

Tithes and Offerings in the New Testament

Fred R. Coulter—April 25, 2011

Now this afternoon we're going to talk about money. Let's understand something about tithes and offerings. Let's keep the perspective the way we need to, which is also what Paul did.

Let's come to Luke 11:37: "Now while He was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him; and He went in *and* sat down. But the Pharisee, seeing *this*, wondered why He had not first washed before dinner.... [Jesus was not politically and religiously correct. I like this session here. And He didn't speak glowing words to the Pharisees.] (Notice how He talked to them): ...Then the Lord said to him, 'Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greediness and wickedness. Fools... [they thought they were the intellectual elite of their day] ...*did* not He Who made the outside also make the inside? Rather, give alms *from* the things that are within...' (vs 37-41).

In other words, whatever you do must come motivated within from a clean heart, because you're not going to bribe God. God is pleased when we choose to do the things that please Him. So keep that in mind.

"Rather, give alms *from* the things that are within; and behold, all things are clean to you. But woe to you, Pharisees!... [That's pretty heavy. You go back and read all the places in the Bible where it talks about woes and especially the book of Revelation. It's really hell, damnation and destruction.] ...For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God... [If whatever you do is not for the love of God, then you're missing the whole point. That's what happened with the Pharisees there.] ...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things... [we should do them] ...and not to set aside those *lesser things*' (vs 41-42).

Because you do a major commandment, does not necessarily mean you ignore the minor commandments. Or you can't take the minor commandments and blow them way up and ignore the major commandments—loving God first, loving your neighbor, loving the brethren. This is telling us that they should do the right thing.

Let's ask a couple of other questions concerning our age. First of all Daniel tells us everything is closed and sealed to the time of the end. What else did he say? *Many shall go to and fro!* That's what it is today. It's been about a hundred years. I know, I sat there at the airport waiting to get on the plane. It was full of people, down at Orlando,

coming and going, coming and going. What am I doing? Coming and going, coming and going.

And knowledge shall increase! I look around and what do I see? Everybody working on their cell phones and iPads. I get on the plane and I sit down next to a man who has an iPad and he's got this thing and he's going do-do-do-boop-boop and I watched him and I couldn't figure out what he was doing. He did it most of the flight. Of course, he turned it off when we took off, so as we were landing I said, 'How do you like your iPad? He says, 'Oh, I love it. It quite hasn't replaced my laptop, but it's really great.' I said, 'Does it weigh as much as a laptop?' He said, 'No, here feel it.' So he let me hold it and it was this thick, half-inch thick. He said, 'The new one's even lighter and thinner.' And I'm thinking, wooh, is Fred Flintstone way behind!

When I'm on a computer, I'm only doing word processing, so my word processor is twelve years old; that's my computer; that's what I work with. You watch the kids doing their thing, you watch everyone doing their thing, knowledge will increase and come to you quickly, we can add, too. That tells us God understood what this society would be like—right? *Yes, indeed!*

What did Jesus say? '*As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of coming of the Son of man*'—right? He knew what it would be like. And I also think that God is responsible for letting a lot of this technology—revealing it to men, He knows they're going to use for good and evil—can also be used for preaching the Gospel. So Tim came up here between services and he had his iPhone. There he was watching me on Church at Home, right there.

If the Apostle Paul had access to airplanes for his travel, do you suppose he would use them? *I believe so!* If he had access to recording material and sending it like we do today, and pretty soon the post office is going to be obsolete—would he use it? Don't you think he could get his message a whole lot quicker to the churches of Galatia if he had digital recorder and an iPhone to send it? It could get there the day he wrote it, instantly. I could just see the title of it on it, say an iPad: 'Oh, foolish Galatians!' Then he could send pictures of the group he was with when he was writing it, because he said, 'all the brethren with me.'

Today we live in an age that sometimes it is more difficult to understand how some of the prophecies apply. But nevertheless, this is true. Let's come to Matthew 4. It ties right in with what we're talking about to begin with. By the way, we can pinpoint the day His ministry began. The Day of

Atonement in 26_{A.D.} was the beginning also of a jubilee year. That'll be coming out in a new book sometime this summer.

So here He was tempted, forty days and forty nights. Matthew 4:3: "And when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.'" He could do that. No problem. But if He did it, who would He be obeying—God or Satan? *Satan!*

So notice His answer, v 4: "But He answered *and* said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" How do we do that today? Living in the age that we live in today, what do we do with electric lights? *We turn them on and off—right?* What did they do before electricity? *They had candles or they had a lantern.* That's what they used all down through the centuries until electricity, except now they think the Egyptians probably had access to electricity, too, because you can't see in those pyramids without some kind of light.

Who would want to go to Egypt to look at all those dead men? They're still dead. I don't want to go to Egypt. I don't want to go to Jerusalem either. Jesus said, 'Those without, don't go in. Those in—skidoo—get out of here.'

It gets into how we keep the Sabbath and it also gets into something else. It gets into how do we tithe. When you have a completely agricultural country. In Israel when God formed it, He put cities of Levites within every tribe, and for the purpose of serving and teaching the people in their tribal areas and also so they could bring their tithes to the Levites. Then the Levites would send up a tithe of a tithes offering up to Jerusalem for the priests. When you had mostly an agricultural society, what was it that they brought?

- tithe of the corn
- tithe of barley
- tithe of the wheat
- the first of the firstfruits

All of that would be brought to the local Levites in their tribe. Then the heave offering would go up to Jerusalem.

What happens? God knew that there would be this age we're living in today where we are not mostly agriculture, but we are mostly metropolitan, that is city-livers, those who live in cities. How are we to obey? Let's come to a principle here in Romans 7. We are to live by every Word of God. Now we know in the New Covenant, because everybody's Old Covenant/New Covenant, all of that, that is true. How are we to obey today? Which was also a requirement for them in their day, although it was in the letter of the law.

I'm not going to go through and explain the whole of what Paul is talking about here. In the second edition of the *Holy Bible in Its Original Order* we have Understanding Paul's Difficult Scriptures (Appendix Z). You can go through and read it there.

Romans 7:6: "But now we have been released from the law... [That's the marriage covenant law between Israel and God. That doesn't mean the law has been dismissed and abolished, because if there is no law, there is no sin. And if there is no sin, you don't need a Savior.] ...because we have died *to that* in which we were held... [How did they die? He's not writing to dead people. How do we die? *We died the death of baptism*, that's correct.] ...that in which we were held so that we might serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

That's how we are to serve: *in newness of spirit*; a spiritual covenant, now spiritual obedience. We will see how then it is handled with tithes and offerings, because some people become almost apoplectic when they hear the word 'tithe.' Today it is more difficult because of inflation.

We have the beginning of the Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church (pg. 1,288 *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*); a little further in we have a section: XX: Christian Financial Responsibility (pg 1,301). So I'm not going to go through everything that is written there. If you have other questions, you can read it. Let's go on from here and we will see how we're going to cover this today.

Now then, he asks the question, v 7: "What then shall we say? *Is the law sin? MAY IT NEVER BE!....* [The Greek there is 'me genoito'—meaning, don't even let this thought come into your mind.] ...But I had not known sin, except through the law. Furthermore, I would not have been conscious of lust, except *that* the law said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, having grasped an opportunity by the commandment, worked out within me every *kind of* lust because apart from law, sin *was* dead. For I was once alive without law; but after the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (vs 7-9). *In baptism!*

In other words, he began to see sin was not just what you do on the outside, but sin, he saw, was on the inside. Therefore, he had to be baptized and be forgiven his sins and he died the death in baptism.

We are to obey in the spirit. Let's also see something here that's very important to understand. By the time of Jesus' ministry, they were more of the metropolitan community than an agricultural community. Also another thing happened. When the Romans came in and conquered the land, they took the land and ownership of it themselves and they

would let the former owners work as tenants. So much of what they produced went to the Empire to keep it going. They also had at that time, money: silver, gold and copper coins. In Matthew we see a confrontation with the disciples of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians. And this is something that applies today.

Matthew 22:15: “Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech. And they sent their disciples *along* with the Herodians to Him, saying, ‘Master, we know that You are true, and *that* You teach the way of God in truth, and *that* You are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect the persons of men Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?’” (vs 15-17).

I don’t think they had a constitution like we have. Much of what we have in the way of the money system is not constitutional. But look what happens to everyone who resists. Just like it was in the Roman Empire. You pay or you pay—either the money or time in jail—either way you’re going to pay.

So Jesus presented this answer to them, v 18: “But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, ‘Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.’ And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription *is on* this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God’” (vs 18-21).

He’s talking about money. There are some things that belong to God that are not money. If tithing was only imposed upon those who grew crops or livestock and they alone had to pay tithes, would God be fair? *God is fair and just!* I don’t think He would be if He did it that way. Let’s see some of the things of God’s that we find explained to us. Let’s see that it also involved money. I think it’s interesting, because some people will go through and say, ‘Well, I don’t see anything here in the New Testament where it shows that you got to keep paying, that you got to pay tithes.’ We have two places we’ve already read, where we covered that Jesus said you’re not to neglect the tithing, but you have neglected judgment and law. So, tithing is not as important as loving God and judging, but it is still required. Let’s see what Jesus observed and the lesson that He taught and it involved money.

Luke 21:1: “When He looked up, He saw the rich men tossing their offerings into the treasury.” This was money. People say, ‘In the New Testament, we’re only supposed to give offerings.’ Okay, how much are you to give? ‘*Well, probably more than ten percent.*’ All right, is that what you do?

Verse 2: “Then He also saw a certain poor widow drop in two small coins. And He said, ‘Of a truth, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all *of them*; For all these have from their abundance cast into the offerings to God; but she, out of her poverty, did put *in* all the livelihood that she had’” (vs 2-4). Not everything that she had the rest of her life, but everything she probably had that day. That’s how God views our attitude toward it.

What then would be the spiritual obedience to this? Let’s come to Hebrews 7 and let’s see about the situation with Abraham and Melchisedec. I’ve given two sermons on it: *Who is/was Melchisedec?*—so I won’t go through the whole thing. We’ll cover some of the key verses here that are important for us to understand. As we’re going through here, let’s realize that God also has understood from the beginning that since He’s chosen men to do His work of teaching people, then He makes sure that they have a living, and He makes sure that there are the things necessary to accomplish what needs to be done. It’s talking here about Abraham who met Melchisedec after the battle and brought Him ten percent of the spoil. Now some people believe that Melchisedec was Shem, but he had a genealogy.

Melchisedec, Hebrews 7:3: “Without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but having been made like the Son of God, remains a Priest forever.... [We know that was the One Who became Jesus Christ.] ...But consider how great this one *was* to Whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. For on the one hand, those from among the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood are commanded by the law to collect tithes from the people—that is, *from* their brethren—even though they are *all* descended from Abraham; but on the other hand, He Who was not descended from them received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises. Now it is beyond all doubt *that* the inferior *one* is blessed by the superior *one*. And in the first case, men who die receive tithes; but in the other case, *He received tithes of Whom it is* witnessed that He lives *forever*” (vs 3-8).

Now v 9 is very interesting; I want you to think about this: “And in one sense, Levi, who receives tithes, also gave tithes through Abraham... [That shows you how important that it is to God that He would draw this analogy.] (reason being): ...for he was still in his forefather’s loins when Melchisedec met him.... [How about that! This was done before Levi was even conceived.] ...Therefore, if perfection was indeed *possible* through the Levitical priesthood—for *the law that* the people had received was *based* on it—what further need *was there for* another priest to arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and not to be named after the

order of Aaron? For since the priesthood has changed, it is obligatory *that* a change of *the* law also take place” (vs 9-12).

- Did the whole covenant change? *Yes!* From physical and letter in the law *to* spiritual and obeying in the spirit.
- Are there still those that God uses to serve the people?
- How then do people who receive all of their physical blessings from God?
- How do they show honor to God for what He has given to them through His creation? *By giving of their substance that God has given them!*

There had to be a change in the whole law—Old Covenant to New Covenant.

All the priestly laws having to do with the sacrifices were all replaced by a higher spiritual standard. Tithing and offerings, since we’re dealing in money as we covered back here with Jesus and the things of Caesar to the things of God and the widow and the giving her two mites and the rich men giving of their abundance, we see that things still must be carried on in the realm of financial responsibility.

Let’s look at how Paul handled it, because this becomes important and this becomes, along with this chapter, Heb. 7, and 1-Cor. 9. This becomes the authority to collect tithes and offerings. As you will see when you read about *Christian Financial Responsibility*, in the beliefs section (Appendices XX) you will see that God never asks for something you do not have. However, the example of the widow giving her two mites is an excellent example of what we need to do when we have no increase from our labor. If you receive a paycheck, that’s an increase for your labor—is it not? You work; you’re paid. You don’t work; you don’t get paid. You’re retired, you receive some retirement, but most people are not receiving retirements that are the result solely of their own labor. So they should have some kind of offering that they would give, depending upon what their heart is. And we will see all of that here in 1-Corinthians 9.

1-Corinthians 9:1: “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in *the* Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, without a doubt I am to you. For you are the certification of my apostleship in *the* Lord. My defense to those who are examining me is this” (vs 1-3). Why was he being examined? We will see he didn’t take a dime from them. He didn’t want to take it from them because there were too many false apostles coming along who were collecting the tithes that should have gone to Paul. We’ll see how

he explains this, because this chapter carries a lot of understanding in it.

Verse 4: “Do we not have a right to eat and to drink? Do we not have a right to take with us a sister, a wife, as also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working? Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense? Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it? Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock? Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.’ Is it because God is concerned for oxen?” (vs 4-9).

In India there was one man who read this in the Bible and he had this real skinny oxen that was pulling around the grindstone. They weren’t feeding it. So, he read this and he fed the cow and it did more work and did better when it was fed. When we see Paul’s answer to this and how he interprets it, I want you to see that this is quite an interpretation, so I’m glad he has it written.

Verse 9: “For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.’ Is it because God is concerned for oxen? Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes?... [Reaching clear back into that part of the Old Testament and saying, ‘This is meant for us.’] ...For our sakes it was written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope” (vs 9-10). Is the Church likened to a field? *Yes!* Matt. 13 and Mark 4.

Notice what he says here, here’s his conclusion, v 11: “If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things?” Which then includes whatever agricultural products may have been, whatever monetary system they had, because it was in the Roman Empire and they had a monetary system.

Verse 12: “If others participate in this authority over you, much more surely *should* not we?... [He was waiting for them by seeing him work, to volunteer and choose to give tithes and offerings. He determined he was not going to take from them, but he took from other churches. And we’ll see a little later what he said about that.] ...Nevertheless, we have not used this authority; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ. Don’t you know that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple, *and* those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar?” (vs 12-13).

What did they receive? What did the priest receive? The Levites in their local cities received the tithe there. They send up a tithe of a tithe to the priests at the temple. *That was tithes! That's what they received!*

The altar: There were certain portions of the animals sacrifices that they could have. Then there was the bread offering and the other things that they had, but it's all part of the temple and the altar. What do we make of this verse for those people who say there should not be any tithes and offerings? And generally speaking, those who say that should not tithe, they don't, even though they may profess, well, we should give more than a tenth. *Rarely happens.*

Here he is saying others were using this authority so the authority could be used and he says he could, but he didn't. It puts it into the realm that Christ said: *Make the inside clean and then the outside will be clean. Do the judgment and love and then take care of the tithing and the offerings.* It's exactly the same thing here.

I don't see how you can get away from this, v 14: "In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel." That means from tithes and offerings of the brethren to the ministry. Just like those who *give* the tithes and offerings have to be faithful to God, those who *receive* them have to be faithful to God and use the monies to do the things that should be done in preaching the Gospel and serving the brethren. Just like the meal that we had here today. That comes from the income that comes into the Church, to serve the brethren. God has blessed us in that endeavor wherever we go and we do so.

I remember one man said, 'Well, haven't we given enough tithes and offerings that the church could buy the meal for us?' I said, 'Yeah, that's right, why not.' So that's how we got started. God has blessed us every time we do. But there it is.

Verse 14: "In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel. But I have not used any of these things. And I have not written these things in order that this might *now* be done to me. For *it would be* better for me to die rather than to have anyone make my boasting void. For though I preach the Gospel, there is no *reason* for me to boast because an obligation has been laid upon me. And woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if *I do this* against my will, I have been entrusted with a ministry. What then is my reward? That in preaching the Gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without expense, so that I may not abuse my authority in the Gospel.... [So he's showing he had the full authority to do so, but he didn't do it.] ...For although I am

not under bondage to anyone, I have made myself a servant to all, so that I might gain the more" (vs 14-19).

(go to the next track)

Let's see what he says about this; let's see what happened, because the Church at Corinth was giving their tithes to the false apostles. I wonder how many of them were ex-Levites.

2-Corinthians 11:5: "But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles.... [That's the meaning of it, because he's talking about false apostles here.] ...For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet *I am* not in knowledge; for in all things I have demonstrated this to you. Now did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you freely? I robbed other churches... [they sent more.] ...receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you" (vs 5-8). That's something—isn't it? I receive a wage from the tithes that come in. Tithes come in to the church to do the things that we need to do that God wants us to do. Just like Paul, I receive a wage.

Verse 9: "And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone (for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs); for I kept myself, and will *continue* to keep myself, from being burdensome to you in anything" (v 9). So now he was really laying it on to them.

2-Corinthians 12:10: "For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses... [God said His grace would be sufficient.] ...in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*... [He didn't want to boast about all those things.] ...when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing. Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what way was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you?.... [burden/burdensome has to do with exercising the authority of collecting tithes and offerings] ...Forgive me this wrong" (vs 10-13).

It's the same principle we have in welfare today. When everybody receives everything free, what do they do? *It destroys them and they take it for granted*—right? Now look at the state that we're in—to say nothing of having neglected God. So I think that's pretty important here what Paul said. He said, 'Forgive me this wrong.'

We don't have Third Corinthians, so we can't find out what they did, if they did anything.

Let's go back and review something here for just a minute. Let's come back to 1-Corinthians 9 here for just a minute and let's review it. There are three things that can get people really wound up:

1. church
2. money
3. politics

People can have strong feelings, many different ways, but what we have to do is see what Paul said and understand what he wrote.

1-Corinthians 9:11: "If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things?... [He's talking about the authority to receive money and goods from people.] ...If others participate in this authority over you, much more surely should not we? Nevertheless, we have not used this authority..." (vs 11-12).

Doesn't say it doesn't exist! Some people can get all bent out of shape. 'Well, you ought to see the way they live high on the hog off the tithes and offerings!' Did that eliminate that authority? *No!* You're talking about the sinful, wasteful use of what should have been used to preach the Gospel—right? *Yes!* Paul didn't use this authority, does not mean it did not exist, because others were using it—right?

"...but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ.... [What are you going to do with these?]: ...Don't you know that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple... [What are the things of the temple? *Tithes and offerings*—correct? *Yes!* Couldn't be anything else—could it?] ...*and* those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar?" (vs 12-13). That's with the sacrifices.

I want you to think on v 14, because there are some people who are cantankerous enough to say that tithing no longer exists. Now maybe you don't want to tithe. That's between you and God. Everything we do is a choice. This is not a sermon to beat you over the head. This is the first time I have preached on it in two and a half years. And it was two years before that the last time that I preached, so here twice in five years. Okay? And still, I know when this message goes out to some people, they're going to say, 'There he goes again.' So I'm asking you to set aside what you think or believe:

- Are we all not going to be judged by the Scriptures? *Yes!*
- Do we all not have to believe the Scriptures? *Yes!*
- Was not Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ? *Yes!*

Verse 14: "In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to

live of the Gospel" (v 14). Now what are you going to do with that? We don't find it preached by Peter or John, but we find it preached by Paul. That cannot be a mistake.

Let's see something else. This is after he told them he was leaving, won't see him again, Acts 20:32: "And now I commit you, brethren, to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing" (vs 32-33). That doesn't mean that people didn't give him tithes and offerings. He didn't covet those things for himself. When tithes and offerings are abused, that is coveting. The things that were done with the money is one of the major reasons why that organization no longer exists. Took care of those who had need.

Verse 34: "Rather, you yourselves know that these hands did minister to my needs and to those who were with me." And yes, I have worked. I had my own business while I was ministering and took very little or no money from the Church because I made money doing loans. So I had two hated occupations: a minister and a loan broker.

I worked, but if there weren't tithes and offerings and if I didn't work and apply myself to do what God has led me to do, we wouldn't have any of the books. We wouldn't have the Bible, and not to say that I take credit for it. I have my effort, but God gives the inspiration. I have my work. I must study and know and understand the Word of God, and live by it and preach it and not get lifted up in anything.

The question really remains: Not why *we* have done it, but why wasn't it done when there were millions and millions and millions of dollars to do it? That's what gets people's hackles up, because of what was done, so I can understand that. I can understand someone saying, 'You aren't getting another penny from me!' Well, you don't have to give it to them, but that doesn't do away with the laws of God, one way or the other.

Here's something else that he said that the Lord said, just like we read back there, v 35: "*In* all things, I have showed you that you are obligated to so labor to support those who are weak, remembering the words that the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

You don't find that in the Gospels—do you? But you find it here. Is this still the Word of God and did Jesus say this? *Yes, of course!* Paul wouldn't write it if He didn't say it—right? So likewise when you come back here to 1-Cor. 9:13-14, especially v 14: "In the same way also, the Lord did command..." This is the only place that it is written.

How many places did God have to say something? *Once is quite sufficient*—isn't it? God says let our 'yes' be *yes* and our 'no' be *no* and He's going to judge us on that. We have one verse here which says, 'The Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel.' How's that to be done? Do we give pledge cards and then everybody pledge? or Is that a way of man?

If we are to do things, are we not to do it God's way? Is not God's way tithe and offering? *Yes, it is!* These verses are here. If they weren't here we'd have a different story. But I can vouch for you that this was in the Greek. Should we then send you a bill? *No, that's a man's way!* Should we then, as the Mormons, bring you in for a tithe-reconciliation conference? And you know what that is—don't you? You bring in your income taxes and you sit down with the elder in a tithe-reconciliation conference. If you haven't paid the tithe, you pay. That's an abuse.

In the final analysis, we all have to choose whether we're going to love God and obey Him or not—isn't that correct? No one's trying to take anything. Surely preaching twice in five years on tithes and offerings is not trying to take anything. And yes, there are people who give more than others. We don't examine anyone's account of tithes and giving that they give. We merely faithfully keep track of it, report to you at the end of the year, and send you an annual statement. The only other time I mention tithes and offerings is when we take up a Holy Day offering. That's it, because I don't want to make people feel under compulsion that they must give. It's a free choice you have to do. Just like

- you have to choose to keep the Sabbath
- you have to choose to love God
- you have to choose to keep the Holy Days

Isn't that correct? Everything we do is a choice.

Let's look at some things to it in addition to it. Here we have the parable of the pounds—British currency. What are we to do with what we receive? *It belongs to God!* It's not anyone's person to do with it as he sees fit. The money is to be used to preach the gospel and to serve the brethren. That's what we do. If we love God, we're going to feed the flock—correct? But here's what we are to do.

Luke 19:11: "Now, as they were listening to these things, He went on to speak a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. Therefore, He said, 'A certain nobleman set out to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and to return. And after calling ten of his servants, he gave to them ten pounds, and said to them, "Trade until I come *back*. But his citizens hated him and sent an ambassador after him, saying, "We are not willing to have this man reign over us." And it came

to pass that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he directed that those servants to whom he had given the money be called to him, in order that he might know what each one had gained by trading. And the first one came up, saying, "Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds." Then he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities." And the second one came, saying, "Lord, your pound has made five pounds." Then he also said to this one, "And you be over five cities"" (vs 11-19).

What are we to do with the money of God, because it's God's money? *We are to make it increase!* How do we make it increase? *By using it to produce the things and the methods of doing it which will feed the flock and reach out and preach the Gospel* to others so God is going to have a greater harvest when Christ returns, that's why. Any of the funds that come in belong to God. There is nothing that we don't use the money for to do what we should do with it. I consider it this way, and this is the way that it has to be. This is a principle in the Bible. ***A steward is someone who has been entrusted by its owner to use his goods and his property for the benefit of the owner.*** It all belongs to the owner!

What happens when that is not done? Well, look at the mess. We've all seen it—right? Now what happens when someone refuses to do with what God gave? You can look at it this way. All of us have a certain number of talents and abilities that God has given to us physically and mentally—correct? We are ourselves, we have our minds, our bodies, and everything, and that all belongs to God because it came from God anyway. What are we doing with this asset? This is greatest asset—isn't it?—our hearts and our minds in serving and worshiping God.

- How are we doing it?
- Are we increasing and multiplying in that?
- Are we using it to grow in grace and knowledge and understand?

All of that's accountable, too, and we're not talking about anything to do with monetary policy or fiscal policy at all. We're to be stewards for God; likewise anything that we receive. What happens to someone who received and did not respond and give back? Did not go out and work?

I've seen this a couple times, it's on the TLC, The Learning Channel. I saw a couple specials there on hoarders. Ever seen a hoarder? Man, some of those houses. You ever watch that? Watch it sometime. It's appalling! They never took the things that they had and used them to multiply it in service to others. They just gathered it all in their house and

they had it. ‘Everything I ever received, I have in my house, but I can’t move.’ Really, some of them cluttered from floor to ceiling! Garbage bags full of stuff. Junk! They just get it and accumulate it. But they’ve never done anything with it to better their lives, to better someone else’s life. I’m trying to use that as an analogy to understand when we talk about this next one here who received the one talent:

Verse 20: “But another came, saying, ‘Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.’ Then he said to him, ‘Out of your *own* mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow. Then why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank, so that at my coming I might have received it with interest?’” (vs 20-23). *He didn’t do the least thing!* That’s a judgment God is going to have to make.

What is part of the lesson of the Passover in examining ourselves? What is it? *It is that if we examine ourselves, we will not be judged of God!* In other words, if we judge ourselves, we’re not going to be judged of God. Use the Word of God and Spirit of God to judge yourself, your heart and mind, and then make sure that you’re right with God in everything.

- Where is your heart and mind? *That’s the important thing!*
- What are you doing with your life? *That’s the next most important thing!*
- What are you doing with the assets that you have?
- What are you doing with your family?
- What are you doing for your children?
- What are you doing for your husband or wife? *All of those are important!*
- What are you doing for the brethren? *All of that’s important!*

All of those you need to consider. We need to base it on the Word of God and take it from there.

I hope I’ve made friends and no enemies today. There are other Scriptures that we can cover. Let’s just look at one more here, Malachi 3. This is the hated, dreaded chapter, but let’s read it. It’s still in the Bible. For some people it’s like a Sunday keeper reading about Sabbath. They get all upset. Malachi 3 is quite an interesting one, because this had an awful lot to do with the coming New Testament. Remember, this was the last prophet. The next one to come was Christ.

Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger... [John the Baptist] ...and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek,

shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight, Behold, He comes,’ says the LORD of hosts.... [That’s a prophecy of Christ—isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*] ...‘But who can endure the day of His coming?...’” (vs 1-2). That’s His second coming. So we have His first coming. The next sentence we have the second coming.

“...And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the LORD, as in the days of old and as in former years. And I will come near to you for judgment. And I will be swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against those who swear falsely, and against those who extort from the hired laborer’s wages—and *against* those who turn away the widow, the orphan, and the stranger because they did not fear Me,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘For I *am* the LORD, I change not...’” (vs 2-6). We need to add that to one of the Scriptures concerning tithes and offerings.

“...Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the days of your fathers, you have gone away 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, “In what way shall we return?”’” (vs 6-7). A man’s treasure is where his heart is. So God wants your heart, so He requires of your treasure.

“...‘But you say, “In what way shall we return?” Will a man rob God?... [This is true and I’m not reading this to beat you over the head. I’m just reading this to you so you can understand how God looks at it. That applies to all of us.] ...Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me. But you say, “How have we robbed You?” In tithes and offerings! You *are* cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation.... [We have that example there in the Old Testament—don’t we?] ...Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove Me now with this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is* not enough *room to receive it*’” (vs 7-10). Now isn’t that true spiritually? What part of our lives before God can we neglect?

- Prayer? *No, that’s important!*
- Study? *That’s second—right?*
- Walking in the way of the Lord? *Can’t neglect that because we are to keep His commandments!*

- Loving our neighbors? *No, we can't neglect that*—can we?
- What part can we neglect?

Well, about the only one you can't do, which is this, if you live in the city and have no land you can't give the land the rest—correct? But all the others that pertain to God, that pertain to living, that pertain to neighbors, that pertain to brethren, they are all applicable—aren't they? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 11: “‘And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delightful land,’ says the LORD of hosts.... [Think of that in relationship to the Church.] ... ‘Your words have been all too strong against Me,’ says the LORD. ‘Yet you say, “What have we spoken so strongly against You?” You have said, “It is vain to serve God; and, what profit *is it* that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we are calling the arrogant blessed. Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered”’” (vs 11-15). It sounds like people who walk away from God—doesn't it? Walk back into the world. *Yes, indeed!*

I want you to get the full flow of this in how it comes down to v 16, because now it blends into what? *Into the church, into us*, so all of these things as they come down here can apply to us, every bit of it.

Verse 16: “Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, each man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. ‘And they shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him” (vs 16-18).

That's quite a chapter. ***We should serve God with all our heart and mind and strength, just like we love Him.*** I think we've covered enough on that today, so may it be another two and a half years before I broach the subject again. But nevertheless, in the final analysis, we need to ask:

- What does God think?
- What does God say?
- What do I choose to do?
- What should I do?

All of those are there all the time. This is a daily operation in everything that we do, of which tithe and offerings is part of it. After all, God made the earth and everything in it.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 11:37-42
- 2) Matthew 4:3-4
- 3) Romans 7:6-9
- 4) Matthew 22:15-21
- 5) Luke 21:1-4
- 6) Hebrews 7:3-12
- 7) 1-Corinthians 9:1-19
- 8) 2-Corinthians 11:5-9
- 9) 2-Corinthians 12:10-13
- 10) 1-Corinthians 9:11-14
- 11) Acts 20:32-35
- 12) 1-Corinthians 9:14
- 13) Luke 19:11-23
- 14) Malachi 3:1-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 13
- Mark 4

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Who is-was Melchisedec?*

Appendices from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

- Appendix Z: *Understanding Paul's Difficult Scriptures*
- Appendix M: *Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church: XX: Christian Financial Responsibility*

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Transcribed:5-6-11
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