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## Mitzvot on Tithes

### 27: 30-34

**Mitzvot on Tithes DIG:** Many times today, pastors talk about biblical tithing, and they use the “Old Testament” benchmark of ten percent. But if you were going to tithe like they did in the TaNaKh, what would be the percentage? What is our obligation to tithe today?

**REFLECT:** Did you grow up in a house where tithing was practiced and taught? Was it a positive or negative experience for you? If positive, do you still tithe today? If not, have you actually tried tithing? God says he will bless you even more if you tithe? Why not try?



One of the irreversible mitzvot of receiving tangible **blessings** from **the LORD** is the matzah of **tithing**. **Malachi 3:10-12** says: **Bring the whole tenth into the storehouse, so that there will be food in my house, and put me to the test,”** says **ADONAI-Tzva’ot**. **“See if I won’t open for you the floodgates of heaven and pour out for you a blessing far beyond your needs. For your sake I will forbid the devourer to destroy the yield from your soil; and your vine will not lose its fruit before harvest-time,”** says **ADONAI-Tzva’ot**. **“All nations will call you happy, for you will be a land of delights,”** says **ADONAI-Tzva’ot**.

Here, the Torah goes on to discuss the mitzvot of **the tithe**. **Tithes** were a **ten percent** collection taken from agricultural produce as a donation to the Temple. A

tenth of the produce of **the land**, the fields, the orchards and vineyards belonged to **ADONAI**. It needs to be pointed out that in the Torah there were several **tithes**. When all were added up, it amounted to approximately **twenty-five percent** of one's income or produce given to **YHVH**.

**All the tenth given from the land, whether from planted seed or fruit from trees, belongs to ADONAI; it is holy to ADONAI.** The Torah allowed for a person to **redeem** his **tithe**. **If someone wants to redeem any of his tenth, he must add to it one-fifth (27:30-31).** This might happen when a person had already set aside a certain amount of produce for **the tithe**, but was then needed for another purpose, or it might be necessary if **the tithe** were to be rendered unclean. Because it had already been designated for use as **a tithe**, it already belonged to **God**. Therefore, the person needed to pay the full price of the produce plus twenty percent of its value.<sup>551</sup>

**All the tenth from the herd or the flock, whatever passes under the shepherd's crook, the tenth one will be holy to ADONAI (27:32).** The reference here is to the Jewish mode of tithing sheep. As the sheep passed through a narrow gate, one-by-one, the person counting stood by, holding **his shepherd's crook**, colored yellowish-brown at the tip. Every **tenth one** he touched with **his crook**, thus putting a mark on it. **Jeremiah** alludes to this method of counting sheep in (**Jeremiah 33:13** and **Ezeki'el 20:37**).<sup>552</sup>

This **animal** could not be exchanged, **redeemed** or used for any other purpose other than **a tithe**. **The tithe of the animals** was sacrificed as **a peace offering (to see link click Ak - The Peace Offerings: At Peace with God)**. Typically, **the tithes of the animals** were brought to Jerusalem for **the pilgrimage festival of Sukkot** where the owner, his family and friends could partake of the meat by sacrificing **the animals** as a **peace offering**. In its overall effect, this mitzvah is in agreement with the provisions in **Deuteronomy** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Cx - Do Not Neglect the Levite**), although the matter is stated differently there. In **Deuteronomy**, the Israelites were required to set aside **a tithe** from the produce of the fields and bring it each year to the Temple.<sup>553</sup>

Since **an animal** was marked for **tithe** regardless of its condition, it is possible that **the tithed animal** was not fit for sacrifice on the bronze altar. Nevertheless, it was not to be substituted or exchanged. **The owner is not to inquire whether the animal is good or bad, and he cannot exchange it; if he does exchange it, both it and the one he substituted for it will be holy; it cannot be**

**redeemed (27:33)**. If the owner attempted to exchange **it** for another animal, both **it** and **the substitute** would be regarded as **holy** and both would go to the priesthood. **A tithed animal** could not be **redeemed**.<sup>554</sup> Today, in the B'rit Chadashah there is no set amount for **tithing** (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**).

**These are the mitzvot which ADONAI gave to Moshe for the people of Isra'el on Mount Sinai (27:34)**. This postscript reverts to the opening verse of **Chapter 25, "ADONAI spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai."** It was customary to state, both at the beginning and end of major sections, or books, of the Torah, where and when the revelation from **God** had occurred. The same postscript occurs in **Leviticus 26:46** and the closing verse of **Numbers, 36:13**.<sup>555</sup> What more could be said? We just finished studying a book which told us how **the Most Holy God** chose to call us and make us **holy**, both as individuals and as a nation. To be separated from the rest of the world and totally dedicated to serve Him is the greatest privilege a human being can know. This call to holiness involves more than just correct ritual. It involves the complete dedication of ourselves, our family, and our possessions to **Him** who bought us with the price of **His** blood, who made us **holy** by **redeeming** us from sin – our **Messiah Yeshua, the Holy One of Isra'el**. In **Him** and **Him** alone can the fulfillment of the Torah (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Dg - The Completion of the Torah**) and all concluding **blessings** be realized.

**Therefore, as is the ancient tradition when we finish a book of the Torah, we say,**

**Hazak, hazak, v'nit'chazek!**

**Be strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened!**<sup>556</sup>

**Haftarah B'Chukotai reading (Jeremiah 17:14):**  
**(see the commentary on Deuteronomy Af - Parashah)**

Intercede for your people! **God** burdened **Jeremiah** with a message of judgment and forbids **him** to marry or attend weddings (**Jeremiah 16:1-2** and **8-9**). For this, **his** culture brands him a pariah and an object of social disgrace. **Jeremiah** sees the day that the Gentile nations will confess idolatry and turn to **ADONAI (Jeremiah 16:19)**. **The prophet** indicts the southern kingdom of Judah for her

hardheartedness. **He** uses a diamond-point to etch the accusation on the tablets of Judah's heart (**Jeremiah 17:1**). Disaster strikes! For unatoned sin, **Ha'Shem** says, "I will cause you to serve your enemies." Judah will lose her heritage and her **land!** Those who forsake **YHVH** are without help (**Matthew 22:11-14**). Covenant breakers will be condemned. Yet all is not lost. The prophet turns to **God** for healing!

### **B'rit Hadashah reading (Matthew 22:14):**

**Matthew** aims three parables in a row to describe the change of leadership over **God's** Kingdom (**Matthew 21:28-32, 33-46, and 22:1-14**). Of course, leadership has already passed from firstborns to the Levites and the elders. Now, it passes to those who are invited and elected to come, properly dressed, to the wedding banquet given by the king for his son (**Matthew 22:2 and 11**). In ancient days, formal festivities required an advance invitation, followed by a second notification after the feast was prepared (**Matthew 22:3-4 and 8**). The insult to the king was especially grave, since the food was ready and this was the second invitation. In his anger, the king destroys those who have persecuted his servants and burns the city. Then he goes outside the city to invite travelers, both Jew and Gentile, to fill the room full (**Matthew 22:9**). The elect responded – on short notice!<sup>557</sup>

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for being such an awesome and wonderful Heavenly **Father!** How amazing it is that **You** who are perfectly pure and holy, yet in love, **You adopt** all who love You and confess **Your Son** as their **Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 1:5; John 1:12)**. No amount of works can open salvation's door, but **Your** gracious love through our **faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)** offers **Messiah's** righteousness. **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)**.*

*What a joy it is to offer ourselves back to **You** in grateful appreciation of the great pain and shame that **Messiah** went thru on our behalf (**Hebrews 12:2**). **Yeshua** focused on **the joy set before Him** and so when trials come our way we will also focus on **the joy** of an eternal home in heaven with **You (Romans 8:18)**! Thank **You** for sending out **Your Son's** wedding invitation to all who would have **faith/trust/belief in Him** and thereby be "**in Messiah**" (**Ephesians Chapter 1**). **For You are all sons of God through trusting in Messiah Yeshua. . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female - for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua (Galatians 3:26,***



**28).** *It is a joy to serve **You!** We love **You** and look forward to praising and worshiping **You** thru all eternity! In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*