

## **1003 A doer of the word is better than a hearer - the third one of trilogy** (Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified.)

We discuss briefly this topic using three subtopics. James 1:22 says clearly, "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." Once we are justified [1], we need to be sanctified become conformed to the image of His Son [2]. First, let us acknowledge the fact that God has absolute authority as Romans 9:15 mentioned: For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It is impossible for us to talk about every aspect of the doer in this short article. For this, we need to study the Bible. Therefore, we merely point out certain issues.

First, we can see that the Bible in John 13:34-35 says: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. Furthermore, Hebrews 13:1 says, "Let love of the brethren continue."

Both New and Old Testaments not only say that God is the God of love, but also the God of justice. New Testament in Matthew 16:24 tells us clearly: Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." In the process of sanctification, we must deny ourselves and take up the cross which is given to us by Him. It is not a cross if we initiate tribulation by ourselves. That is the justice that God gives His children. Meanwhile, He also gives us the promise, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) And, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) Through studying the Bible, not only will we learn promises like these, but we also "...have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him." (Colossians 3:10)

Secondly, Jesus says in John 5:39-40, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." Having life is the real goal of studying the Bible, not merely gaining knowledge. In the following, we'll briefly discuss some issues about having life.

We need to know first that the life comes from God as 1 Corinthians 3:6-7 says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.; So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth." Therefore, to understand the Bible, we need to read what Luke 24:45 says, "Then He (Jesus) opened their minds (G3563, Greek nous) to understand the Scriptures." In the era of New Testament, this can only be done by Holy Spirit.

In the era of New Testament, we can pray like Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:17, NIV to have a Spirit of revelation, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better." [3] The Spirit of revelation will lead us to do the Bible study and tell us what we need to know. Please notice, revelation is not only by supernatural things, but also through other means such as others' and the Bible's words, and so on. God has absolute authority, so how could one say that there are only certain ways to know things? We must know: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9) What we need to do is "Do not quench the Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 5:19) Believe that Holy Trinity is the true and living God, and is full of mercy and grace. He will give us the revelation to lead us. In Hebrews 7:25, we see such a promise "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." We just need to continuously abide in Christ Jesus in faith. This is the only way we can understand the Bible and have life.

Thirdly and lastly, we will discuss the issues involved in the offerings regarding having enough food in God's house. The first question we want to ask is what the offering system in Old Testament is? Apparently, like when Moses built Tabernacle, contributions had to come from every man whose heart moved him [4]. It is also said clearly that one tenth of our earnings belongs to God [5]. Like what Malachi 3:10 says, the goal of offering is to give the house of God enough food [6]. Then, how much is required in the offering system of Old Testament? Let us examine the law or from Malachi 3:8, "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." In short, in the era of Old Testament, it is required that every man moves to offer more than one-tenth. This is what we mean when we say to look at things in aspect of the Bible. That means, whatever the Bible says counts. Because the Bible is inspired by God [7], this also means we are looking at things in the aspect of God or the author. Please notice that we cannot say both are equivalent since it is not true to look at things in aspect of the Bible is sufficient to fully understand all aspects of God.

Then, what does the New Testament teach us about offerings? Direct teaching on this is only that Jesus approved of the offering of the poor widow in Luke 21:4, "for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on." Thus, the answer to this question is very simple. Since man has free will about how much he offers which depends upon the relationship he has with God, man can determine the offering amount by himself. In the era of the New Testament, it is impossible to have a law saying something like one has to offer at least one-tenth. Jesus says clearly that He didn't approve obeying any such law. [8]

We shouldn't say that the offerings mentioned in Malachi 3:8 are all related to sacrifices and thus they don't matter in the era of New Testament. As a result of this thinking, are tithes the only sacrifice left and do we need to offer one-tenth in the era of New Testament? No, the New Testament doesn't say so. By this way of thinking, logic not derived from the

**Bible is added on top of what New Testament says. This is what it means to look at things in the aspect of a human.**

**Please notice that I don't say that giving less than one-tenth of your earnings as an offering means your relationship with God is poor. Not everyone has the resources to offer one-tenth, even if they have a good relationship with God. What I want to emphasize is the fact that there is not a requirement of an offering of one-tenth in the era of the New Testament. It can be used as a reference. That's all. If one person thinks about offering one-tenth but does not have adequate resources, God might tell that person in His way that there is no need to obey such a law like in the era of Old Testament. The Lord looks at the heart. [9]**

**This is not to connect the Gospel with money, but instead we are talking about the relationship with God. If a person cares about the welfare of another, he will naturally think about the other person, who should have sufficient foods to eat. Likewise, if someone cares about God's house, shouldn't he ensure that it has sufficient foods? Offering money is just one among the simple ways to serve God. There are definitely other ways to serve. The era of New Testament is to emphasize our heart should move us to offer, not obey the rules in the law like in the era of Old Testament.**

**But the God in New and Old Testament is one. The one-tenth belonging to God is still true and will not change. There is no such requirement in the era of New Testament. If one has a good relationship with God, that person will endeavor to give back to God what belongs to Him.**

**We end these discussions with two testimonies of others. The first testimony is about one brother who was talking about that God's faithfulness, he accidentally revealed at the same time that he offered over one-tenth. He at that time originally has no way to offer one-tenth but had the heart to pray about doing it. God is faithful, and he eventually can offer more than one-tenth.**

**The second testimony is about one sister. When she preached about offerings, she mentioned that she suddenly realized that over 50% offering to her organizations cannot deduct taxes. After checking online, I realized that there are different upper limits for various nonprofit organizations. The highest one is the offering to churches, which is 60%. One purpose of this testimony is to tell everyone that there is a limit in the law for offering to churches. Of course, I never think about such offering in the past and dare not to think about it in the future.**

### **Some related verses and knowledge**

**[1] Romans 5:1, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**[2] Romans 8:29, For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.**

- [3] In James 1:5, NASB, it says "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." It is clear from this verse, if we want to get wisdom, we need God working on us. In the era of New Testament, Holy Spirit will do the work. That is why we use NIV for Ephesians 1:17, since NASB is translated as "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him." From the consistency of the Bible, we have to use Bigger letter Spirit, not our spirit.
- [4] Exodus 25:1-2, Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution."
- [5] Leviticus 27:30, Thus all the tithes of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord.
- [6] Malachi 3:10, Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.
- [7] 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, ..." Although the New Testament was not finished at the time when Paul said so, Christians believe that it is true for the whole Bible. For example, Book Revelation is not finished for sure at that time.
- [8] Matthew 23:23, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."
- [9] 1 Samuel 16:7, But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."