



SABBATH 48—NOVEMBER 30, 2024

HE'S THE OWNER OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

Proverbs 10:22—“The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.”

We find the first mention of tithing in the book of Genesis, in the Old Testament. . At the very beginning of chapter 14, there is a description of a fascinating meeting between Abram, the father of the Hebrew people, and a king named Melchizedek, who was the “priest of God Most High.” Abram had just recovered his goods from his enemies. This priest gave him a special blessing and, as recorded in Genesis 14:20, “[Abram] gave him a tenth of all.” Here we see a grateful patriarch consecrating to God, through Melchizedek, a tenth of what he had gained.

But before tithing, Abram received three valuable instructions from Melchizedek.

1. Blessing comes before faithfulness. The biblical text says that Melchizedek said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High” (Genesis 14:19). Adventist theology believes that first God blesses, then, in response to God’s blessings, we are faithful. Not the opposite, as those who advocate the theory of prosperity want to teach, with the pretense of determining the blessing through “positive thinking” as a way of bargaining with God.
2. God owns everything. He is the “Possessor of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:20). Melchizedek was claiming that Abram would bring the tithes to the One who already owned everything that was in Abraham’s hands. No person can think that he owns something, even if he has built it, for we are creatures who were born and exist on this earth thanks to God’s creative power.
3. God has delivered us from the hands of our enemies (Genesis 14:20). Melchizedek reminded Abram that he was not a warrior and neither did he lead an army. The victory over the four kingdoms was only possible because God was involved in the battle. As we worship God on the Sabbath and as we return our tithes and offerings, we are affirming that God has given us victory throughout the week and the month.

Appeal: Throughout the ages, the keeping of the Sabbath and the return of tithes and offerings became a sign of commitment to all who called upon the heavenly God. We are all called to share in God’s bounty. He who is abundantly gracious wants us to be gracious. He who pours out His blessings on us wants us to pour out our blessings on others as well.

