

TITHING – IS IT RIGHT OR IS IT WRONG?

What One Man Discovered When Challenged to Study!

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The following booklet is a study on the subject of Tithing. I will enter this study with some bias, because of my convictions. This study is to further the truth and to help this soul in the quest of Holiness. I pray that through this study, I will be able to learn and apply the results to anyone else who might be troubled in their heart concerning this subject. I will use only scripture in this text so that YHVH will be glorified and not man.

In this day when pastors are being revealed on every side about their dishonesty, the Tanakh commandment about tithes is in question. Is it valid today or just an Torah commandment?

When we look at anything in this world, and we want to partake in that thing, we must look into its origins. We must do so also with the subjects in the Bible. We look at the things of the world to ponder if YHVH will be Glorified in our doing those things. We look at the subjects in the Bible to see the intent and blessings that YHVH had, or should I say has, by our obedience in those things. Thus, we must do the same thing with the subject of tithing. We see the word “Tithe” in the Bible and that word is taken from the Hebrew word “Ma-asar” which literally

means one tenth. This was a Temple contribution that was given to the storehouse of YHVH to be used by the priests.

All indications are that the animal tithes were used as sacrifices. One might wonder if tithing was a common practice before the law of Moses was given. There are indications that there was a ten percent tax that was similar to a tithe in ancient cultures. These taxes existed in the fourteenth century BC in Assyria and the sixth century BC in Babylon. Both of these taxes (tithes) were used for the upkeep of a temple court and were referred to as a “sacred tax”.

TITHING PRIOR TO THE MOSAIC LAW

Since tithing is a part of the Torah, one wonders if any of the Bible characters mentioned before the Torah were observed as having tithed. While I am not a Bible scholar, I am able to study YHVH’s word and here are the results.

Two people are mentioned in the Bible as pre-Torah tithers. These men were Abraham and Jacob. In Genesis 14 we see that Abraham had just defeated the kings who had attacked Sodom and Gomorrah and taken Abraham’s nephew Lot captive. Abraham went to battle to save his nephew and was successful. The King of Salem (later called Jerusalem) brought bread and wine to Abraham after the battle and proclaimed a blessing over Abraham. This king was named Melchizedek and he was the priest of El Elyon. Abraham was so happy that YHVH had kept him in a time of trouble, that he decided to give a tenth of all the spoils to Melchizedek.

And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the

king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. Genesis 14:17-20

Since the King of Salem was a priest to YHVH, then giving the tenth to him was the same as giving it to YHVH. We must remember that Abraham came from the area of Asia that would later become Babylon and it was possible that the practice of tithing (the sacred tax) was common at his time. John Seldon (a noted Christian author) points out that the gifts that Abraham gave to Melchezidek were tithes only on the spoils of war, as noted by the historian Josephus in 10:2 of his "History of the Jews." The Bible says nothing about Abraham's tithe being mandatory. Abraham had received a blessing and wanted to be a blessing in return

We now come to Genesis 28, and we find here that Jacob is promising YHVH that He would pay a tithe (tenth) of all that YHVH would give him.

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Genesis 28:20-22

The question that comes to mind is, who did Jacob pay his tithes to? He probably paid them to his father Isaac. The priesthood (although there was no Levitical priesthood yet) at that time was passed down through the family, thus Isaac received it.

TITHING UNDER THE MOSAIC LAW

The next area in the Bible where tithes are mentioned is in Leviticus 27:30-32. In these scriptures, YHVH is saying that one tenth of the land, either seed or fruit, belongs to Him. He goes as far as to say that it is holy to the Lord. YHVH said that if a man wanted to keep the food, he would have to substitute the monetary value of the food plus add 20 percent.

And 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. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe 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. Leviticus 27:30-33

This seems to suggest that YHVH wanted the tithe to remain of an agricultural nature. That is why he made redeeming a man's tithe such a costly thing. The Levites couldn't eat gold and silver now could they.

The question comes to mind, why did YHVH command that the people of YHVH were to tithe. One wonders, why such strict commandment? The answer is quite simple. In Numbers 18,

we see that the tithes that were offered up from the children of Israel, were to be given to the Levites as an inheritance from YHVH.

But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. Numbers 18:23-24

If one remembers back when the land was divided up among the tribes, Levi didn't get an inheritance. They had no land to farm and no animals to eat. These people would starve if it were not for the food that YHVH offered them from the children of Israel. The interesting thing is that once the Levites had the heave offering, they had to offer a tenth of their gift to the YHVH. The whole affair would seem to keep everyone humble.

We now go into the book of Deuteronomy and we see something interesting. In chapter 26, we see that YHVH had specific uses for the tithes of Israel.

When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; Deuteronomy 26:12

He said that it was acceptable to give the tithes to the Levites (whom it was intended for) and also feed the fatherless and widow. We go to Deuteronomy 14 and here we see that everything belongs to YHVH and He had His way of dividing the tithes for their best use.

Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

Deuteronomy 14:22-29

When we read this passage, we must remember that the Jewish religious calendar was made up of seven-year periods. YHVH states in this passage that if the event arose that the tither was too far from the place that the Lord had for the tithe to be brought (referring to Jerusalem) then the tither was to take the tithe and convert it into money. He was to use it in any way that he chose but was commanded to remember the Levite. On the third (and sixth) year of the seven-year cycle, the tither was to store his tithes at the city gate to share it with the Levite, fatherless, stranger and widow of his/her city. There was no tithe on the seventh year.

There is no doubt in my mind, that there was a very fine line that separated a tithe from the offering. Firstly, they were both commandments. They both were comprised of giving of the prized possessions of farmers in ancient Israel. As a matter of fact, the only difference that I can see, is that the offering was to be given as an atonement for offenses toward YHVH whereas, the tithe was a commandment as an offering to help the Priests and Levites. Therefore, if a person in the church is not a farmer and offers his skill to further the church, is that not a tithe? I think it is.

I mentioned earlier that the tithe was not only for the Levite, but also for the fatherless and widow. We now come to the time when the prophet Amos was on the scene. It seemed that the opulent people were oppressing the poor of that time. That was not their only offense though. They were tithing to the false gods of their neighbors while they were afflicting the poor.

We will now look at some Old Testament scriptures which will show that the tithe seemed to accompany religious and social reform. In II Chronicles, chapter 31 we see that King Hezekiah went to great lengths to reinstate the tithe in his reform of Israel.

He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the LORD. Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD. 2 Chronicles 31:3-4

We see in verse four that the king demanded that the people of Israel contribute support to the priests and Levites so that they might devote themselves to the YHVH. This commandment was the tithe. We see reform again in the book of Nehemiah, chapter 13 verses 4-13.

And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Nehemiah 13:10-11

We see that the Levites had been neglected during the time that Nehemiah was absent. The neglect had been so bad that the Levites had to go back to farming (which they did in Babylon in exile) just to survive. Verse eleven seems to suggest that Nehemiah acted stern with Judah to the point where all of Judah brought tithes to the Levites. Nehemiah appointed Levites to distribute the tithes to all of the Levites and all was well again.

There were promises and curses for Old Testament tithers and non-tithers. Such can be seen in the book of Malachi.

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. 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. 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. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:8-12

The scripture in Malachi has been used for many years by ministers and pastors to cause their parishioners to tithe. Those in the pews are coerced into believing that every little problem in their lives are the result of a curse pronounced upon them by YHVH Himself because they are not faithful givers. Those in the pulpit then tell the parishioners that if they will tithe faithfully, their lives will be blessed and that their problems will be greatly lessened or will disappear completely. They do this by suggesting that they are extensions of the priests and Levites mentioned in the Old Covenant. It's too bad that they haven't read or are deliberately ignoring the words of the Apostle John:

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:5-6

TITHING AND THE JEWISH RABBINIC PERIOD

This study would not be complete without the study of the words that were uttered by the leaders who lived in the Rabbinic period. This period was roughly from 400 BC to 500 AD. This was the time of the Oral Law, a time that great men attempted to explain the Torah and enforce the Torah. It is interesting to note that all of the Rabbis saw no conflict between the written law (that law that was given to Moses) and the oral law (the traditions of men).

These Rabbis saw the tithe (Ma-asar) as a heave offering (Trumah) for the priests and Levites. They saw this as an act of righteousness on behalf of the giver. An act of righteousness was called Halacha. Another way to express Halacha is “good works”. The Rabbis divided the giving of the Trumah into three separate classes. The generous man was to give one thirtieth, the common man one fiftieth and the miserly were to give one sixtieth. When the Rabbis talked about the miserly they said, “but if a person has a bad eye, then let him give only one sixtieth”. This can be compared to Matthew 6:19-23.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! Matthew 6:19-23

In Matthew, Yeshua talks about the bad eye and equates it with serving mammon. When one looks at the Mishna 1:1, we see that the Rabbis demand that the tithe was to be of common vegetable matter and not wild stock. This would keep it so that the tither would give from his increase and not gleanings of a wild field. The paying of tithes by the way of money was not an accepted practice until near the end of the 2nd century AD.

It was around 100 AD. that the Israelites started paying tithes not only to the priests and Levites, but also to the synagogues. This was done to support the scholars and Rabbis that were in YHVH's service. The oral law also stated that tithes were only to be paid in the land of Israel. John Seldon, in his book titled "History of The Tithe" emphatically points out:

"Tithes did not apply outside Eretz (the land of) Israel but was observed in Egypt, Moab, Syria, Babylon, Ammon and all of Trans-Jordan, because that was the promised land".

After the temple was destroyed the tithe was used more and more in place of the sacrifice to support Rabbis, scholars and the poor. In the seventeenth century AD, the Jewish author Joel Serks wrote about the tithe:

"Tithing ones earnings is a voluntary custom and is not obligatory under Mosaic or Rabbinical law".

In the Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 12; pg 152, we read about the tithe:

"The whole of the tithe should be given to the poor and none of it is to be used for any other religious purpose".

As we can see, the tithe, from the time that it was instituted, was meant as a means to support the poor and needy. After the temple was destroyed and the Jews were dispersed, the law of tithing ceased. Finally, in the words of Rabbi Maimonides (Ram Bam) we read

“At this day, by their law, they pay none. Those who live in the land of Israel, for want of their priesthood and temple, and those who live dispersed in other countries, and here in all agree”.

TITHING AND THE EARLY CHURCH

Now that we have seen that tithing was an institution that was given to the Tanakh’s saints, let’s look and see if it is applicable to the Brit Hadasha believer. Tithing was never adopted by the early church and was never intended as a funding of an ecclesiastical organization. In the Gospels the subject of tithing is mentioned strictly in a Jewish format but after Pentecost the subject of tithing is never mentioned in the context of the early Church.

First of all, let us look at our Adonai and Savior, Yeshua, and see if there are any examples of his tithing. The answer is that there are no examples of His tithing. Many Christians would probably use the fact that Yeshua was the Son of El Elyon, so therefore He would be exempt. That sounds like a convincing argument, but how come Yeshua kept every Torah command, but not that one. Could it be that He knew that it was not important or is it just possible that the writers of the Gospels forgot to include His tithing. Yeshua was quite emphatic about the Pharisees and their tithing. He saw them putting in large amounts of money and then announcing their great deed to everyone within an earshot. He declared that the old widow of Luke 21:3-4 had put in more in her poverty, than the Pharisees in their wealth. She was giving to

the temple treasury and not tithing and even if she were tithing, she technically still lived in the Tanakh era as Yeshua had not laid down his life yet.

Yeshua is quoted as saying that we should render unto Caesar those things that are Caesar's, and unto YHVH those things that are of Elohim. Now it stands to reason that since YHVH is spirit, we should render to Him things of the spirit. Tithing was a form of worship in the Tanakh and our spiritual service should be our worship in this covenant. One should consider that Yeshua came to fulfill the Torah (which He said and did), so if He came as our sacrifice and offering, which are both part of the Torah, then He must have atoned for our tithing obligation too. One must take into account that any person in the four gospels that was mentioned before the crucifixion of Yeshua, was still under the Torah (as was Yeshua) because the Brit Hadasha is procured in His blood. Things are very different after His death.

When we enter the Acts of the Apostles and the many Epistles, we see Christianity in its true form. The Brit Hadasha says in Revelation 1:6, that Yeshua has made us Kings and Priests to Elohim the Father. The Torah said that the Priests were to receive the tithe. Why are the priests of today told by their brothers that they must pay the tithe?

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Revelation 1:5-6

In the book of Acts, we are shown how the Brit Hadasha believer is supposed to act, where giving is concerned. In the second chapter of Acts, we see an interesting scripture when we look at the 44th and 45th verses. It reads beautifully:

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. Acts 2:44-45

This suggests that the early church had a heart for giving. They did not need to have a food closet or church organization to pass out the goods, because it was in everyone's heart to give as they saw the need. In verse 42 of that same chapter we see that the believers had "fellowship" with one another. The word fellowship is the Greek word "Koinonia" which here means benefaction or contribution. When the believers met together, they benefited and contributed to those who needed it.

We can then go to Acts, where we read about other charitable acts. The scripture goes as follows.

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Acts 4:34-35

Again, we see charity in the heart of the first century believer. These people didn't need to be persuaded because they were the example of charity.

Later in the first century we can still see the loving kindness in the church as exemplified in these two scriptures. The two scriptures to look at are; Romans 15:

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. Romans 15:26-27

And 1 Corinthians 16:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 16:1-3

We are shown in this scripture that times were tough for the church in Jerusalem. Persecution and hunger were the theme of the day and the church in that city needed help or else they would perish. In the chapter in Romans, we read; *“For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem”*. We see in the 1 Corinthians scripture that Paul had to ask in a firmer way. Paul says that he had to order them to put money in the plate on the first day of the week. This would be for the saints in Jerusalem. We recognize that these were one-time requests and not tithe commandments. We are beginning to see a pattern here, and that being that we are not commanded to give but when we become greedy, YHVH will command us to give. This thought comes to mind; a parent knows

that his son is now eighteen years old and should know the ins and outs of life, but the parent is always close by to correct his child, should that child go astray.

Scripture shows us that while YHVH does not command a tithe in the Brit Hadasha, He does require us to help the needy and wanting in His fold. This has been disregarded in many of the modern churches. I for one have approached pastors in the past and informed them of people who were out in the street, only to be told that YHVH was trying to deal with these people and that the ordeal would bring these people to a point where YHVH could use them. I have found that in most cases that action usually causes the people in need to leave the church and live in doubt that the people of YHVH really care for anyone but themselves. And I have also seen that this pious attitude also has a trickle-down effect to the parishioners, who use the false sense of caring to keep their pockets padded in a comfortable manner. I pity these pastor's souls at the judgment. How much better would it be to bring these people in and feed their souls and spirits.

THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS AND THE TITHE

One might wonder what the early Church Fathers had to say on the subject of giving. Did they mention tithing or not? Justin Martyr, considered a genius of his time was born around 110 A.D. in Samaria. He is reported to have been martyred in the year 165. Martyr was a leader in what is referred to as the sub-apostolic age. Listen to what he says about a typical Sunday back in his time.

“And on the day called Sunday, people who live in the city or in the country are gathered together in one place and the memoirs of the apostles are read as long as time permits. Then when the reading ceases, the president (Nassim) verbally instructs or exhorts the

people to imitate these good things. Then we all rise together and pray prayers. And as we have said, when the prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president offers prayers of thanksgiving to the best of his ability and the people say amen. And there is a distribution to each and a participation of that of which thanks has been given. And to those who are absent, a portion is sent by the deacon and they that are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit. And what is collected is deposited with the president who succors the orphans and widows and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning with us” This can be found in “Ante Nicene Fathers” Vol. 1.

The next reference is taken from the “Constitution of The Holy Apostles” written in the second half of the third century and can be found in “Ante Nicene Fathers”; Volume 7, page 435.

“But if you say that those who give alms are such as these, and if we do not receive from them, which shall we administer to the widows and from whence shall the poor among the people be maintained. But if a gift to be wanting, inform the brethren and make a collection from them and thence minister to the orphans and widows in righteousness”.

On page 471 of the same volume, we further read:

“All the first fruits of the winepress, the threshing floor, the oxen and the sheep shalt thou give to the priests. That thy storehouse and garners and the products of thy land might be blessed and that thou mayest be strengthened with corn and wine and oil and the herds of thy cattle and the flocks of thy sheep may be increased. Thou shalt give a tenth of thy increase to the orphan and to the widow and to the poor and to the stranger. All of the

first fruits of thy hot bread, barrels of wine, oil or honey or nuts or grapes or the first fruits of other things shalt thou give to the priests. But those of silver, of garments and of all sorts of possessions to the orphans and to the widows”.

When we looked at Romans 12:13; 15:27 and I Corinthians 16:1-2, we saw the practice of Koinonia. The word literally denotes a close bond and it expresses a two-sided relationship with an emphasis either on the giving or on the receiving. It means a participation or impartation. Our relationship with YHVH is not just vertical but also horizontal. Isn't it interesting that the intersecting lines of this perfect relationship form a cross! True Koinonia is expressed in freely offered sacrifice.

Last but certainly not least, we have the man called Tertullian. This man was born in 145 AD. He was born again in the Ruach Ha Kodesh in 185 and became a great elder in 190. He became Bishop of Carthage around the year 200 and died around AD 240, but not before earning the title “Founder of Latin Christianity”. Let's see what Tertullian had to say about giving:

“The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining their honor not by purchase but by established character. There is no buying or selling of any sort in the things of God, and although we have our treasure chest it is not made up of purchase money as of a religion that has its price. On the monthly day if he likes, each puts in a small donation, but only if it be his pleasure and only if he is able for there is no compulsion, all is voluntary. These gifts are as it were pieties deposit fund, for they are not taken thence and spent on feasts, drinking bouts or eating houses, but to support and bury poor people and to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents and to old people confined to the house. Such too that have suffered shipwreck and if there happen

to be any in the mines or banished to the islands or shut up in prisons. For nothing but their fidelity to the cause of Gods' church they became the nurslings of their confession. But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that leads many to put a brand upon us `see, they say, how they love one another'". Ante Nicene Fathers; Vol.3 pg.46.

The testimony of the Jews in the Last century BC and the first century AD, as well as Paul and the early church in the land of Israel and the writings of the Ante Nicene Fathers all witness to the voluntary nature of giving, not as a responsibility but as an action of righteousness. The true believer recognized something that superseded the concept of what we consider in our minds as law. Holy giving made the church grow rapidly.

THE MIDDLE AGES / AND THE CHRISTIANIZING OF THE TORAH

In the latter half of the third century we see that the ecclesiastic church was coming into full bloom and with that flower comes the idea that the church should use the tithing law in its affairs. We will see that it was not yet a commandment in the church, but the stage was set for its appearance. There was a saint that lived during that time. His name was Thasseus Cyprean. Cyprean was born around 200 AD. He became a Christian about the year 246 and excelled to the office named Bishop of Carthage in the year 248. He is reported to have died in 258. He wrote several works but the one that we will use is titled "*The 65th Epistle of Cyprean*" The following is taken from "Ante Nicene Fathers" Vol.5 pg. 367.

"How much rather ought those not to be bound by worldly anxieties and involvement, who being busy with divine and spiritual things, are not able to withdraw from the church and have leisure for worldly and secular doings. The form of which ordination and

engagement the Levites formally observed under the law, so that when the eleven tribes divided the land and shared the possessions, the Levitical tribe which was left free for the temple, the altar and divine ministries, received nothing from that portion of the division. But while others cultivated the soil, that portion (the Levites) only cultivated the favor for God and received the tithe from the eleven tribes, and their food and maintenance, the fruits that grew, which was by divine authority and arrangement so that they that waited in divine services, might in no respect be called away nor be compelled to consider or transact secular business, which plan and rule is now maintained in respect to the clergy. That they that are promoted by clerical ordination in the Church of the Lord may be called off in no respect from the divine administration or be tied down by worldly anxieties and matters. But in the honor of the brethren who contribute, receiving as it were tenths of the fruits that they may not withdraw from the altars and sacrifices, but may serve day and night in heavenly and spiritual things”.

We can plainly see by the script above that tithing was a contribution that was received by those that served the Lord and his people. We can also see that a ecclesiastical order was developing that would later lead to the Catholic Church.

In the book “Ancient Facts and Fictions Concerning Churches and Tithes”, written by the Earl of Selbourne (Randall Palmer) and published in 1892, we see some very interesting facts about tithing. On pages 23 and 24 we read;

“Not tithes in particular, but all church property of every kind, was from early times and down to the fourteenth century described as the patrimony (inherited estate) of the poor. The poor were always, and always must be in a special degree, objects of Christian

ministry. To them the Gospel was preached. The relief of the temporal as well as the spiritual wants of the destitute and the sick, old aged and afflicted of strangers and foreigners, of prisoners and captives was also from the beginning part of the office and the work of the church.

Of tithes, there is no mention in the western church until the beginning of the fifth century. None indeed in this particular connection until later”.

The first Christian decree making the tithes into a law came in the year 786 in England. The nineteenth century writer named Henry Hallum in his book titled “View of The State of Europe in The Middle Ages”, published in 1854; declares the following. He says;

“The slow and gradual manner in which Parochial churches became independent appears to be in itself a sufficient answer to those who describe a great antiquity to the universal payment of tithes. There are however, more direct proofs that this species of ecclesiastical properties were acquired not only with decrees but with considerable opposition.”

We find the payment of the tithes first enjoined by a canon of a provincial council in France near the end of the sixth century. From the ninth to the twelfth and even later it is continually enforced with similar authority. Father Paul remarks that most sermons preached about the eighth century inculcate (repeatedly teach with force) this as a duty and even seem to place the summit of Christian perfection in its performance. This reluctant submission of the people of a general and permanent tribute is perfectly consistent with the eagerness displayed by them in accumulating voluntary donations upon the church.

Charlemagne was the first who gave that confirmation of a civil statute to these ecclesiastic injunctions. No one, at least has, so far as I know, adduced any earlier law for the payment of the tithes, than one of his (Charlemagne's) capitularies. This capitulary is known as the 'Baloozee Capitularia,' it dates from 789 A.D."

A capitulary is a statement of Law. Charlemagne, went by two other names; Carolus Magnus or Charles the Great. He was the King of the Franks from 768-814. He was crowned King of the Holy Roman Empire by Pope Leo III to whom he was fiercely loyal. Charlemagne's' capitulary regulated the tithe and divided it into three parts;

1. The Bishop and his clergy,
2. The poor,
3. Support for the fabric of the church.

The "Encyclopedia Britannica" 11th edition; printer in 1911 says of tithes in this era; *"Thus they became transferable to laymen and sellable like ordinary property in spite of the injunctions of the Third Laterine Council"*.

Henry Hallum says in his book, on page 264; *"Payments of tithes became payable out of sources of income that were not originally tithable. Not just crops and field items but every form of income imaginable and every kind of labor"*.

Pope Boniface VIII, who was pope from 1294 to 1303 put out his infamous "Unum Sanctum Bull" (a decree) in November of 1302. On that date Boniface made papal claim to world supremacy when he said, *"If the King resists the pope, he resists God Himself"*. This

applied to the tithe also. Thomas Aquinas (a co-author of the Bull) went even further to say that; *“We declare, define and affirm that every man must obey the pope or forfeit his salvation”*. In other words, he was saying that if a man didn't pay his tithe (among other things) then he wasn't a good Christian and YHVH would remember that on judgment day. It is funny that in the 20th century the same thing is said about tithes. A synod held in Rome declared that this Bull gave a correct expression of the view of the Roman Catholic Church.

Apart from tithing, the pope had a great deal of financial resources at his disposal. These included briberies and the sale of indulgences. The philosophy of the indulgence was criminal in itself. According to this thought, Christ and His saints performed more good works than were needed and these surplus deeds of goodness were at the disposal of the church and could be sold to the poor. Thus, one could buy their relative out of purgatory or even supposedly acquire your own salvation through them. Other resources at the popes' disposal were:

1. Anates: First Fruits: The first-year wages in office which was taken from Bishops and Abbots.
2. Reservations: Money paid by richest people in order to succeed to higher office.
3. Expectancies: Nominations sold by the pope to those who expected to succeed to pope.
4. Commendations: Provisional appointments on promise to pay an annual tax.
5. Jus Spoleorum: The ownership of all property by the pope.
6. Tithing: Of church property for urgent matters.

The situation became so bad that individual priests exacted the tithe from the income of peasants. They demanded additional payment for things such as Marriage ceremonies, baptism and confession. Finally, and in conclusion of this section, “The Council of Trent” which

convened from 1545 to 1563, enjoined the due payment of tithes but went one step farther by excommunicating those who withheld the tithe.

THE REFORMATION

When Martin Luther nailed his thesis to the door of The Castle Church in Wittenberg it was a thesis on reformation. He never intended to start a new religion but was seeking to reform the old one. Some of the idea of his reform proposal was based on the misuse of money by the ecclesiastic church. Most of the doctrine of the Protestant Church was just modified doctrine from the Roman Catholic Church, and this was especially true with the tithe. In most cases, the tithes given to the new church were used for the clergy and to build megalithic church buildings, much to the neglect of the poor.

UNDERSTANDING “THE LAW” USAGE IN THE BRIT HADASHA

Often when speaking to Christians about the Torah I encounter the notion that the Torah is done away with because it was nailed to the Cross with Yeshua. There is a basis for this statement because Apostle Paul does use that terminology. It is important however to understand how Paul understood the Torah (Law) so that his words are not taken out of context.

Yes, Paul talks about the Law, but what almost 99% of Christians fail to know, because they were never taught this, is that Paul mentions seven different Laws in his Epistles. One has to study which Laws Paul is talking about before one can understand Paul’s meaning when he talks about Laws being done away with.

So, you ask, if there are seven Laws, which laws are they? How do they apply to the Church of Yeshua and His followers? In a nutshell, here is the list of Laws that Paul talks about:

1. The Law of God: Romans 3:31; 7:22-23 and 8:7
2. The Law of Sin: Romans 7:23-25
3. The Law of Sin and Death: Romans 8:2
4. The Law of The Spirit of Life: Romans 8:2
5. The Law of Faith: Romans 3:27
6. The Law of Righteousness: Romans 9:31
7. The Law of Christ: 1 Corinthians 9:21

The first thing to realize is that Torah means instruction. The whole book of Leviticus exists to teach us what YHVH requires of a person in order to please Him. We know what “wrong” is because YHVH laid it out in the Torah as sort of an instruction manual. If the Torah has been abolished, then we do not know what YHVH expects and if the Torah has been abolished then there is no sin and if there is no sin than there is no need for grace.

The only two parts of the Torah that were nailed to the Cross with Yeshua are the Law of Sin and the Law of Sin and Death, and that is only true if a person has accepted the free gift of salvation that YHVH provides through the Blood of Yeshua. Because of Yeshua’s sacrifice we are no longer seen as sinners by Aveinu because Yeshua’s blood has cleansed us from our sin. We know from scripture that the wages of sin are death, more specifically the “second death,” which is eternal separation from YHVH. The Law of Sin and Death required that sacrifices be made at a place designated by YHVH for the covering (not washing away) of sin. When Yeshua cleansed us by his blood there was and is no need for any sort of sacrifice because Yeshua is our

Pascal Lamb, our atoning sacrifice. The Law of God (the Ten Commands) is still valid, and the parts of Torah that do not pertain to priestly ritual and/or sacrifice are still valid and alive and need to be obeyed. The words of Yeshua sum this up well. If you're not going to listen to Paul, or if you still find Paul's teachings on The Law confusing then listen to the words of Yeshua:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-19

THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

I would like to look at some more subjects concerning the tithe of the modern-day church. The average Christian, when asked why they tithe, will say that YHVH tells us to. I have yet to find where YHVH says that in the Brit Hadasha. I have been approached by many a Christian about the subject and the answer is the same. I will always ask where they find it in the Bible and the answer is always, "in the Tanakh," specifically in Malachi, chapter three. Older and wiser Christians, when asked about that subject, will say that the Lord told them to tithe. I do not doubt that the Lord does have people tithe, but I would say, that tithing is their conviction, and not a law that they feel they have to follow, with the threat that judgment will occur if they fail to obey.

One can only feel sorry for the Christian who tithes out of obligation to the Law of Moses. These people miss the true meaning of Messiah's death. He clearly said that He came to fulfill the law. If He fulfilled the Law, then He fulfilled the whole Law. If you were to tell these same people to keep a Kosher diet or to sacrifice animals for their sins, they would label you as a heretic and tell the whole neighborhood to avoid you, yet they have to tithe every Sunday. The Apostle Paul said it so nicely

“For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” Romans 8:2

Paul tells us right off the bat that the law that we are free from is The Law of Sin and Death. Scripture tells us: The Soul that Sins Will Surely Die. We all deserve to die, it is the sentenced that has been passed down throughout every generation. For this reason, in the Tanakh we are shown time and time again that animal sacrifice was to occur to cover the sins of the sinner. In order for the sacrifice to occur there had to be a structure of priests and Levites that would sacrifice animals which would be a propitiation for the sinner. The priests and the Levites were not given land, nor were they given anything else. Their sole purpose was to work in or around the Temple and to be a liaison between YHVH and Israel. The tithe was given mostly in agriculture materials which were used to feed the Levites and the poor of the land. The tithe sometimes came in the form of gold or silver which was given to the priests for their material needs and food provisions.

There is however one problem with all of this after the sacking of the Temple in 70 AD. There is not a priesthood anymore nor is there a Temple for the Levites to labor within. Another problem that the idea of tithing has is that Scripture clearly says that Yeshua is our High Priests.

Add to that the fact that Scripture says that you, me and all believers have been made Kings and Priests to YHVH. These are reasons why tithing is not mentioned in the Brit Hadasha.

Because there are many well-meaning Christians that would try to persuade all Christians (even those who are not convicted to) to tithe, using the Law as an example, we shall see more of what the Brit Hadasha says about the law. The Apostle Paul said plainly, concerning the death of Yeshua:

“Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”.

The “handwriting of requirements that was against us” was the fact that because we are born sinners we were all under a death sentence, we are required to die a first and second death. This is the Law of Sin and Death. However, if we come to the Cross and accept by faith that Yeshua has cleaned away our sin by his blood, this scripture then makes more sense. We were ransomed by YHWH through the Blood of Yeshua, making the Law of Sin and Death invalid where His believers are concerned.

Paul tells us furthermore in Romans:

“But now we have been delivered from the Law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter”. Romans 7:6

Let’s think about this for a minute. Since the Torah is instruction and all of YHVH’s instruction is profitable for us, why would we want to die to it or better yet, why would YHVH

void his instructions. No, again Paul is talking about The Law of Sin and Death, telling us that the letter, “And the soul that sins shall surely die,” was no longer valid because now we live through in righteousness by the Blood of Yeshua and through understanding of the Torah by the Ruach Ha Kodesh so that we live by the Spirit and not by the flesh. The flesh always leads to death, but the Spirit leads to life.

And again, in Romans we are told:

For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes”. Romans 10:4

Again, if we render the above scripture correctly we know that on our own we cannot become righteous. Any righteousness that we have is through the work of Yeshua, our flesh just cannot cut the mustard in that regard. Unrighteous people are sinners that have not come to faith in Yeshua to be washed clean by His blood. Since unrighteous people are sinners they still live under the death penalty that all the unsaved live under. The scripture rendered correctly reads, *“For Christ is the end of The Law of Sin and Death and makes righteous everyone who believes.”*

And in Galatians we read:

“But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the Law”. Galatians 5:18

Again, if we look at scripture using the correct context we can understand the text above. The flesh is not redeemable, it will perish and so will everything deed that is done by us that gives the flesh any kind of glory. The flesh cannot see YHVH because even though we are saved

by grace, our flesh is filthy. This is why believers will be changed at the Resurrection of the living and the dead. The flesh is under the penalty of sin and death, but thanks to Yeshua our souls and spirits are redeemable because they have been cleansed and are not under that law if we have faith in Yeshua. Again, Paul was not talking about the Torah (instruction) but was referring to The Law of Sin and Death.

We see that the law is not pressing us if we are allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us. One might ask how the Holy Spirit can work through us. This is answered in the following verses. In Galatians we read;

“for the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”. Galatians 5:14

We see this proved again in Romans where we read;

“love does not harm a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law”. Romans 13:10

I hope that the reader can see that the Torah is not fulfilled in tithing or other things; but in love, and that love comes from its author Yeshua who is the complete fulfillment of Torah. In addition, the second-best way for anyone to show love is to show someone what will help them to prosper in life and what will make YHVH happy, and that is what Torah is all about.

Finally, we see that since YHVH has written His laws on our hearts, we should be moved to give when we see a need. The Apostle Paul says in II Corinthians;

“Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver” 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Giving out of compulsion is not a cheerful thing, no, in fact it is a bondage. And as mentioned earlier, the Tithe was given to maintain the priests and Levites. Seeing that Yeshua is our Great High Priest and our advocate there is no need for a Temple with its traditional Levites attending to it, and the Church is not Physical Israel, and Yeshua has made every believer a King and Priest, so Tithing in any form or fashion is null and void and if anything, it goes against scripture.

THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

There is another subject that I would like to add to this study. This is my own philosophy, but I feel that it is honored by YHVH. I feel that the time and work that is donated by a person, to a church could be considered a tithe, or in contemporary terms, a gift. This would hold especially true if one would give of his or her time contributing of the trade or skill that the Lord enabled them to do. Since there are very few people that work on or own farms, the food tithe is hard if not impossible to accomplish. Therefore, if a tradesman takes the time to work on a brothers or sisters home or business, or even the church building, or if a bookkeeper works free for the church or if an instructor teaches Sunday School, he is tithing of the skills that the Lord gave him. In other terms, he is giving of his field of work much as the farmer gives of the field he tends.

There are many in the church, that do argue such work is an offering and not a tithe. These people are again under a part of Torah that has been nailed to the cross with Yeshua. They

have in essence, said that if you didn't tithe, all of the work that you have done is null and void and not accepted by the YHVH, no matter how pure that the intent of service was. I know how this feels. It is a real slap in the face. What they are saying, can be seen in another light. Let's say for example, that a good Christian is on his way to church and sees a man starving on the side of the road. He takes the ten dollars that he was going to tithe and buys the man a good meal and gives him the change that is left over. Many a modern Christian would say that good deed was not recognized by YHVH because the good man didn't tithe before he presented that good offering to that man. Jesus said that *"if you did it unto the least of these, you did it unto me"*. Pleasing Jesus, is far more important than paying an obligatory sum to appease a law that is no longer in effect.

Another item that is prevalent in the church, is the heresy that if a person is not moved to tithe, he is placed under some curse by YHVH. Again, why would YHVH curse someone for not obeying the Torah that was fulfilled by the atonement procured through the death of our sacrificed lamb. If they want to be legalistic then they might as well not even be believers in Yeshua because they do not recognize that He came to fulfill the Torah, specifically the verse in Malachi where they get their heresy from. If He did not fulfill all of the Torah, then He did not fulfill any of it. True Christians know, as did Isaiah in chapter 53, that He came to set us free.

We must remember that the law was comprised of many parts but that it was all one Law. There were two provisions to the Torah; one that obeyed Torah and were covered by grace, and the other that you disobeyed Torah and came under judgment from The Law of Sin and Death. When a person offended one instruction, it was as if he broke the whole Torah. Thus,

when He set us free from the Levitical portion of the Torah and the Law of Sin and Death, He also set us free from tithing which was a provision for the Levitical order.

You know, it never ceases to amaze me what can come out of the mouths of some Christians. Believe me, I've been guilty of operating my mouth while my brain was in neutral, but what happened to spur on this study just floored me. Some pastors and others in authority are so attached to the tithe that they will actually make the statement that if a person doesn't tithe, then they doubt that a person is saved. How can someone argue against such blatant lack of knowledge? Well, we can see what the Apostle Paul had to say the prerequisites of being saved are:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Romans 10:9

It's a very dangerous thing to prescribe the fate of a soul. Nobody knows the heart of another and as far as I know, nobody on earth has had the privileged of peering into the Lamb's Book of Life to see what names are there or not there.

In like manner there are some who say that if a person isn't water baptized then they cannot enter heaven. Things like this are often said in ignorance. But what about the thief on the cross to whom Yeshua promised paradise the day that they both died? Again, Jesus knew the man's heart and his sincerity and the man's faith is what got him saved and into heaven. So that should eliminate any question about what YHVH knows about each man's heart.

Yet another tithing myth that is so prevalent in this day and age is the prosperity reason for tithing. There has been for a long time a heresy going through the church that says that if you give to YHVH, He will return what you gave and much more. While it is true that YHVH does reward those that give to worthy causes, and do so with pure motives, it is not a reason to give selfishly. People that give through pure motives do so to please YHVH and to further His kingdom, and they do so, knowing fully well that they might not receive their reward in this life. People that give out of selfish reasons have received their reward already. They have the praises of people and I would even imagine that many of them see chiropractors to readjust their spines after patting themselves on the back. These people are the ones that usually abandon YHVH when they do not receive their expected blessing. Let them abandon YHVH because the Kingdom of YHVH has no place for the likes of them.

SUMMARY

What have I learned from this study? I have learned that I have been lied to for many years. Whether this was done intentionally, YHVH only knows. I have learned that tithing is a Tanakh procedure for supporting the Priests and Levites. I have learned that it has been replaced by common sense giving as orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. I have learned that there are many scriptures to back up this point. Most of all, I have learned that I was right all the time and that my opinion, prior to this study was right and was given by the Ruach Ha Kodesh.

Now that last statement might sound like a prideful thing. Perish the thought. Knowing that I was right and sticking to my guns made me feel wonderful. Knowing that I persevered through all of the taunting and threatened expulsions from churches for doing what was right is a big thing to me. It would have been easy to cave in and submit to unrighteousness. It would have

been easy to be one of the crowd and to go with the flow, but I just couldn't do that. I even had some pastors feed single women at the churches with the lie that I was a poor soul who needed guidance. They would come to me, partially with the allure of their beauty and single status and partially with the misguided premise that they could sway me to the churches' way of thinking. I persevered though through the temptation and wiles of wickedness and came out all the stronger. I had to do what Yeshua told me to do, and to have faith that what He was showing me was truth and righteousness.

AN ADDENDUM / LESSONS PASSED ON

I want to stress the fact that if YHVH tells a person to support the local church then he better do so. I also want to stress that the conviction to support the church (if so convicted) comes from the Ruach Ha Kodesh, not from the compulsion of man. If pressure is being applied by the pastor or other people in the church, then it is not of YHVH. Any man or woman that is walking with YHVH has the same hearing capability as do other believers and is able to hear YHVH when he is talking. If you hear about giving, and you feel good in your heart about it then by all means do it. If you feel troubled about it, then abstain until you have talked it over with YHVH. Remember that the Bible says that "YHVH loves a cheerful giver". If you are tithing under compulsion, then it is as if you are not giving at all in YHVH's eyes. Remember too that if you give under compulsion, you will become bitter toward Pastors, churches and ultimately toward YHVH, and neither you nor YHVH want that to happen, right?

I would also advise that a person examine a new church before supporting its efforts. Look to see if the pastor and the other leaders are spending wisely and don't be afraid to ask questions. If the leaders of a church are honest then they will be glad to display monthly financial

reports and answer your questions. If the pastor avoids you or tries to turn your questions around, then be aware. If you are shown the financial report and things are not itemized to the last penny you should proceed with caution. Also, without a doubt, be careful of churches where financial reports have things like “various expenditures” or “miscellaneous” written on the report. Look at the pastor’s lifestyle; is he modest or extravagant? Does he mix with the laymen in the church or cling to the business men? Is he sacrificing like he is asking you to do?

If those steps are followed, then you might avoid disappointment and sorrow in the future. Remember, pastors and all church workers are men and women just like you. If they have the appearance of anything greater than they are not worth the bother; go where there are genuine people.

ADDENDUM / WORKING PASTORS

After reflecting for a great while about this subject, and its implications, I feel that I have to add another section. This new section will address something that has been on my heart for some time and should be spoken about. This subject has to do with tithing as a sole mean of support of a pastor and his family. I want to state in strongest terms that I am alluding to humble and contrite pastors who take little and live on little for subsistence. Also, I am not talking about pastors who have physical limitations or whose life might be endangered by physical work. And, aside from what I have written below, there are good and honest pastors who tend full time to their flock and their needs. I attended a church in 2014 whose pastor has limitations yet cares for his flock, and he is an honorable and righteous man.

Below I refer to those who do not tend to their flocks fully yet expect a great influx of tithe money to have nice houses, big and expensive cars and other such things. If a pastor has a contrite and humble spirit they deserve to be taken care of and they are paid accordingly, both in monetary ways and in spiritual ways.

A few years ago, when I was challenged to do this study something was said to me that always made me wonder. The woman who was chiding me about what she thought was my disobedience, said that one of the reasons that we are supposed to tithe was to support the pastor and his family. I wondered if people should actually be getting paid for serving the Lord, or should it be on a voluntary basis. Here is what I came up with.

As I mentioned earlier in this text, whenever one wants to know about the Church and its correct function, one needs to look at the early Church and its ways. One might argue that financial and societal conditions were different during the first through third centuries, but we must not forget what the Bible says about YHVH. Hebrews 13:8 declares "*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever*". Look at the world today. Is it really different then the first days of the church? Christians are still regarded as an oddity and in some cultures are deemed insane and/or are persecuted and killed. There is still war, famine, pestilence and hatred. We still have rich, poor and the unemployed people. As a matter of fact, conditions are probably easier in this contemporary society (especially in America) because of the welfare institution and other programs designed to help the poor, and the laws that protect people and religion. In Roman days if you were poor you died hungry or you sold yourself into slavery to keep alive. Seeing that economic conditions are better in the present we can assume that we're financially well to do,

even the poorest of us. As one anonymous person once said, “America is the home of the richest poor people in the world”.

Why did I say all of that? I said that because I believe that (aside from some exceptions) pastors should earn their keep. One might say that a pastor spends his week counseling his flock and studying for his Sunday sermon. While this explanation might hold water for a pastor that is not led by the Holy Spirit, it does not hold water where the majority of the Spirit filled pastors are concerned. Let’s face it, if YHVH knows what he wants a pastor to say, and He wants to speak through that pastor, then there should be very little preparation time (except for prayer time) needed for studying. People don’t want word studies and history lessons, they want the truth, plain and simple, and they want it put in terms so that they can apply it to their daily lives.

Now I mentioned above that there are some exceptions. For example, if a pastor has a very large church where the needs of the congregation are many and the church staff is small then a pastor should have time to study, pray and counsel. A pastor who chooses to work to support his family should choose a field of work that won’t take up great amounts of time. I’ve had experience myself with the Delusion Resistance Ministry where this is concerned. I’ve had to arrange my time to where the daytimes are for working and the nighttime’s are used for working on the web site and other ministry matters. So, it can be done if the time is portioned out wisely.

Several years ago, I taught Sunday School classes. Not having kids of my own I often went into class wondering if I would be effective. I would study the “pre-packaged” lesson that I was to present, and more often than not the kids would be bored during the lesson. I proclaim that the days that I was not prepared but prayed for hours before the class were the best that I

ever taught. YHVH gave me innovative ways to teach and lessons that ministered to the kids. We had prayer times that were great, and the children left feeling they had both learned something and gotten business done with YHVH. YHVH likes to work in fresh and new ways, not in redundant and ritualistic ways. Adults are the same way where learning is concerned. To put it in food terms, we want the freshly cooked steak dinner, not the precooked hamburger that's been sitting under the heat lamps. A pastor that is alive in the Holy Spirit and in tune with what YHVH wants to present can fulfill that order.

Another reason why I feel that a pastor should hold a secular job is so that he can see what it is like to work in the real world. There are some pastors who do this, and their lessons are outstanding. If a pastor could both see and live the pressures that drive his parishioners to do some of the things that they do, they would also have more of a compassion for the sinner, and probably would have more answers for those same parishioners. The working pastor could understand why some people are too tired to go to church on Sunday and not be critical of those people. After all, didn't Aveinu the father do this very same thing. When He was ready to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah He didn't just do the act. He sent His angels down to both warn Lot and to see first-hand the evil that was in those places. Only after he saw that the condition was hopeless did He destroy that region. Again, let's look at YHVH Yeshua. We have been taught (and rightly so) that Yeshua came to Earth to die for us on the cross. Well, another reason why Yeshua came was to live a human life. He had to experience just what He was saving us from. Only when He was tempted by every evil that we are tempted could He forgive us. What a concept, for perfection to live among imperfection in order to make us right with YHVH.

A few years ago, I attended a church named Last Days Harvest Ministries. The pastor's name was (and still is) Tom Mooney. Tom wasn't just a pastor, but he was also a chaplain at Union Gospel Mission in Sacramento, California. Tom held down a job as chaplain there, ministering to the homeless, most of whom were drug abusers and/or alcoholics as well as dual diagnosis people who had mental illness on top of drug abuse. Tom hit the streets, ministering to people and he got to see how people live in squalor and destitution. Tom led worship every Sunday and I attest that the worship I cannot find duplicated or even close to the same since I moved away from California. His messages were outstanding because he knew what his congregants needed. Most of the people at the church were former street people and people who were former criminals and/or addicts. Tom knew how to minister to people because he saw the basal condition of people and he knew that every person was poor and destitute inside without Yeshua. He was able to preach wonderful church services because his street experience allowed him to address people in a manner that I have never seen before and haven't seen since.

Yet another reason for a pastor to hold a secular job would be for him to interact with the lost, just like Tom Mooney did. A part of every pastor's commission is to bring the lost to salvation. What better way to do that, then to be among those that are lost. Another good point for this argument would be the amazingly tremendous plus this would be for public relations for YHVH and His Church. Today most people who don't attend church have a bad opinion of a pastor who just sits in an air-conditioned office making sustenance off of people who can barely make ends meet (their personal view, not mine). A pastor holding a secular job would throw that notion right out the window.

Finally, another good reason for a pastor to hold a secular job is that he could sustain himself and his family. Imagine the amount of finances that a fellowship could spend on real needs if they did not have to make a car payment, a house payment and make salary obligations for a pastor. Imagine how a church could use those finances in the community; for food closets, visitation ministries etc. The Lord never meant for the church to become a storehouse for money. He wants it to be a sieve. Yeshua didn't take the loaves and fishes and put them in storage. He blessed them and gave them to everyone.

Lastly, let's look at the first Christian preachers. Yeshua, up until His ministry years was a tradesman. Since the Bible does not mention everything that our Lord did during his life one might venture to assume that he lifted the hammer and used a saw during that time also. Paul was a tent maker and probably worked as one to sustain himself while he preached at his many locations. Peter was a fisherman and suffice to say that he probably cast the net to sustain himself. They were well aware of the fact that the Bible says, "*if you don't work, you don't eat.*" But let's venture that the apostles didn't work to sustain themselves. What did they do with their time? They led thousands to faith in The Lord Jesus and laid the foundation for what would become a long-lasting faith and Church. Those are notable fetes, making them worthy of their keep.

So, I end this study and thought with clear convictions. I have made peace with the whole tithing bit and have expressed some concerns that face the regular lay-person in the Church. I realize that I probably have not endeared myself to the Ecclesiastic members of the Church and that I have just plain gotten some people very angry. Well, that is between them and YHVH. I realize that because of what is written here, I will not be welcome in many a church and probably

be asked to leave after this document is discovered on the internet. Those are things that all men who have stood for their convictions have had to suffer. It is my hope and prayer that everyone who reads this letter will not take it as their conviction because of some fleshly selfishness. I put a lot of prayer and study behind this work and pray that the reader will do the same. YHVH Bless you, the reader, as you pursue the truth.