

# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TITHE

Finally...Separating Fact from Fiction

Free Tithe Study Guide

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The Truth about the Tithe is based on *The Tithing Hoax: Exposing the Lies Misinterpretations & False Teachings about Tithing*. You may purchase copies of The Tithing Hoax in [Paperback](#) or [Kindle](#) on Amazon.com.

All scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

## Table of Contents

BONUS LESSON - The Tithe and the Law of Moses

Lesson 1 - What is a biblical tithe?

Lesson 2 - Who was commanded to tithe?

Lesson 3 - Who was commanded to receive the tithe?

For Further Study – Read *The Tithing Hoax* (FREE Chapter Excerpt)

A message from the Author

About the Author

## Introduction

The Christian church is divided over the issue of tithing. There are those who believe that Christians must tithe by paying God 10 percent of their income. They often cite Biblical scripture to support their belief. On the other side of the fence, there are those who say that tithing is not for today's Christians. They too point to biblical scripture to support their belief. In addition, there are many Christians who are caught in the middle of the debate. They straddle the fence on this issue because those for and against tithing are quoting from the "word of God."

So who's right? Or rather, what is the truth regarding the tithe?

To understand the tithe you must know what the Bible says about the tithe in the context of the scriptures. FreeDictionary.com defines context, as such:

1. The parts of a written or spoken statement that precede or follow a specific word or passage, usually influencing its meaning or effect: You have misinterpreted my remark because you took it out of context.
2. The set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event, situation, etc.

The confusion surround the topic of tithing is rooted, primarily, in the fact that the word tithe(s) has been taken out of biblical context. Understanding the biblical tithe in context requires the following:

- Reading the passages before and after a verse
- Identifying who the writer is addressing in the scripture
- Knowing why the verse, passage or book was written
- Taking into account the historical and/or cultural environment in which the verse, passage or book was written

And these are the basic guidelines we have followed for this Tithe Study. By doing so, this study guide gives you:

- A clear understanding of what the biblical tithe is
- A Bible-based foundation for your own in-depth study on the biblical tithe
- Answers to some of the most common questions you may have about the tithe

The Tithe Study aims to clear up the confusion about tithes and to correct the false teachings about the biblical tithe. It is my hope that you find this study enlightening, reassuring and helpful.

## BONUS LESSON

### The Tithe and the Law of Moses

The Lord made tithing a commandment under the Law of Moses (or Mosaic Law). The Law of Moses consists of 613 commandments that the ancient nation of Israel was required to follow. The commandments were the rules and regulations that governed ancient Israel. Among those commandments is the commandment to tithe.

#### **Many Commandments, One Law**

The Law of Moses is considered ONE Law. No commandment was considered separate and apart from the rest of the commandments. Ancient Israel could not pick and choose which commandments to obey and which to ignore. This is important because the Lord blessed ancient Israel based on their obedience to the whole Law. In other words, if ancient Israel obeyed ALL the commandments of the Law then the Lord would bless them.

#### **Deuteronomy 28:1**

*And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.*

Likewise, if ancient Israel broke any of the commandments they were guilty of breaking the whole Law. As a result, the Lord would curse them.

#### **Deuteronomy 28:15**

*But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.*

In fact, the Book of James reiterates the fact that the Lord considered ALL the commandments of the Mosaic Law as ONE Law.

#### **James 2:10**

*For the one who obeys the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*

It's important that we know that the commandments are considered one Law because the modern church promotes tithing as a stand-alone commandment. Tithing is promoted as if it can be separated from the rest of the commandments (Law of Moses).

But as we see the Lord never intended for the tithe command or any other commandment to be viewed or practiced separately from the other commandments.

Once again, the Law of Moses is comprised of 613 commandments and it is considered ONE LAW. And ALL the commandments had to be obeyed.

**Does this mean that Christians must begin following ALL the commandments of the Law of Moses?**

The answer to that question is “No.” Why? The simple fact is that the Law of Moses was given only to ancient Israel. The Lord ONLY required ancient Israel to obey the commandments of the Law of Moses because it was the covenant between the Lord and ancient Israel. This covenant is also called the Mosaic Covenant.

**What is the Mosaic Covenant?**

A covenant is essentially an agreement. The Mosaic Covenant (Law of Moses) was an agreement made between the Lord and ancient Israel. With this agreement (covenant) the Lord promised to protect (and bless) ancient Israel, as long as they kept the commandments of the Law and remained faithful to the Lord.

**Leviticus 27:34**

*These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai.*

So, none of the commandments of the Law of Moses, such as tithing, pertain to Christians because Christians are governed by the New Covenant (New Testament).

## Summary

The Law of Moses is ONE LAW even though it consists of 613 commandments. Throughout the Bible, the Law of Moses is often referred to as “the Law.” Because it is one Law, the commandments were not considered as being separate and apart from the other commandments.

Under the Law of Moses, ancient Israel was either blessed or cursed based upon their obedience to the *whole* Law.

For example, if ancient Israel only followed the tithe command but did not obey the other commands they were guilty of breaking the WHOLE Law. Likewise, if they followed ALL the commandments but did not tithe they were still guilty of breaking the WHOLE Law.

Therefore, it is not biblical for the modern church to preach the tithe commandment as if it is separate from the rest of the commandments of the Law of Moses.

The Mosaic Covenant was an agreement made between the Lord and ancient Israel. Under this covenant only ancient Israel was required to follow the commandments of the Law.

Christians are under a new and better covenant that does not require that they obey the Law of Moses. Since the tithe command is part of the Law of Moses (Mosaic Covenant), then Christians are not required to tithe.

## Lesson 1

### What is the Biblical Tithe?

#### The Tithe Command

As stated in the Bonus Lesson, the tithe command is one of the 613 commandments of the Law of Moses (Mosaic Law). The first reference to the tithe command appears in the Book of Leviticus.

#### Leviticus 27:30

*And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.*

The practice of biblical tithing became a commandment only when it was incorporated into the Law of Moses. In other words, under the Law of Moses the practice of tithing was mandatory for ancient Israel. In addition, the Lord gave very specific instructions on what ancient Israel was to tithe, who was to pay tithes and who was to receive tithes.

If ancient Israel did not tithe according to the requirements of the Law then they would be guilty of breaking the Law. As such, they would be cursed.

In this lesson you will learn exactly what the biblical tithe is.

#### The Word Tithe

There are two Hebrew words for tithe, *asar* and *ma-aser*. The word *asar* means a tenth part. The word *ma-aser* means one tenth. In other words, both words essentially mean 10 percent. Whenever you read the word "tithe" in the Bible it refers to 10 percent. However, the word tithe in the Bible not only refers to an amount but it also refers to specific items that were tithed.

#### A Tenth of What?

In understanding the biblical tithe, we must ask the following question: The Lord wanted a tenth part (or 10 percent) of what?

Contrary to what is taught in the modern church, the Lord did not want a tithe (or tenth) of one's income, money or wages. In Leviticus, the Lord gives a specific command that he wanted a tithe of what was produced from the land of ancient Israel. And this is consistent throughout the scriptures.

There are numerous verses describing exactly what the biblical tithe is.

For example:

### **Leviticus 27:32**

*All the tithe of herd or flock, everything which passes under the rod, the tenth one will be holy to the Lord.*

### **Deuteronomy 12:17**

*You will not be allowed to eat in your villages your tithe of grain, new wine, olive oil, the firstborn of your herd and flock, any votive offerings you have vowed, or your freewill and personal offerings.*

### **Deuteronomy 14:22-23**

*You must be certain to tithe all the produce of your seed that comes from the field year after year. In the presence of the Lord your God you must eat from the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the place he chooses to locate his name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always.*

What we see from these few scriptural examples is that the biblical tithe obviously did not consist of money but rather crops and livestock.

- The biblical tithe consisted of crops (or agricultural produce). According to scriptures, the Lord wanted a tithe (one tenth) of everything produced from the land of ancient Israel. Therefore, the biblical tithe consisted of fruits, vegetables, grains, oils and wine, etc.
- The biblical tithe also consisted of livestock. The livestock included animals such as lambs, goats, cows, bulls and sheep, etc.

The biblical tithe that the Lord required was always in the form of goods that ancient Israel could consume in the form of food and drink.

### **God's Instructions Regarding Money**

There is ONLY ONE instance in which money was used in conjunction with the tithe. This is detailed in Deuteronomy 14:22-27.

During this time the ancient Israelites did not have a centralized place of worship. The Lord designated different locations where they would bring their tithes to EAT and DRINK in the presence of the Lord.

### **Deuteronomy 14:22-23**

*Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.*

According to the Bible, the only circumstance in which money was accepted was when the ancient Israelites could not carry their tithe (crops and livestock) to the designated location, because it was too far for them to travel.

In this instance, ancient Israelites had the option of bringing money to the Lord's designated location. Now, the scripture is explicitly clear regarding how that money was to be used.

### **Deuteronomy 14:24-26**

*And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,*

In other words, the ancient Israelites were instructed to purchase their tithe (crops and livestock). They bought their tithe, such as oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink or whatever else he or she wanted eat and/or drink.

This is the only circumstance in which money was used in place of the tithe. More importantly, we see that the biblical tithe is NOT the same as money. We also see that it was the tithe (crops and livestock) that the Lord desired and considered holy – not money.

## Summary

The Lord incorporated the tithe into the Law of Moses (or Mosaic Law). Under the Law of Moses tithing became a commandment. As such, the Lord gave ancient Israel specific instructions on how to tithe and what the tithe should consist of.

We established that the word tithe does mean one tenth (or 10 percent). However, the biblical tithe is one tenth of crops and livestock, not money. Under the Law of Moses the biblical tithe only consisted of that which ancient Israel could eat and drink in the presence of the Lord.

The Bible makes it clear that the only instance in which money was used was when the ancient Israelites could not carry their tithe to the Lord's designated location. In this situation, they brought money to the designated location and purchased their tithe (crops and livestock).

Otherwise, a tithe in the form of money was not acceptable. Therefore, based upon biblical scriptures, the Lord would reject the monetary tithe (10 percent of income) as it is practiced in the Christian church today.

## Lesson 2

### Who Paid Tithes?

#### The Tithe

In Lesson 1 we established that the Lord required the tithe be paid in the form of crops and livestock. The biblical tithe was consumable goods that ancient Israel would eat and drink in the presence of the Lord. Now that it is clear what the biblical tithe is the next logical question we must ask is this: *Who was commanded to pay the tithes?*

#### A Misconception

It is a common belief that the tithe commandment applied to everyone in ancient Israel. In other words, everyone in ancient Israel paid tithes, but this is not the case. There were only three groups of people in ancient Israel required to pay tithes. In this lesson we will focus on 2 of the groups. We will cover the 3rd group in Lesson 3.

Two of the groups are:

- The Farmers
- The Herdsman

#### The Farmers Paid Tithes

The biblical tithe consisted of crops (or agricultural produce). Keep in mind that the Lord only wanted what was grown from the ground of the Holy Land (ancient Israel). Since the farmers raised crops for a living it was their responsibility to pay a tithe of their crops.

#### The Herdsmen Paid Tithes

Aside from crops, the biblical tithe also consisted of livestock such as goats, sheep, oxen, lambs, bulls, cows, etc. Therefore, the herdsman were the other group of people who paid tithes because they raised livestock for a living.

#### Wage Earners Were Exempt

There is another common misconception that ancient Israel was strictly an agricultural based society and that everyone in ancient Israel farmed or raised livestock. However, this is not the case.

In addition to farmers and herdsmen, ancient Israelites earned a living working in a variety of skilled trades, such as craftsmen, art designers, engravers, house servants, carpenters, and tent makers, etc.

### **Exodus 28:11**

*You are to engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel with the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a seal; you are to have them set in gold filigree settings (Engravers).*

### **Exodus 35:25**

*Every woman who was skilled spun with her hands and brought what she had spun, blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, or fine linen (artisans).*

### **Leviticus 25:6**

*You may have the Sabbath produce of the land to eat – you, your male servant, your female servant, your hired worker, the resident foreigner who stays with you (House Servants).*

These people earned wages. They received money (shekels) in exchange for their services. However, they did not pay tithes because the biblical tithe had to be paid in the form of crops and livestock. Therefore, the wage earners were exempt from paying tithes.

It's important to make that point because some people in the Christian church will argue that the reason the Lord wanted tithes in the form of crops and livestock was because ancient Israel was an agricultural-based economy, and they did not use money as a form of currency.

They also make the argument that since we live in a money-based economy then tithes should be paid in the form of money.

But the Bible is clear that money did exist in ancient Israel. The money was used for buying goods and services as well as paying people who made their living from occupations other than farming and raising livestock.

What is also key in this discussion of who was commanded to pay tithes, is that the farmers and herdsmen who paid tithes were members from the following 11 tribes of Ancient Israel:

- Reuben
- Judah

- Issachar
- Zebulun
- Benjamin
- Dan
- Naphtali
- Gad
- Asher
- Ephraim
- Manasseh

The Bible identifies 12 tribes of Israel. The other tribe not mentioned above is the tribe of Simeon (Levi). In our final lesson - Who Received Tithes? - we will share more detail about the tribe of Levi and what role the tithe played in their life.

## Summary

Based on the scriptures, we see that the Lord was specific regarding who was required to pay tithes. Contrary to popular belief, all ancient Israelites did not pay tithes. Because the biblical tithe consisted of crops and livestock, the farmers and herdsman who lived off the land were responsible for paying tithes. Specifically, it was the farmers and herdsmen from the 11 tribes of ancient Israel. The other tribe, the tribe of Levi, was excluded. However, the tribe of Levi played a unique role regarding the tithe, which is discussed in Lesson 3.

It is a common belief in the Christian church that everyone in the Bible paid tithes; or that the Lord intended for everyone to pay tithes. Biblical scripture does not support this belief.

Everyone in ancient Israel did not farm land or raise livestock. Many of the ancient Israelites (Hebrew/Jews) were wage earners who earned their living from various occupations. As wage earners, they did not pay tithes. They did not pay tithes from their wages.

This is an important point because Christians are led to believe that the Lord commanded all of ancient Israel pay tithe, and on that basis, all Christians should pay a monetary tithe (10 percent of their income). But again, the Bible is clear that tithes were not paid in the form of money (wages or income). The Lord *only* accepted tithes in the form of crops and livestock.

## Lesson 3

### Who Received Tithes?

#### The Tribe of Levi

The Bible identifies 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob (later named Israel) fathered 12 sons. The family of each son is considered a tribe. Of the 12 Tribes there was one tribe that the Lord chose to serve as the priests for ancient Israel. Their primary responsibility was to perform all the religious ceremonial rituals. The tribe chosen to conduct the religious ceremonies is the tribe of Levi.

#### Deuteronomy 10:8-9

*At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the Lord's covenant, to stand before the Lord to serve him, and to formulate blessings in his name, as they do to this very day.*

According to biblical scriptures, the Lord assigned land (or territory) to all the 11 tribes of ancient Israel EXCEPT the tribe of Levi. Instead of inheriting land, the Lord was their inheritance.

#### Numbers 18:20

*The Lord spoke to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any portion of property among them – I am your portion and your inheritance among the Israelites.*

#### Deuteronomy 10:9

*Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.*

#### The Role of the Levites

The tribe of Levi is also known as the Levites. The Lord specifically chose the Levites to work in the tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem. They conducted all the religious ceremonies for the nation of Israel. Their duties included making offerings and sacrifices unto the Lord.

Among the Levites there were two distinct groups – the Levitical priests and the assistants. The only tribal members who could serve as priests were those who were male descendants of Aaron (Moses' brother). Aaron was the first high priest and those in his bloodline served as priests also. They were called the Levitical priests (also known as the Levitical Priesthood or Aaronic Priesthood).

The assistants were the Levites who helped the Levitical priests with the duties and responsibilities of the Tabernacle and the Temple.

### **The Levitical Tithe**

Since the tribe of Levi was set aside to serve in the Tabernacle and the Temple they did not receive any land (or territory). In Lesson 2 we explained that the Lord commanded the other 11 tribes to pay tithes. In this lesson we share who received tithes. The Bible identifies specific groups who were commanded to receive tithes and one of those groups is the tribe of Levi.

#### **Hebrews 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.*

Remember, the biblical tithe consists of one tenth of the crops and livestock. The tithes were given to the Levites. The tithe paid to the tribe of Levi is known as the Levitical Tithe.

#### **Tithe of the Tithe**

Not only did the tribe of Levi RECEIVE tithes but they also PAID tithes.

#### **Numbers 18:25-29**

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 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. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.*

When the Levites received tithes from the other 11 tribes, they were commanded to pay a tithe (one tenth) of the tithe they received. This is referred to the "Tithe of the Tithe". Thus, there were only 3 groups who were commanded to tithe:

- The Farmers
- The Herdsmen

- The Levites

### **The Poor, Widows, Strangers & Fatherless**

According to scriptures, the Lord commanded that ancient Israel also give tithes to the poor, widows, strangers and fatherless within the land of ancient Israel.

#### **Deuteronomy 14:28-29**

*At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.*

#### **The Poor Tithe**

Furthermore, the poor not only received tithes but they were also exempt from paying tithes. In other words, the poor DID NOT pay tithes.

In fact, the Lord set aside a specific tithe that was to be given to the poor, and it is called the Poor Tithe.

The Poor Tithe was collected and given to the poor every 3 years. Specifically, this was done every 3 years in a 7-year cycle. In other words, the Poor Tithe was taken up twice over the course of 7 years. On the 7th year no tithe was collected.

#### **Deuteronomy 26:12**

*When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;*

The following illustrates when the Poor Tithe was paid:

#### **The Poor Tithe**

1st Year

2nd year

3rd Year - Poor Tithe

4th Year

5th Year

6th Year - Poor Tithe

7th Year

Mentioning the Poor Tithe is a key point because many preachers that promote tithing teach that poor people can tithe their way out of poverty (or financial lack). If proponents of this doctrine were serious about following the "word of God," then they would not require poor people to pay so-called tithes.

## Summary

Among the 12 tribes of ancient Israel, the tribe of Levi was the only tribe that did not receive a land inheritance. According to scripture the Lord was their inheritance. The tribe of Levi was chosen by the Lord to conduct all the religious ceremonies for the ancient nation of Israel. Since the tribe of Levi did not possess land, the Lord required the other 11 tribes to pay them tithes (one tenth of crops and livestock).

According to the Bible, the Lord gave specific commandments as to who was to receive tithes. The only groups who received tithes were the tribe of Levi, the poor, widows, strangers, and fatherless who resided within the land of ancient Israel. In fact, the poor received a specific tithe to meet their needs referred to as the Poor Tithe.

The Poor Tithe was paid every 3 years of a 7 year cycle. What is interesting here is that many Prosperity Gospel messages suggest or claim that poor people can “tithe” their way out of poverty. But the Bible clearly shows that the Lord intended for poor people to RECEIVE tithes, not pay tithes.

## The Tithing Hoax – Chapter 11

### New Testament Christians Did Not Tithe

Christianity derived from Jewish religious traditions, rituals and ceremonies. In fact, the first Christians were Jewish. However, there were several aspects of Judaism that were not incorporated into Christianity.

For example, some Jewish Christians believed Gentiles (non-Jewish people) should be circumcised in order to convert to Christianity. They also wanted the Gentiles to follow the Mosaic Law. However, the Apostle Paul and others disagreed. They did not believe circumcision or the observance of the Mosaic Law were necessary for a Gentile to become a Christian (Acts 15). Therefore, circumcision did not become a part of Christianity. Like circumcision, tithing was another Jewish ritual that was not carried over into Christianity.

There are a number of New Testament scriptures that make reference to the fact that the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus the Christ brought an end to the Mosaic Law, which includes tithing.

*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace* **(Ephesians 2:15)**.

*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.* **(Colossians 2:14)**.

*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof* **(Hebrews 7:18)**.

*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away* **(Hebrews 8:13)**.

According to biblical scripture, Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians believed Jesus the Christ was the Messiah. Moreover, they believed the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus the Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Law. What this means is that there was no longer a need, reason or purpose for biblical tithing (animal sacrifices). This is why the New Testament makes no mention of Christians tithing.

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## **A Message from the Author**

### **Please Share & Review**

If you found the information in this Tithe Study helpful and would like to pass it along to your friends and family, I invite you to share the eBook on social media pages. I also invite you to share your review of *The Truth About The Tithe* on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Feedback is always appreciated, and I would love to know what information you found most helpful.

Thank you very much!!

## About the Author

R. Renee has been writing and teaching on the topic of tithing since 2009. She is the co-author of *The Tithing Hoax: Exposing the Lies, Misinterpretations & False Teachings about Tithing* (African American Literary Book Club #1 Bestseller). She also co-founded [www.TheTithingHoax.com](http://www.TheTithingHoax.com) to serve as a reliable source for Christians seeking accurate, Bible-based answers to their questions about the tithe. In addition, she has appeared on national media outlets, such as WHPK 88.5 FM, WYCA 102.3 FM, WEXY 1520 AM, BlogTalkRadio's Prophetic News Network, and CNBC's theGrio.