

Lesson 146 - God's Tithing System

1. What is tithing considered towards God? **Leviticus 27:30**

EGW: He who gives men power to get wealth has with the gift bound up an obligation. Of all that we acquire He claims a specified portion. The tithing is the Lord's. "All the tithing of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree," "the tithing of the herd, or of the flock, . . . shall be holy unto the Lord." Leviticus 27:30, 32. The pledge made by Jacob at Bethel shows the extent of the obligation. "Of all that Thou shalt give me," he said, "I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Genesis 28:22. {Ed 138.3}

2. How much is tithing? **Leviticus 27:32**

EGW: The Lord declared that he required his husbandmen to give him the returns of his vineyard. Men are not to use their possessions as their own, but only as intrusted to them. The Lord's portion is to be faithfully returned to him. "All the tithing of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem aught of his tithings, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithing of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed." {RH, July 17, 1900 par. 18}

3. Who took the responsibility to still pay tithing simply because all the possession legally was his to keep though he chose not to keep any of it personally? **Genesis 14:17-24, Hebrews 7:4**

EGW: Few, if subjected to such a test, would have shown themselves as noble as did Abraham. Few would have resisted the temptation to secure so rich a booty. His example is a rebuke to self-seeking, mercenary spirits. Abraham regarded the claims of justice and humanity. His conduct illustrates the inspired maxim, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Leviticus 19:18. "I have lifted up my hand," he said, "unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich." He would give them no occasion to think that he had engaged in warfare for the sake of gain, or to attribute his prosperity to their gifts or favor. God had promised to bless Abraham, and to Him the glory should be ascribed. {PP 135.2}

4. Who continued to pay tithe or a tenth despite no Levitical law existing yet? **Genesis 28:20-22**

EGW: The tithing system reaches back beyond the days of Moses. Men were required to offer to God gifts for religious purposes before the definite system was given to Moses, even as far back as the days of Adam. In complying with God's requirements, they were to manifest in offerings their appreciation of His mercies and blessings to them. This was continued through successive generations, and was carried out by Abraham, who gave tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. The same principle existed in the days of Job. Jacob, when at Bethel, an exile and penniless wanderer, lay down at night, solitary and alone, with a rock for his pillow, and there promised the Lord: "Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." God does not compel men to give. All that they give must be voluntary. He will not have His treasury replenished with unwilling offerings. {3T 393.1}

5. Who is the tithe intended for? **Numbers 18:21, 23-24** [Not looking for the name but rather the activity found at the beginning of verse 23 and several times in verse 21.]

EGW: (no comment)

6. How much of the tithe are ministers to keep? **Numbers 18:26**

EGW: (no comment)

7. Who are ministers to take tithe from despite all being of the seed of Abraham, at least spiritually speaking? **Hebrews 7:5-6, Galatians 3:29**

EGW: (no comment)

8. What part of funds received is tithe to be paid upon? **Deuteronomy 14:22** [This is important for self-employed people mostly.]

EGW: (no comment)

9. If we do not pay tithes, what are we considered towards God? **Malachi 3:8**

EGW: The Lord, by the prophet Malachi, asks the question, "Will a man rob God?" He would seem to imply that such a crime could not be possible. But despite the heinous character of the offense, he adds, "Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." The fact that this solemn charge is brought against the professed people of God, should lead us to earnest self-examination, watchfulness, and prayer, lest we be included in its condemnation. {RH, May 16, 1882 par. 1}

10. What is placed upon those that know that they should be paying tithes and do not? **Malachi 3:9**

EGW: It is the spirit of covetousness which leads men to keep for gratification of self means that rightfully belong to God, and this spirit is as abhorrent to Him now as when through His prophet He sternly rebuked His people, saying, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Malachi 3:8, 9. {AA 339.1}

11. Where is the tithes to be placed? **Malachi 3:10**

EGW: Money is a talent, which is to be placed in God's treasury, for investment in his cause. But many are robbing God in tithes and offerings. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me," God declares. "But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." {RH, September 12, 1899 par. 14}

He who gave His only begotten Son to die for you, has made a covenant with you. He gives you His blessings, and in return He requires you to bring Him your tithes and offerings. No one will ever dare to say that there was no way in which He could understand in regard to this matter. God's plan regarding tithes and offerings is definitely stated in the third chapter of Malachi. God calls upon His human agents to be true to the contract He has made with them. "Bring ye all the tithes into the

storehouse," He says, "that there may be meat in mine house." {RH, December 3, 1901 par. 2}

12. What is the purpose of placing tithe there? **Malachi 3:10** [Keep in mind that nowhere does Ellen White state that the storehouse is to be equated with the General Conference management of funds.]

EGW: The question is asked, "Will a man rob God?" And the answer might be given: "Yes, Lord. Some whom Thou hast honored, and given a place in Thy work, have been engaged in robbing Thee for years. They have indulged themselves, and have centered the good things of life upon themselves, and have refused to act their part in fulfilling the requirements of God." "Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee?" Now listen, for God is speaking to you out of His Word. "In tithes and offerings." How does God regard the robbery of His treasury? Listen: "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Hear the words of the most high God, you who have been robbing God: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house"--not a meager portion, not one half, or one quarter, but "all the tithes, . . . that there may be meat in Mine house." The reason is so plain that it commends itself to everyone who has been cherishing the hateful plant of selfishness,--"that there may be meat in Mine house." The reason that the Lord wants all the tithes in the treasury is that there may not be a scarcity of funds when His providence opens new fields to be occupied by the messengers of truth, that souls as precious in the sight of God as your own may come into the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent, and in their turn become missionaries to the souls of others. {PH149 61.1}

13. What does God invite us to do? **Malachi 3:10**

EGW: The Lord of heaven challenges those whom he has supplied with his bounties to prove him. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." {RH, December 1, 1896 par. 21}

14. What can we expect in return? **Malachi 3:10**

EGW: Duty is duty, and should be performed for its own sake. But the Lord has compassion upon us in our fallen condition, and accompanies His commands with promises. He calls upon His people to prove Him, declaring that He will reward obedience with the richest blessings. "Prove me now

herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts." He encourages us to give to Him, declaring that the returns He makes to us will be proportionate to our gifts to Him. "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." God is not unrighteous to forget your work and your labor of love. {RH, December 3, 1901 par. 3}

15. Why do some think that tithing stopped when the Levitical laws regarding feast days happened to cease? **Leviticus 27:32-34** [In other words, who do they say tithing was only for despite Abraham and Jacob paying tithe beforehand.]

EGW: Such was the practice of patriarchs and prophets before the establishment of the Jews as a nation. But when Israel became a distinct people, the Lord gave them definite instruction upon this point: "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." This law was not to pass away with the ordinances and sacrificial offerings that typified Christ. As long as God has a people upon the earth, his claims upon them will be the same. {RH, May 16, 1882 par. 26}

16. What are the closing words of Jesus to point to the fact that He did not do away with tithing? **Matthew 23:23**

EGW: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." In these words Christ again condemns the abuse of sacred obligation. The obligation itself He does not set aside. The tithing system was ordained by God, and it had been observed from the earliest times. Abraham, the father of the faithful, paid tithes of all that he possessed. The Jewish rulers recognized the obligation of tithing, and this was right; but they did not leave the people to carry out their own convictions of duty. Arbitrary rules were laid down for every case. The requirements had become so complicated that it was impossible for them to be fulfilled. None knew when their obligations were met. As God gave it, the system was just and reasonable; but the priests and rabbis had made it a wearisome burden. {DA 616.3}

17. When we pay tithe, what ought we not do, especially in public? **Luke 18:10-12**

EGW: He proceeds to recount his good deeds: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." The religion of the Pharisee does not touch the soul. He is not seeking Godlikeness of character, a heart filled with love and mercy. He is satisfied with a religion that has to do only with outward life. His righteousness is his own--the fruit of his own works--and judged by a human standard. {COL 151.1}

18. What will happen to such people that brag about paying tithe? **Luke 18:14**

EGW: From the parable of the Pharisee and the publican we learn that to profess excellence which we do not possess, will exclude us from the grace which alone can make us of value in the sight of God. The teachings of Christ give no countenance to a spirit of self-righteousness which would exalt self over others. Vanity is never the result of virtue and true piety. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." {ST, February 19, 1885 par. 12}

19. What two out of three kingly titles are considered towards tithe payers? **Hebrews 7:2** [In other words, we shall receive what and be at what?]

EGW: (no comment)

20. What was Abraham, and all tithe payers for that matter, considered in the eyes of God? **Hebrews 7:4**

EGW: (no comment)