

The Purpose of Paying Tithes

By Pastor Sean R. Pinder

- **Genesis 14:14-24**

Abraham had just won a great victory by delivering his nephew Lot and the people of Sodom. The king of Sodom was very grateful and went on a journey to meet Abraham and to thank him for being an instrument of deliverance.

As the king of Sodom journeyed towards Abraham, so did God in the form of Melchizedek. I love how God shows up just in the nick of time to prevent us from making bad decisions. As usual, God got to Abraham before the King of Sodom did. What a meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek. Let us look at what Melchizedek brought for Abraham:

1. Bread and wine (communion).
2. He blessed him.
3. He gave him revelation: "...Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."
4. Abraham paid tithes.

As soon as Abraham had his divine encounter with Melchizedek, something else transpired. The king of Sodom showed up to offer to Abraham the goods of Sodom as a reward for delivering his people. Abraham shocked him by making an eye-opening statement: "I have lifted up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich...." It is here that a revelation of paying tithes is captured in the Scripture. I pondered this statement and wondered, "When did Abraham lift up his hand unto the Lord?" He did when he paid tithes of all. Paying tithes, to Abraham, meant that he had fully placed his trust in the Lord as his provider. This meant that Abraham would look to God alone as his sole provider. So, when we pay tithes, we are telling God, "I take you at your word and I fully put my trust in you. It also means that you make a firm commitment not to trust in the arm of human flesh, because it will fail. God, however, never fails. Abraham also discerns the thoughts and intentions of

the king of Sodom and says, "...lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich...." Had Abraham taken the goods from the king of Sodom, he would have fully taken credit for wealth that God Almighty had given to Abraham. God's timing here blows my mind. It was the visitation with Melchizedek, Priest of the Most High God, that strengthened Abraham to be able to resist the temptation to receive from the king of Sodom. God is always ahead of our enemy, whose sole purpose is to discredit what God is doing in our lives.

- **Genesis 15:1**

God honored Abraham for resisting the king of Sodom. The Bible says:

1. God's word came to Abraham in a vision.
2. Fear not Abram (you don't have to dread or be afraid of anything or anyone).
3. I Am thy shield (defense, protector).
4. I Am thy exceeding reward (compensation, benefit).