it was paraded around town. The heart of tax is to keep the temple running. To feed the men and women who served God. It was also meant to fix roads and pay armies. The heart of tax was the sustainer for what mattered in a city. Its why God imposed rules for the tithe. It's what He created laws of payment for sin. It was to keep people honest.

It also shows the heart of those who give. Mark 12:23-24 *“Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you; this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44 They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”* Jesus pointed out that this old woman gave in love rather from her wealth.

Leviticus 19:9-10 *‘Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.* The parallel lines are clear. The tithe or ten% was meant for those who had nothing. Our extra money should go to help those in need. Its why charities exist.

Malachi 3:8-9 are famous verses. *“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings.”* Most pastors use these verses like a club. They tell people to search the depths of God for answers on tithing. Yet, God asks us to search our own depths for answers on tithing. It's like I said in the beginning of this teaching, we know deep inside what to do.

God the Father in the Old Testament says it. Jesus says it. The heart of giving is in the heart. Jesus told us to drop our offering and forgive someone first. David said He would not accept the threshing floor for free. 2 Samuel 24:24 *“No, but I will buy them from you for a price; I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing.”* The great people in the Bible knew their God. They honored their God with tithes and offerings. Just as Abraham did in the verse at the beginning of this study. The parallel lines are all over the place. The tithe is not about money. It's about your heart. Years ago, I used to give 5 dollars. Then God told me it's ten. A few weeks later I only had a twenty. Now it was twenty. I tithe more than 10% because I want to. Not because God demands it. Paul knew it too.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 *“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*