

**1008 One tenth offering interpreted and a time to every purpose under heaven
(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified.)**

First, we'll use the example of giving one tenth of your income as an offering to show that we shouldn't forcefully interpret the Bible as I did, since I finally got rid of the logic in the aspect of human after three iterations [1]. Instead, whatever the Bible says, we follow. In other words, we can finally study the Bible on this topic in the aspect of the Bible. Then, we asked why Paul didn't see the big light before he prosecuted Christians? This leads to the discussion of the fact there is a time for everything under heaven similar to the first one that I went through three iterations. After that, we discuss a prayer in Proverbs 30 about keeping deception and lies far from me. Finally, we take a brief look at how the Bible says that God is living and true and He is full of mercy and grace.

We have talked three times about the concept of one tenth offering in topic-wise Bible study as the topic influences our daily life. In the first iteration of 8/16/20, the arguments are very logical in the aspect of human. Actually, there is someone agreeing with me on the same arguments which gave me the courage to talk about it. In the first iteration, I conclude wrongly with the following arguments that we have to offer at least one tenth in the era of New Testament with hearts moved.

In Exodus 25:1-2: Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "... from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution." So, we must have our heart moved when we give an offering. From Leviticus 27:30, it says: Thus, all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's ..." This sentence is still true even in the era of the New Testament. For churches talking about one tenth offering, they often quoted the verse in Malachi 3:8, it says: "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." Someone may argue that more than tithes are required if quoting this verse, since there are additional offerings mentioned. Since the offerings mentioned in this verse are all related to the sacrificial system. We no longer have the temple in the era of the New Testament or the offerings mentioned. Therefore, from this argument, one tenth offering in the era of New Testament is still correct.

In the era of New Testament, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 in NIV says, "...On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income (G2343), ..." Paul didn't have to say how much since everyone at that time knew, one tenth. Let us see what Jesus said in Luke 11:42, "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and ..." He also said in Matthew 23:3, "therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, ..." Hence, both Testaments say that we have to offer at least one tenth. Is it very logical? That is why both of us are deceived by words not in the Bible.

In the second iteration of 12/20/20, I realized the word in Greek G2343 is not necessarily related to income. I made changes accordingly.

In the third iteration of 9/4/21, to answer the question about what the teaching of offering in New Testament is, I realized that the only direct teaching was what Jesus said in Luke 21:2-

4, "And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; 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.""

In the era of New Testament, it is impossible to have any law like one tenth offering as we can see how Jesus hated it. I didn't say offering less than one tenth indicated the relationship between God and the person was no good. I want to point out there is only one God, who has the absolute authority. We really cannot use logic to say there is no sacrifice anymore, and conclude one tenth offering is still correct. This is to view things in the aspect of human. If in the aspect of the Bible, it was required to offer more than one tenth in the era of Old Testament. Period. Man has free will. Offering how much definitely depends upon the relationship between God and the person.

However, this is not to be used as an excuse. Just like if one person has a good relationship with another person, the first person normally hopes that the other will not lack of food. If one person has good relationship with God, the person will automatically think about having enough food in God's house like what Malachi 3:10 says, "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, ..." The person then really wants return what belongs to the Lord as said in Leviticus 27:30 mentioned earlier. However, I can testify that God doesn't blame at all those people who don't have enough resources to offer one tenth, "...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7).

We might ask then why I had to go through three iterations to get it finally be consistent with the Bible? This is my interpretation. One might ask why Paul saw the big light after he prosecuted Christians. Isn't it better if it happened before that? Yes, in the aspect of human. But in Isaiah 55:8-9, it says, "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." Furthermore, in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven." So, it is the right time as you can see from what Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:16, "Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." I think that it might be a similar reason why I had to go through two wrong logical iterations before I finally am consistent with what the Bible says. The way of God is definitely higher than mine, not comparable at all. We can also see that there is a window of time for everything. Sometimes God allows us to start the time window unexpectedly or even by allowing us to make mistakes, the end is solely controlled by God as He has the absolute authority.

Just to mention by passing what is related to 1 Timothy 1:15, "... sinners, among whom I am foremost of all." notice that the verb is the present tense. So, he didn't say that he was the foremost because he prosecuted Christians, he is now the one too. God let him see that before His Holy presence and His infinity, what else could he feel other than being the foremost? May God let us feel the same way since such a perception is the must.

Let us now take a look at a prayer in Proverbs 30:7-9 related to the time, "Two things I asked of You, Do not refuse me before I die: Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God." People often think that a lie out of a good will is acceptable by the world at large. Hence, it is ok to lie out of good will. Absolutely not! A lie out of good will is still a lie. What we want to do is to use the words of wisdom as in James 1:5-6, "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. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind." If we don't have the wisdom, we can pray for it. There are no other requirements except requiring that a Christian prays in faith. It doesn't say anything about time, but we are surely to get it as God promised.

When God forgave someone in the Bible for lying, it is always related to the life for that person. For example, in Joshua 2:4-6, "But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. It came about when it was time to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof." Surely, the harlot Rahab lied. If at that time Rahab didn't lie, it would be just like suicide. God doesn't want us to commit suicide. In the Bible, the faith of Rahab is praised, never about her lying. If related to truth, Revelation 2:10 says clearly, "...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." Although Matthew 4:4 says, "But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'", we'll not depend on food ALONE but still need food. Hence, though such a prayer talks about materials, someone testified that it was still made God pleased and was granted so far.

Finally, let us remember the Bible says that although God has the absolute authority, He is living and true. He is full of mercy and grace. Apparently, He is living and true as said in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God." He has the absolute authority as in Exodus 33:19, "...and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." It also shows that He has compassion. In the era of the New Testament, John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." He is full of grace.

We have mentioned some promises. We have to believe that whatever He promised, it will be done. All we have to do is to pray in faith as said in James 1:6, "But he must ask in faith without any doubting, ..." For example, the promise in the great mission of Matthew 28:20 "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." is done by the indwelling Holy Spirit stated in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."

We end the sharing by a verse in 1 John 3:24, "The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."

Reference

[1] For people who know Chinese, you can go to YouTube to get those three iterations in detail. They are: 『200816 從聖經的無誤和一致性看一些經文』 <https://youtu.be/xea-Yj-jnro> , 『201220 讀經要從整本聖經讀的三個例子』 <https://youtu.be/O3E84s3SoYI> , 和 『210918 願神家有糧和十一的奉獻』 <https://youtu.be/YH7ih5ZFQeQ> 。