

“FOR GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER...” (1)

By Keith Greer

Studying the various parts of our worship to God we began by discussing the Lord's Supper. We will also examine, Praying, Singing, and Learning God's Word. Today, we begin examining the act of our Giving. We are trying to be consistent in studying what the scriptures teach about each of these acts. Sadly, many would like to forget the subject of "giving," and many feel ill at ease in preaching and wring on this subject. However, "giving" is part of our worship to God, and it's important how it is done. We cannot just "leave out" giving any more than we can leave out any other act of worship and still be pleasing to God.

Today, so many are skeptical of religion because it appears to them that "asking for money" is the primary objective. A friend of mine, who is not a Christian, recently told me about attending services in a denomination. "Just like all religions I have attended the last few years, the majority of time was spent asking for money. It seems that the dollar has become more important than the soul!"

Many have the idea that the "money grabbers" on television are the pattern of "all religions." If we examine the subject closely, we will find that there is no fault in God's concepts on the need for giving. The fault lies in man's application of the law.

"When the children of Israel were bringing offerings for the building of the tabernacle, the workers and they received from Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, and they spoke to Moses, saying, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded us to do." So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done-indeed too much." {Exodus 36:3-7}

The children of Israel gave so much that they had to be restrained. They demonstrated an attitude toward God and His work that was exemplary.

In reading Leviticus 27:30-33, Numbers 18:21-24, and Deuteronomy 12:6-7, 17-19 concerning God's law on tithes, many are under the misconception that the Jews were only required to give 10%. A close examination of the law will clearly show that they actually gave much more. They not only gave 10% of the money that they had, they also gave of their sheep, cattle and harvest. Did God ask them to give too much?

When the children of Israel were in Egypt, they were slaves, and they were living lives that were "bitter with hard bondage." When God brought them out of Egypt, every blessing that they

had was from God. As long as they were obedient, they reaped the blessings God had promised.

While the children of Israel journeyed to the Promised Land, God provided them with food (manna and quail) and water. Even though they were often ungrateful, God still provided for their physical needs. Anything that they were required to give back to God was but a small price for everything that had been done for them.

Could Israel ever "out-give" the things that God had done for them? We know that they could never out give God or repay Him for all that He did for them.

God's people have been delivered from the bondage of sin. Do we not owe God a debt for everything He has done for us? Can any Christian believe that our debt is less than what He did for His people long ago? *** (continue on next Page)***