

**Title:** True Riches III - building the house of God  
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**Date:** 15 January 2012  
**Time:** 09:00



Luke 16:11 (NKJV) <sup>11</sup> *Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*

- God won't trust us with the true riches, when we are unfaithful with money and possessions.
- **Test:** Whom do we serve?

Matthew 6:24 (NKJV) <sup>24</sup> *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

**The daily battle for the believer is not between choosing to serve God or the devil, but between serving God or our stuff.** Tithing is the starting point of giving which aids Christians in breaking free from the power of Mammon.

## Building the house of God - vs lawlessness

King David loved the house of God. He was a man after God's own heart. The house of God was of primary focus for David. David wanted to build God a house.

Psalms 27:4 (ESV) <sup>4</sup> *One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that **I may dwell in the house of the LORD** all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.*

- David also gave extravagantly to God's house.

Matthew 24:12 (NKJV) <sup>12</sup> *And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.*

**Everyone does what is right in their own eyes.** Lawlessness.

Kingdom chaos for **many misunderstand grace.** *Grace is empowerment to give more, not license to give less.* Grace empowers us to be more loyal, more committed and more giving.

**At the heart of grace is Christian community.** It is its power source, just like an Eskom powerplant provides electricity to the nation. The church is that house of grace or source of power for all.

**Result?** Lawlessness causes the church to become a powerless powerplant.

**The house of God is in ruins:**

Haggai 1:9 (NLT) <sup>9</sup> *You hoped for rich harvests, but they were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, while all of you are busy building your own fine houses.*

**Unity causes anything to become possible.** The possible impact increases exponentially.

Genesis 11:6 (ESV) <sup>6</sup> *And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.*

**Jesus said:** "I will build My church". **This is His priority.**

## The tithe honours God - Abraham and Melchizedek

Genesis 14:18–20 (NKJV) <sup>18</sup> *Then Melchizedek king of Salem **brought out bread and wine**; he was the priest of God Most High. <sup>19</sup> And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup> And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." **And he gave him a tithe of all.***

*\*\*One of the most meaningful principles of Bible interpretation is that the first mention of something in Scripture carries extra weight. It sets a standard for a subject that the rest of Scripture will support and add to.*

Tithing was not introduced by the law of Moses, but by **the father of the faith**, Abraham, who paid a tithe of all to Melchizedek. Tithing isn't legalism. To tithe is to honour God for His provision and goodness. To tithe is to say thank you. To tithe is put our trust in God as our Source. Tithing is about faith as the father of the faith Abraham showed us.

Proverbs 3:9–10 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> *Honour the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;* <sup>10</sup> *So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.*

- **firstfruits?** the first and our best / our tithe. **Vats overflow with new wine?** Speaks of abundant spiritual blessing as we honour God with our firstfruits and possessions.

## **We give our tithes to Christ**

Hebrews 7:1–3 (NKJV) <sup>1</sup> *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,* <sup>2</sup> *to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,”* <sup>3</sup> *without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.*

Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God, **is a type of Christ**. Maybe even a theophany (physical manifestation of God / Christ) (Hebrews 7:1-10 & Genesis 14:18-20). Melchizedek was declared to be superior to Abraham and that he is eternal.

Abraham gave a tithe to Christ when he gave a tithe of all his spoils to Melchizedek. Abraham the father of the faith shows us that tithing is an eternal precept of God, for he gave it to the Eternal One, who remains a priest continually. When we tithe or give a tenth part of all, we give it to God. Even though we are giving it to the house of God, in actual fact we are giving the tithe to Christ.

*“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord: it is holy to the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30)*

The tithe “belongs to the Lord,” not to people. It applied to “everything,” not some things. It was “holy,” to be set apart and given to God, not used for any other purpose. / The meaning of the word tithe is “a tenth part”.

## **The tithe is given to the House of God**

Genesis 28:16–17 (ESV) <sup>16</sup> *Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.”* <sup>17</sup> *And he was afraid and said, “**How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.**”*

**This is the first mention of the house of God.** The house of God is defined to be an awesome place! A place where God is and the gate of heaven. This has always been God's heart, that His house would be a special place. A place where people meet with the God of heaven.

Genesis 28:19–22 (NKJV) <sup>19</sup> *And he called the name of that place Bethel; ...* <sup>20</sup> *Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “**If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on,*** <sup>21</sup> *so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.* <sup>22</sup> *And this stone which I have set as a pillar **shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.**”*

Tithing is a spiritual response and sign of “the Lord shall be my God”.

**Tithe + house of God - It is no coincidence** that Jacob met with God at Bethel, which means the house of God and that in this place he declares that he will give a tenth of all. **The first time the house of God is mentioned**, the tithe is also mentioned. The house of God and the tithe has always been connected, because the tithe should go to the storehouse, which is the church of God.

1 Timothy 3:14–15 (NKJV) <sup>14</sup> *These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;* <sup>15</sup> *but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the **house of God**, which is **the church** of the living God, **the pillar and ground of the truth**.*

- The house of God (in New Testament) is **the church** of the living God. The pillar and ground of the truth. The church is of **primary importance to God**. Paul writes to teach how they ought to conduct themselves.

## Tithing hasn't been rescinded in the New Testament

Some say that tithing has fallen away in the New Testament because we are now under grace. Grace is empowerment to give more, not license to give less. We should be giving above and beyond the tithe, not less, for now we are empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

Significant signs of being in covenant with God (In Old Testament) like circumcision, upholding the Sabbath, making blood sacrifices and giving the tithe, it is only the tithe that is not rescinded by any Scripture in the New Testament.

*\*\*Circumcision has been rescinded in the New Testament (Galatians 2:3-6). Hearts still need to be circumcised. The Sabbath has been rescinded (Colossians 2:16). Principle of resting one day a week still applies, but not as it was in Old Testament. Blood sacrifices has been rescinded because Jesus has made one sacrifice of Himself once for all (Hebrews 10:12-14).*

Yet there are many Scriptures that show giving in the New Testament should excel (2 Corinthians 8:7, Luke 14:33), which implies beyond the tithe. There is not one scripture in the New Testament that says it is no longer applicable. Jesus actually confirms tithing in Matthew 23:23. This shows the tithe is an eternal law of giving, just like the law of sowing and reaping.

## Tithing in the Early Church

That tithing was still the case within the first few hundred years of the Church is demonstrated in the words of the influential Church father Irenaeus: "The Jews were constrained to a regular payment of tithes; Christians, who have liberty, assign all their possessions to the Lord, bestowing freely not the lesser of the portions of their property, since they have the hope of greater things. " Note the key phrase, "not the lesser portions," in reference to the Jews. This is a direct indication that the tithe was considered a minimum standard in the early Christian community.

A few hundred years later, Augustine indicated that tithing was still practiced: "Tithes are required as a matter of debt, and he who has been unwilling to give them has been guilty of robbery. Whosoever, therefore, desires to secure a reward for himself, let him render tithes, and out of the nine parts let him seek to give alms." Note the clear distinction between the mandatory tithe and the voluntary offering of almsgiving. Alms were to be given above and beyond the tithe.<sup>1</sup>

## Reward - true riches + food in God's house

Malachi 3:10 <sup>10</sup> ***Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,*** Says the LORD of hosts, ***"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.***

- The blessing of giving. Open heavens!
- The blessing of community.

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<sup>1</sup> Money, Possession and Eternity, Randy Alcorn, page 185