

BREAKING BROKE PT 15

THE FIRST: The Trust That Unlocks the Rest

Kingdom Economics Finale

Hebrews 7:1-9: For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ²to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” ³without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. ⁴Now consider how great this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham **GAVE A TENTH OF THE SPOILS.** ⁵And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, **HAVE A COMMANDMENT TO RECEIVE TITHES** from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; ⁶**BUT HE WHOSE GENEALOGY IS NOT DERIVED FROM THEM RECEIVED TITHES** from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. ⁸**HERE MORTAL MEN RECEIVE TITHES, BUT THERE HE RECEIVES THEM, OF WHOM IT IS WITNESSED THAT HE LIVES.** ⁹**EVEN LEVI,**

WHO RECEIVES TITHES, PAID TITHES THROUGH ABRAHAM, so to speak, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUE BENEATH THE ARGUMENT

Good morning, church. Whenever the subject of tithing comes up, the debate usually sounds like this:

- “Is that Old Testament?”
- “Are we under grace now?”
- “Is that law or liberty?”

Those are important questions, but they are not the deepest question. The deeper question is this:

Can God trust you with the first?

Because long before there was Moses, long before Sinai thundered, long before Malachi rebuked Israel, there was a pattern God established in Scripture.

And the pattern is this:

The first always belongs to God - What belongs to God carries the power to redeem what remains.

Tithing is not fundamentally about money. It is about ORDER. It is about LORDSHIP. It is about TRUST.

Over these two messages, I want to walk you through the theology of the first. Not as a slogan. Not as a church tradition. But as a covenant principle woven through the entire storyline of redemption.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE FIRST:

Point 1 - **THE FIRST BEGAN IN A GARDEN**

- Before there was a tithe, there was a tree.
- In Genesis, God placed Adam in a garden of abundance. Every tree was good for food. Every river flowed with provision. Dominion was handed to man. Except for one tree.

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stood in the center as a boundary. Why?

Was God insecure? Was heaven short on fruit? No. **That tree represented divine order.**

- God was establishing this truth from the beginning: You may steward much, but I must remain first.

The first principle is not about RESTRICTION - It is about RECOGNITION.

- That tree declared, “You are not ultimate. I am.”

- Adam's failure was not hunger. It was mistrust. **He reached for what was reserved. He consumed what was meant to be consecrated.**

When the first is **DISHONORED**, everything else becomes **DISORDERED**.

That is the seed of the theology of the first. Why is this important...because these principals flow together...

Transition: If the garden establishes the principle of honor, Egypt reveals the principle of redemption.

Point 2 - **THE FIRSTBORN: THE FIRST REDEEMS THE REST**

In Exodus 13, after Israel's deliverance, God commands that every firstborn male belongs to Him.

- The firstborn of livestock.
- The firstborn son.
- Everything that "opens the womb" was His.

Why the firstborn?

Because in Hebrew thought, the firstborn represented strength, inheritance, and future.

The first was the representative portion of the whole.

God was teaching Israel something powerful:

If the first is **CONSECRATED**, the rest is **COVERED**.

- The firstborn lamb was sacrificed.
- The firstborn son was redeemed through sacrifice.

Redemption was tied to the first.

The theology is unmistakable: **The first given in faith redeems what follows.**

- God was not collecting children or cattle.
- He was establishing covenant order.
- If you trust Me with what represents your future, I will secure the future.

Transition: That same pattern follows Israel into the Promised Land.

Point 3 - **JERICHO: THE FIRST CITY BELONGS TO GOD**

When Israel crossed the Jordan, Jericho was the first city conquered.

Joshua 6 makes God's instruction unmistakable. The city was devoted. The silver and gold were consecrated. The spoils were not to be touched.

Why?

Jericho was the **FIRSTFRUITS** of Canaan.

- God was saying, “Before you enjoy the land, you must trust Me with the first victory.”
- Jericho functioned as a tithe of conquest.

And when Achan took what was devoted, Israel lost momentum. One man touching what was reserved affected the entire nation.

Here is the principle:

**WHEN THE FIRST IS HONORED, VICTORY MULTIPLIES.
WHEN THE FIRST IS CONSUMED, BLESSING STALLS.**

- Jericho was a trust test.
- If Israel could trust God with the first city, God would give them the rest.

Transition:

Now we begin to understand that tithing is not an isolated law. It flows from a larger covenant pattern.

Point 4 - TITHING PREDATES THE LAW

- **Genesis 14 records Abraham giving a tenth to Melchizedek, priest of God Most High.**

This happens centuries before the Law.

Abraham had just won a battle. He recovered goods and captives. **And before he built wealth, before he secured assets, he gave the first tenth.**

Why? Because he recognized the Source.

- **Genesis 28 shows Jacob vowing to give God a tenth of all his increase.**

Again, before Moses.

Tithing did not originate in LEGISLATION - It originated in WORSHIP.

- It was the patriarchal way of declaring, “This blessing did not originate with me.”

Transition: When the Law arrives, it does not invent tithing. It formalizes it.

Point 5 - UNDER THE LAW: HOLY AND SET APART

Leviticus 27:30 says, “The tithe... belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.”

- Holy means set apart. Reserved. Not common
- Under Moses, the tithe sustained the Levites, the temple, and the poor.
- Numbers 18 establishes that those who minister live from what is brought into God’s house.

The Law protected the principle of the first.

By the time of Malachi, Israel had drifted. Malachi 3:6–12 records God’s rebuke:

“Return to Me...Will a man rob God? Bring all the tithes into the storehouse.”

This was not divine irritation over money. It was covenant correction.

When the tithe stopped, the temple emptied. When the temple emptied, ministry declined. When ministry declined, spiritual climate deteriorated.

The issue was trust. God says, “Test Me in this.”

- This is the only place in Scripture where God invites examination.

If you will trust Me with the first, I will open the windows of heaven. I will rebuke the devourer. I will bless the land.

Transition: But what about the New Covenant?

THE FIRST IN THE NEW COVENANT

Point 6 - **JESUS DID NOT DISMANTLE THE FIRST**

In Matthew 23:23 – “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! **FOR YOU PAY TITHE OF MINT** and anise and cummin and have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. **THESE YOU OUGHT TO HAVE DONE** without leaving the others undone.

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

He does not abolish the tithe. He corrects the heart behind it.

Hebrews 7:8 - Here **mortal men receive TITHES**, but **there he receives them**, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.

- Connects Melchizedek to Christ.

- Verse 8 declares that while mortal men receive tithes on earth, there He receives them, of whom it is witnessed that He lives.

Our High Priest is alive. When we give, we are not funding an institution. We are responding to a living King.

Transition: So, what does this mean practically?

Point 7 - **TITHING REVEALS WHO YOU TRUST**

Tithing is not a math issue. It is a trust issue.

- It exposes fear.
- It confronts control.
- It challenges scarcity.

If God can trust you with the first portion, He can trust you with multiplication.

- Throughout Scripture, multiplication follows consecration.
- **The widow of Zarephath gave first to Elijah before feeding herself, and the flour did not run out.**

- **The boy gave his loaves to Jesus, and thousands were fed.**

The first given in faith unlocks increase. The tithe is not about losing ten percent. It is about inviting God into the remaining ninety.

It declares:

- You are my source.
- You are my security.
- You are my provider.

Trust is the currency of the Kingdom. And trust is demonstrated first.

Point 8 - **THE ULTIMATE FIRST: CHRIST**

- Romans calls Jesus the Firstborn among many brethren.
- Colossians calls Him the Firstborn of all creation.

God gave His First so the rest could be redeemed.

This is the deepest theology of the first. Before we ever gave to God, He gave to us.

- He did not wait to see if humanity would improve. He gave His First when we were still sinners.
- The cross is the ultimate firstfruits offering.
- And every tithe echoes that greater redemption.

If God did not withhold His Firstborn Son, it should not shock us that He asks for the first portion of our increase.

The first belongs to Him because everything originates with Him.

CONCLUSION: RETURN TO THE FIRST

Malachi begins with this declaration: “I am the Lord, I do not change.”

- The covenant pattern has not changed.
- In the garden, the first tree established honor.
- In Egypt, the firstborn established redemption.
- At Jericho, the first city established trust.
- Under Moses, the first tenth established order.
- In Christ, the Firstborn established eternal salvation.

This is not about pressure. It is about PRIORITY. Not about legalism, but LORDSHIP. Not about obligation, but ORDER.

- When the first is honored, the rest is redeemed.
- When the first is consecrated, the rest is covered.
- When the first is surrendered, the rest is multiplied.

The question is not whether tithing is Old Testament or New. The question is simple:

Can God trust you with the first?