



TITHES & OFFERINGS

BLOCK SEVEN

PSALMS

24:1

The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

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IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Tithing is a responsibility while Offerings are an opportunity.
2. We tithe because we are share croppers and the first tenth of the increase belongs to God.
3. We give offerings to:
 - a. Sow a seed (Proverbs 11:25; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6)
 - b. Meet a need (1John 3:17; 1 Corinthians 16:1)
 - c. Follow the lead (Matthew 19:21; 2 Corinthians 9:8)
4. "Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving." - **2 CORINTHIANS 8:7**

Throughout history, in the United States and in country after country in virtually every culture for generations past all the way back to Adam and Eve, there has been a system I know as "Share Cropping." You may know it by some other name in your country but the concept is the same.

An owner provides the land, the seeds, and the fertilizer and makes water available while the worker provides the labor to plant, cultivate, and make a crop. When harvest time comes the worker reaps the harvest for the land owner and receives his fair share of the increase as agreed. In this system both the owner and the worker are partners and both benefit from a job well done. The greater the harvest, the greater the blessing for them both.

Variations of this system have been in place since the world began. I can remember my mother shelling peas, canning vegetables, and making jellies and preserves "on halves." Up until the last few years Brenda and I owned a federal wheat farm. Since wheat in the US was in abundance we petitioned the government to allow us to grow hay for a production crop. Each

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year when it came time to harvest our crop we partnered with people who baled the hay for a percentage share of the harvest.

What I've called "share cropping" or "working of halves," the Bible teaches as "stewardship." We see this principle in the very first pages of the Bible.

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed ...

GENESIS
2:8

... the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

GENESIS
2:15

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record Jesus teaching this truth in a parable about a land owner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge of protection around it, provided the tools, and leased it out to share croppers and went into another country. When it came the time for the landowner to receive his portion of the fruits of the harvest, the share croppers imagined they owed him nothing. Jesus spoke of the greed and ungodliness of such an attitude. He didn't have very good things to say about these men.

Attitude is everything! The first time we see God unhappy with something, after the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, it was about Cain's attitude in giving back to God a portion of what he had worked for.

Adam and Eve must have lived a life of bringing their first fruits offerings to the Lord because we find their two sons following that same example.

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Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.

GENESIS

4:2-5

Notice while Cain brought an offering of the fruit he produced, Abel brought the firstborn of his flock. The reason why the LORD did not respect Cain and his offering was because Cain did not respect it. Cain's attitude reveals neither a man who is giving his first nor his best and Cain is certainly not happy about having to give anything. Perhaps he imagines it to be a waste of time and fruit. Abel on the other hand brings his firstfruits with a willing and an obedient heart. God loves a cheerful giver! (2 Cor. 9:7)

Many Christians wrongly imagine that Tithes and Offerings began as a part of the Law of Moses and are therefore no longer valid New Testament practices. Nothing could be farther from the truth and the desire of God.

- Cain and Abel brought tithes and offerings to the LORD.
- Abraham gave his tithes to the Priest Melchizedek (Genesis 14)
- Jacob entered into a covenant of tithing on all of his future increase to the LORD at Bethel, the House of God. (Genesis 28:22)

The Old Testament's historical record of mankind contains the Law of Moses. However, the Old Testament is so much bigger and more encompassing than just the Law. Jacob, for example, lived and died more than 400 years before the Law was written. Jacob's covenant commitment to be a tither was so strong that it endured and guaranteed the grace of God on his descendants

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even during the period of the Law. And, lest we imagine the New Testament to be shy about the subject of giving, note that Jesus said more about money than He did about heaven and hell combined. Even Jesus paid His taxes and gave His offerings. He knew firsthand what the Psalmist David and the Prophet Malachi said was true:

Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

PROVERBS

3:9-10

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field.

MALACHI

3:10-11

The word "Tithe" means "One Tenth." God has established this as His Share. The Believer is admonished from both the Old Testament and the New Testament, under the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Law, and the Grace of Christ, to bring the first tenth of all of our increase to the Lord, for it is His holy share. Then we are also encouraged to give offerings above and beyond our tithes so that together they can provide ministry and meet needs through the Church of the Living God. Our examples were those first century Christians who were fully engaged in these matters.

