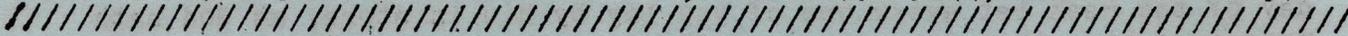


THE CONTENDER

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"HOW MUCH OWEST THOU UNTO MY LORD" (Luke 16:5)

"Will a man rob God? yet ye rob me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse; for ye rob me, even this whole nation. Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my 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." (Mal. 3:8-10)

GODS PEOPLE'S DEDICATION

HOW MUCH DID THE JEWS GIVE?

1. Lk. 21:3,4 "And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast into the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."

2. Acts 2:45 "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

3. "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 apostle's feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joseph who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is being interpreted The son of consolation) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostle's feet." (Acts 4:34-37)

4. II Cor. 8:2-4 "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

The Jews gave, counting the Sabbaths the feast days in which no work could be done (Lev. 23:1-43), the Sabbatical years, and the year of Jubilee, (Lev. 25:1-43), the Jews gave approximately one third of their time to the Lord. They also gave one-tenth of their products to their religion. (Deut. 14:22-27) After their king was anointed they had to give another tenth as taxes to support their government. (I Sam. 8:15-17) Hence one fifth of their gross income was given to support their religion and government.

In addition, each man over twenty years of age was required to give a half-shekel into the service of the tabernacle every atonement day (Ex. 30:10-16). Every man was required also to bring a gift, as much as he was able, when he went to the three annual feasts (Deut. 16:16,17). Over and above this were required numerous burnt offerings, peace offerings, drink offerings, and various other sacrifices and vows. (Lev. 1-5; 22:37) They were required to give to the poor as the need arose (Lev. 19:9,10) If a loan was made to a poor man no interest was to be collected (Lev. 25:35-37)

We might note that even if a Christian decided to give one tenth of his income to the Lord he would not be giving as much as the Jews gave.

NOTE: Some of you money-loving tightwads who might read this article ought to seriously reflect on God's pattern of giving as you begrudgingly give Him your dollar! If your driving around in a new car and "got it" be sure you are "putting your necks to the work" (Neh. 3:5) lest you be condemned.

A Blessing: "The liberal soul shall be made fat." (Prov. 25:11)

A Warning: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21)

THE N.T. PATTERN OF GIVING

1. WEEKLY: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. 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." (I Cor. 16:1-2)
Incidentally, denominationalism can see enough authority in this verse to take up a collection each first day of the week but cannot see the very same authority in Acts 20:7 to observe the Lord's Supper every week. Shows you something doesn't it?
2. WILLINGLY: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (II Cor. 8:12)
3. PURPOSELY: "Every man according, as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9:7) (By the way, the Indian brethren sing as the collection is being taken in contrast to others who have such long faces at this point in the service. The word "cheerful" is from the Greek word whence we get the English word hilerous.)
From the above Scriptures you see there is no authority to tithe today, neither raising money by: car wash, pie sales, "fellowship dinners", or binding a certain amount on the members. How is your congregation doing?

THE CHURCH TREASURY

- I. Authority For A Church Treasury:
 - A. Acts 4:32-35
 - B. I Cor. 16:1-3 ("Store" THESAURIZO--"to lay up, store up, a treasury, a storehouse")
 - C. Churches have money to pay preacher--II Cor. 11:8, Phil. 1:4,5; 4:15,16
 - D. Must be ready for every good (only good if have scripture authority) work--II Cor. 9:8
 - E. Members giving must not be of necessity (II Cor. 9:7) so something should be in reserve.
 - II. The Difference Between The Church And Individual's Treasury:
 - A. Clearly seen in Acts 5:1-4 and II Tim. 5:16
 - III. To Whom Does The Church Treasure Belong?
 - A. Though God, owning all, has given man charge of earthly possessions He has retained the treasury. (Acts 5:1-4) If we realize that this money becomes His and not ours we'll be more careful how it is spent!
 - IV. Spending The Church Treasury:
 - A. Not To be spent for the following: (Listen up!)
 1. Orphan Homes, Hospitals, Schools & Colleges, Parties, Non-Saints or Unfaithful Christians, A sponsoring Church or anything else for which there is no scriptural authority!
 - B. It Must Be Spent For:
 1. The local congregation's preaching of the gospel (I Thess. 1:8) (tracts, bullitin, radio program, or newspaper article etc)
 2. The preacher's wages (II Cor. 11:8), either located (I Cor. 9:7-14) or sent directly, not through a sponsoring church, to him. (Phil. 4)
 3. Needy Saints of the congregation. A congregation does wrong while it has the funds, to overlook a faithful needy member in benevolence. Also a faithful needy member does wrong in refusing support from the congregation as this is God's will and perhaps a test.
- Church Benevolence Always To The Saints: (Acts 2:45-4:32-35, 6:1-6; 11:27-30
Rom. 15:25-31, I Cor. 16:1-4;
II Cor. 8 & 9 and I Tim. 5:9-16) Let's remember that death was punishment for tampering with the Lord's treasury. (Joshua 6:17-19; 7; Acts 5:1-11)
- "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I Jn. 3:17)