

End *All* Your
FINANCIAL
WORRIES

by David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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No one thinks they have enough money. Many are concerned—even obsessed—by the need for more. Despite the majority of households having more than one income, this is often still not enough to pay the bills. Budgeting does not always help. Everyone wants to end their money worries. The Bible holds the key!

Despite affluence in the Western World that is unparalleled in human history, personal bankruptcies are soaring. *Why?* Consumer credit has never been so high. *Why?* Up to 95 million American adults are just “one paycheck from the street.” *Why?* The U.S. national debt is measured in the trillions of dollars, requiring annual interest payments in the hundreds of billions! *Why?* Money woes are considered the second leading cause of divorce.

None of this need be.

Much of the national news is devoted to the rollercoaster ride of the “leading economic indicators”—and whether they are moving up or down. Unemployment, inflation, recession, interest rates, bull or bear markets, stocks, housing starts, auto sales, layoffs, hires, available energy and fuel prices are all household words dominating the news.

What about you? If you are honest with yourself, you will admit that you spend a lot of time thinking and talking about MONEY. You probably wrestle with financial difficulties daily.

Sometimes you feel that you are winning the battle, only to learn that you are either treading water or falling behind. Many today find it almost impossible to “get ahead.”

For most, the “money struggle” is constant, and the pressure can seem unbearable. Just the stress of these problems can drive away the happiness and peace that everyone seeks but few find. All of this is unnecessary if you have God’s *key* to financial prosperity.

What You Earn Is *Not* Your Own

Your house belongs to *you*, right? So does *your* car, doesn't it? You bought the clothes on your back with *your* money, didn't you? Haven't you heard yourself say, "*I* earned my money, it's *mine*"? Isn't it true that "what's yours is yours and what's mine is mine"? Not so fast!

Certainly we would all agree that before we have fully paid off the things that we have purchased, they are not truly ours. Banks and other lenders hold liens against houses, cars, boats and other expensive things that people buy on credit. Everyone understands this. But have you ever considered whether you really own everything that you *think* you do? Do you really have title to the things you own "free and clear"?

We must consider whether others could lay claim to what is "ours."

"Death and Taxes"

Most are familiar with the phrase, "Nothing is certain in life except death and taxes." Indeed, death is certain. Of course, everyone also recognizes that the government is entitled to a certain percentage of one's income. Few dispute this, though most seek to get around taxes in as many ways as possible. No one wants to give the government a penny more than "its fair share." Most feel that *less* than "its share" would be better.

Have you stopped to consider whether *God* instructs us to pay taxes? *He does!* These scriptures prove it. Paul wrote, "Let *every soul* be subject unto the higher powers...Wherefore you *must* needs be subject...for conscience sake. For this cause pay you *tribute* [Greek: taxes or assessment] also...Render therefore to all their dues: *tribute* to whom *tribute is due*" (Rom. 13:1, 5-7).

Christ was asked if He felt that taxes should be paid—with the question actually directed to Him for the purpose of tempting Him into giving a wrong answer. Notice how those who questioned Him said, "Is it lawful to give *tribute* to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?" Christ asked to be given a penny for the purpose of illustration. He then answered, "Render to Caesar *the things that are Caesar's*, and to God *the things that are God's*" (Mark 12:13-17). Christ taught that there are things that *belong to man's government* and things that *belong to God*.

We will momentarily address what belongs to God. However, what belongs to the government are *taxes!* In some countries this includes city, state and federal taxes. Woe to those caught not paying them! Interest, penalties and even prison can be the result for those guilty of tax evasion. But in doing this, people have disobeyed not only the laws of the land but also God's plain instruction. So then, taxes *are* an undisputed fact of life for most people on Earth. The fact that you *earned* the money you have does not negate the fact that human governments have a prior right to take a certain

legal percentage of it to insure their own operation. No government can function without tax revenue.

This is one way that what is yours is *not* always entirely yours.

Who Really Owns Everything?

Despite the fact that governments can legally collect taxes for themselves from the taxpayers of a country, no one would suggest that they own everything *else* that a taxpayer has. All that is left belongs to the taxpayer—or does it?

Now for a basic question. Look around you and ask yourself: Where do we get the things that we have? Where did they actually come from?

God says, “For all the earth is *Mine*” (Ex. 19:5). Have you ever considered this? The Bible also states, “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is *the LORD’s* your God, the earth also, with all that therein is” (Deut. 10:14) and “whatsoever is under the whole heaven is *Mine*” (Job 41:11). In the Psalms, King David was inspired to write, “The earth is *the LORD’s*, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psa. 24:1). Paul recorded the same statement in I Corinthians 10:26.

God says, “For every beast of the forest is *Mine*, and the cattle upon a thousand hills...If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for *the world is Mine*, and the fulness thereof” (Psa. 50:10, 12). Finally, the prophet Haggai said, “The silver is *Mine*, and the gold is *Mine*, says the LORD” (2:8).

In a sense, God is saying that *all* money is His (remember, the value of money is generally attached in some way to gold and silver). God *owns* absolutely *everything* there is to own. Human beings are “squatters” on His land and “renters” in homes that belong to Him. This is what these verses say! Make no mistake—what you think is yours is not! Everything that you *think* you own is actually owned by God. You are merely its temporary custodian.

People may manufacture products from natural resources, which come from the Earth, but it is God who makes both the natural resources and the Earth in which they are found. Men may own mining or timber rights, but it is ultimately God who owns the mine and created the timber, which grew because of the elements found in the soil of the Earth—which He created and owns!

Any time He wishes, God could take back all that is His. After all, *it is His!* This includes your income. While you may have “earned it,” God OWNS it.

“The Things That are God’s”

We have seen how Christ said that, in addition to taxes belonging to Caesar, there are also “things that are God’s”—or things that *belong to God*. What are these things? We have read that God owns everything. And Christ said to “*Render...to God the things that are God’s.*” Render means *give*. Since the

heavens and the earth (or the land on which we live) cannot be “rendered” back to God by human beings, to what is this referring?

We have proven that our entire income (salary, wages, interest earned, investments, bonuses, commissions and any other kind of financial increase) actually belongs to God.

What of a farmer and the produce from his field? What is the process whereby things grow? The farmer does his part—tilling, planting, fertilizing, watering, etc.—but so does God, in that He sends rain and sunshine and provides the very soil in which the fruit, vegetables or grains take root and grow. Who did most of the work? In truth, the farmer did little more than a fraction of the work, while God did perhaps 90%. As a matter of fact, the farmer is far more dependent on God’s effort than God is on the farmer’s. Without God’s contributions, the farmer would produce nothing and, in fact, *would not even be alive* because no one would be able to produce the food necessary for all human beings to survive.

Think of it this way. You formed a partnership with God—whether you knew it or not—the day you took a chosen profession, job or vocation. In that you are using materials that belong to God, in order to invest, sell, distribute or produce goods or services, whereby you can earn a living, *you have become a partner with God!* There is no other way to view or understand this. Admit to yourself that, without God’s role and help in earning a living, it would be impossible to produce anything! God knows this and has chosen to make a special arrangement with you. His Word describes it.

God lays prior claim to the first 10% of everything that people earn as income. This is called the *tithe*, and it means “the *tenth*.” You may be familiar with the term. To tithe, or to be a tithepayer, means the same as “tenth” or to be a “tenthpayer.” The word *tithe* is actually an old English word. The King James Version of the Bible was translated nearly 400 years ago—in 1611. At that time, the word was commonly used to mean *tenth*. People have long understood that to tithe is to pay a tenth of one’s income. We will thoroughly explore to whom this tenth was paid in the Old Testament, and to whom it is paid today.

There are small and large points within God’s law. Some commands carry more “weight” than others. When speaking of some lesser points within God’s law, Christ said in Matthew 5:19 that, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of *these least commandments*, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (To learn more about God’s Law, read our book *The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” or Required for Salvation?*)

Let us now examine an important verse about tithing. Christ said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For *you pay tithe* of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the *weightier* matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: *these* [the weightier matters] *ought you to have done*, and *not*

to leave the other [tithing conscientiously] undone” (Matt. 23:23). God also inspired Luke to record the same account—and to repeat the same command (11:42). Love, mercy and faith are, indeed, weighty matters within the overall law of God. Christ acknowledges this. However, He also explains that tithing should not be something that people “leave undone.” The argument is often raised that tithing is not important—that it is *least* among God’s laws. This verse does not actually say that it is “least” among God’s commands. Matthew 5:19 merely says that, *if it were*, it is still required to be kept today by all who value the commands of God!

Any who are learning the truth of God’s tithing laws must pay His tithe—once it is clear where His chosen representatives are working! We will learn that tithing is the manner in which He finances the Work His true servants perform. Only after God’s tithe has been paid does God give the rest of one’s income back to the tithepayer. God’s generosity and love for those who are His children is why He gives nine-tenths of what He owns to the one faithful in tithe-paying. In other words, we are not giving God *one-tenth* of what is *ours*. God is giving us *nine-tenths* of what is *His*!

We should now examine several scriptures about tithing. People who dismiss this practice as a valid command often attempt to make the truth of tithing into a highly technical subject. Tithing is not a technical subject. It is not difficult to understand. It does require some careful examination of a relatively *few* scriptures. Doing this will make clear that tithing has always been, is now and always will be the means whereby God finances His Work and His Church.

The Tithe Is God’s

Some theologians and “Bible critics” attempt to create confusion by saying that tithes in the Old Testament belonged only to the Levitical Priesthood of ancient Israel. Is this true? Does the Bible say this? We must ask, is there a place, anywhere in scripture, where God plainly says that *tithes belong to Him*? There is!

God states, in Leviticus 27:30, 32, “And *all the tithe* of the land...IS THE LORD’S: it is *holy unto the LORD*...And concerning *the tithe* of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passes under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.” These verses are direct. They are plain. Tithes belong to God alone. *He* may choose to give them to His servants (this will be discussed later), but it is completely within *His* discretion what *He* does with them.

These same “higher critics” often attempt to use Numbers 18:21 and 24 to prove that the tithe belonged to the *Levites*. Carelessly reading these scriptures causes them to be misunderstood by those who will not accept their plain meaning. This passage says, “And, behold, *I have given* the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve...But the tithes of the children of Israel...*I have given* to the Levites to inherit.” Carefully consider this verse. Did *Israel* give their tithes to the

Levites? No! *God* gave His tithe, which was merely supplied by the Israelites, to the Levites. He twice said, “*I* have given.”

The tithes were God’s, not Israel’s, to give to whom *He* chose. Reading verse 20 makes this more plain. God says that *He* will provide for the Levites, since they had no physical land inheritance in the nation of Israel.

Abraham and Jacob Paid Tithes

Those who teach that only ancient Israel was required to pay tithes, and that they were always to be paid to the Levites, have another serious problem in their thinking.

The patriarch Abraham, often called the father of the faithful (his name actually means “the father of many nations”), paid tithes! The following account occurred when Abraham was still known as Abram. Notice: “And He [God in the Person of Melchizedek] blessed him [Abraham], and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the Most High God, which has delivered your enemies into your hand. *And he* [Abram] *gave Him* [Melchizedek] *tithes of all*” (Gen. 14:19-20). Abraham tithed on *all* of what he received.

This account took place well over 100 years prior to the birth of Levi—Abraham’s great-grandson. The tribe of *Levites* came from *Levi*! However, God did not establish the Levitical Priesthood until soon after Israel came out of Egypt, over *400 years* after Abraham paid tithes! So, the nation of Israel, and its twelve tribes—with Levi being *one* of those tribes, was not recognized as a nation until that time. Abraham was paying tithes to God long before Leviticus 27:30-31 and Numbers 18:20-24 were recorded by Moses.

Hebrews 7:1-6 proves that Melchizedek was the same person who became Jesus Christ. (We will study this in more detail later.)

But understand—Melchizedek was God because Christ is God. Abraham paid tithes directly to God, 400 years before the Levitical Priesthood was formed. Paul explained, in Hebrews 7:6, that Melchizedek (Christ) did *not* descend from Levi, and yet, as a *non-Levite*, He was paid tithes by Abraham.

Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, also paid tithes to God. Jacob’s name was later changed to Israel. He was the father of twelve sons (Levi was one) and one daughter. Notice: “And, Jacob vowed a vow, saying, *If God will be with me*, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that you shall give me *I will surely give the tenth unto you*” (Gen. 28:20-22).

Many are familiar with the story of “Jacob’s Pillar Stone”—it has also been called his “pillow stone.” However, most people do not recognize its connection to Jacob’s vow to pay God His tithes! This particular scripture introduces a vital principle. Notice the phrase “*IF* God will be with me.” Jacob wanted to

know that paying God's tithes meant blessings, guidance and protection from God would always be insured. The connection between tithing and blessings is so important that God inspired it to be recorded for all time.

God Says People Can Rob Him

A remarkable prophecy about tithing is found at the end of the Old Testament. The prophet Malachi asks, "Will a man rob God?" (Mal. 3:8). Be careful that you do not say that this is an *Old Testament* scripture with no effect today.

Did you realize that the *New Testament* Church is built directly on top of the prophets? I never heard this in Sunday school or in the denomination of my youth. Ephesians 2:19-20 says, "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the *household of God* [the Church]; And are *built upon* the foundation of the *apostles and prophets*, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone." There it is—the Church stands directly on a foundation that includes the prophets! Therefore, what is written in the prophets is instruction to God's New Testament Church!

We can now read a powerful series of verses. The first two set the stage for a verbal exchange between God and His people: "For I am the LORD, *I change not*...Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from *My ordinances*, and *have not kept them*. Return unto Me and I will return unto you, says the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 3:6-7). The exchange then shifts to a rhetorical question from the people to God: "But you said, Wherein shall we return?" Now God answers with His own question: "Will a man rob God? *Yet you have robbed Me*." The context returns to another rhetorical question from the people: "But you say, Wherein have we robbed You?" God answers, "IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS" (vs. 7-8).

When people do not *pay* God His tithes—nor *give* Him His *offerings*—He considers them to be robbing Him. Robbing is thievery—stealing! Not only is it stealing, but it is stealing FROM GOD! All sin is against God, and few things could be more serious than this!

Stealing from God brings consequences. In the next verse, God continues, "*You are cursed with a curse*: for you have robbed Me, even this *whole nation*." This statement is directed to all the modern-day nations that descended from the twelve tribes that comprised ancient Israel. Generally, these nations are the democratic nations of Western Europe, and the primarily English-speaking nations of the world—the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

These nations are under a growing curse for their sin of stealing God's tithes. Remember that Abraham and Isaac were *not* Israelites, yet were required to pay tithes. Therefore, all nations suffer—and will continue to suffer—from the curse of not obeying God's financial laws.

This world is based on the "get" way rather than the "give" way, which is God's way! People constantly strive to "get" more for themselves. This vio-

lates the Tenth Commandment, which forbids coveting. Notice what God says of His people, and of all nations, in a prophecy directed to those alive at the end of the age: “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them *every one is given to covetousness*; and from the prophet even unto the priest *every one deals falsely*” (Jer. 6:13). Two chapters later, there is an almost identical statement, except that God also warns of the horrific punishment He will bring because of this worldwide attitude.

The book of Malachi records several passages relating to a coming period of punishment. Similar passages are found in nearly all of the Minor Prophets—the last twelve short books of the Old Testament. See Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-14; 3:1-21; Amos 5:18-20 and Zephaniah 1:7-18, among others. Malachi continues the theme and actually pictures tithing as the key to a repentant attitude.

Consider!

How could God punish the nations of Israel—and the world—for robbery, *if the tithing law is not in effect today*? This would make no sense and would make God terribly unjust if He did this.

The context of Malachi continues with an offer from God. It is directed both at the modern peoples of Israel and to any *individual* who chooses to take Him at His word. Notice: “*Bring you all the tithes* into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and *prove Me now herewith*, says 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” (vs. 10).

This is a promise! Pay God His tithes, and He will bless you beyond what you have room to receive! Will you believe this?

Jacob believed God and this is what he expected, once he began to pay His tithes. Jacob was prepared to tithe *if God would provide for, bless and guide him*. His life became a testimony to the fact that God keeps His Word, if men obey Him.

Becoming God’s Partner

Recognize this. Faithful tithing activates a PROMISE to which God has bound Himself. Hebrews 6:18 says it is “impossible for God to lie.” He is bound by His promises. When God makes a promise, He keeps it—and we have already read that He tells Christians to “prove Me” through tithing. We have also read that Jacob took God up on this promise. What about you?

I have known men who made God their partner. In my hometown of Lima, Ohio, a well-known, successful businessman put a sign on the side of his factory saying, “God is my Partner.” Some years ago I saw that the sign was still there. He attributed his prosperity to his belief in God’s promise. This man actually gave God *one-half* of his income. He certainly did prosper.

John D. Rockefeller, the famous Cleveland businessman and patriarch of the large, successful Rockefeller family, was known to tithe. He attributed his

success to this practice. There have also been other well-known tithepayers who prospered because they followed this principle.

No one can make God his partner. We cannot “let God in” on a “business deal” with us. But, *God* can *choose* to make individual tithepayers *His partners*—not the other way around!

Do not forget that everything belongs to God. He gives us 90%, as long as we pay Him what is His. To not pay our bill to God is theft, pure and simple. Stealing is dishonesty. No businessman could remain in business if he stole from his partner. Getting caught stealing is enough to put people in prison. This fear keeps most from attempting it.

But men do not fear a God who does not immediately catch and punish them. To most people, God seems far off, unreal—and people think that they can get away with disobeying and displeasing Him. The consequences of disobeying God’s tithing law are financial curses.

Some believe that they should pay off existing debts before paying God’s tithe. Is this correct? Realize that tithing is actually a debt that all of us have to God. It is no less a debt than any *other* debt, and it is no less an obligation than any *other* obligation we have! (To learn more about avoiding debt, read our booklet *Taking Charge of Your Finances*.)

Since God promises to bless the tithepayer, there will actually be more left to pay the other debts, because the *most important* debt was *not* left unpaid. God is a faithful partner who keeps His word. He *will* pour out blessings to make up for the financial problems a person may have gotten himself into prior to tithing. In God’s form of “higher math,” \$10 minus \$1 is *more* than ten dollars, not less. I have seen “God’s math” at work hundreds of times in people’s lives and have experienced it many times myself.

I have seen many who were blessed in ways they could never have anticipated, simply because they put God first and faithfully paid His tithes. Little by little, their debts seemed to melt. Extra, unexpected income always seemed to come to cover additional bills and emergencies that all people encounter. You can have faith that God will always keep His promise—*always!*

The Bible is filled with places where God says that He wants to bless His people, if they will be faithful in their obedience to Him. Solomon wrote, “HONOR THE LORD with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase: *so shall your barns be filled* with plenty, and your presses shall burst out with new wine” (Prov. 3:9-10). The apostle John recorded, “I wish above all things that you may *prosper* and be in health” (III John 2).

Moses said, “Observe and hear all these words which I command you, *that it may go well with you*, and with your children after you forever, when you do that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God” (Deut. 12:28).

Tithing is for our own good—as are ALL of God’s commands. He wants to bless people, but requires their obedience beforehand.

The Christian is told, “Seek you *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; *and all these things shall be added unto you*” (Matt. 6:33). Being

part of the soon-coming Kingdom of God must always be the FIRST goal of a Christian. Everything else (including all debts and financial concerns) is less important than this first great goal. You are promised that when you remember this priority, all other necessary things will be “added unto you.”

First pay your tithes. Do not delay. The tithe belongs to God. Even temporarily withholding it is stealing. Jesus said, “He that is faithful in that which is *least* is faithful also *in much*: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also *in much*” (Luke 16:10). Tithing is far from the “least” of things that matter to God. Those who are faithful in all matters will be given GREAT RULERSHIP (this would certainly qualify as “much”). And be sure to give *offerings* willingly, not grudgingly or sparingly, because God especially loves “cheerful givers” and promises they will reap “bountifully” with this kind of giving (II Cor. 9:6-7).

Do not worry over the *size* of your tithes and offerings. The story of the “widow’s mites” (Mark 12:42; Luke 21:2) has an important lesson for all. Even small amounts, when paid faithfully, carry much weight with God. I have seen many inspiring examples of people who had little but gave much. God always blessed them with more in the end!

Tithing is a law. Like any *other* law, there is an automatic cause and effect relationship. Why do you “keep” the law of gravity? Because if you “break” it, you know that there will be an immediate, visible and sometimes painful effect. If you jump off a 10-story building, there is no doubting the consequences. This is why you would never consider doing this.

Tithing is no different. It is a law. If we break it, it turns and “breaks” us. But if we keep it, then it “keeps” us. However, there is one fundamental difference between tithing, which is a spiritual law, and physical laws. Breaking any spiritual law does not usually bring an *immediate* effect on the person doing it. There is a *delayed penalty*—but there is a penalty, nonetheless.

Was Tithing Ever Done Away?

Because few groups practice tithing, most people are unfamiliar with the term. The average person understands very little of its history or practice. Some might ask, “Wasn’t tithing done away?” Or, “Wasn’t it just for the Jews or the Old Testament nation of Israel?” Some feel that tithing was little more than a ceremonial ordinance introduced by Moses, while still others have heard that it was a form of national, civil taxation and nothing more. Other religionists claim that tithing was merely a way of taking care of the poor in the Old Testament. Almost no one believes that tithes are to be paid to a faithful New Testament ministry. All of these ideas, except for the last, are wrong. They do, however, demonstrate the confusion that reigns over the subject of tithing.

The modern nations of Israel are paying—and will pay—a terrible price because of this confusion. Catastrophic punishment is coming on the world because a rebellious mankind—that wants the blessings of obeying

God without having to actually obey Him—has ignored this law! Most are deceived into believing that they can live their lives any way they choose and then blame God when the blessings of peace, happiness and prosperity are missing.

Understand! Any individual who steps out in faith and obeys God's tithing laws will be blessed and protected from the HORRIFIC PROPHECIES soon to strike this world. Through God's promise, he will *escape* the punishment soon to befall all nations!

Some understand that tithing was practiced in ancient Israel, where people were required to tithe on money, livestock or grain products. What is less clear to people is what the *New Testament* says about the subject of tithing.

First, we must explore the book that discusses the Priesthood of ancient Israel. Hebrews has been called the "book about the Priesthood."

Where Is Christ's Office Today?

I grew up hearing much about a *dead* Jesus, with many depictions of Him hanging crucified! I almost never heard anyone talk about how He was *alive* and sitting at the right hand of God. A few vaguely understood that He would return to Earth as "King of kings and Lord of lords." But I certainly never heard anyone describe Christ as God's High Priest. Yet, this is the office that Christ works through today—and the seventh chapter of Hebrews contains instruction for financing His ministry. Christ's Priesthood has always superseded—and long *preceded*—the Levitical Priesthood of ancient Israel.

True Christians have hope of eternal life because Jesus Christ has given them *access* to the Father. He has taken them inside the very throne room of God in heaven, "within the veil," to where human beings have never been allowed access before. It is Christ's role as High Priest that has made this possible. This requires some explanation. Notice Hebrews 6:20: "Where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an HIGH PRIEST FOREVER after the order of Melchisedec."

Jesus Christ is still the active High Priest of His New Testament Church and ministry. At His first coming, He brought the message of the Kingdom of God. The world focuses on His *Person*, instead of the *Message* that He brought. The true gospel is about the coming Kingdom of God. After His ministry was completed, Christ was crucified and became the Savior of mankind. Afterwards, He was resurrected to sit at God's right hand in heaven.

Notice Hebrews 4:14-15: "Seeing then that we have a great HIGH PRIEST, that is *passed into the heavens*, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an HIGH PRIEST which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

These are tremendously encouraging words. They show Christ to be both High Priest and the *living Head* of the *true Church* of God.

Many have wondered just who the Melchizedek of the Bible is. This question has long puzzled Bible students. The first six verses of Hebrews 7 make absolutely plain that Melchizedek could be none other than Christ Himself.

The Moffatt translation best renders “after the order of Melchisedec” as “*with the rank of Melchisedec.*” Christ held the rank of Melchizedek (Hebrews spells this with a “k”) when He received tithes from Abraham during the times of the patriarchs.

How and where does Christ work today? Ancient Israel did not preach the gospel to the world and it did not have a ministry teaching God’s truths to *all nations* of the Earth. Israel was one physical nation that did not have the Spirit of God. The Levitical Priesthood carried out burnt offerings, animal sacrifices and many other physical rituals. The arduous physical labor of the Old Testament Priesthood was very different from the work required of the New Testament ministry. In short, the Levitical Priesthood held a lower, human rank far below the spiritual, divine rank of Christ as Melchizedek.

We have discussed how God financed the Levitical Priesthood of ancient Israel. It should now also be clear that Jesus Christ, as Melchizedek, received tithes many centuries before the Levites appeared. An already-existing system of tithing simply *continued* through this Priesthood and, as we will now learn, passed to the New Testament ministry.

Hebrews 7

The first five verses of Hebrews 7 begin the process of comparing the two Priesthoods—the Levitical and the Melchizedek. We have seen that tithing did not start with Moses and the Levites.

Carefully read Hebrews 7:1-5: “For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, *priest of the Most High God*, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all... *abides a priest continually.* Now consider how great this man was [correctly translated: “this *one* was”], unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the Priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people *according to the LAW.*”

Abraham was no different than either a New Testament Christian or any citizen of ancient Israel. He paid tithes to a High Priest—Christ. The Levitical system always had an existing high priest. (See Numbers 18:8-32.) Moses’ older brother Aaron was the first human to hold this office. All of the Levitical priests served and functioned under whoever was the high priest at the time. Tithing is not something that was merely practiced during the period of the Levitical Priesthood. It is a practice that has existed as long as there has been a high priest (Christ or the Levitical high priest) to receive tithes.

We have seen that tithes were paid to Christ, and that He is alive today as the High Priest and Head of His New Testament Church. Tithing then is God’s

system for financing His Work—no matter the age in which His servants live. Notice that Melchizedek, “having neither beginning of days, nor end of life... *abides a priest CONTINUALLY*” (Heb. 7:3). Because Christ had no “beginning” as Melchizedek, He also existed as a Priest from the time of *Adam*. Notice, the Bible says that He “abides...continually.” Christ is still High Priest of His people. Hebrews 7 goes on to address the question of which Priesthood supersedes the other *today*.

While Christians of the first century needed little instruction about how tithing was a mandatory, permanent law, they did need to be carefully taught that the Melchizedek Priesthood of Jesus Christ had been restored and had, therefore, changed (replaced) the Levitical Priesthood.

Which Priesthood is actually the greater? Which Priesthood—Levitical or Melchizedek—does the Bible consider superior?

Examine the following scripture: “Now consider *how great this man* [one] *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils... But He whose descent is not counted from them [the Levites] received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him [Abraham] that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less [Abraham] is blessed of the better [Melchizedek]... And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he [Levi] was yet in the loins of his father [great-grandfather Abraham], when Melchisedec met him” (Heb. 7:4-9). Christ—Melchizedek—was not “descended” from the Levites. Is this clear? As God, Christ (a *non-Levite* and *pre-Levite*) supersedes the authority of the Levitical Priesthood.

The Melchizedek Priesthood has precedence as the greater, superior Priesthood above the Levitical system! It is now again in force as God’s continuing Priesthood, under Christ—and it requires financing! We are now set to read the all-important concluding verse 12: “For the **PRIESTHOOD** *being changed*, there is made of necessity a *change also of the LAW.*” This should be very clear. The law, requiring people to pay tithes to the Levitical system, was “changed” in the *New Testament*! There are no assigned Levites today to pay tithes to—yet tithes still belong to God. So, He has had to *redesignate* to whom they must now be paid! Technically, it is correct to say that the law, as it was prior to the Levitical Priesthood, has been *restored*—changed back to the way it was from the beginning.

At this point, it would be helpful to understand the overall reasons for the book of Hebrews. *First*, it was written to prepare the New Testament Church for the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 69-70. The Levitical Priesthood would soon pass from existence—creating a dilemma for those who knew that tithes belonged to God and must somehow be paid to Him. *Second*, was to teach the nature and function of the Priesthood. *Third*, was to explain that Christ’s office was *above* the office of Aaron and predated it to the Melchizedek Priesthood, which had no beginning. While there are some additional reasons why the book of Hebrews is important to study, it is these three particular reasons that are important to our study of tithing.

Consider what David wrote: “The LORD has sworn, and will not repent, You [David] are *a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*” (Psa. 110:4). This verse is actually a prophecy that David, at the resurrection of the dead when Christ returns, will also be considered a priest “after the order of Melchizedek.” This is a fascinating statement! David was a *Jew*, not a Levite, and yet he will one day be a priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is no wonder that Revelation 5:10 says, when speaking of the Christian’s reward, “And has made *us* unto our God *kings and priests*: and *we* shall *reign* on the earth.”

Faithful Christians will reign on the Earth as **KINGS** and **PRIESTS**! This is because Christ is King *OF KINGS* and High Priest *OF PRIESTS* (though no one ever hears of this part of the Christian’s reward). While Christ is the greatest King and the greatest Priest, it is *all* true Christians who will be the *other* kings and the *other* priests ruling with Him.

What a staggering promise for those who are faithful to this full understanding of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Faithful Christians are kings and priests *in training*.

Notice, when describing the Church, the apostle Peter wrote, “But **YOU** are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:9).

After Christ returns, tithes will be paid to all of the *other* priests who qualify to comprise this Priesthood with Him. None who are unwilling to pay tithes to Christ today, as their High Priest *now*, could ever be used later, in this coming Priesthood. They will have disqualified themselves to *receive* tithes because they themselves were not willing to *pay* them.

Tithing has always been God’s law. It is in this way that He finances His Work of feeding the flock and taking the true gospel to the world at the end of the age. Remember, tithes belong to God and they must be paid to Him. For approximately 1,500 years, the tribe of Levi, as God’s “ministry” during that time, collected tithes. Now those tithes are once again paid to the restored Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Paying God’s Tithes

We have discussed how governments collect taxes. In most countries today, people do not physically hand their taxes to the country’s leader in the capital city in which he lives. Money is paid to regional offices that collect revenue on behalf of the government.

Companies are the same. They have collectors who act as their *representatives*. They function by the authority of or in the name of the company. If a customer pays a collector, he considers himself to have paid the *company*—not merely the collector or representative. In this same way, no customer considers himself to have paid the salary of the collector, but rather a bill or invoice that he owed the company. The company pays the salary of the collector.

In a sense, God owns the greatest company in the universe. He employs representatives, or collectors, who receive the actual payment for the bills or invoices that *the company has sent the customer!* In essence, God has sent a bill to every human being on Earth. As with customers of a company that sends out invoices of differing amounts, depending upon the size of the purchase, God “invoices” people differing amounts—whatever is exactly 10% of their gross income. When a person pays this invoice to God, the bill is then satisfied—until the time when the next invoice is received.

Tithing works in this way. Each time you tithe, you have paid the latest in a long string of ongoing regular “bills” sent to you from God. Actually, it is His bill that is always the *first* one that should be paid! God is not willing to stand in line behind other creditors who represent merely human organizations to whom the tithepayer may also have existing or on-going obligations. Remember, God gives you 90% of your income. *No other organization to which you pay bills gives you back 90% of your income!*

There is another important principle to note here. Tithes paid to God work differently than money placed in a bank. If you place your money in a bank, you expect that bank to keep careful track of the funds you have deposited and to give you a periodic accounting of your money. The bank remains responsible to you for keeping proper track of your funds. The reason is simple. Though the bank may be *holding* your money, *it is still your money!* It is not their money—it is yours. The same could be said of stocks or other investments that one might have. Brokers account to the investor. While there is more of a risk to own these, because the value could go down, it is still true that the stocks or investments belong entirely to the person who made them.

Tithing is different! Since tithes belong to God, once they are paid, God (or His representative) is not obligated to explain exactly how, or in what fashion, those tithes were spent. One should never pay tithes to God’s representatives and then feel a need to supervise or otherwise have the duty to watch over the way the ministry or headquarters spends those tithes. The minister—ministry—headquarters answers to God because it is *God* who employs them, not the people who paid the tithes. God owns His “company,” and He has the authority to hire (or fire) His ministers. The people who pay tithes have no voice in how they are spent.

Proving Who God’s Representatives Are

But who are God’s representatives? How does one find them? How are they identified? A tithepayer must be absolutely sure that he is paying tithes to where God is working. This requires careful thought and research. It is not a decision to be made lightly.

God’s tithes belong to Him—and giving them to those who are *not* His representatives is the same as *not paying them*. If someone owes you \$200 and,

in ignorance or through misunderstanding, gives that \$200 to someone other than you, *you* did not receive your \$200! Upon reminding the person who owed you the money of this fact, would you be satisfied if he said, “I’m sorry, I paid your \$200 to *someone else*! They said they represented you.” Would you not say, “That’s regrettable! But you still owe *me* the \$200 because they did *not* represent me!” Of course you would. So would God. We—YOU—cannot give God’s tithes to those who do not represent Him.

There are many ministers in the denominations of this world. They all profess to be Christian—to *represent* Jesus Christ. The Bible says that Satan has his ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15). These ministers do not *appear* to be ministers of Satan. None of them say, “I am the devil’s minister, you should follow me.” For the most part they are just as deceived as those who follow them. Yet, they are counterfeits! They speak and preach in syrupy, sanctimonious and pious-sounding language that they suppose is “spiritual.” Because Revelation 12:9 says that Satan “deceives the whole world,” his ministers greatly outnumber the true ministers of God. These men have already come in “sheep’s clothing,” and will continue to “wax worse and worse” (II Tim 3:13) in the future, *pretending* to serve God—when they are really not His servants!

Paul said that we must “PROVE all things” and “HOLD FAST that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). Christ said that the only way to prove true ministers is by their *fruits*. Notice: “Beware of *false prophets*, which come to you *in sheep’s clothing*, but inwardly they are *ravening wolves*. You shall know them by their *fruits*” (Matt. 7:15-16). These verses are a plain warning to all. Do not be deceived. “All that glitters is not gold,” and all who come in the name of Christ are *not* His true ministers!

God does have His true ministers and He uses them to lead (under Christ’s guidance) His true Church. (Read our book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* to learn more.)

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, “I will build My church.” This Church is a spiritual body of specially called out believers. He went on to say, “the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it.” There is only one true Church and our booklets explain how to recognize—how to identify—that one true Church from the nearly 2,000 different professing Christian organizations that have been built by *men*. It is only in this Church that Jesus Christ is working. The answers to the questions of *where*, *what* and *why* that Church is, along with the answers to many other questions, are found in the above-mentioned booklets. No one need be confused about this subject!

In numerous verses, Christ’s Church is described as a little flock that is persecuted and hated by this world for teaching the truth. However, since Christ promised that His Church could not die out, it must exist somewhere on Earth today. It is your responsibility to prove where it is, so that you do not give God’s tithes to a thieving impostor!

It is *only* to the faithful ministry of the true Church—the *only* Church Christ built—that tithes should be paid. Those who are laboring full-time in the Work

of God are hired and paid directly by God! God owns the entire income of every human being on Earth and keeps for Himself the first tenth of all of those incomes. Since they cannot be sent directly to God in heaven, He designates that they be sent to His representatives on Earth.

You must prove who is teaching the full truth of all God's doctrines. *You* must prove who is faithfully proclaiming the gospel of the soon-coming Kingdom of God to the world.

How God Spends His Tithe

A fundamental question remains. How does God *spend* His tithe—what does He *do* with it?

After Christ built His Church, He gave it work to do. Notice Matthew 28:19-20: “Go you therefore, and teach *all nations*, baptizing them... Teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you*: and, lo, I am with you alway[s], even unto the end of the world [Greek word means *age*].” This responsibility has never changed in the nearly 2,000 years since Christ explained it. He taught His disciples many true doctrines, and His Church has preserved them and is to continue to teach them (“all things”) *all over the world*. This is not a duty that His ministry can shirk. Also, they cannot go to the world teaching many humanly-devised doctrines and ignore the responsibility to teach *God's true doctrines*, commanded to them by Christ!

Though ancient Israel was called the “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38), it was still a physical, fleshly, civil nation, having no need for a *spiritual* ministry. God selected the Levites to work for Him and take care of the *physical* duties, nationally as well as locally, of *all* of the twelve tribes of Israel. Again, they merely performed rituals, sacrifices and various ceremonies and ordinances. The New Testament ministry no longer does these things. Ancient Israel did not have the Spirit of God. The Priesthood simply ministered to the *physical* needs of that *single nation*. Their responsibility did not reach outside Israel to “*all nations*” of the world. At that time, God was not yet working with people from all nations. Today He is.

True ministers of God have been called and trained by Him. Their responsibilities are not merely physical duties. God's ministers are led by His Spirit. Their ministry is of a spiritual nature.

The Church's Work

Christ gave an extraordinary prophecy of what His Church would be doing at the end of the age. Notice: “And this *gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached *in all the world* for a witness unto *all nations*; and then shall the END come” (Matt. 24:14). Recall that Christ instructed that all nations were to be reached with the knowledge of “all things” He had commanded them. But it is this gospel of God's world-ruling Kingdom, led by Christ and the saints, that will be of

special emphasis at the end of the age or “before the end come.” (To grasp the stunning picture of *how* the Kingdom arrives, read *How God’s Kingdom Will Come – The Untold Story!*)

The world lies in chaos. It is confused about who and what man is, and the purpose that God is working out on Earth. War, famine, disease, poverty and other problems grip the planet. This world is held captive by an unseen being who holds sway over its values, customs, beliefs, governments and religions. The world does not know—is blinded to (II Cor. 4:4)—the great plan and purpose that God is working out. (Read our booklets *Which Is the True Gospel?*, *Why Do You Exist?* and *A World in Captivity* to learn more about these topics.)

Doing God’s Work costs money. God’s Church must continually hire more staff to perform the many functions of running a growing worldwide organization. We publish a vast number of booklets, magazines and other types of literature, teaching God’s truth to the world. The Church of God has members around the world who need to be fed the spiritual truth of God by faithful ministers and elders (John 21:15-16; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2). The number of those whom God is calling is expanding and will continue to expand.

Soon this age will be over and the glorious Return of Jesus Christ will have occurred. We have little time left to finish this phase of God’s Work!

It is through the biblical principle of tithing (and offerings) that God finances His Work. This is the way He finances ALL that He does. *Doing His Work* is the way He chooses to spend His tithe. God calls people into His Church so that they can help do His Work of preaching (Mark 13:10 says “*published*”) His true gospel to the world.

You may say, “I never knew about tithing.” That may be true, but ignorance of the law has never been an excuse for disobedience. The true God is very merciful. He freely forgives those who wish to change and seek Him.

I have now done my part. I have taught you the truth about the doctrine of tithing. You have been given *essential knowledge* that you must act on, in order to be given more knowledge (Psa. 111:10). Christ said, “*Walk while you have the light*, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes. While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the *children of light*” (John 12:35-36). Further, notice this warning to all: “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, *if you continue in His goodness*: otherwise you also shall be cut off” (Rom. 11:22).

We will all be held accountable for what we do with what we know. The Bible says, “Therefore to him that *knows* to do good, and does it not, *to him it is sin*” (Jms. 4:17), and “For if we sin wilfully *after that we have received the knowledge of the truth*, there remains no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:26).

These are sobering statements direct from God. A calling from God (John 6:44, 65) is occurring when one *understands* the truth upon seeing, reading or hearing it. *You* must decide if God is calling you to take part in this great Work—to help take His truth and His true gospel to the world while there is

yet time in this age! *You* must decide if you are willing to allow God to train you to become a KING and a PRIEST!

A Tremendous Privilege

The following comes from the conclusion of Herbert W. Armstrong's booklet *Ending Your Financial Worries*. It eloquently states the wonderful opportunity presented to anyone considering whether or not to pay God His tithe:

“Some will say, ‘I never tithed, and I know God never frowned on me, for I have the feeling in my heart that I am His child without having to tithe.’

“God has blessed you according as you have *yielded* to Him according to the light He has revealed to you, from His Word! While you have the light, WALK in it, *lest darkness come upon you!* (John 12:35, 36) ‘GROW in grace and the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord’ (II Pet. 3:18)...

“If every professing Christian would accept this plain instruction from God, honoring HIM instead of themselves with their substance, the Work of the Eternal would go forth with such mighty power that the world would be shaken to its foundations!

“Seek [you] FIRST the kingdom, and your material needs shall be ADDED. Try it! Take God at His Word! PROVE HIM! (Mal. 3:10). See how you begin to prosper! Be a faithful steward; make God your PARTNER! Receive His BLESSING! God's Work is waiting upon YOU!”

The following literature expands on topics discussed in this booklet:

- Taking Charge of Your Finances
- The Ten Commandments – “Nailed to the Cross” *or* Required for Salvation?
- Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!
- Which Is the True Gospel?
- Why Do You Exist?

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