TITHING ACCORDING TO TORAH (AND NOT BY RELIGIOUS TRADITION)

Before we repeat what modern religious institutions teach about tithing, we MUST return to the Torah and examine what YHVH actually commanded. The Torah does NOT present tithing as simply "handing 10% of every paycheck to a pastor or church". The commandments concerning tithes identify SPECIFIC sources, purposes, recipients, and instructions. If we claim to follow the Torah, we must be willing to distinguish what is WRITTEN from what we have been taught by religious TRADITIONS.

📕Marqos (Mark) 7:7-9, 13 TS2009
"And in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teachings the commands of men.' Forsaking the command of Elohim, you hold fast the tradition of men. And He said to them, "Well do you set aside the command of Elohim, in order to guard your tradition. nullifying the Word of Elohim through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such traditions you do.""

Let's start with the most obvious: the tithe given to the Levites. The purpose of this tithe was to provide for those serving in the Tabernacle. Leviticus 27:30–33 establishes that the tithe of the land belongs to YHVH. It specifically identifies the seed of the land, the fruit of the trees, and every tenth animal passing under the shepherd's rod:

📘Wayyiqra (Leviticus) 27:30-33 TS2009
"'And all the tithe of the land – of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree – belongs to יהוה. It is set-apart to יהוה. 'If a man indeed redeems any of his tithes, he adds one-fifth to it. 'And the entire tithe of the herd and of the flock, all that passes under the rod, the tenth one is set-apart to יהוה. 'He does not inquire whether it is good or spoilt, nor does he exchange it. And if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it are set-apart, it is not redeemed.' ""

The book of Numbers explains that YHVH gave the tithes of Israel to the Levites as their inheritance in return for their service at the Tent of Appointment (Tent of Meeting in other translations). The Levites had no inheritance of land among Israel as the other tribes did:

📗Bemiḏbar (Numbers) 18:21-24 TS2009
""And see, I have given the children of Lĕwi all the tithes in Yisra'ĕl as an inheritance in return for the service which they are serving, the service of the Tent of Appointment. And let the children of Yisra'ĕl no more come near the Tent of Appointment, lest they bear sin and die," because the Lĕwites shall do the service of the Tent of Appointment, so they themselves bear their crookedness. A law forever, throughout your generations: that among the children of Yisra'ĕl they are to have no inheritance, but the tithes of the children of Yisra'ĕl, which they present as a contribution to יהוה, I

have given to the Lĕwites as an inheritance. That is why I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Yisra’ĕl they have no inheritance.’ ””

Notice what the text actually describes: agricultural produce and livestock, given to support the Levites because of their assigned service. Nehemiah further describes the bringing of the firstfruits and tithes to the house of our Elohim and the Levites collecting the tithes in the agricultural regions:

📙 Neḥemyah (Nehemiah) 10:37-39 TS2009
“And that we should bring the first-fruits of our dough, and our contributions, and the fruit from all kinds of trees, of new wine and of oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the House of our Elohim; and the tithes of our land to the Lĕwites, for the Lĕwites should receive the tithes in all our rural towns. And the priest, son of Aharon, shall be with the Lĕwites when the Lĕwites receive tithes, and the Lĕwites bring up a tenth of the tithes to the House of our Elohim, to the rooms of the storehouse. For the children of Yisra’ĕl and the children of Lĕwi bring the offering of the grain, of the new wine and the oil, to the storerooms where the vessels of the set-apart place are, where the priests who attend and the gatekeepers and the singers are, and we should not neglect the House of our Elohim.”

Scripture also records Israel bringing the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and the increase of the field, along with the tithe of cattle and sheep:

📕 Diḇre haYamim Bĕt (2 Chronicles) 31:5-6 TS2009
“And as the word spread, the children of Yisra’ĕl brought large quantities of the first-fruits of grain and wine, and oil and honey, and of all the increase of the field. And they brought in the tithe of all, a large amount. And the children of Yisra’ĕl and Yehuḏah, those who dwelt in the cities of Yehuḏah, brought the tithe of cattle and sheep. Even the tithe of set-apart gifts which were set apart to יהוה their Elohim were brought in, and they gave heaps, heaps.”

Continuing the passage from Numbers 18, we read that the Levites were to give a tenth of the tithe they received as an offering to YHVH. (A tenth of the tenth they received.) The Levites themselves were not exempt from this responsibility:

📘 Bemiḏbar (Numbers) 18:26-29 TS2009
““Speak to the Lĕwites and say to them, ‘When you take from the children of Yisra’ĕl the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall present a contribution of it to יהוה, a tenth of the tithe. And your contribution shall be reckoned to you as grain from the threshing-floor and as filling from the winepress. Thus you also present a contribution unto יהוה from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Yisra’ĕl. And you shall give from it the contribution to

יהוה to Aharon the priest. From all your gifts you present every contribution due to יהוה, from all the best of them, the set-apart part of them.'"

The point is this — the tithe for the Levites was NOT an "unrestricted fund" for religious leaders to pay their mortgage or to use however they pleased! It was connected to YHVH's provision for the LEVITICAL SERVICE and His instructions concerning the holy things. YOUR SWINE-EATING PASTOR IS NOT A LEVITE, NOR DOES HE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WHAT IS HOLY AND WHAT IS PROFANE. DO NOT BE FOOLED:

📗 Yehezqĕl (Ezekiel) 22:26-28 TS2009
""Her priests have done violence to My teaching and they profane My set-apart matters. They have not distinguished between the set-apart and profane, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean. And they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned in their midst. "Her leaders in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy lives, and to get greedy gain. "And her prophets have coated them with whitewash, seeing a false vision, and divining a lie for them, saying, 'Thus said the Master יהוה,' when יהוה had not spoken."

Now let's move on to one of the "lesser known" commandments regarding tithing. There is also a tithe for the Appointed Times — the Moedim. The purpose of this tithe is to rejoice before YHVH with the provision He has given us. Now read Deuteronomy 14:22–27 carefully:

📙 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 14:22-23 TS2009
""You shall tithe without fail all the yield of your grain that the field brings forth year by year. "And you shall eat before יהוה your Elohim, in the place where He chooses to make His Name dwell, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, and of the firstlings of your herds and your sheep, so that you learn to fear יהוה your Elohim always."

Israel was commanded to set aside a tenth of the yearly produce of the field. This tithe included grain, new wine, and oil, together with the firstlings of the herd and sheep, and it was to be eaten before YHVH at the place He chose to establish His Name.

📕 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 14:24-26 TS2009
""But when the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to bring the tithe, or when the place where יהוה your Elohim chooses to put His Name is too far from you, when יהוה your Elohim is blessing you, then you shall give it in silver, and shall take the silver in your hand and go to the place which יהוה your Elohim chooses. "And you shall use the silver for whatever your being desires: for cattle or sheep, for wine or strong drink, for whatever your being desires. And you shall eat there

before יהוה your Elohim, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.”

As we can see in the passage above, if the distance was too great to carry the produce, the Torah permitted it to be exchanged for money. The money was then taken to the chosen place and spent on provisions for the celebration before YHVH. The passage explicitly says to rejoice with your household before Him.

📘 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 12:5-7 TS2009
“but seek the place which יהוה your Elohim chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His Name there, for His Dwelling Place, and there you shall enter. “And there you shall take your ascending offerings, and your slaughters, and your tithes, and the contributions of your hand, and your vowed offerings, and your voluntary offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. “And there you shall eat before יהוה your Elohim, and shall rejoice in all that you put your hand to, you and your households, in which יהוה your Elohim has blessed you.”

📗 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 12:11-12 TS2009
““And it shall be, that unto the place which יהוה your Elohim chooses to make His Name dwell there, there you are to bring all that I command you: your ascending offerings, and your slaughters, and your tithes, and the contributions of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to יהוה. “And you shall rejoice before יהוה your Elohim, you and your sons and your daughters, and your male servants and your female servants, and the Lĕwite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you.”

📙 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 12:17-18 TS2009
““You are not allowed to eat within your gates the tithe of your grain, or of your new wine, or of your oil, or of the firstlings of your herd or your flock, or of any of your offerings which you vow, or of your voluntary offerings, or of the contribution of your hand. “But eat them before יהוה your Elohim, in the place which יהוה your Elohim chooses, you and your son and your daughter, and your male servant and your female servant, and the Lĕwite who is within your gates. And you shall rejoice before יהוה your Elohim in all that you put your hands to.”

These passages reinforce the principle of bringing the designated offerings and tithes to the place YHVH chooses and rejoicing before Him with your household. The Torah also expressly commands the males of Israel to appear before YHVH at the three pilgrimage festivals and says that each person is to give according to the blessing YHVH has given him:

📕 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16-17 TS2009
“Three times a year all your males appear before יהוה your Elohim in the place which He chooses: at

the Festival of Matzot, and at the Festival of Shaḇu’ot, and at the Festival of Sukkot. And none should appear before יהוה empty-handed, but each one with the gift of his hand, according to the blessing of יהוה your Elohim which He has given you.”

As we can see, a pattern emerges of setting aside provision for worship, pilgrimage, and rejoicing during YHVH’s appointed times. To be more precise, Deuteronomy 14 explicitly describes a tenth of AGRICULTURAL produce, not a separately specified percentage of modern WAGES. Setting aside money from one’s income today to prepare for the Moedim is a PRACTICAL way to apply the principle of planning ahead, but we should not misrepresent that application as a DIRECT COMMAND to “tithe 10% of every paycheck.” The principle here is that we should not wait until a Moed arrives to discover that we have made no provision to observe it!

Then we come upon the “third-year tithe.” This tithe is for the LEVITE and the VULNERAE. The purpose of this tithe is to ensure that those without an inheritance or adequate provision are fed. The Torah commands that at the end of every third year, the tithe of that year’s produce is to be brought out and stored within the towns:

📘Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 14:28-29 TS2009
““At the end of every third year you bring out all the tithe of your increase of that year and store it up within your gates. “And the Lĕwite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the sojourner and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, shall come and eat and be satisfied, so that יהוה your Elohim does bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”

Now, who is this tithe for? Let’s review:
👉The Levite, who has no land inheritance.
👉The stranger or sojourner.
👉The fatherless.
👉The widow.
👉Not your swine-eating pastor.

The purpose of this tithe is that they may “come, eat, and be satisfied.” (Not to pay for their fancy suits, car-notes and mortgage.) Deuteronomy 26:12–15 expands on this command. In the third year, the tithe is distributed to the LEVITE, the SOJOURNER, the FATHERLESS, and the WIDOW. The passage then records a declaration before YHVH concerning obedience to this command and a request for His blessing upon Israel:

📗Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 26:12-15 TS2009
““When you have completed tithing all the tithe of your increase in the third year, which is the year

of tithing, and have given it to the Lĕwite, to the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, and they have eaten within your gates and have been satisfied, “then you shall say before יהוה your Elohim, ‘I have put away the set-apart portion from my house, and also have given it to the Lĕwite, and to the stranger, and to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Your command which You have commanded me. I have not transgressed Your commands, nor have I forgotten. I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed any of it for any unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of יהוה my Elohim, I have done according to all that You have commanded me. Look from Your set-apart dwelling place, from the heavens, and bless Your people Yisra’ĕl and the land which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” ’”

Deuteronomy 24:19–21 gives further instructions concerning the “forgotten sheaf”, the “remaining olives”, and the “remaining grapes”. These provisions ensured that the STRANGER, FATHERLESS, and WIDOW could obtain food:

📙Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 24:19-21 TS2009
““When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. Let it be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow, so that יהוה your Elohim might bless you in all the work of your hands. “When you beat your olive trees, do not examine the branch behind you. Let it be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean behind you. Let it be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.”

The point is that the Torah’s economic instructions include responsibility for the VULNERABLE. Provision for the poor is not an “optional afterthought” to be considered only after religious institutions have received “their share”... ESPECIALLY if those institutions teach contrary to the Torah of Elohim.

We must distinguish between the tithe assigned to the Levites, the tithe eaten in rejoicing before YHVH, and the third-year provision for the more vulnerable members of the community. These instructions have related agricultural foundations, but their stated purposes and distributions are not identical.

There is also an important detail to consider. Deuteronomy 14:22–29 discusses the “festival tithe” and the “third-year tithe” in the SAME passage. The relationship between the tithes, including whether the festival tithe and third-year tithe represent SEPARATE annual tenths or a MODIFIED DISTRIBUTION of the tithe in the third year, has been understood differently by different people. We should also acknowledge that the Torah NEVER GIVES US an explicit modern “paycheck formula”

like is commonly taught today.

And what about the claim that the Torah simply commands everyone to “hand 10% of their income to a Christian pastor”? SHOW ME the commandment in the Torah. SHOW ME the specified recipient. SHOW ME the passage that says a modern church building replaces the Levitical arrangement. Again, your pastor is NOT A LEVITE OR A PRIEST (AND PROBABLY NOT ONE OF THE “VULNERABLE” EITHER).

We must NOT take commandments given for Israel’s agricultural economy, the Levitical inheritance, the chosen place of worship, and care for the vulnerable, then casually collapse them into a single modern religious fundraising endeavor for your local 501c3 ABOMINATION. Our responsibility is to read what YHVH commanded, understand the context, and apply His instructions HONESTLY rather than adding to and twisting His Word for financial gain.

📕 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2 TS2009
“”Do not add to the Word which I command you, and do not take away from it, so as to guard the commands of יהוה your Elohim which I am commanding you.”

📘 Deḇarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32 TS2009
“All the words I am commanding you, guard to do it – do not add to it nor take away from it.”

READ THAT AGAIN, AND LET IT FULLY SINK IN.

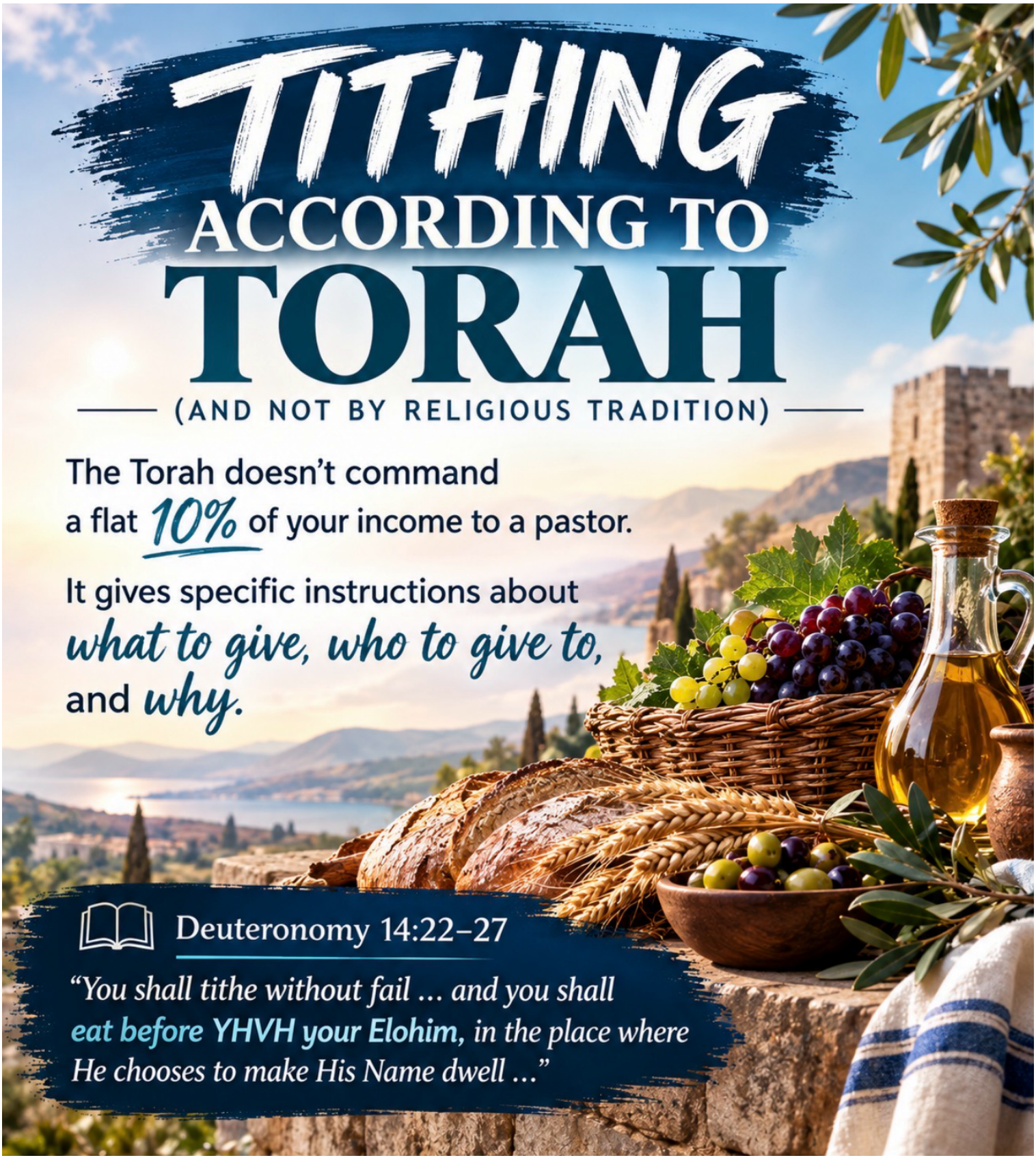
THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER WE SHOULD BE GENEROUS. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER WE WILL HONOR YHVH’S INSTRUCTIONS WITHOUT REPLACING THEM WITH THE TRADITIONS OF MEN.

Study the Torah. Examine every passage. Test what you have been taught. Let the Scriptures establish the standard.

📗 Ma`asei (Acts) 17:10-12 TS2009
“And the brothers immediately sent Sha’ul and Silas away by night to Beroia, who, having come, went into the congregation of the Yehuḏim. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonike, who received the word with great eagerness, and searched the Scriptures daily, if these words were so. Then many of them truly believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, decent women as well as men.”

Shalom 🤲

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It gives specific instructions about
what to give, who to give to,
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