

What the Bible Teaches About the Three Tithes (23%)

(Passages from the NAS)

Questions I like to ask about a passage of the Law (the teaching): What does this passage teach about God's character? How does this principle separate "us" from the world's system? What is the blessing inherent in this passage? How does it foreshadow Jesus?

Gen 14:18-20 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. 19 He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all.

Leviticus 27:30-31

30 "Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD. 31 "If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it.

Tithe #1 Numbers 18:21-26 - - *the general tithe - paid to the Levites to fund the national government and to compensate them for their tabernacle service* 21 "To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. 22 "The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. 23 "Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24 "For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, "They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel." 25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26 "Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, "When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe.

Deuteronomy 12:17

17 "You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or new wine or oil, or the firstborn of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand.

Tithe #2 Deuteronomy 14:22-27 - *the worship tithe to be used for the celebration of convocations of worship at the sanctuary* 22 "You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. 23 "You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24 "If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, 25 then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26 "You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27 "Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.

Tithe #3 Deuteronomy 14:28-29 - *the welfare tithe - stored up in the individual cities to feed the Levites, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger who lived with the Israelites.* 28 "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town. 29 "The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Deuteronomy 26:12

12 "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied.

2 Chronicles 31:5-6

5 As soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all. 6 The sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed them in heaps.

Nehemiah 10:37

37 We will also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the oil to the priests at the chambers of the house of our God, and the tithe of our ground to the Levites, for the Levites are they who receive the tithes in all the rural towns.

Nehemiah 13:12

12 All Judah then brought the tithe of the grain, wine and oil into the storehouses.

Malachi 3:8-10

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, "How have we robbed You?" In tithes and offerings. 9 "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! 10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

Matthew 23:23

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

Luke 11:42

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

*There is thus an obvious apparent discrepancy between the legislation in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. It is harmonized in Jewish tradition, not only theoretically but in practice, by considering the tithes as three different tithes, which are named the First Tithe, the Second Tithe, and the Poor Tithe, which is called also the Third Tithe (Pe'ah, Ma'aseroth, Ma'ser Sheni, Dema'i, Ro'sh ha-shanah; compare Tob 1:7,8; Ant, IV, iv, 3; viii, 8; viii, 22). According to this explanation, after the tithe (the First Tithe) was given to the Levites (of which they had to give the tithe to the priests), a Second Tithe of the remaining nine-tenths had to be set apart and consumed in Jerusalem. Those who lived far from Jerusalem could change this Second Tithe into money with the addition of a 5th part of its value. Only food, drink or ointment could be bought for the money (Ma'aser Sheni 2:1; compare Deut 14:26). The tithe of cattle belonged to the Second Tithe, and was to be used for the feast in Jerusalem (Zebhachim 5:8). In the 3rd year the Second Tithe was to be given entirely to the Levites and the poor. But according to Josephus (Ant, IV, viii, 22) the "Poor Tithe" was actually a third one. The priests and the Levites, if landowners, were also obliged to give the Poor Tithe (Pe'ah 1:6).

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Lev 19:9-10 NAS

9 "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.
10 "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.

2 Cor 9:6-11 NAS

6 Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; 9 as it is written,

**"HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR,
HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER."**

10 Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.