

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH
IVγ. Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (cont.)

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 2¹) First Watch c. 7:30 P.M. Wednesday, 12th
Nisan (April 1), A.D. 33. Lesson: **Stewardship in the Light of His Coming**
Continued ² Mt. 24:43-51; Mk. 13:34-37

Introduction: Having examined the Lessons that The Lord Jesus taught in The Temple to the multitude and His disciples during the day on Wednesday, we then considered:

I. His exit from The Temple and

II. His prophetic teaching on the journey up to and upon The Mount of Olives.

A-E. After answering the disciples three questions concerning when and what signs they were to look for to indicate the Time of His Return To Earth to set up His Kingdom, He then told The Parable of The Fig Tree followed by a description of life on Earth preceding His Return and told five more parables. It was noted that The Lord Jesus made a clear distinction between His return in the air and His Return to the Earth to set up His Kingdom. After answering these three questions (c. 6:40-7:00 P.M.), The Lord Jesus taught a very significant and pertinent parable to His disciples, The Parable of The Budding Fig Tree.

E. The Conditions on Earth When The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth. The Lord Jesus Christ declared Four Prevailing Behaviors Predominating upon The Earth before That Sudden Catastrophe Overtakes Humanity by the appearance of The Son of The (Hu)Man to Earth as Conquering King: A Disastrous Event of Sudden Destruction; A Dynamic Event Causing Separation and Division; A Determining Event Testing Security of Domicile from The Thief; and A Disclosing Event Revealing Laxity of Stewardship. Therefore stewardship is vitally important for **All** humans saved and lost. The Lord Jesus said much about 'stewardship.' He put a high priority upon it, and so should we! In order to understand the full significance of the parable of The Foreign-Travelling Human we must consider The Scriptural Concept of Stewardship.

EXCURSUS: STEWARDSHIP

1. What is Stewardship?

a. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines stewardship as: "the office, duties, and obligations of a steward; also: the individual's responsibility to manage his life and property with proper regard to the rights of others."

b. Economy is included in **responsibility** and both call for both efficient and careful use of all that The God has given to or allowed you and me to manage for Him.

All God's riches, Christ's inheritance, and all spiritual Truths are entrusted to the stewardship of all humans especially those who trust and love God's Son. The legacy of heaven is ours! We cannot expect to become entrusted to share in and of Christ's inheritance in Heaven and in His Kingdom, reigning with Him, if we do not learn to manage well **all** that God entrusts to our stewardship here and now. We shall be given portions according to how loyal, faithful, and careful we were in managing all that has been entrusted to us.

2. What is a Steward?

a. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines the verb as:

“one who guards, . . . a head manager in a large family (household) or a large estate or manor to manage domestic concerns . . . an officer in charge of finances.”

b. The Greek noun translated ‘steward or ‘manager of affairs [house administrator, usually a promoted bondslave] is **οικνομός** (oikohnomós) which means the manager of household or of household affairs esp. a steward or manager, whether free-born or as was usually the case, a freed-man or bondslave to whom the head of the house has intrusted the management of his affairs along with the care of receipts and expenditures and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age (Logos Bible Software condensed).

c. The translation of the Greek word **οικνομία** (oikohnoméah) literally is “house law.” The meaning is: the management of affairs by a steward, a house administrator, an overseer, or a governor. The proper use of that which has been put into one’s trust to manage and preserve all his master’s possessions. In The New Testament everyone, who is redeemed and becomes a bondslave to The Lord Jesus Christ and The God, becomes absolutely responsible as a steward of all that he or she possesses and receives from The God’s bountiful hand by His Grace.

In order to comprehend what Scriptural Stewardship involves we must be conscious of The Extent of our Accountability to The God as we kneel before The **Báymah** upon which The Lord Jesus Christ shall sit and judge the saints’ works (Rom. 14:9-12).

3. Of What Are We Responsible to Manage Well?

There are seven areas, all of which we must consider in order to comprehend all that is essential for all of us to give close attention and faithful, responsible concern.

How to Manage Your Life!

a. **The Totality of Your Life** (Job 1:21, 1 Tim. 6:7; Luke 16:1-13; 19:12-27; 1 Cor. 6:19,20 cf. v. 15; 2 Cor. 5:9-11).

(1) **Your Body - Soul - Spirit** (1 Thes. 5:23).

The God wants our whole being, body, soul, and spirit totally committed to Him first, before we give Him money and service. He begins with our bodies because what controls our whole lives is in the head of the body, the brain and then the heart. Before light of Truth is absorbed it enters the body through the eyes and the ears. Then it enters the mind in the brain where Satan can block it from going further by blinding the person. If one is not blinded, Truth enters the heart (not the blood pump, but the innermost being where the spirit resides and lights up the whole body (2 Cor. 4:4-6), and continues residing in the human spirit to be reminded by The Holy Spirit as He will at some future time if not immediately.

(A) Proper Use - according to the order of control. Which of the three is in control?

When your spirit is in control, the order of control is Godward; when your soul is in control, the order of control is manward; or when your body is in control, the order of control is selfward. Differentiate between Heart (Spirit) and mind (soul). The heart is the seat of the spirit of man, while the mind is where the soul is lodged.

(B) Misuse or Abuse - Do not misuse any part of your body! Do not abuse your body! Do not disuse your body by laziness;

idleness, or lack of exercise! Do not confuse your body by yielding the control of your body or soul rather than yielding your spirit to the control of The Holy Spirit and by doing what you want to do or to be rather than what God wants you to do or to be.

(2) **Your Works** (1 Cor. 3:9-16).

Paul used building with two kinds of building material to illustrate the works of the child of God: combustible and non-combustible building material.

(A) Combustible building material will burn away; such as wood - what is done for the good of humanity; or hay - what is done in order to get glory for the flesh; or stubble - the dregs of human Sin.

(B) Non-Combustible building material that will be purified and endure forever after burning in the fire: such as gold - what is done for the glory of God; or silver - what is done with the redemption of man in view; and precious stones - regenerated and disciplined souls won to Christ (Mal. 3:17).

b. **The Teaching (Truth) Received.**

We are responsible to manage well The Truth (teaching) that we receive, making sure that we give It out accurately and without cost and do not hold It back in unrighteousness. Moses recorded The Scriptural Exhortation to Israel (Deut. 6:6-8; 4:9) which also applies to us and Paul to Timothy that which also applies to you, me, and to our households, including family and servants and to others (2 Tim. 2:2).

Negative Exhortation: (We must do the opposite!)

(A) Do not detain (hold back) The Truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18)! You received The Truth freely (“without cost” APT and without restraint). Give Truth out freely “without cost and without restraint! The Lord saved you and me to communicate The Gospel and all of The God’s Truth to all others, and to disciple people of all nations, that is to intimately train in Truth in order that they do likewise with others.

(B) The reason is because some have not been instructed and disciplined (1 Cor. 15:34 APT). Stop sinning by your indifference and inaction in this matter of conveying Truth to others!

How to Manage Your Time!

c. **Your Time:**

We laid out a sample distribution of time and how it can be apportioned so that The God could have the tenth of our time for His use. We must give to The God what He claims is His, the tenth. That also includes our time! Make time for The God or time will make you (what you don’t really want to be)!

The Lord claims seventeen hours or one day of waking time per week (Mal. 3:8-10). But then, when you give God one day, you haven’t given to The God anything except what He claims is His (the Tenth). We call Sunday the Lord’s Day. But is it really His day? How do you and I spend it? If 17 hours is the tenth of the week’s hours, which He claims is His, is the minimum in order to give a tenth, how many hours per week is your minimum?

How to Manage Your Affairs!

d. **Your Talents:**

Your innate abilities of each one of us as well as the spiritual gifts with which each of us have been given at new birth along

with the finances (entrusted to us) are to be used for Him and not for self, even if you use them to earn your living. Manage innate abilities well, even as your other assets even though they are seemingly intangible. We shall expand upon the Stewardship of Talents later, when we consider the parable of The Travelling Human, His Possessions, and His Bondslaves (Mt. 25:14-30).

e. **Your Tasks:**

Tasks range from eating and drinking to getting dressed, to daily chores, to secular working, to working for The Lord by means of being disciplined and discipling others, and other spiritual service as opportunity affords. All is to be done with all your heart for the glory of The God in how we eat and drink, how we dress and adorn our bodies, how we work out from the heart and soul to please The Father and our Lord for Their glory. Whether your tasks be spiritual, secular, physical, or mental, they are part of your total assets and **all** are to be managed well for The God's glory.

f. **Your Talk:** (Mt. 12:35-37; Eph. 4:25, 29,31; 5:4; Col. 4:6; Tit. 2:7,8; Jas. 3:1-15; 1 Sam. 2:3).

(A) You and I are responsible to manage well our speech and every word that you or I speak. Therefore we are to guard the tongue of ours: because we will give account of all we say at Judgment Day; because we are defiled by some things we say; and because it reveals the nature of its source (the heart). Hence it brings The God's judgment of wrath! We also must guard it because we defile others when we tempt the listener to take up an offense and destroy friendship; we grieve the Holy Spirit if we don't guard it; and also we divide the body of Christ if we don't. And we are to manage well our talk because we hinder the effect of The Gospel by destroying the testimony of love and by failing to create a thirst for Christ.

(B) Help other believers you love by refusing to listen to gossip!

(C) Concentrate on the positive use of your tongue.

Now we resume our study of stewardship at this time.

g. **Your Treasures:** These include Material Treasures and Spiritual Treasures.

(A) Material Treasures (Mt. 6:19-21; 23:23).

How The God views our material treasures !

(a) As Our Seed (2 Cor. 9:6-10).

(b) As Our Righteousness (Rev. 19:8).

(c) As Our Liberal Distribution (1 Cor. 1:13) in ministering to the saints (2 Cor. 9:14)

(d) The Interest: fruit, gifts (Mk. 4:8,20).

30 fold = 30 x 100% or 3,000%; 60 fold = 60 x 100% or 6,000%; 100 fold = 100 x 100% or 10,000%.

Where on Earth can you get interest like that? And this interest lasts forever!

Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Many of The God's people realize how important it is to give to The God so that His Word and The Gospel may be spread abroad and His Church may prosper and effectively minister to His people and reach out to the lost throughout the world. Because there are so many demands and cries for your money and mine, it is imperative that we know what The God's Word says about giving, the method to give,

and the manner to give.

There are so many charities, foundations, missionary agencies, and churches in need of funds. Some are doing excellent work, some good work, some mediocre work, some are careful stewards, and others do not make good use of their funds. Some are serving The Lord God, some are serving religion and their denominations in the name of The Lord, and yet, in this way Satan is being served and not The Lord Jesus Christ and The God. Others are serving charity, for the good of humanity. How do you choose or select which ones should receive your financial support? What does The God's Word say about this matter? After all, since God is going to judge you and me for how we use our money, certainly He should have given some instructions as to how to make these decisions, shouldn't He? Yes indeed! And He did! The God gave very clear instructions in His Word. Let's find out how and where to begin!

(B) Where to Begin (Mt. 22:15-21).

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that the place to begin is with the responsibility we have toward the government and toward The God. When disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians (members and supporters of the political party in power in Palestine) came to Jesus in order to trap Him, they asked, "Is it lawful to give poll tax to Caesar, or not?" Jesus asked for a denarius, the legal coin of the poll tax and asked whose image and inscription was on it. When they answered, "Caesar's," Jesus said to them, "Therefore [aorist imperative] render-at-once the-things belonging-to-Caesar to-Caesar and the-things belonging-to-The God to-The God!" (Mt. 22:16-21 APT).

"Stop treasuring up for yourselves treasures upon /Earth, where moth and corrosion[eating] deform[make disappear] and where thieves dig through and steal! But treasure up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor corrosion[eating] deform[make disappear] and where thieves do not dig through nor steal! For where your& /treasure is, there the heart of yours& will be also" (Mt. 6:19-21 APT).

There is no problem today in the matter of paying income tax. The government has seen to it that the employer takes the tax out at the time the salary is paid. There may be a problem of working out the return in order to pay less. But the individual employee never sees the amount of tax which the government estimates is the amount to be paid. The taxing is done on the total amount of income earned. Isn't it interesting that people have no difficulty in giving the proportion 'Caesar' or the government requires on their total earnings? But, when it comes to giving The God His portion, many want to calculate the proportion on the net after the government ('Caesar') has taken its portion, rather than on the total amount received. Thus God is short-changed and considered less important than man or government. But The Lord Jesus said that we are to "render-at-once...unto The God the-things belonging-to-The God." Since proper stewardship begins with fulfilling our responsibility both to the government and to The God, it is necessary to understand three vital truths: 1. Recognize Three Vital Facts;

2. Reckon What The God Claims Is His, to be The God's; and

3. Render to The God That Which Is His.

First, Recognize Three Vital Facts:

If we are to render to The God what things are His, we must begin to recognize three things: What is The God's; What is yours; and What The God Claims is His.

(1) Recognize What Is The God's - The Possessor of Heaven and Earth.

We will never be able to render unto God all that is The God's until we recognize what **is** The God's. Therefore we ask, "What does The God say about our lives and our possessions?" First of all, everything we have has been given to us by The God. The apostle Paul asked the Corinthians, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Therefore since The God has given to us all that we have, He has all the rights to all that we have. He can take it all away in quick time.

(A) Job lost all his possessions then acknowledged this Truth.

When Job was severely tested by losing all his possessions and his children, he said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: The Lord gave, and The Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of The Lord" (Job 1:21). Job recognized that all he had accumulated was given by the Lord and therefore the Lord had the right to it or the right to take it away.

(B) Note David's acknowledgment at the end of his life. David amassed a great treasure of materials in preparation for Solomon to build the Temple (1 Chron. 29:1-19). He recognized, "Both riches and honor come of Thee [The God]" (v. 12). Then he humbly acknowledged The God's goodness to him to enable him to give so abundantly. "But who *am* I, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of thee, and of thine own have we given thee" (1 Chr. 29:14).

(c) Paul's concept taught to Timothy, "For we-brought-in not-one-thing into the World. Clearly,^[Ps. 49:17; Eccl. 5:15] 'We-are-able-to-bring-out-not-even-one-thing-.''" (1 Tim. 6:7APT). No doubt some will say, "I worked for it. I labored hard for everything I have." Yes, but where did you get the strength to work for it? "From the food you eat?" Who gets the credit for your good health so you can work? And who made the food to grow? Who sent the rain? the sunshine? the minerals in the soil? When it is finally analyzed, we must say, God, the Creator and Maker made it possible! And He gave it to you. Therefore everything that you have is on loan as a trust from God. All your income or increase comes indirectly from God. He gives it to you as a trust.

Yes, The God has all the rights to all that we have because all belongs to Him, some of which He granted to us for use. It does not matter whether or not anyone, a mere human agrees with this fact. The God has clearly indicated this fact in His Word. Whether or not, a mere human, a being The God has created agrees with this fact, that is incidental. Agreement or disagreement (contradiction) by a creature does not alter The Truth or the fact. Disagreement to Truth is a lie and therefore it is of the devil. He was a liar from

the beginning and the father of falsehood (Jn. 8:44). If anyone fails to recognize this fact or determines to reject or neglect this Truth, they will regret it for all Eternity because we all individually shall give an account of himself or herself to The God (Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9-12; 1 Pet. 4:5,6).

- (2) Recognize What Is Yours or Mine (1 Cor. 6:19,20; Lk. 16:1-13).

The Scriptures emphasize what is **not** yours or mine. When what is **not** ours is once determined, then it will be easy to determine what **is** yours or mine. Paul asked the Corinthian saints (1 Cor. 6:19,20),

“¹⁹Or, you[&] are aware, are you[&] not? The body of yours[&] is a ⁰Holy Place^[of the Temple] of ⁰Holy Spirit Who ^[is] in you[&], Whom you[&] continually have from ⁰God; and, You[&] continually are not belonging to yourselves, ²⁰for you[&] are redeemed^[bought in a marketplace] with a highly respected precious price. Accordingly glorify^[exalt with majestic radiant splendor] The God in the body of yours[&] and in the spirit of yours[&], which[&]^[whichever] are The God’s!” (1 Cor. 6:19,20 APT).

The price that The Lord Jesus had to pay for the redemption of you and me was to shed His own precious blood in death on the cross. He saved you and me from eternal destruction. He purchased you and me back to The God from slavery to sin and serving Satan. You and I no longer belong to ourselves, nor to Satan. You and I now belong to The God. Therefore everything that we personally receive is His and is not ours to do with as you or I want or as we please. You and I have been entrusted with all that we have to use for Him and for His glory and not waste it. And though He will not **now** demand an account of your or my stewardship, He shall demand a full account in some future day (here read Lk. 16:1-13 APT). Everything you and I have is The God’s! Nothing is one’s own! The God has entrusted to you and me all that you or I have or possess to manage as a good steward for Him. At some future date you and I will be called to give an account of that stewardship.

In addition to recognizing what is or what belongs to The God (everything) and what is yours or mine (nothing, everything you and I have has been entrusted to us by The God), it is now necessary to recognize what The God Claims to be His.

- (3) Recognize What The God Claims to Be His:

Once you recognize that all is The God’s and nothing is ours, then we must recognize what God claims to be His. This includes the tithe, the firstfruits, and our love-offerings. Although many people today do not understand this, nor do they acknowledge it, yet the fact remains true. Some day they all shall recognize it and acknowledge it to their Eternal regret and vexation.

- (A) The Tithe Is the Lord’s (Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:8-11);

Moses wrote the words of The LORD God, “All the tithe . . . is The LORD’s: It is holy unto The LORD” (Lev. 27:30). The tithe is ten percent of all the increase or income you receive. God claims that ten percent of all you have or

will receive belongs to Him, to be used to care for His servants (in the Old Testament they were the Levites and the priests), in the New Testament it is His servants that are the missionaries (evangelists) and the shepherds (pastors) and the teachers of His True Church. The God claims the tithe (ten per cent of our income) is His. This is not only true for Israel and for the Church, but for every human for all ages. Each one individually has the responsibility to see that The **LORD God** receives this portion that He claims is His and that is used for His ordained purpose i.e. to spread The Gospel throughout the whole Earth, to make disciples and instruct them, and to build His Church. When we see that The God receives the tithe for the purpose He has indicated, we have not really given anything to Him. We have only returned to Him the portion that He claims for His workers. In order to give love offerings to Him, we must give over and above the tithe which He claims. Love-offerings to The God are given out of our weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and annual increases and out of our treasures. Little is mentioned and known of this concept of stewardship of our treasures, which are considered in the two categories mentioned above: material and spiritual, and shall be considered further next time.

Conclusion: Today we continued to consider The Lord Jesus Christ's teaching and prophesy upon The Mount of Olives. We highlighted His Parable of the Fig Tree i.e. Israel and all the Living Trees i.e. all the Reestablished Gentile Nations Significant to Israel. We also summarized the Conditions on Earth When The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth. The Lord Jesus Christ declared Four Prevailing Events Occurring upon The Earth before That Sudden Catastrophe Overtakes Humanity by the appearance of The Son of The (Hu)Man to Earth as Conquering King.

Then we reviewed the introduction to and highlighted the parable of The Foreign Travelling Human which emphasizes stewardship. It was noted that in order to understand the full significance of this parable we must consider The Scriptural Concept of Stewardship and then launched into a condensed study of Stewardship. Then we considered the question, **Of What Are We Responsible to Manage Well?** We noted seven areas to comprehend of what all is involved in that judgement for which all of us are responsible and shall be judged. In considering our Treasures we observed that there are three vital Truths that must be considered: Recognize Three Vital Facts: What is The God's - everything; What is Yours - nothing; and What The God Claims to Be His - the tithe or ten percent of all one's possessions, which is to be used for the support of His servants that are the missionaries (evangelists), the shepherds (pastors), and the teachers of His True Church. It is up to each of us to see that His purpose is accomplished!

Application: Beginning today what will you and I do with our possessions and how diligent will we be to see that The God receives them and not a substitute proffered by Satan and his bondslaves?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: **Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching** (First Watch of Night c. 7:30 P.M.): **Stewardship in the Light of His Coming Continued** (Look up and read concerning: Your Treasures: Lk. 16:1-13; Heb. 7:1-10; Mal. 3:8-11; 2 Cor. 9:6,7).

(B) Your substance and the firstfruits are to be used to honor The LORD (Prov. 3:9);

During the age of Israel's kingdom, wise King Solomon exhorted his son to "Honor the LORD with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9). The first fruits are the very best crops that ripen before the whole crop. They are a sizeable portion of the harvest. These were given to the Lord immediately. Additionally we are to honor The Lord with our wealth. The word translated 'substance' literally means "enough." Out of what is enough for keeping alive, we are to use it to honor The LORD. Two of the meanings of the word translated 'honor' is "to promote" and "to promote to honor." Are we being good stewards of all that which The God has blessed being 'enough' and using what is more than enough to promote His name, His glory, and His Gospel and by investing in The Lord's work promote His honor?

C) Failure to render tithes (plural) and offerings to The LORD is robbing The God? Remember God's Solemnizing Question. At the end of the Old Testament the Lord of Hosts, The LORD God of Heaven asked, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8-11). The God cursed Israel because they robbed Him. He has done so much more for you and me than He ever did for Israel. This is where we must begin to give - at least ten percent of our increase or \$1.00 out of every \$10.00 received. But The God gave further orders in verse 10,

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The reason that the true work of The Lord suffers today is because The God's people will not obey The Lord to their own detriment both temporally and eternally. They do not recognize what The God claims and the purpose for which He claims it. The God further states that failure for God's Old Testament people to bring the tithe to the storehouse results in the devourer destroying the fruits of the ground or the source of income. The storehouse for these Jews at that time in The Old Testament was the Temple in Jerusalem.

7. Your Treasures: (Deut. 26:12; Lev. 27:30; Mt. 23:23; Gen. 14:20; 28:20-22; Heb. 7:1-10).

Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Many of The God's people realize how important it is to give to The God so that His Word and the Gospel may be spread abroad and His church may prosper and effectively minister to His people and reach out to the lost throughout the world.

Because there are so many demands and cries for your money and mine, it is essential that we know what The God's Word says about giving, the method to give, and the manner to give. There are so many charities, foundations, missionary agencies, and churches in need of funds. Some are doing excellent work, some good work, some mediocre work, some are careful stewards, and others do not make good use of their funds. How do you choose or select to which ones you should give your financial support? What does The God's Word say about this matter? After all, since God is going to judge you and me for how we use our money, certainly He should have given some instructions as to how to make these decisions, shouldn't He? Yes indeed! and He did! The God gave very clear instructions in His

Application: Beginning today what care will you and I take of our bodies, souls and spirits so as to be able to be joyful to meet The Lord Jesus Christ as Judge and what attention will we give to our works which count ?

For next week: **Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching** (First Watch of Night c. 7:30 P.M.): **Stewardship in the Light of His Coming Continued** (Look up references after 7. Treasures on page 7).

There is much more of this subject in connection to this appointment to be studied, so we will reserve that which relates to this passage for next week. Conclusion: Today we continued to consider The Lord Jesus Christ's teaching and prophesy upon The Mount of Olives. We