

THE CONCEPT OF TITHE AND IT'S APPLICATION IN THE MODERN CHURCH

Omale S.A Elijah

Department of Christian Education
Dynamic Theological Seminary, Kwale, Delta State Nigeria
Affiliated to Harvest Bible University, Los Angeles, California, United States of America

INTRODUCTION

The concept of tithe has triggered a lot of theological issues in our modern churches. It has grown to a level where Christians are having doubt whether to pay tithe, where to pay tithe, whom to pay to, and lots more. It has also metamorphosed that some Christian believed that Tithing is an Old Testament practice not meant for the New Testament and the current believers. Theologians, scholars, and other elicited interpreters have done the best they could to provide a profound solution to the issue of tithe in our modern church based on their doctrines and traditions in operation.

Nevertheless, efforts shall be deployed on this issue to transmute the menace that has eating up the church of our time due to the so called “advancement in knowledge and practices in different denominations”.

The term has been so episodic in nature due to changes and believes in our contemporary church.

"Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on Your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fell from your Secure positions". N.I.V (2 peter 3:17).

The intent of this work is to give a coherent stand for believers in other to annihilate the presumed errors in our modern churches.

DEFINATION OF THE TERM

The term tithes has its root from both Hebrews and Greek languages. In the Hebrew word tithe is "asar" while in Greek word is "dekattoo". The English word tithes means "One tenth of everything" Such as livestock, agricultural produce, and as well goods.

"One tenth of all the produce of the Land, whether grain or fruit, Belongs to the Lord" GNT. (LEV. 27:30)

Children of God pay, their tithes to God. God is the owner of it, and to him shall it be paid. God had divided the blessings he gave to man into ten parts. He had made one part of it holy for himself. If you temper with it you are touching the Holy thing that belongs to God. You have the right to do whatever you desire with the nine including offerings, arm giving, bills and so on. But the tenth he separated and made it holy, you have no right to touch or spend that at all.

Tithe is like paying a debt or returning something to its owner. As difficult and shameful it will be when you are indebted to a human being, so it suppose to be

when we fail to pay tithe to the rightful owner. Whatever reason for which you kept the tithe the law applied to it is in (LEV. 27:31).

Tithes is not tax but similar with tax collection. Everything of man's income must give tithes to God. In the bible the people of God where given tithes. Because they knew that God owns everything. Israelites were required to give one tenth of Their livestock and Lands produced as well as their income.

Israel's tithe was according to the Law. "It refers to that tenth of the people's produce or income that was given to God for the temple service and other social obligation" according to James Montango Mercy Boice.

Tithes belong to God who created everything. Tithes is a sign of putting God first in everything, as He created man, earth, Heavens, rain, sun, plants, animals, Forest's, and every treasures on earth and gave all things to the man He created. (Gen. 1:28). God created all things and submitted to mankind. The men of God gives tithes back to God, the creator of all things and owner of all things. Thus, A Elwell said, "That the tithe also functioned as a kind of tax to support the temple and its personnel".

ETYMOLOGY OF TITHE

Attempt by different scholars has tried to trace the exact time and where the first tithes was Mentioned. But the definite was a presume but history reveals that it “existed long ago in Egypt, Persia and Babylon, even in the land of China. John

Macarthur. Abram's record in Gen. 14:20 shows that Abram application is an indication that he knew of tithe even before he met this high priest.

In other word tithes can be traced to the Old Testament as a measure for the Israelites to support the temple. Today, although we are not required to give a tenth of all we have as it where, but it is ideal to continue to use the tithes as a guide for the minimum amount to give freely and cheerfully to the service of the temple and the Kingdom. In the New Testament, Christians were not commanded to tithes as It were but rather encouraged to voluntarily give to the church and to God in proportion to their wealth. Matt. 22:15-22, 23:23, and ROM 13:1-7, Jesus was referring to the Old Testament command on tithing not advocating for the return of the requirements. The New Testament is vastly different, but aptly explained by Paul "whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly.... 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. Apostle Paul makes it clear that generosity should be cheerful and voluntary (2 COR. 9:6-7). We should not allow the Old Testament Law of tithing to become a stumbling block of embracing the new covenants behavior of generosity.

WHY THE PRACTICE.

"Bring the whole tithe into the Storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test me in this; says the Lord Almighty.... NLT. (Mal. 3:10).

In our contemporary English God is saying "dare if I will not" --- Accept God's invitation to put him to test, and tithe faithfully and correctly if he will not fulfill this part of the deal.

Tithing is an important theme for Christian because its really a symbol of how God called us to live our live as stewards rather than owners. In Old Testament, it was a law of God but now transformed by the grace of God In our lives, we move from a sense of duty to a sense of delight. This is why really in the New Testament you don't hear a whole lot about tithing, not because believers are not expected to give, they're just expected to be a lot more generous because of the fullness of the work of Jesus that we celebrate.

Tithing is a kind of entrance level into a life of grace the more the grace of the gospel capture the heart, the less one asked "how much do I have to give" how can I live a more fulfilled life by giving generously to the glory of God, because of the poured love of Christ one is enjoying? Apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians church for giving themselves to the Lord, as they asked us for the privilege of sharing in the offering.

In the bible, tithe was required as a way to provide for both Levites, priest, who were not allowed to own land and the less fortunate. (num.18:21-32). Today, there are debates whether a Christian tithe should be exactly a tenth of their income, but the practice of tithing is generally regarded as an important practice of the faith.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF TITHING

Since the order of tithes in New Testament is more of grace more than a command, differences in tithing becomes a thing of concern. They are instances in

our modern churches that tithes become legalized while other denomination It's still maintaining it as a standing order. This will be broadened in few sections

1. **Denominations differences.** There are denominations that doesn't believe tithes not because it's not Biblical but believe it's an Old Testament practice. That means, church leaders are defrauding members of their finance. Others give tithe of tithes to the pastor and the temple workers probably, as practice in numbers 18:21-32. All this show that to some extent tithes is still believed in New Testament churches but the application may be different.

2. **Advanced knowledge:** The revelation showed to Daniel in Daniel 12:4 is becoming practical. The so called advancement in knowledge has brought a serious setback in our religious practices. Setting group of believers agreed that tithes is biblical but not on the gross income but should be applied on the net income. Some applications are basically on salaries not on the gift, agricultural produce and so on. Even at that. They are Christians who practice ten percent to themselves and ninety to God and are sincerely testifying.

3. **Administrative policies:** Apart from denominational differences, Administrative policies equally play some roles in tithe practices. Personalities in church government and their biblical understanding regarding tithes also makes policies different. The believe of some, inculcate that , tithes is to take care of the temple workers, since that cannot be out rightly applied effort will be mounted to make sure that the priest, Levites and all other temple workers should live without lacking any good thing.

4. The Old Testament policies of tithing may not be fully practiced and administered, but to some extent the usage of the proceeds are merely applied. Effort should be enhanced to teach and to preach that, tithing is biblical and of a greater necessity in the 21st Century. What is good for Mr. A of old is equally good for Mr. B of the New with a greater grace, in fact much better for the 21st Century.

SUMMARY

When the expected direction to a particular destination is miscalculated the expected result will be disdained. The formula for a specific equation remains the brands for that product.

Tithes remains one of the surest way for God for blessing of his faithful children who are loyal and obedient to him. (Mal. 3:10).

The doctrinal and administrative structures that have devalued the usage and management of tithes shouldn't be an emblem of refusal or not believing the blessedness of faithful tithers.

The delicate Land mark of Moses to Joshua as well can be deduced to the application of tithes from the book of Joshua 1:8;

Keep this Book of the law always on your lips.... Niv.

Jesus teaching on the Mount Profane the value of the Law; Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophet.... Matt. 5:17 KJV.

It is emphatically, and beneficial to note that tithes is more graceful and more rewardable to the 21st Century churches to practice than ever. To whom much is given much is expected....Luke 12:48 God realizes much and expected us to give

in proportion to the measure of our grace. Prompt and faithful in tithing pave ways for God's blessings.

REFERENCE

Adams J. Wesley, Full life international study Bible for spirit filled Christians. Grand Rapids. ML: Baker books, 2011.

Alexander, Donald L. ed, Christian Spirituality: Five views of sanctification. Bowners Grovee, ILLinois: Intervarsity press, 1988.

Baker, J. Siolow. A New Call of Holiness, Grand Rapids: Zondervan publishing House, 1973. Brain, Edgar. The message of the Trinity. UK: British Library Estaloguing publishing, 2004.

Cho, David Yonggi and others. A close look at His Theology and Minister. Goopo, kyunggido: Do: Hansei university press, 2004.

Danny McCain, We believe: An Introduction to christian Doctrine, Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks (Acts), 2006

Enns, Paul. The moody Handbook of Theology. Chicago: Moody press, 1989.

Evans Effion. The weich revival of 1904. California: Evangelical press, 1969.

Evans, William, The great Doctrine of the Bible, Chicago Moody press, 2003.

Friesom, Gerry. Decision making and will of God. Oregon, Portland: Multwomach press, 1980.

Kendell, R.T. Tithing. England: Hodder Stoughton Press, 1982.

Oxford, Stephen. The Grace of Giving. Michigan: Moody press, 1975.

Ryrie, C. Charles. Balancing the Christian life. Chicago: Moody press, 1975.

COMMENTARIES

Adeyemo, Tokumbo ed, Africa Bible Commentary. Nairobi; Zondervan world alive publishers, 2006

Church, Leshile F. ed Matthew Henry's Commentary in one Volume, America: Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1981.

MAGAZINE

Abuja Zone, Celebrating God's faithfulness@ 20th Anniversary, Garki: Zonal headquarters, 2016.