

What was the tithe Abraham gave to Melchisedec?

Tithing in the old testament is a practice based in the harvesting of grains and livestock of the farming community. There are no commands to give ten percent to God from the spoils of war. In the case of Abraham and Melchizedek and the giving of the Tithe, Gen 14:23 shows that Abraham when talking to the King of Sodom refused to take anything from the King not even a shoelace, let alone money. He only took a portion of his food. [verse 24]. The tithes that were given to Melchizedek were food items from the booty of the King of Sodom..

(Gen 14:14) And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan.

(Gen 14:15) And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damascus.

(Gen 14:16) And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

(Gen 14:17) And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which *is* the king's dale.

(Gen 14:18) And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God.

(Gen 14:19) And he blessed him, and said, Blessed *be* Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

(Gen 14:20) And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

(Gen 14:21) And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

(Gen 14:22) And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

(Gen 14:23) 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:

(Gen 14:24) Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

In Hebrews 7:1 this incident is again mentioned and is given to an interpretation by Paul. The passage is lengthy but important to read.

(Heb 7:1) For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

(Heb 7:2) To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

Without knowing what was taken from the King of Salem and assuming it was precious stones or silver or gold. One would think from verse 2 that “a tenth part of all” was money and that Abraham gave that to Melchisedec. But we have seen from Gen14:23-24 that food was the commodity that was given to the King of Salem.

(Heb 7:3) Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

(Heb 7:4) Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Interestingly, the word “spoils” in this verse in the Greek means;

ἀκροθίνιον Spoils

akrothinion

Thayer Definition:

- 1) top of the heap, the first fruits
 - 1a) best of the spoils or crops
- 2) the Greeks customarily selected from the topmost part of the heaps and offered this to the gods

So, we see that the phrase should be reworded; “Abraham gave a tenth of the Firstfruits.” This is quite a revelation, to say the least. It means that the portion given to Melchisedec was an omer [2.3 quarts] of the booty.

What is fascinating in this revelation is that this procedure is directly related to the Feast of Pentecost where the firstfruits of the wheat harvest are gathered into the storehouses and during the Passover. The High priest would take a sheaf or omer [2.3 quarts] of the firstfruits of the best portion of the harvest and use it to make two wave loaves during the festival of weeks, which were to be waved at the ceremony. Lev. 23:10-12 talks about the time when Joshua entered the promised land during the Passover performed the same ceremony.

(Lev 23:10) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:

(Lev 23:11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

(Lev 23:12) And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD.

To further verify that the tithe that Abraham gave to Melchisedec who was the High priest of the most High, was a tithe of the tithe. We begin with Hebrews 7:5 to establish that Levi was to collect tithes from the other tribes.

(Heb 7:5) And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

What is significant is that the tithes received from Levi to the priesthood was a tenth of that tithe; A tithe of the firstfruits is the same principal in distributing the tithe of the tithe to the priesthood. That`s what Abraham did.

(Num 18:26) Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

To build upon this concept we see in Heb 7:9 that Levi who received tithes from the rest of the tribes of Israel also, figuratively speaking, also gave a “tenth part of the first fruits” to Melchisedec which shows that the levitical priesthood was inferior to the order or priesthood of Melchisedec. It was physical, Melchisedec was a spiritual or eternal priesthood.

(Heb 7:9) And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham

.So, we can conclude that Abraham took the best of the food he received from the King of Sodom and separated a tenth or omer [2 quarts] and gave it to Melchisedec; a Tithe of the Firstfruits. The tithes referred to in Hebrew 7:4 is the First of the firstfruits. Coincidentally, Christ is referred to as the “First of the firstfruits. That sleep” He was the Melchisedec who deserved this honor as High Priest of the Father and who ate and talked with Abraham.

(Gen 14:18) And Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God.

The bread that Melchisedec brought with him to eat with Abraham, interesting enough is the word “lechem” in the Hebrew it is strong's 3899 and is used to denote “shewbread”, which are unleavened cakes that are used in the temple or tabernacle.

One can see below that #3899 is used in several places in the scriptures to denote that shewbread is what Melchizedek brought with him.

Exo 25:30 And thou shalt set ^{H5414} upon the table ^{H7979} shewbread **H3899** before ^{H6440} me alway. ^{H8548}

☐ Exo 35:13 The table, ^{H7979} and his staves, ^{H905} and all his vessels, ^{H3627} and the shewbread, ^{H6440} **H3899**

☐ Exo 39:36 The table, ^{H7979} *and* all the vessels ^{H3627} thereof, and the shewbread, ^{H6440} **H3899**

It is fitting that this would be the case since Melchisedec as the High Priest he would bring shewbread which indicates that he was a representative from a tabernacle or temple. In addition to that imagery the showbread also is the representation of the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribes were in the loins of Abraham, figuratively speaking.