

TITHING A TOMATO

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WHEN HARVEST TIME COMES, SOME DEVOUT CHRISTIANS TAKE THE FIRST AND BEST OF A HARVESTED VEGETABLE OR FRUIT AND BURY IT IN THE SOIL WITH A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING TO GOD.

During the middle of the summer of 2012, I foolishly planted four tomato plants too late in a pot too small on my patio. I harvested only one tomato. Nevertheless, I gratefully sliced off a tithe (10%) of the tomato and buried it in a flower pot. After singing the Doxology, I offered a prayer of thanksgiving. After removing some seeds for next year's planting, I ate the rest of the tomato (90%) as a sandwich on buttered bread. Delicious! I also got more of the tomato than God did. But that's OK, because God owned the whole tomato in the first place. Yes! When we give to God, we offer only a portion from what He has given us. God is also very, very generous, providing many seeds from one tomato which potentially can produce many plants, each one of which, in turn, many tomatoes. Since God is so generous, why should we be afraid to be generous? Actually, being generous pays off! Read about it in 2 Corinthians 9:10-11. While there, you might as well read the whole chapter and the one preceding.



Tithed Slice



Buried Slice



Sandwich & Seeds

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TITHING

> **Definition** - The Biblical Tithe has its origin in the O.T. Hebrew word, "mah-as-ayr" signifying the number ten which, in numerology, is symbolical of "completeness, abundance, sufficiency, perfection".

> **Abraham** - The patriarch Abraham gave Melchizedek, King of Salem and Priest of God Most High, a tenth of all the spoils he had taken from Kedorlaomer. (Gen. 14:20; Heb. 7:4)

> **Jacob** - After Jacob experienced a dream depicting an angelic ladder to heaven, he promised: "...of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." (Gen. 28:22)

> **Mosaic Law** - The O.T. ceremonial laws included a command for the Israelites to give a tenth to the Levites, the tribe designated for religious duties. (Numbers 18:21-24). The Levites, in turn, were to give a tenth of what they received to the priests for their sacrificial services. (Numbers 18:26-28)

> **"Robbers of God"** - Through the prophet Malachi, God reproved the people for neglecting the tithe by calling them, "robbers of God", for

which they suffered the chastisement of famine. God promised prosperity if they resumed giving the tithe. (Malachi 3:8-12)

> **Tithing in the N.T.** - In Jesus' day, the Pharisees scrupulously tithed to the point of even giving a tenth of their spices (mint, dill, cummin). However, they neglected the more important matters of the Law. In Mt. 23:23 Jesus admonished them: "You should have practiced the latter (justice, mercy, faithfulness) without neglecting the former (the tithe), indicating the tithe an acceptable practice.

> **N.T. Implications** - Under God's "New Covenant (Testament)", founded on the Gospel, Christians have been freed from the "Old Covenant (Testament)" ceremonial laws which included the command to tithe. They were liberated to love God in response to His love demonstrated in the redemption of Christ. Motivated by their love for Christ, many Christians have determined to willingly and cheerfully give more than 10% of their annual income believing that no one can out-give God.