



Dear Phil

TITHING part II

Does God require NT believers to tithe? Isn't the NT principle that everything belongs to God and we should want to give more than OT believers gave? In other words, is a tithe all God requires

from us in our giving? Or should we be giving more than the tithe?

—*Jim*

Dear Jim,

In my last column I argued that (1) everything God required of His people in the Old Testament applies to us today either directly or in principle unless He has stated or implied that it does not; (2) tithing appears to be a practice God instituted prior to the Mosaic Law; (3) tithing acknowledges God's ownership of everything and expresses our gratitude for His blessings.

Perhaps a quick overview of OT tithing regulations will further clarify why God wants us to tithe. God set up a seven-year agricultural system in Israel. On years one, two, four, and five, the non-Levites were to tithe the increase of their harvest and of their livestock to the central sanctuary, i.e.,

the Tabernacle/Temple (Lev. 27:32; Deut. 12:5-7, 17-19; 14:23; 26:12). Upon arriving at the central sanctuary, they were to use their tithe to hold a meal for their family, their servants, and the Levites living near them (Deut. 12:17-18; 14:23-27). This meal was to celebrate God's blessings upon them (Deut. 12:18; 14:26). The remainder of the tithe, which would have been most of it, was then given to the Levites for their support since they worked at the central sanctuary (Num. 18:21-24). If a person lived so far from the central sanctuary that he could not transport his tithes there, he was to sell his tithe, take the tithe money, journey to the central sanctuary, provide a feast as previously described, and then give the remainder of the money to the Levites (Deut. 14:24-27).

On years three and six, the Israelites were to bring their tithes into their local towns to provide for the local

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Levites, resident aliens, orphans, and widows (Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12). On the seventh year they would tithe only their livestock since they were not to plant or harvest anything that year (Lev. 25:4-7). The Levites, on the other hand, were to give a tenth of the tithe they received to the Aaronic priests every year (Num. 18:28-29). This was how the priests received their support.

In addition to providing for the support of the Levites and priests, the tithe provided an opportunity for God's people to eat and rejoice in how He had blessed them (Deut. 12:7, 18). It also provided for the poor, the orphaned, the widowed, i.e., those who could not provide for themselves. The reason the Lord required His people to tithe was "so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always" (Deut. 14:23), and "that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do" (Deut. 14:29).

Unfortunately, God's people often failed to pay their tithes. The results were disastrous: since the Levites did not receive the support they needed. Thus they had to work and could not properly care for the Temple (Neh. 13:10-12). As a result, the spiritual well-being of the nation suffered. Further, God considered Himself robbed and permitted "the devourer" to destroy their crops (Mal. 3:8, 10). Yet God graciously called His people to renew their love for Him and test His bountiful goodness by tithing. He promised to open the windows of heaven and pour out an overflowing blessing upon them (Mal. 3:9).

I will conclude my discussion of tithing in the next issue of the *God's Revivalist*.

Sincerely,
Philip Brown ■

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ALABAMA EPISCOPAL CHURCHES DIVIDE

Montgomery's Church of the Ascension, third-largest Episcopal church in the Diocese of Alabama, divided in early April, with its pastor, the Rev. John-Michael van Dyke, and many of its 1600 members leaving the Episcopal Church USA. Christchurch, the new parish, led by van Dyke, will temporarily conduct Sunday services at a Presbyterian church.

This is the second Episcopal congregation in Montgomery to split this year. In January the Rev. Doug McCurry, priest of the 250-member Christ the Redeemer Church, resigned and took most of the congregation with him to begin Legacy Church, a new parish affiliated with an African bishop through the Anglican Church in America. Both new churches were formed by Episcopal conservatives protesting the national church's ordination of an openly homosexual bishop.

KANSAS BANS SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

In early April, Kansas became the 18th state to adopt a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage, with seventy percent of voters endorsing the action. Since 1867 there has been a state law banning same-sex marriages, but supporters of the constitutional amendment argued that it was necessary to

protect traditional marriage from activist judges. Tony Perkins, president of Family Research Council, who endorsed the vote, commented, "The beat of the American heartland is clearly for marriage as it has always been defined—between a man and a woman."

OPPOSITION TO DENYING DISABLED PERSONS FOOD AND WATER

In the wake of Terri Schiavo's final suffering and death, a poll by Zogby International on behalf of the Christian Defense Coalition, found "that 80 percent of likely voters believe a disabled person who is not terminally ill and with no written directive should not be denied food and water."

PAPAL TOMB OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

Vatican authorities have opened the grottoes beneath St. Peter's Basilica to allow pilgrims access to the tomb of Pope John Paul II, who died April 2 at the age of 84. In one of the largest funerals in history, hundreds of thousands from around the globe paid tribute to the Polish pontiff, who will be remembered for his world travels, his opposition to Communism, and his conservative stands on such issues as sexual morality. ■