

*What is the place and purpose of the contribution from the apostle's words?*

[www.aubeacon.com](http://www.aubeacon.com)

**Introduction:** We must be reminded of the foundation every Christian builds on.

A. We building on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. **(Eph 2:20)**

**Ephesians 2:20** - having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*,

1. Some think it is unspiritual to teach on externals and that they are of little importance. They say only motives and the heart are important
2. We find the scriptures teach that we are to submit to Christ in all things. When an apostle gives instructions we must respond with reverential obedience.

B. The things we do together are of special importance. **(Phil 4:15-17)**

**Philippians 4:15-16** - Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church *shared with me concerning giving and receiving* but you only. <sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but *I seek the fruit that abounds to your account*.

1. We must be especially careful in matters that every Christian must participate in to be solidly founded on the apostles' doctrine. **(Acts 2:42)**

**Acts 2:42** - And they continued steadfastly in *the apostles' doctrine* and *fellowship*, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

2. We must take all of the instructions given in the New Testament and stay within what has been revealed. Much of the teaching is *given by example* in epistles where *specific situations* are addressed at a given church.
3. When we simply stay within these instructions we can accomplish God's purposes with God's wisdom. In this God will be glorified! **(1 Pt 4:11)**

**1 Peter 4:11** -If anyone speaks, *let him speak as the oracles of God*. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

***I. Paul as an apostle commanded some churches to have a weekly contribution***

A. Paul gave this *command* to both Corinth and the churches of Galatia. **(1 Cor 16:1-4)**

**1 Corinthians 16:1-4** - Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: <sup>2</sup> On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. <sup>3</sup> And when I come, whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

1. **order** - διατάσσω - strictly *arrange carefully, make precise arrangement*; hence *order, direct, command* (MT 11.1); middle with the same sense (AC 24.23); passive *be ordered* or *ordained* (GA 3.19) – **Freiberg Lexicon**
2. Since this was not a universal command, does it apply to us today?

B. There are several elements of Paul's instructions.

1. The contribution was for the needy saints in Jerusalem because of a specific, temporary need. **(2 Cor 8:12-15)**

**2 Corinthians 8:12-15** -For if there is first a willing mind, *it is accepted* according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have. <sup>13</sup> For *I do not mean* that others should be eased and you burdened; <sup>14</sup> but by an equality, *that now at this time* your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack -- that there may be equality. <sup>15</sup> As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."

2. The day of the week was specified.
3. The individual was to give as "he may prosper."
4. The contribution would be taken to Jerusalem when Paul came.

C. Did members simply keep their money at home or did they give when they came together?

1. Paul said "that there be no collections when I come." If this was done at home then there must be another collection! See notes.
2. In the Old Testament there were collections made and a storehouse to keep what was given. **(1 Chron 26:20, 22; Josh 6:24)**

**1 Chronicles 26:20** - Of the Levites, Ahijah *was* over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the dedicated things.

**1 Chronicles 26:22** - The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and Joel his brother, *were* over the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

3. Jesus and the Apostles had a common treasury. **(Jn 12:6; 13:29)**

**John 12:6** - This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

**John 13:29** - For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

4. When the Apostles were at Jerusalem the money was laid at the apostles feet thus it was a treasury from which future needs would be met.

**(Acts 4:34-35; Acts 5:1-2)**

**Acts 4:34-35** -Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

**Acts 5:1-2** - But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.  
<sup>2</sup> And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

D. Did the church have contributions only when special needs arose?

1. You should never have a contribution when there is no need.

2. Should a church ever be without a need for a contribution? (**Phil 4:15-16**)

**Philippians 4:15-16** - Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. <sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.

3. Was this the first time that Corinth had a contribution?

(**1 Cor 9:11-15; 2 Cor 11:8**)

**1 Corinthians 9:11-15** - If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? <sup>12</sup> If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of the altar*? <sup>14</sup> Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel. <sup>15</sup> But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.

**2 Corinthians 11:8** - <sup>8</sup> I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

## II. Does Paul's command have any application to us today?

A. What do we find when we take all that God has revealed about local churches and how they raised money?

1. We know that freewill collections were directed by the Apostles.

2. We have more specific instructions in a specific collection in 1 Corinthians 16.

3. There are items that are specific to that collection. The specific purpose and the specific way the money was to be transported.

4. The requirement of every first day of the week is consistent with the practices of other churches. (**Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 7:17**)

**Acts 20:7** - Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

**1 Corinthians 1:2** - To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

**1 Corinthians 7:17** - But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

B. When we understand the nature of the New Testament and that it is a complete instruction given to God's people, then the application of it is clear. (**Jude 3**)  
**Jude 1:3** -Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

1. Taking all that is revealed and carefully staying within that is right.

2. On what basis can we work together? (**1 Cor 1:10; 4:6**)

**1 Corinthians 1:10** - Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

**1 Corinthians 4:6** - Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

3. Sadly, money issues can drive other doctrinal issues. (**2 Pt 2:14-15**)

**2 Peter 2:14-16** - having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. *They have* a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children.<sup>15</sup> They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

### **III. How should local churches use the contribution?**

A. Take all the verses that address local churches and see how they used the contribution.

1. They had contributions to help needy saints. (**Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35**)

**Acts 2:44-45** -Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,<sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

**Acts 4:34-35**<sup>34</sup> Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,<sup>35</sup> and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

2. They supported teachers who spread the gospel and taught brethren.

(**2 Cor 11:8; 1 Cor 9:9-14; 1 Tim 5:17**)

**2 Corinthians 11:8** - I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

**1 Corinthians 9:9-14** - For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?<sup>10</sup> Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.<sup>11</sup> If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things?

<sup>12</sup> If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we

have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? <sup>14</sup> Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

**1 Timothy 5:17** - Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

3. Things necessary to accomplish these things can be bought by the local church. (Acts 6:1-2; Heb 10:25)

**Acts 6:1-2** - Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. <sup>2</sup> Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

**Hebrews 10:25** - not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

B. Churches must be careful in what teaches they use and support. (Gal 2:9; 2 Jn 9-11) **Galatians 2:9** -and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

**2 John 9-11** -Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup> If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; <sup>11</sup> for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

1. Discernment is required by our Lord! (Mt 7:15; 1 Tim 1:3; 4:6, 13, 16)

**Matthew 7:15** - Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

**1 Timothy 1:3** - As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

**1 Timothy 4:6** - If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

**1 Timothy 4:13** - Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

**1 Timothy 4:16** - Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

2. Some have supported men who did great damage. (2 Tim 2:16-18)

**2 Timothy 2:16-18** - But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. <sup>17</sup> And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, <sup>18</sup> who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

C. Churches must not use the contribution for entertainment and carnal purposes.

1. There were many who sought Jesus because they wanted food. Jesus did not yield to them and rebuked them. (**Jn 6:44-45; 26-27**)

**John 6:44-45** - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

**John 6:26-27** -Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but *because you ate of the loaves and were filled.* <sup>27</sup> "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

2. We must never become angry when men ask for Bible authority for how the local church uses the contribution. Every member must be seeking God's will on this!

#### **Questions**

1. Did Paul command all churches to have a contribution in 1 Cor 16? How then can we apply this verse to churches today?
2. Did Paul require a weekly contribution in the assembly?
3. On what day and how often were they to have a contribution?
4. What spiritual fruit can come when the contribution is properly used?
5. What dangers can come when the contribution is improperly used?
6. Do you know how the money is being spent where you attend?

#### **Additional Notes**

"Every one was to lay by himself, i.e. most commentators say, at home, par' heauto. Compare pros heauton in **Luke 24:12**; see also **John 20:10**. The direction then is that every one should, on the first day of the week, lay aside at home whatever he was able to give, thus treasuring up his contribution. To this interpretation it may be objected that the whole expression is thus obscure and awkward. 'Let every one at home place, treasuring up what he has to give.' The words do not mean to lay by at home, but to lay by himself. The direction is nothing more definite than, let him place by himself, i.e. let him take to himself what he means to give. What he was to do with it, or where he was to deposit it, is not expressed. The word thesaurizon means putting into the treasury or hoarding up, and is perfectly consistent with the assumption that the place of deposit was some common treasury, and not every man's own house. If Paul directed this money to be laid up at home, why was the first day of the week selected? It is evident that the first day must have offered some special facility for doing what is here enjoined. The only reason that can be assigned for requiring

the thing to be done on the first day of the week, is that on that day the Christians were accustomed to meet, and what each one had laid aside from weekly gains could be treasured up, i.e. put into the common treasury of the church. The end which the apostle desired to accomplish could not otherwise have been effected. He wished that there might be no collections when he came. But if every man had his money laid by at home, the collection would be still to be made. The probability is, therefore, Paul intended to direct the Corinthians to make a collection every Lord's day for the poor, when they met for worship." - Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974 edition), pp. 363-364.

### ***The New Testament Pattern of "Giving"***

***By Wayne Jackson***

It is a strange phenomenon in today's church. It is recognized widely that there are rules regulating worship. This is acknowledged in virtually every area of church activity—except in one's "giving." Many know how the music portion of the worship is to be conducted (with a cappella singing). Not a few understand the proper communion elements (bread and fruit of the vine), along with the day and frequency for the observance of the supper (each Sunday). They would vigorously, and correctly, protest any presumptuous alteration of these ordinances.

But some appear to think there are no regulations for giving. With many, there is almost a "design-your-own-system" procedure, along with a flippant "it's-nobody's-business-what-I-do" disposition. If the Lord has prescribed a pattern for what we do in other acts of worship, is it reasonable to presume that he left the matter of "giving" as an entirely optional feature—or at best very ambiguous?

Paul discussed several requirements for Christian giving in **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**.

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, do the same thing that I commanded the Galatian churches; every Sunday, let each one of you lay aside by himself, if he earns anything, and put it in the treasury; so that there will be no collections when I come" (McCord's Translation).

#### ***The Background***

When Paul, in the company of Barnabas and Titus, went to Jerusalem to assure the church of the validity of his apostleship, and the genuineness of the gospel he preached (**Galatians 2:1**), he was readily endorsed. James, the half brother of the Lord, along with Peter and John, extended to the apostle the "right hand of fellowship" in the noble work in which they all

were involved. They did encourage Paul, however, to “remember the poor,” which he was most zealous to do (**2:10**).

For the past half-dozen years, prior to the composition of 1st Corinthians, the great preacher had demonstrated his concern for the needy, and even now he was busily involved in a campaign to assist the poor among the saints at Jerusalem (**cf. Romans 15:24-25; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Acts 24:17**). In the apostle’s mind, there was no segregation of benevolence from evangelism; benevolence is evangelism (**Matthew 5:16; Galatians 6:10**)! These circumstances are the background of **1 Corinthians 16:1-4**.

### **Command**

Note that the instruction conveyed in **1 Corinthians 16:1-2** is in the form of a “command” (“order” ASV; diatasso 16x in NT). Other texts that employ the word demonstrate the imperative nature of the language. When Jesus finished “commanding” his disciples, he departed to preach in their cities (**Matthew 11:1**). Aquila and Priscilla left Rome because Claudius Caesar had “commanded” all Jews to depart from Rome (**Acts 18:2**). The instructions that follow in this Corinthian correspondence are not optional suggestions. They constitute a pattern for the implementation of sacred duties.

As a result of something Paul later wrote to this church, some have surmised that this text is not to be viewed as a binding pattern. Regarding the same collection, the apostle would write: “I speak not by way of commandment, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity also of your love” (**2 Corinthians 8:8**).

Regarding this seeming discrepancy one may observe: (a) the matter of supporting the cause of God in its various needs is unquestionably a sacred obligation. (b) The specific objects of reception, involved in rendering that responsibility, is a matter of judgment. (c) The general procedure for carrying out financial obligations is prescribed. (d) It is better to motivate by love than by coercion, when at all possible. Professor Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary once observed:

This [“order”] is the language of authority. For although these contributions were voluntary, and were required to be made cheerfully, **2 Corinthians 9:7**, yet they were a duty, and therefore both the collection itself, and the mode in which it should be accomplished, were proper subjects for apostolic direction (362).

### **Frequency**

The frequency of contributing is “every Sunday”; the Greek literally says: “the first day of every week” (**cf. Matthew 27:15; Luke 2:41**). It is a mystery as to why the force of the distributive preposition, kata (every),



was not made evident in the KJV/ASV translations (see Danker, et al., 512).

One should budget his finances, therefore, so as to be able to give each Lord's day. If one is ill, or away, thus unable to contribute at his local congregation, he should make provisions to leave his contribution behind, or else make it up when he returns. One is obligated to contribute as consistently as he has income. It is not right for a few to bear virtually the full expenses of a local work, while others "ride free."

### *Individually*

For each family income there must be a gift. If the husband/father is the sole wage earner, he obviously will be the only source for a gift. If the mother/wife has a separate income, she must contribute from that as well. When Christian teens have a job, they must give from their income. If they receive an allowance, a portion of that belongs to the Lord. If older folks are on social security, they are not exempt from this act of worship. "Each one" means "every one" who has income—rich or poor, young or old, male or female.

### *Treasury*

The next portion of the passage is the most controversial. Is the Christian obligated to contribute into the "treasury" of the local church? What does the phrase "lay by him in store" mean?

The expression "by him" (παρ ἑαυτοῦ) is commonly assumed to suggest, "save up at home." The Seventh-day Adventists have long contended for this view in an effort to negate the first-century evidence for Sunday worship (Canright, 207-08). But the evidence does not support that view. The phrase "by him" most likely means, "let him take to himself what he means to give" (Hodge, 365). Or the words may be considered as a neuter form, "by itself" (McGarvey, 161), or "to put something aside" (Danker, 268). James MacKnight rendered the full phrase: "lay by itself putting it into the appointed treasury" (208).

The phrase "in store" derives from thesaurizon—an imperative mood (a command), present tense (repetitious action), participle. The verbal action depicts consistently depositing something in a "treasury" (thesaurus). Each Christian has an obligation to help sustain the local church treasury, regardless of the extra missionary and/or benevolent work to which he may contribute otherwise as an individual.

Some, in an attempt to negate church responsibility, dispute that the early church had "treasuries" at this point in time. "It is improbable that at that time there was any Church treasury, and not until much later was money collected during public worship" (Robertson / Plummer 384). And so, as

noted above, a common allegation is that the “storing up” was what the individual did at his home. This is pure speculation and quite contrary to the explicit testimony of the passage, namely that these Christians (and others, e.g., those in Galatia) were to give “every first day of the week.” Moreover, common sense dictates that the monies collected had to be deposited somewhere.

Leon Morris noted that since “Paul expressly deprecates the collecting of the money when he arrives (which would be necessary if they all had it laid by at home) it is perhaps better to think of it as being stored in the church treasury” (238). See a similar discussion in: Shore, VII.353.

The modern translations (e.g., Wuest), and commentary assertions (e.g., Fee, 813), that the phrase signifies, “put aside at home,” are entirely unwarranted. There is no “at home” in the text—either stated or implied (contra Thayer, 168). Appeals to texts in classical literature are irrelevant to this context. This “at home” business is the very circumstance Paul was endeavoring to prevent—“that no collections be made when I come.”

Another scholar responds:

Some have interpreted the words *par heauto* (literally ‘by himself’) to mean ‘at home.’ But then why mention doing it on Sunday, when they could just as well do it regularly at home at other times? The meaning must rather be that the Christians were to bring their offerings to church on Sunday, since that was the day they assembled for worship (**Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10**). It is significant that the early church father, Justin Martyr (second century A.D.) testified that contributions to the church were received on that day (Apology I, 67.6) (Mare, 293).

Another writer also has observed that since the “laying by” was to “be done on the day of their religious assembly, and so that there should be no trouble or time lost in collecting it when he [Paul] came, it is rather to be inferred that on each Sunday it was to be deposited in the treasury of the church” (Sadler, 299).

The celebrated historian, Mosheim, in describing the Lord’s day worship of the first-century church, stated that: “Every Christian, who was in an opulent condition, and indeed every one, according to their circumstances, brought with them their gifts, and offered them, as it were, unto the Lord” (I.35-36).

Under the Old Testament regime the Hebrews were not allowed to be “free-lancers” with their “tithes.” Rather, the Lord charged: “Bring the whole tithe into the store-house [‘osar – “treasury” cf. Job 38:22], so that there may be food in my house” (Mal. 3:10). Similarly, Christians have a primary duty to the local church; they may not act as independent agents in their giving to the Lord.

The assertion of some commentators, that this injunction is not a pattern and holds no authority for today, is a reckless statement of no basis. It wholly ignores the command motif at the commencement of the passage, as well as the application of the instruction beyond Corinth (1:2; 16:1).

### *Proportionally*

The expression, “as he may prosper” is one word in Greek (euodotai)—a subjunctive mood (most likely), present tense, passive voice verb. The subjunctive is the mood of possibility, the present tense reflects an action in progress, and the passive voice indicates that the subject is the recipient of action—in this case, prosperity from God. The term itself basically means “prosperous journey,” and thus suggests this idea: to whatever degree he “is prospered” by God, week-by-week, he must contribute a portion to the Lord’s work “according to his ability” (**Acts 11:29**; cf. the exceptional “beyond their power” – **2 Corinthians 8:3**).

The more one is prospered, the more he should give; the less he prospers, less is required. As Christ once expressed the principle: “to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required” (**Luke 12:48b**).

Still, the amount expected seems vague. Is there more precision that might be anticipated, beyond the general principle—“to the degree one is blessed”?

While we do not live under the Old Testament economy, there are many incidental truths one can learn from those documents that assist us in arriving at various elements of truth. For example, Paul appealed to the law of Moses to establish the principle that one who exerts considerable labor in a cause, is worthy of sustenance for his effort (**1 Timothy 5:17**; cf. **Deuteronomy 23:4**).

### *The Old Testament “Tithe”*

In the earliest age of Old Testament history, the patriarchal period, there are two examples of great servants of the Lord offering gifts to the Creator from their prosperity. Abraham gave to Melchizedek, a priest of God, ten percent of the “chief spoils” he recently had taken from some pagan kings (**Genesis 14:20**; **Hebrews 7:4**). Later Jacob, after his dream of the ladder that reached from earth to heaven, with its ascending and descending angels, set up a pillar to memorialize the occasion. He pledged to give a tenth of his resources to Jehovah (**Genesis 28:22**).

Later the Mosaic law formalized the “tithe” (a tenth) as the required giving of Israel (**Leviticus 27:30-32**). In addition they offered various sacrifices, and gave “free-will” offerings. So actually, they gave much more than the tithe (a portion being considered taxation), but ten percent appears to have been the very minimum (cf. **Malachi 3:10**).

Gospel ministers have not rendered a balanced service by merely stating: “We do not live under the law of Moses; therefore we are not required to tithe,” as if that somehow leaves us with no direction at all—and we are free to give as far below that level as we are disposed to do! Of course many are happy to accommodate themselves to a significantly smaller amount.

### ***The Higher Ideal***

One of the major designs of the book of Hebrews is to show the superiority of the new covenant of Jesus Christ, over the former covenant given through Moses. Again and again, the sacred writer uses the comparative term “better” to mark the qualitative distinction of the latter over the former.

Christ, as giver of the new covenant, is “better” than the angels, through whom the old regime came (1:4). We have a “better hope,” i.e., as priests ourselves (1 Peter 2:5, 9), a more direct access to God (7:21). The new covenant is a “better covenant” because of the unchangeable priesthood of our Savior (7:22). The ministry of Christ is a “more excellent” one; indeed it is a “better covenant” enacted upon “better promises” (8:6). The new covenant is one with “better sacrifices” (9:23)—a reference to the sacrifice of our Lord. [Note: The plural form is designed to correspond with the “sacrifices” of the Levitical system, but with a symbolic emphasis—suggesting the excellence of Christ’s offering, “perfect in all its parts” (Bengel, IV.426).]

In view of all this, how could a conscientious Bible student ever come to the conclusion that we may sacrifice less than the ancient patriarchs, or the nation of Israel—when we have far more revelation, and tremendously greater blessings, than they enjoyed?

We must give consistently, generously, and joyfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).

How could any informed Christian possibly contend that he, as a beneficiary of the new covenant, and as a part of the body of Jesus Christ, could love less, thus give less, than the Jew who professes to honor God, but knows not our Savior?

There is little doubt that if all Christians gave as much as 10% of their incomes, our contributions would soar far above what they now are!

Here is a mathematical challenge to your faith. Multiply your present contribution by ten, and ask God to bless you with an income in that amount. And perhaps hope he doesn’t!