

“Lightning & Thunder”
(Grace & Giving)

A special series on Stewardship

8/12/07

Text: Leviticus 27:30; Matthew 23:23; Topical

The more America has gained wealth, the less the Church has addressed the subject of GIVING.

Finally, after 13 weeks of looking at one theme after another on the topic of stewardship, we zero in on THE ‘T’ WORD: T_____.

Jesus affirmed the practice in the midst of His stern rebuke of the religious authorities. In Matthew 23:23 He says, *“²³How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest part of your income, but you ignore the important things of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things.”*

The TITHE Defined:

The meaning of the word *tithe* is “tenth part.” Leviticus 27:30 says, ³⁰*“Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD’s; it is holy to the LORD.”*

Key words/phrases:

Malachi 3:8-10 – says, *“⁸Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts,*

if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”

Understand...the practice of tithing began long before the law of Moses. **E.g.** – Abraham tithed to the high priest Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20). Jacob promised a tithe to the Lord (Genesis 28:22).

- Tithing is intended to _____.
- Tithing gives _____.
- Tithing brings _____ to our understanding of God’s grace poured down upon our lives.

FIRSTFRUITS Defined:

Proverbs 3:9 says, *“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.”*

The tithe defined the amount of the offering; firstfruits defined the nature of the offering.

VOLUNTARY GIVING (i.e. - Freewill giving – Grace giving)

Whenever you read about the construction of the tabernacle or temple in the Old Testament, you uncover statements similar to this: *“All...who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings”* (Exodus 35:29; see also Leviticus 22:18-23; Numbers 15:3; Deuteronomy 12:6, 17; Exodus 36, et al.) There was a *willingness* to give entirely above and beyond the “tenth part.” You also see this same intensity of willingness on the part of the Macedonian Christians in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 8).