

## TITHING QUESTIONED PART TWO JESUS, THE RICH YOUNG RULER, ZACCHEUS AND THE TITHE

*“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former” (Matt. 23:23).*

What Jesus says in Matt.23:23 cannot be used to justify the paying of tithes in the New Testament church, because at the time that He spoke the words that the verse refers to, the Old Testament was still in force. It only came to an end at the moment of His death on the cross. This same explanation can be given to those who want to justify Law keeping by referring to what Jesus said to the Rich Young Ruler who asked what he had to do to inherit eternal life (Luk.18:18-21).

The fact that some people use scriptures like Matt.23:23 and Luk.18:18-24 to explain why they must keep the Law, illustrates how important it is to understand the difference between the two testaments. Uncertainty about where the division between the two takes place affects the way we interpret things that Jesus said. Although the typographic division between the Old and New Testaments is between the end of Malachi and the beginning of the book of Matthew, it is not where the division takes place from God’s point of view. According to New Testament teaching, it takes place at the moment of Jesus’ death on the cross:

***“...because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is still living” (Heb.9:17).***

Although Jesus started preparing His disciples for the new dispensation that would start after His death, He still had to fully submit to the laws of the Old Testament. This He had to do in order to become the Lamb without defect that had to die on the cross to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world. Modern tithing teachers often quote Matt.23:23 to “prove” that Jesus commanded tithing in the church, but they ignore the rest of the context of the Law of Moses to which it refers! The context of Matthew 22 and 23 is still the old dispensation which was still in force. This is what Jesus was referring to when He said to the Pharisees and to the teachers of the Law:

*“You should to have practiced the latter, **without neglecting the former**”  
(Matt.23:23, my emphasis).*

To insist, on the basis of what Jesus said, that believers in the church should tithe, but not to include other aspects of the law that He was alluding to, for instance circumcision, the stoning of false prophets, chastity tests for young ladies, disciplining unruly boys by stoning, etc. is once again to be guilty of inconsistent application of Bible passages.

### **The Rich Young Ruler (Luk.18:18-24) and Zacchaeus (Luk.19:1-8)**

*“You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give it to the poor...”  
(Luk.18:22).*

It should be noted that Jesus did not say to the rich young ruler to sell everything he had and to give a tenth of the proceeds to the priests in the temple; he had to give it to the poor!

According to what is being preached in some circles today, one would think that Jesus should rather have said to him to take it to the "house of God."

In a similar situation when Zacchaeus said to the Lord that he was going to give half of what he owned to the poor and that he was going to repay those who he had cheated, Jesus did not say a word about tithes that should go to the temple! (Luk.19:8).

## THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS ABOLISHED TITHING – HEBREWS 7

### The Change of the Priesthood

***"For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law"***  
(Heb.7:12).

It is difficult to understand why any discussion concerning tithing, the Sabbath or the keeping of any Old Testament law, does not start with a study of Heb.7:12.

The Greek word *metatithemi* which is translated as "change" in the English version of Heb.7:12, is given a fuller meaning by looking at what the KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon has to say about it:

*met-at-ith'-ay-mee, ... Verb, Definition: to transpose (two things, one of which is put in place of the other); to change; to transfer one's self or suffer one's self to be transferred to go or pass over; to fall away or desert from one person or thing to another"*

The English word "metamorphosis" derived from the Greek word *μεταμόρφωσις* has the same prefix *μετα-* (*meta-*), meaning "change" and combined with *μορφή* (*morphe -form*) has the meaning of "to undergo a change of form" or to experience a transformation.

When a larva has turned into a butterfly we say that a complete metamorphosis had taken place. With the death of Jesus Christ on the cross a metamorphosis took place, a new priesthood took the place of the old Levitical system that went hand in hand with the Law of Moses:

*"If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come- one in the order of Melchisedek, not in the order of Aaron?"*  
(Heb.7:11).

*"For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law"* (Heb.7:12).

The whole discussion in the context of Hebrews chapter 7 makes it very clear that the law that was changed was the Mosaic Law. Jesus being a descendant of the tribe of Judah, and not of the tribe of Levi, did not qualify to become a priest under the law of the old Mosaic system of religion. Therefore, in order for Him to become a High Priest, the law had to be

changed to accommodate Him. At Christ's death His blood took the place of the blood of the Passover lamb, and the place of Aaron as high priest was taken by Jesus who then became the new High Priest of the New Testament. One of the results of the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus was that the old system of priests was replaced by the New Testament priesthood of all believers (1 Pet.2:5-9, Rev.1:6, 5:9-10). Because the Old Testament priesthood came to an end as result of Jesus' death on the cross, the tithing system which supported it was also no longer necessary. **In its place came the principles of New Testament stewardship which includes the principle of giving by grace.**

The total absence of any mention of tithing in the letters of the New Testament can only be explained by the fact that no such law was given to the church; just as there was no law given to the church about circumcision or of having to keep the Sabbath.

**Nick Maartens**  
**Jeffreys Bay**  
**0827826074**  
**nickmaartens@hotmail.com**  
**www.nickmaartens.co.za**