

# Are We Required To Tithe?

by Casey Head

Although Jesus Christ established a “new testament” (Hebrews 9:15), many religious people today struggle with a desire to keep certain aspects of the law of Moses. The Christians of the first century had this same problem, and the apostles preached many lessons and wrote many letters in an effort to correct this error. While many Old Testament commands could be examined, let us devote our attention to the subject of tithing. Under the law of Moses, the people of Israel were required to tithe (give ten percent), but Christians are not bound to keep this law.

First of all, we have to establish the sovereignty of the New Testament. A good place to begin is Jeremiah 32:31-32. The prophet says here, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers.*” It was prophesied in the Old Testament that a new covenant would one day be established. This tells us several things- (1)that God never intended for the old covenant to last forever, (2)that God had a new and better covenant in mind, and also (3)that when this new covenant came, the ordinances of the old would no longer be observed (as two testaments can not coexist). Paul also says in Colossians 2:14, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.” When Jesus died on the cross at Calvary, He nailed the laws and requirements of the Old Testament to the cross. The apostle Peter says in Acts 15:10-11 that the law of Moses was unbearable for the people of Israel and that we today are saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. Finally, God tells us in Hebrews 8:13, “A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” The lesson here is that we cannot go back to the law of Moses to derive justification for our actions under the law of Christ!

Tithing is not commanded or authorized in the New Testament. Never are we as Christians told to give ten percent of our income. We are told, however, to give on the first day of the week as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). If you have been blessed financially, then you should give more, but if you are struggling financially, then you will give less. In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Paul tells us, “But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Several important points are set forth here regarding our laying by in store on the first day of the week. First, we are to give bountifully. That does not mean that you have to give so much that you can’t afford food for your family; that is not the point. The point is, that while we do not have to give a specific amount as in the Old Testament, we should be willing to give bountifully. Also, we are to give as we have purposed in our heart. This means that we must decide for ourselves what to give, and no one can regulate our contribution (as many denominations do today). Finally, we are not to give grudgingly. In other words, don’t give a certain amount simply because you feel obligated to do so- give what you feel comfortable giving, what you can afford, and what you have purposed to give.

So many denominations today demand ten percent from their members, and while there is certainly nothing wrong with our CHOOSING to give ten percent of our income, it is wrong, and in fact sinful to bind tithing. Christians are bound to the law of Christ, and we must recognize that the New Testament never commands or even authorizes tithing. As Paul says in Galatians 5:3, if we observe and bind any part of the law of Moses, “(we are) a debtor to do the WHOLE law.”