



Firstfruits Stewardship

Tithing, the Bible, and the Christian, Part I

The Ecosystem of Biblical Giving



All three practices matter. All three span both the Old and New Testaments.
All three function as distinct acts of Christian financial stewardship and worship.

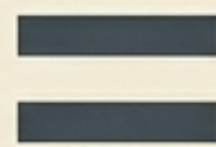
The Theology of Work: The Tribute Offering (Leviticus 2)



Raw Creation
(The materials God provides)



Human Labor
(Our craft and effort)



The Tribute Offering
(Flour, Oil, Wine)

The tribute offering is not just about giving things away; it brings wealth and work into the context of worship. Giving is the mechanism by which we acknowledge that our work belongs to a King who owns everything. He delights in the work of our hands.

The Paradigm Shift: Ownership vs. Stewardship

The Owner (God)

- Holds ultimate title to heaven and earth (Psalm 24:1).
- Provides all raw resources, greatness, and strength.
- "All things come from you..." (Liturgy)

We don't give God what is ours—we return what is His.

The Steward (Humanity)

- Manages resources temporarily on behalf of the Owner.
- Exists as "strangers and sojourners" on earth (1 Chron 29).
- "Everything I own I hold in trust as God's steward..." (Catechism Q336)

The Guiding Principle: Firstfruits

“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce...”

(Proverbs 3:9)

The Priority

The primary purpose of wealth is worship.

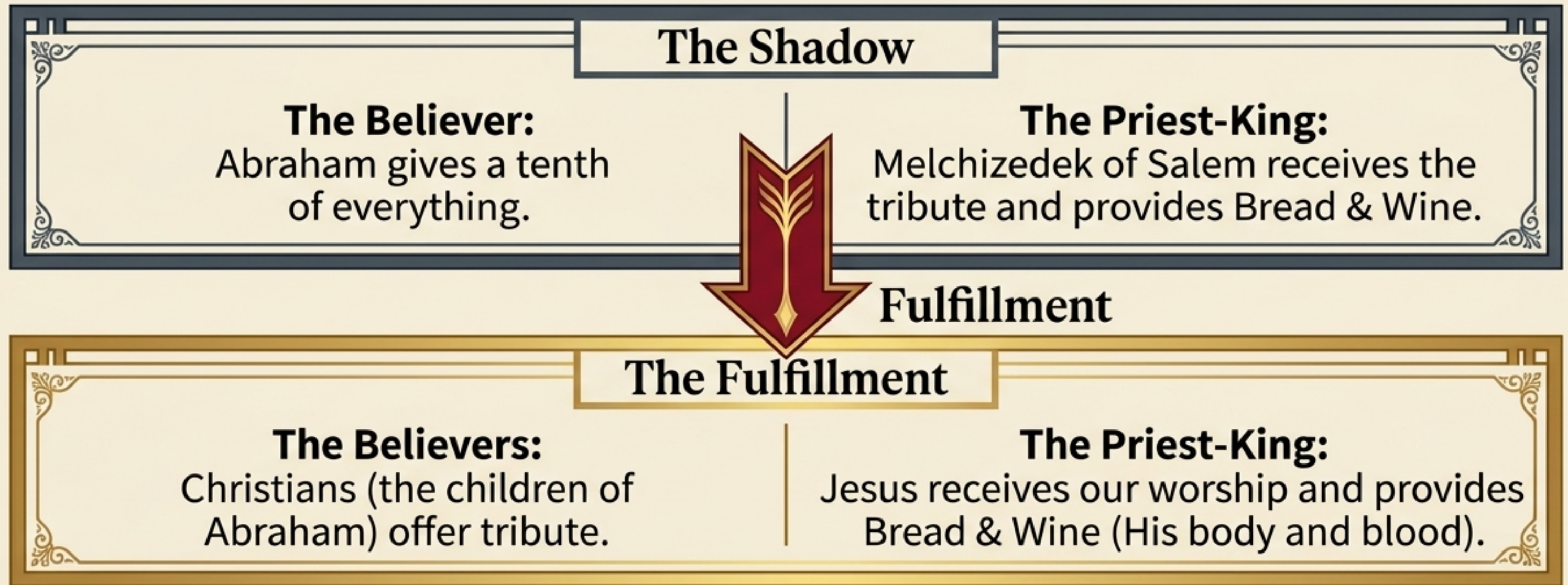
The Mechanism

Bringing the first and best to God, ensuring He does not receive the leftovers (Exodus 23:15).

Firstfruits giving is intrinsically tied to the tithe.

“The tithe denoted the amount of the offering, firstfruits the nature of the offering.”

Pre-Law Precedent: Abraham & Melchizedek (Genesis 14)



The principle of the tithe predates the Law of Moses. It is fundamentally a tribute offering to our ultimate Priest-King.

Pre-Law Precedent: Jacob's Vow (Genesis 28)

Divine Presence & Provision
(God keeps, protects, and feeds Jacob).

leads to

Human Worship & Vow
("The Lord shall be my God...")

results in

The Tithe
("I will give a full tenth to you.")

**Tithing is not initiated by a demand for funds;
it is motivated by the presence and provision of God.**

The Tithe in the Ordered Life of Israel

Compulsory Structure

It is not an occasional or optional gift, but a regular rhythm tied to covenantal life.



Holy to the Lord
(Leviticus 27:30)

The tenth intrinsically belongs to God.

Sanctuary Maintenance

According to scholar Jacob Millgrom, it is essential for sustaining the physical space of worship.

Priestly Provision

It serves directly as the wages for the Levites who minister before God.

The Scholarly Debate: One Tithe or Three?

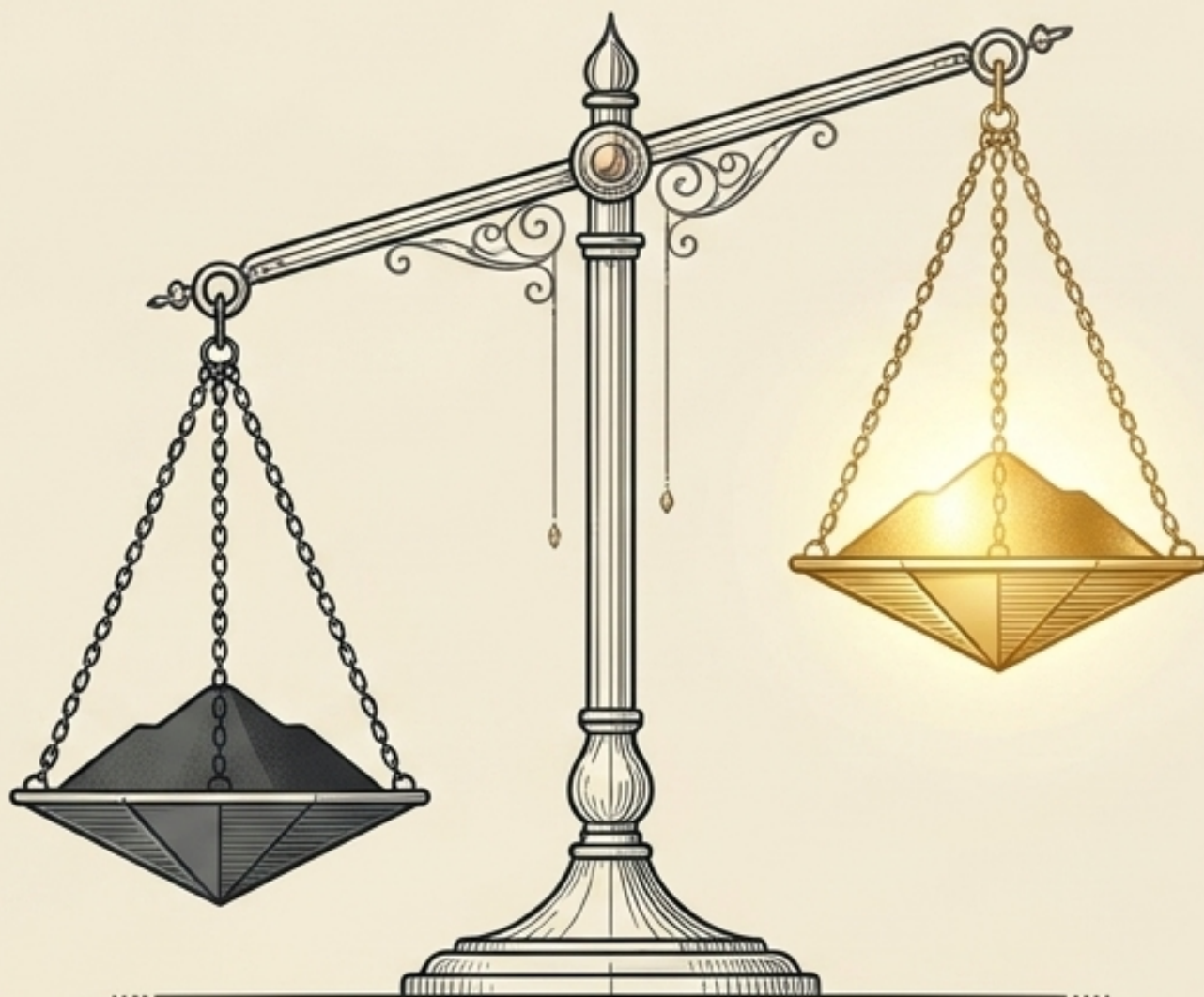
Scholars debate whether Israel gave 20–23% annually through three separate tithes, or if there was a single 10% tithe applied to three different uses (Deuteronomy 12, 14, 16).

The Levitical Tithe	The Festival Tithe	The Poor Tithe
Regular support for the priests and Levites.	Used for sacred meals and rejoicing before the Lord.	Collected every third year for community relief.
The Verdict: However the details are parsed, the central point is undeniable: the tithe was an indispensable obligation for maintaining the worship of God and the care of the community.		

The Prophets' Indictment & The Eighth Commandment (Malachi 3)

The Indictment

"Will man rob God?"
Withholding the full tithe is treated as a violation of the 8th Commandment (Thou shalt not steal), bringing a covenantal curse.



The Promise

"Put me to the test." God promises to open the windows of heaven and pour down an overflowing blessing until there is no more need.

During the Second Temple period, prophets like Malachi and Nehemiah made it explicitly clear:
The tithe is a matter of covenant fidelity, ensuring the worship of God is not neglected.

Synthesis: The Christian Standard

“A ‘tithe,’ which is 10 percent of my income, is the minimum standard of giving for the work of God’s Church and the spread of his kingdom; yet I should generously give of all that God has entrusted to me.”

— *The Anglican Catechism*

Tithing is returning.

It is the foundational obligation. We are not being “generous” when we tithe; we are returning to the Owner what is already His.

Generosity is giving.

True generosity begins after the tithe, through freewill offerings and alms from the remaining 90% we steward.