

## Torah Portion #3: Lech Lecha (לך לך) "Go forth"

Torah ~ Gen. 12:1-17:27 | Prophets ~ Isa. 40:27-41:16; Mal. 3:8-12 | New Covenant ~ Rom. 4:1-25; Heb. 7:1-28

**Tithing**

Tithing can be seen early in the Bible, including two out of the first three Torah portions, well before the Law was written at Mt Sinai. Tithing is when we count our increase (finances) and give the first 10% (firstfruits) back to God. The first time we see tithing is in the first Torah portion with Cain and Abel's offering in *Genesis 4:3-7*.

Just like Cain and Abel, Abraham and Jacob also knew about tithing before it was a written law. Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek the Priest of God in *Genesis 14:18-20* and Jacob promised to give a tithe to the Lord in *Genesis 28:20-22*.

*Leviticus 27:30-32* and *Numbers 18:21-28* gives us the first written command to tithe. In *Malachi 3:8-12* the Lord tells us that we are cursed when we rob Him of the tithe, but He will bless us when we bring our tithe to His storehouse.

*Proverbs 3:9-10* "(9) Honor Adonai with your substance, with the first fruits of all your increase: (10) so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine."

After Abraham and Jacob obeyed the Lord in tithing, both went on to be very blessed.

*Genesis 24:1* "Abraham was old, and well stricken in age. Adonai had blessed Abraham in all things."

*Genesis 30:43* "Jacob soon became rich and successful." CEV

**Tithing and the Feast of Firstfruits**

Every year on the Feast of Firstfruits, the Priest would wave a sheaf (omer / measure) of "green" barley before the Lord (*Leviticus 23:9-14*). This barley was the "first" grain of the year. *Exodus 16:36* tells us what an omer is when it says "An 'omer is one-tenth of an eifah [which is a bushel dry-measure]" CJB. Another word for one-tenth is "tithe".

The waving of the sheaf was done in a ceremony that marked the start of the counting of the omer, thereby starting the 50 day countdown to the wheat harvest festival of Shavuot (Pentecost). During these 49 days the Israelites was to set aside the firstfruits (the tithe) of their grain harvest to be presented on the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost). By doing this the Lord was teaching the children of Israel how to tithe.

**Tithing to help the Poor**

One of the many purposes for tithing was to help the poor. *Deuteronomy 14:28-29* says that every three years the annual tithes was not to be taken to the central sanctuary (Tabernacle), instead they was to be stored in whatever town or village one belonged to. This was the core of the Hebrew welfare system. It was from these communal stores that the poor and the sick could get food to survive.

**Tithing in the New Testament**

Yeshua spoke of tithing in *Luke 11:42* saying that it was the right thing to do, but also keep the remainder of the Torah.

Yeshua speaks of money quite frequently. 16 out of the 38 parables of Yeshua and 1/6 of the Gospels are about money.

*Matt. 6:33* "Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well." NCV

*Luke 6:38* "If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return." CEV

*Acts 20:35* "It is more blessed to give than to receive." NKJV

**In Closing**

Tithing is not something that is rarely mentioned in the Bible, nor is it only mentioned just in the Old Testament. But tithing can be found throughout the Bible, including the New Testament. But the command to tithe is not just for growing the Kingdom of God, its primary reason is to be a blessing for us.

*Proverbs 3:5-6* "(5) Trust the Lord with all your heart, and don't depend on your own understanding. (6) Remember the Lord in all you do, and he will give you success." NCV