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Well, this third year tithe is based on that seven year increment. So basically, every seven years you're going to have two tithing times. The third year and the sixth year is going to be a time of a tithe.

So halfway through and at the end of this seven year period, you look around and gather the tithe. Now this third year tithe is what you might call a second tithe. Every year, you know, whatever passes under the rod and so forth, holy to the Lord, this is what supports the Levites.

But the third and the sixth year tithe has a special function. In the third year, the year of tithing, and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled. So the priests and Levites, they get their normal portion that they get every year.

But every third and sixth year, a portion of the tithe is set aside to feed the fatherless, the widow, the stranger that are within the gates. So there is a built-in function of charity that is a part of this tithing function. And this reminds us that it is not necessarily illegitimate, depending on how you want to interpret and apply this principle, but we know that our government takes a portion of our income tax and renders assistance ostensibly to those who are in need.

That's the principle of it anyway. And looking at this, this is something that was built into the worship life of Israel. The challenge here is to discern what portion of this is the civil code and what portion of it is the worship code.

I tend to view this, especially if you're looking in terms of an organized church that takes up offerings regularly and so forth, is that these offerings ought to be used to assist those who are in need. If you're going to operate, you know, going back to the Old Testament for your principles of operation. You can also look at this as a basis for seeing legitimacy in taking a portion of what is rendered to our government and rendering assistance to those who are in need.

I look at this in terms of disaster relief, those who have been rendered fatherless or widowed by warfare. You have pensions, you have assistance to military families and so forth that takes place after the primary benefactor is gone. All of these are legitimate, and you can see this reflected in the law of Moses.

Well, since we're talking about sevens and sabbaths and rests, we'll come to a rest here in our study this morning. When we come back, we're going to conclude our brief survey of tithing and draw a couple of conclusions from it, especially going back to why Abraham renders a tithe to Melchizedek. Then we'll move forward and see a conversation that Abram has with God.

The first conversation, by the way, that we have recorded in the Scripture between Abram and God. But let's pause here and take our break.