

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH
IVζ. 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**⁵ (2 Cor. 9:6,7; 8:1-4; 9:11,12; Rom. 3:24; 8:32; Lk. 21:1-4).

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 (c. 6:30 P.M.) and

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

A-E. After answering the disciples three questions (c. 6:40-7:45 P.M.) 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.

Then He declared the Conditions on Earth which shall prevail before The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth include the 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. The fourth Prevailing Behavior, A Disclosing Event Revealing Laxity of Stewardship (c. 7:15-7:30 P.M.) led to a deeper study of Stewardship.

F. EXCURSUS: The Scriptural Concept of Stewardship.

We covered so far the following topics:

1. What Stewardship is.
2. What a Steward is.
3. Seven Categories For Which We Are Responsible to Manage Well.

a. The Totality of Your Life (

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

We considered Proper Use and Misuse or Abuse of one's body. Which one of three is in control: body, soul, or spirit?

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

We all are building with two kinds of building material to build our house (habitation) for Eternity: combustible material 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; or 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 The God; or silver, what is done with the redemption of humans in view; and precious stones, regenerated and disciplined souls won to The Lord Jesus Christ.

b. The Teaching (Truth) Received.

We are responsible to manage well The Truth (teaching) that we receive, making sure that we give out The Truth accurately and without cost and do not hold It back in unrighteousness.

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. The Lord claims seventeen hours or one day of waking time per week (Mal. 3:8-10). Any less time is robbing The God and provoking this release of preventing the devourer from destroying "the fruits of your ground."

d. Your Talents:

The innate abilities as well as the spiritual gifts with which we have been given at birth along with the finances (entrusted to us are to be used for Him and not for self, even if you or I use them to earn our living. Manage innate abilities well, even as your other assets even though they are seemingly intangible.

d. 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 that we do is to be done with all your heart for the glory of The God.

e. Your Talk:

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. 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.

f. Your Treasures: These include Material Treasures and Spiritual Treasures.

(1) The God views our Material Treasures as:

(A) Our Seed - The Word of Truth including The Gospel.

(B) As Our Righteousness - Our giving to the work of The Lord and toward caring for the needy redeemed, regenerated saints enduring hardship and financial difficulty is counted for righteousness in the eyes of The **LORD**. Additionally proper and sacrificial giving is laid up in Heaven to be returned to each regenerated saint as the wedding garment for the saints according to their faithful stewardship (Rev. 19:7,8).

(C) As Our Liberal Distribution - in ministering to the saints struggling from famine or disaster.

(D) The Interest: fruit, gifts - the offerings and tithes given to The Lord for the bondslaves ministering The Gospel were multiplied and produced 3,000%; 6,000%; or 10,000%.

Because of much confusion and worldwide misunderstanding about stewardship of one's treasures and the full picture of what The God desires and expects of one's proper use of money and giving, along with failure on the part of His disciple-saints and church leaders to research and teach and practice what Scripture teaches has resulted in the lack of finances to properly conduct fulfillment of His Commandment. Hence the inordinate resorting to worldly ways, means, and schemes to raise funds to finance religious works. Therefore an excursus of Stewardship, a condensed study of what Scripture teaches was interjected into our study. It is essential to remind ourselves of: the progressive revelation of The God, the context of those addressed, and the particular age to which Scripture applies. We first considered Where To Begin.

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

Since proper stewardship begins with fulfilling our responsibility both to the government and to The God, we sought to understand three vital truths: (A) Recognize Three Vital Facts; (B) Reckon What The God Claims Is His, to be The God's;

and (C) Render to The God That Which Is His.

(1) First, We must recognize What is The God's; What is yours; and What The God Claims is His.

(A) Recognize What Is The God's.

Everything we have has been given to us by The God. Therefore since The God has given to us all that we have, He has all the rights to all that we have. All really belongs to Him. He can take it all away in quick time. This is true because He created it, some of which He granted to us for use.

(B) Recognize What Is Yours or Mine.

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. The price that The Lord Jesus had to pay for the redemption of every human whether appropriated or not was to shed His own precious blood in death on the cross. He saves all who appropriate it by repentance, confession of Sin, association by faith into union with Him and open confession of that union and relationship with Him from eternal destruction. He purchased you and me back to The God from slavery to Sin and serving Satan. You who do appropriate Him and I no longer belong to ourselves, nor to Satan. You, redeemed friend, 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 to do 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 the stewardship of yours or mine, He shall demand a full account in some future day when we shall do so. Absolutely **everything** you and I have is The God's! Absolutely **nothing** is one's own!

In addition to recognizing what is or what belongs to The God (**everything**) and what is yours or mine (**nothing**), everything that you and I have has been entrusted to us by The God. It is absolutely necessary to recognize what The God Claims to be His and Render it to **Him** for the purpose He intended.

(C) Recognize What The God Claims to Be His:

Once you recognize that **all** (everything) 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. This is not only true for Israel and for His 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. Otherwise those who do not are robbing The God whether they desire to recognize it or not. After telling His disciples to be prepared for His return to Earth called His Parousia (Coming Presence), The

Lord Jesus commanded them to watch. Then He added, “Now what-things I-am-saying to-you& (His disciples), I-am-saying to-**ALL**” (Mk. 13:37 APT). That includes every human being whether he or she recognizes it or not. The fact remains that Jesus applies it to all humans.

The reason that the true work of The **LORD** suffers today is because The God’s people will not obey The **LORD** and His Word. And thus recognize what The God claims to be His and the purpose for which He claims it as well as to see to it that **He** gets the tithe for that purpose alone which He declared. This disobedience is to their own detriment both temporally and eternally. The God further stated (Mal. 3:11) that failure to bring the tithe to the storehouse results in the devourer (most likely referring to the cankerworm (cf. Joel 1:4; 2:25) destroying the fruits of the ground or the source of income to the farmer. How does that relate to you and me?

The storehouse for these Jews at that time in The Old Testament was the Temple in Jerusalem. This will be discussed later under the topic **Where to Give**.

- (2) Reckon What The God Claims is His and for His declared purpose, To Be The God’s for His intended purpose.

In order to render “unto The God the things which **are** The God’s,” it is necessary to reckon or count in one’s mind what **is** The God’s. Count ten percent of your income to be The God’s for His bondslave-servants to spread The Gospel throughout the world, and therefore not to be used for anything else.

- (3) Render Unto The God, That Which **Is** The God’s.

See to it that The God’s servants in the work of The Lord are properly cared for by use of your tithe (a topic for a future lesson). Under Old Testament Law the tithe went to the Levites, who were teachers spread throughout Israel and in turn the Levites’ tithes went to the priests serving in The Temple. In The New Testament (Covenant) pastors are the resident servants equivalent to priests and the missionaries and teachers are equivalent to the Levites. We are to render unto The God and see to it that He gets that which belongs to Him for His service in building His Church locally **and** worldwide through His bondslave-servants, who are The Lord Jesus Christ’s fellow-workers in building His Church (1 Cor. 3:9-12).

I remember when my wife and I opened an historic closed and boarded-up church building in the late fifties. There were two old men, bachelor brothers that lived about a half mile from the church. One was traumatized by the closing of the church building and relocation of the congregation quite some distance away, many years before we reopened it. He missed the services there so much that he found a way to get in and meditate. When we opened the church he often attended. Later we learned of an acre of ground next to his old homestead, that he owned. He called it “God’s Acre.” He even had posted a sign naming it, lost in the shrubbery that had grown obscuring it.

However, though in his mind it was dedicated to God, The God never received it. Even when we outgrew the old church building and needed ground to build a larger sanctuary,

“God’s Acre” was not available. Immediately after the death of the two brothers, a younger relative sold the property for a huge sum of money to become a wealthy residential community and The Lord received nothing. It is so easy to lull ourselves into thinking what is The God’s and setting it aside for Him, but never really rendering it to Him, thus losing the benefit we could have given to The God only to be spiritually wasted. This brings us to the Third Vital Truth that what is recognized is not only to be recognized, but also is to be performed.

- (3) Where to Give - The storehouse (Mal. 3:10) = the bank (Lk. 19:23; 1 Cor. 16:2).

At first, The Tabernacle was where the tithes and offerings were brought by the Israelites, then in Solomon’s time and thereafter it was The Temple until its destruction in Av (July-August) 586 B.C. Then there was not a storehouse available until The Temple was rebuilt. But by 400-399 B.C., although The Temple had been rebuilt, the Israeli people were still withholding and keeping back the tithes and offerings until The **LORD** spoke through His prophet, Malachi (3:10). The Israelites were commanded to bring their tithes into the storehouse, which they understood was The Temple where The God was worshipped and where sacrifices were offered every day early morning and mid-afternoon. The Temple continued to be the storehouse for the tithes and offerings unto The God until Pentecost, Sunday, 6 Sivan, May 24, 33 A.D.

In The New Testament The Church which is the Body of Christ is the Temple in Which the Holy Spirit resides (Col. 1:18,24; Eph. 2:22). As The Temple is called The House Of God, so also the Church is also called The House Of God (1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:20; Heb. 3:6; 10:21; 1 Pet. 2:5; 4:17).

“¹⁸And This-One⁺ is The Head of-The Body, ^{namely} The Church, Who is ⁰Beginning, ⁰Firstborn out of-the dead-ones, so-that He become ⁰Preminent-One in-all-things⁻. . . ²⁴I, [^{who}] now I-rejoice in-[^{the}]my-sufferings [^{of} mine] in-behalf-of you[&]. In-fact I-fully-fill-up-in-addition [^{adjunctive} use of preposition in verb] the⁻ lacking-things⁻ of-the afflictions of-The Christ in-the-flesh of-mine in-behalf-of The Body of-His, which⁻ is The Church” (Col. 1:18,24 APT).

As one reads through the Book of Acts, the first Church History Book, the first two internal problems the Church faced involved money. First was the incident with covetous couple, **Ahnahnéeahs** and **Sahpfeíray** (chapter 5). Then a about a month later in late summer of A.D. 33 as The Church grew, a murmuring arose about the distribution of money among the widows. The priority of the apostles was to persevere in prayer and in the serving of The Word. Therefore seven spiritually qualified men were selected by the congregation of the Church to serve as deacons. Then the apostles dedicated them in prayer to this ministry (Acts 6:1-6). Ever since in The True Church the deacons have had this responsibility of distributing the finances. If even the apostles distanced themselves from the Church’s finances in order to serve The Lord more effectively in their ministry, why should a pastor desire to become involved and intrude in the apostolically appointed

ministry of the deacons in a local assembly of The True Church? If he, the pastor does influence the decision of the deacons, that local church is not worthy of any of The LORD's money. We are living in a day in which even in our churches "it's all about the money." Therefore we should be doubly careful where The LORD's money goes.

In the Early Church at least until 400 A.D. the deacons of the local churches became the storehouse-keepers of 'the bank' for the giving of the tithes and offerings for the poor saints. The apostle Paul disclosed the practice of local churches established by him that communicated financially with Him (Phil. 1:5 cf. 4:10,15-19). He also taught that those who are "being-repeatedly-orally-instructed ⁱⁿ The Word is to fellowship by means of all beneficially-good things with-the-one orally-instructing!" (Gal. 6:6 APT). Additionally in beloved John's time at the end of the first century the local church was caring for those who went forth to proclaim The Gospel (The Truth) taking nothing from the Gentiles or heathen (3 Jn. 5-8). Those chosen men who proved themselves qualified to be deacons after some unspecified period of time (1 Tim. 2:8-13) disbursed the finds according to guidance by The Holy Spirit as they observed and discerned the need (1 Jn. 3:17).

The local church to which you belong, if she operates her finances according to Scripture with deacons all together (and not the Pastor alone or even he who makes the decisions alone for their approval) controlling the outflow without partiality and without personal preference, but spiritually and prayerfully sensitive to the exercise and burdens The of God's people in the congregation is to be 'the local bank' for deposits (Lk. 19:23). Then bring The God's portion, the tithe, on the first day of the week to the gathering of God's people, namely the local church, unless there is question that the funds will not be handled Scripturally (1 Cor. 16:1,2), then give through financially responsible and accredited missions or ministries that do not ask for funds from humans, but only from The Lord God (Ps. 37:25; Mt. 21:22; 3 Jn. 5-7).

d. How to Determine Where to Give.

If you are concerned as to where to give the tithe and invest in The LORD's work in order to see that The God receives your tithes and offerings for His ordained purpose, the following may be of assistance to you. A study of The Comparison of The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven will be helpful in determining those churches, pastors, missionaries, and ministries, who **are** in The Kingdom of The God and truly serving The God and His Christ and therefore are worthy of financial and prayerful fellowship. {A fuller study of this contrast is found and may be freely downloaded from our website, @ www.happyheralds.org.} There is a marked distinction between mere profession (Kingdom of Heaven) and confession as a result of regeneration (Kingdom of The God); between a mixture of wheat and tares on the one hand and a pure, cleansed, sanctified, and obedient body of regenerated saints on the other hand.

Special and prayerful consideration should be given to the particular ministry through which you have been brought to

Christ and discipled. Also Paul instructed the Galatians to discern between The Gospel of The Christ and another gospel of a different kind which is not another of the same kind but alters The Gospel of The Christ (Gal. 1:6-9 APT also cf. 2 Cor. 11:4,13-15).

e. What to consider in order to determine where to deposit The LORD's money to be sure that you are investing in what is truly and solely The LORD's ministry so that The God receives it and not the enemy. One would be remiss if some guidelines and warnings were not included when teaching proper stewardship.

(1) Consider The Jesus, The Christ, The Gospel, and The Spirit that is proclaimed! Remember what the apostle Paul wrote to Corinthians concerning Satan and his servants' gospel. (2 Cor. 11:4,13-15).

“⁴For if (and-it-is-true) actually the-one-coming proclaims-as-a-herald another-same-kind-of Jesus, whom we did not -proclaim-as-a-herald, or &you-are-receiving another-different-kind-of spirit, which &you-did- not -receive, or another-different-kind-of gospel, which &you-did not -hospitably-receive, well &were-you-persistently-holding-back-from him! . . . ¹³For the-such-like-ones [are]: false-apostles, deceitful workers, transfigurers-of-themselves_[alters-of-outer-appearance] into apostles-of-Christ! And not a-marvelous-thing! For himself, the Satan-is-repeatedly-transfiguring_[alter-outer-appearance-of] himself into an-angel of-light. Therefore not a-great-thing! if (and-it-is-true) the domestic-servants of-his also are-being-transfigured_[alter-outer-appearance] as domestic-servants _[deacons, attendant-to-needs] of-righteousness, the end-of-whom shall-be according-to their /works!” (2 Cor. 11:4,13-15 APT).

This consideration calls for an accurate evaluation, governed by discernment and followed by a difficult decision. We do not want to judge any one because The Lord Jesus warned His disciples against judging others. However He did instruct His disciples to discern. There is a vast difference between judging and discerning. He expects us not to judge, but rather to discern, especially to discern false prophets. Discerning is not judging. How do we know that The Lord Jesus wants His disciples to discern? In Adar I, the first February of an intercalary month in the second year of His ministry in the Sermon on the Mount, The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to be on guard and mightily keep away from false prophets. Then He instructed them how to discern false prophets _[those who utter under influence, in these cases Satanic influence] (Mt. 7:15-23 APT).

These false prophets preach some of The Truth, even in the name of (another of the same kind of) Jesus, but they did not preach The Whole Truth. Therefore the result of their sowing, according to the parable of the wheat and tares, produced tares among the wheat (Mt. 13:24-30). This parable explains how they were sown among the wheat. Jesus said, “An enemy hath done this.” But when were the tares sown among the wheat? Jesus said, “. . . during the process of the humans sleeping.” This is an excellent reason for every mem-

ber especially the elders of a local church of The True Body of Christ, The True Church, to be on guard against false brethren unobtrusively sneaking in and teaching false doctrine.

The apostle Paul explained to the Corinthians (see above) that the false gospel, proclaimed by false apostles and deceitful workers, contained a Jesus of the same kind but was motivated by and contained a spirit of a different kind. Yes ! It is difficult to understand how such nice, clean-living people who make sense in their preaching (prophesying, which can mean telling the future or uttering under influence) could really be enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is true! Therefore these false prophets are influenced and motivated by fallen spirits or angels, who are Satan's emissaries. In addition to his Epistle to Corinthians, Paul wrote to two other churches about false brethren and false teachers, who sneak in unobtrusively, Galatians (2:4) and Philippians (3:18,19) and Peter averred the same warning (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

At this point we must suspend our study until next time.

Conclusion: Today we briefly reviewed an abridged portion of our study of Stewardship that we previously covered. Then we noted seven categories which we must comprehend of all that is involved in that judgment for which all of us are responsible and shall be judged. In considering our Treasures we expanded upon 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, that is the tithe or ten percent of all one's possessions, which is to be used for the support of His servants who are the missionaries (evangelists), the shepherds (pastors), and the teachers of His True Church. Then we considered where to give and observed how and where The Early Church deposited the giving by the saints throughout the history of The True Church. Before closing today's study, it was pointed out what is to be considered in determining where The **LORD's** money should be deposited in order to be sure that is used for the purpose The God intended and be invested for our Eternal House in Heaven.

Application: What steps will you take beginning today to be sure that you are investing wisely for your Eternal habitation?

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: Where to Give (Con.) and Why Give to The God** (2 Cor. 11:4,13-15; 9:6,7; Jn.16:7-13-15; Rom. 3:24; 8:32; 1 Cor. 16:1,2).