

“The Ancient Path of Tithing”

Ancient Paths – Pt. 3

March 11, 2018

Jer 6:16 "Thus says the Lord, 'Stand by the roads and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.'"

- *Jeremiah offers what Jesus also offered in Matt 11 ...*
- *Jeremiah's image:* Busy Highways
- *Jesus issued an invitation—'Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden. ...Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls.'* (**Matt 11:28-29**)

...So, what's at stake in travelling these ancient paths?—The experiential condition of our souls! ...Our Souls Desperately Need to SEE SOMETHING Along Life's Journey!!

Outline for Today

- What is 'tithing'?
- What purpose does it serve?
- How do I walk on this ancient path?

What is Tithing?

- **Definition**

"The meaning of the word 'tithes' is 'a tenth part'. Today, the term tithing is erroneously used of all giving. ...The first fruits offering included the first production of a vineyard (Lev. 19:23-25) and the first annual production of grain, wine, olive oil, and sheared wool (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Deut 18:4). The first of any course meal (Nu 15:20-21), honey, and all the produce belonged to the Lord (2Chr 31:5)." Randy Alcorn, "Money, Possessions, and Eternity", p. 174, 175

- **Biblical Origins**

- Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek

Genesis 14:17-20 After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)¹⁹ And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

- Jacob's tithe to Yahweh

Genesis 28:20-22 Then Jacob made 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 clothing to wear,²¹ so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God,²² and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

- Tithing included in the Covenant with Israel

- **Proverbs 3:1-10**

- v. 1-2 ...something to learn and keep near—to impact your journey ('rest for your soul') ...help with 'not forgetting!'
- v. 3-4 ...Don't Forget/Be Mindful of something—"steadfast love and faithfulness"

"The key here is 'steadfast love and faithfulness.' Those words describe God himself (Ex 34:6). What are we counting on about God? We are staking everything on God's being steadfastly loving and faithful to us forever through Christ, because he promised to be. ...So much American religion makes us the immovable ones, the center around which God orbits." Ray Ortlund, "Proverbs: Wisdom that Works"

- v. 5-6 ..."Trust in the Lord, acknowledge him"—develop the practice of LOOKING TO God, to be Mindful of Him FIRST!
- v. 9-10 ...Honor the Lord with your WEALTH and with the FIRSTFRUITS of all your produce

"The giving of first fruits made an important statement: 'We give of our first and best to you, Lord, because we recognize all good things come from you. In doing so, we recognize our responsibility to sustain the spiritual leadership provided for us.' ...Tithe denoted the amount of offering, first fruits the nature of the offering. ...The nature of firstfruits requires it be taken 'off the top.' It's both the best and the first. As soon as it's harvested or received, it's to be given to the Lord. It's not to be stored up, hidden, hoarded, or distributed in any other way." Randy Alcorn, "Money, Possessions, and Eternity", p. 175, 176

What Purpose does this Ancient Path of the Tithe Serve?

- **It Awakens Our Awareness of God**
 - **Deut 6:10ff** ...the warning/concern in the land was FORGETTING GOD!!
...Judg 1 "there arose a generation after them who 'knew not the Lord'"
 - **Prov 3** ...v. 1 'My son, do not forget...' v. 6 'in all your ways acknowledge him'
Rom 1:21, "For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened ...28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done."
- **It Protects us from the Soul-burdening Weariness of Provision**

- **It Reminds us of God's Purpose for the Earth**

Psalm 24:1-2 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, ² for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

...The first fruits offering reminded people of God's ownership. They saw God as the source of all life and blessing. ...Tithing gives perspective. It reminds us that all we are and all we have is from God. Tithing is not a tip thrown mindlessly down on a table after a meal, but a meaningful expression of dependence upon God and gratitude to Him." Randy Alcorn, "Money, Possessions, and Eternity", p. 175, 179

- Mt. Sinai ...the tithe was to be used to support God's ordained purpose in the Levites and the Temple services
- The Church and the Great Commission ...it reminds us of the call on our lives to further God's kingdom on earth until His return!

- **It Turns Our Attention to TRANSCENDENT Things and Away from IMMANENT Things**

- ***To tithe is to 'Forgo Something Immanent' and to Invest in something Transcendent!*** ...This is needed to guard my heart from becoming 'Kingdom-Blind' and only living and designing my life for 'Right Here & Right Now'!!
 - **Luke 12:13-21** ...The man who built bigger barns, but was not rich toward God!
 - **Luke 12:22-34** ...Giving first to the kingdom was a means of keeping us from being 'wearied and heavy laden' by anxiety and fear about provision!

Remember Deut 6:10ff ..."Stuff/Money/Possessions" have the ability to 'GO VIRAL' inside of us—causing us to OBSESS (anxiety, bigger barns, fears) and to FORGET (about our True Source)!!

"Tithing—the Affluenza Vaccine" ...Help with the 'H3N\$' Virus!!