

# What The Bible Teaches on **TITHES and OFFERINGS**

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## **Chapter 1: What are Tithes and what are offerings?** **Chapter 2: What are the first references to the tithe in the Bible?**

### **1. What are Tithes and what are offerings?**

“Tithe” is the old English word for “tenth.” To give a tithe, therefore, is to give exactly 10%, no more, no less.

The origin is dated to ancient Middle East rulers who required their subjects to pay a tenth of their goods as taxes. A close example was Joseph, acting on behalf of Pharaoh during the seven years of plenty, but what he demanded was double the tithe. (Genesis 41:34-37). Also, in 1 Samuel 8:15, Samuel warned the Israelites that the kings they wanted would tax their produce 10% in the same way other kings were already doing.

What people give to God apart from Tithes are regarded as *Offerings*.

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### **2. What are the first references to the tithe in the Bible?**

The first reference to the tithe in Scripture concerned Abraham and the second was Jacob whose name was later changed to Israel.

#### **(a) Genesis 14:17-20**

It was at the time when he went to liberate his nephew, Lot, from the four kings. These kings had conquered Sodom and taken Lot among their captives, but Abraham was able to release all the prisoners and take back all the goods that had been looted. He

met the mysterious Melchizedek, priest of God Most High on his return. (See further details about him in Hebrews 7 where the story is repeated). Melchizedek blessed him in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth. Then Abraham gave him a tithe of all the goods which he had retrieved from the enemies.

#### **(b) Genesis 28:16-22**

Afraid and alone as he fled from his twin brother whose birthright he had stolen, Jacob had a vision in the night and when he woke up he made a vow to God. He promised that if the Lord prospered his way, he would give a tithe of all that the Lord would give to him. We believe he did pay his vow, but we do not know how or to whom, as there were no priests at the time.