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Do Not Neglect the Levite

14: 22-29

Do not neglect the Levite DIG: What were the three main tithes? What was the purpose of each one? Where is the basis for the title found in the Torah? What did the rabbis conclude? What is the difference between a Levite and a priest? What other religious duties did the Israelites have beside tithing. What would that total amount to today?

REFLECT: To what degree is your tithing an act of worshipful obedience (giving as unto ADONAI), that promotes brotherly love (giving up what you have to help others), and grateful giving (growing in responsible, God-honoring stewardship remembering that everything belongs to God)? What can you do to grow in this area?

The Israelites were called to give a tenth of their produce or income to support, first the Tabernacle, then the Temple, the priesthood and other noble causes.

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 speak of giving to **God** and to the poor. These **tithes** were to be given at certain times during the year. **They** were spread out in such a way that **they** would always be a certain anticipation in hearts of **the Israelites** until a time of release. A time of rejoicing, of rest, and of gladness. It was a break from everyday life where the individual was called into communion with **ADONAI**. These chapters are practical, as they call on the reader to **tithe** as a special time of rest, with, and for, **the LORD**. Something we all need today. However, borrowing and debts are also mentioned, things that deprive us of rest.³⁴²

*Dear Great Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** rich mercy in generously giving **Yourself** as our sin offering. It cost **You** so much pain and shame yet **You** were willing to become our sacrifice. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21)**. **You** are a wonderful example of giving what costs **You** much. It is a joy to give back to **You** our gifts of love - even in times of trial! **For I testify that according to their ability, and even beyond their ability, they gave of their own free will - begging us with much urging for the favor of sharing in the relief of the kedoshim***

(Second Corinthians 8:3-4). Praise You that when we give to You even when we have little, You supply our needs. We will still have wants, but You graciously take care of our needs. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (Second Corinthians 9:8 NIV). Giving is a wonderful privilege and we desire to excel in this privilege. But as you excel in everything - in faith and speech and knowledge and all diligence, and in your love for us - also excel in this grace (Second Corinthians 8:8). Praise You for giving what cost You so much! In Yeshua's holy name and power of His resurrection. Amen



You will surely set aside a tenth of all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year (14:22). During the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on Exodus, [to see link click Da - The Dispensation of the Torah](#)), **the Israelites** were called to give **a tenth** of one's produce or income to support, first the Tabernacle, then **the Temple, the priesthood** and other noble causes. The purpose was to remind **the people of Isra'el** that everything **they** had, came from **ADONAI** and ultimately belonged to **Him**.

In the Torah there are **three main tithes**, which equaled about twenty-five percent. **Leviticus 27:30-33** sets forth the principle of giving **a tithe of the land, whether from the seed of the land, or the fruit of the trees** to YHVH. But **tithing** was only a part of the religious dues of **the Isrealites**. In addition, there was **the sin offering** (see the commentary on Exodus [Fc - The Sin Offering](#)), **the thanksgiving offering** (see the commentary on Exodus [Fg - The Peace Offering](#)), **the first fruit offering** of their crops (**Leviticus 23:10**), **the firstborn animals, the redemption of the firstborn** (see the commentary on Exodus [Cd - Consecrate to Me Every Firstborn](#)), **the half-shekel Temple tax** (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Gf - Jesus and the Temple Tax](#)), **annual wood gathering**, and the **freewill offerings**. The sum total of the religious obligations levied upon **the Israelites** in the TaNaKh was, to say the least, nothing short of enormous.³⁴³

The first tithe went to the priestly tribe of **Levites**, those who were responsible for making copies of the Scriptures, teaching **God's** Word to the people, and maintaining the Tabernacle, and later, **the Temple**. **Numbers 18:21-24** required **the Israelites** to give a **tithe** to **the Levites**, who had no **land** inheritance. **But you are not to neglect the Levite within your gates, for he has no portion or inheritance with you (14:27)**. **The Levites** were then to give a **tenth** of **their tithe** to **the priests** (for the difference between **Levites** and **priests** see the commentary on **Ezra-Nehemiah An - Priests, Levites and Temple Servants Who Returned with Zerubbabel**).

The second tithe was 10 percent of the remaining 90 percent. This was to maintain the Festivals (see **Db - The Three Pilgrimage Festivals**) and sacrifices to **YHVH**. This was a special **tithe**, opposed to the first one. **The tithe** was to be eaten by the offeror with his family at one of the three pilgrimage feasts in **Jerusalem**. **The people of Isra'el** were to be generous with **tithes** and **offerings** because **ADONAI** had been generous with **them**. Each time **they** brought **their tithes** and **offerings** to the Tabernacle or the Temple and enjoyed a thanksgiving feast, it would teach **them to fear the LORD**, because if **the LORD** hadn't blessed **them**, they would have nothing to eat and nothing to give. **You are to eat the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, before ADONAI your God in the place He chooses (Jerusalem) to make His Name dwell, so that you may learn to fear ADONAI your God always (14:23)**. When we cease to **fear ADONAI** and fail to appreciate **His** bountiful provision, we become proud and start to take **His** blessings for granted. Then **Ha'Shem** has to discipline us to remind us that **He is the Giver** of every gift (see the commentary on **Hebrews Cz - God Disciplines His Children**).³⁴⁴ We aren't blessed because we are good; we are blessed because **He** is good.

Now suppose the way is too long for you, for you cannot carry the tithe because the place ADONAI your God chooses to set His Name (Jerusalem) is too far from you. When ADONAI your God blesses you, then you are to exchange the tithe for silver, bind up the silver in your hand, and go to the place that ADONAI your God chooses (14:24-25). Now we can understand the existence of the money-changers in **the Temple**. In **Yeshua's** day, this helpful system that **God** had put in place had become corrupted by **the bazaar of the sons of Annas**, charging an exorbitant amount of interest to exchange the pilgrim's Roman money into **Temple** currency (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bs - Jesus' First Cleansing of the Temple at the Passover**). The whole idea of rejoicing and communion was turned into a mafia style business.

You may spend the money for whatever your soul desires - cattle, sheep, wine, strong drink, or whatever your soul asks of you. Then you will eat there

before ADONAI your God and rejoice - you and your household (14:26). It would, in effect, be a giant family celebration in the presence of **Ha'Shem**. And all believers look forward to the time when we will have a giant family reunion with **the Lord** on earth after the Second Coming (see the commentary on **Revelation Fg - Blessed Are Those Invited to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb**), celebrating the start of **His** Messianic Kingdom (see the commentary on **Revelation Fh - The Dispensation of the Messianic Kingdom**).



And a third tithe was another ten percent to be given every third year to provide for **the outsider, the orphan and the widow** (see **Ey - The Year of the Tithe**). **At the end of every three years, you are to bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year and store it within your gates** so that there would always be provisions for them. This is the core of the Judeo-Christian belief system. **Then the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, along with the outsider, the orphan and the widow within your gates, will come and eat and be satisfied, so that ADONAI your God may bless you in all the work of your hand that you do (14:28-29).**³⁴⁵

While we are still commanded to **tithe** today, most of us are not thinking of the **tithe** during the Dispensation of the Torah which would amount to about twenty-five percent! Giving in the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**) is proportionate. Today, giving is to be personally determined. **Second Corinthians 9:7** tells us that **each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Do - When You Give to the Needy, Do Not Do It to be Honored by Others: The Seven Principles of Scriptural Giving**). It is not so much the amount that is given, but the condition of the heart of the giver (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Je - The Widow's Offering**).