

Introduction

One day while riding the Metrorail I saw a Jewish man seated a few rows ahead of me. Anxious to know more about how Jews viewed tithing, I gathered the courage to go up to him and ask a question. I said, "Excuse me sir. Do Jews still tithe?" He gave me a bewildered look so I asked him the question a bit differently. "Excuse me sir, I was doing some research on tithing and I would like to know if Jews still tithe". He replied, "No. Jews no longer tithe because the temple has been destroyed. But if the temple were rebuilt Jews would have to resume tithing."

I asked him, "If Jews no longer tithe how is your religious activities supported?" He said, "Members support their synagogue with offerings because only priests are allowed to receive tithe. Furthermore, tracing ones ancestry back to Aaron is next to impossible because of the diaspora, so this presents a problem with tithing. Also, in present times supporting synagogues with grain and sheep is impractical because we no longer live in an agricultural society."

Wow! The Jews no longer hold tithing as a present day requirement. I knew that tithing began with the Jews, so their views on tithing and its continued use was very important. Why? Paul answers this question: "*What advantage then hath the Jew? ...Much in every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God*" (Romans 3:1-2). Additionally, the first Christians were Jews! With that brief conversation I received an answer to almost all my tithing questions. But why was I asking questions about tithing?

I was raised in a Christian denomination that teaches tithing and I did not question or challenge my denomination's beliefs on tithing. I knew God instructed Moses to establish the tithing system because Levites were not included in the inheritance in the Promised Land. I understood that the other eleven tribes brought 10 percent of their increase to the temple and this helped meet the basic needs of the priests and Levites living among them. I assumed, like during the time of Moses, tithing was needed to support people that dedicate their lives to God and the ministry.

I was 30 years old before I began to seriously question tithing. At the time, I was attending a very prominent church in Virginia whose membership was mostly upper middle class. I was new to the area and discovered very quickly that northern Virginia was an expensive place to live. I was underemployed at the time, and like many people living in the area needed a roommate to afford a decent apartment. Paying tithes coupled with high living expenses put a tremendous strain on my finances.

My mother was unemployed and having a hard time paying her bills. I had very little money, but sent her what little I had remaining after paying my own expenses. This went on for a few months. I was giving 10 percent of my income to the church, paying my bills, and giving my mother whatever I had left, which was not enough to meet her financial obligations. This did not seem right. I asked myself, "Does the church need the money more than my mother?" It certainly didn't seem that way. The church I attended ran two services and collected approximately \$40,000 - \$60,000 a week from the second service alone. The church was in a nice building, in a good neighborhood, and had more than enough money to pay the salaries of staff (janitors, musicians, secretaries, etc.) and five pastors. The paltry amount that I paid in tithes was insignificant to the church's overall income. However, I could see how giving that money to my mother would help her pay her bills; keep the collection agencies from calling, and her home from foreclosure. I began to question whether I was disobeying the fifth commandment that says: "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12), and doing what Jesus scolded the Pharisees for doing, failing to financially support their parents by giving their money to the synagogue when he said: "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is 'devoted to God,' they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition." (NIV, Matthew 15:3-6).

I decided to give the money I paid in tithe to my mother. However, my spirit was uncomfortable with this and I wondered if I had made the right decision. I was raised to believe you give God his portion first and I feared for my financial security. I seriously believed that my income would be cursed from this but was willing to take the risk. My mother needed help. To my surprise, my financial situation did not improve or get any worse.

After the conversation with the Jewish man on the train the burden I was carrying was released. I could now support my mother financially without feeling guilty about not returning God his tithe. However, with this new knowledge came more questions. Why and how did the Old Testament tithing system change to what we see today? Do Christians know that Jews no longer tithe? How many people presently feel the way I was feeling? I knew more people needed to understand tithing.

More than ten years after that eventful train ride, I decided to write this book to educate, teach, and expose the lies and false teachings about tithing and the prosperity gospel. My objective is to free you from the pressure, shame, guilt, condemnation, and social stigma that come from not paying tithes. In each chapter you will discover and learn biblical facts 100% backed by scripture that proves that tithing has never been a Christian obligation.

The purpose of this book is not to convince you to stop giving to your local church or whatever religious organization you support! There are numerous reasons why you should continue giving. The goal of this writing is to educate and dispel the pernicious lies and false teachings about a Jewish system that is not required by Christians.