

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

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 2^{1m}) First Watch c. 7:30 P.M. Wednesday, 12th Nisán (April 1), A.D. 33. Lesson: **Stewardship in the Light of His Coming Continued**⁶ (2 Cor. 8:1-4; 9:11,12; Rom. 3:24; 8:32; Lk. 21:1-4; Mt. 6:19-21; Phil. 4:10-17).

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

b. The Teaching (Truth) Received; c. Your Time; d. Your Talents; d. Your Tasks; e. Your Talk; and 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 and proper and sacrificial giving is counted for righteousness in the eyes of The **LORD** 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 Command-

ment. 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.

(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.

(A) 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 which He granted to us for use for His glory.

(b) Recognize What Is Yours or Mine.

The Scriptures emphasize what is **not** 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 at Calvary. 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. We now belong to The God. Therefore everything that we personally receive is His and is not ours to do with as we 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. Absolutely **everything** you and I have is The God's! Absolutely **nothing** is one's own!

(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 to be used for His intended purpose. 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 it 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 it applies 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**.

- (B) 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.

- (C) 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).

- (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. Then there was not a storehouse available until The Temple was rebuilt seventy years later. 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 Temple continued to be the storehouse for the tithes and offerings unto The God until Pentecost, 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 The God (1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:20; Heb. 3:6; 10:21; 1 Pet. 2:5; 4:17).

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 **Sahpfeh-éeray** (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, which prompted the saints of the Church to select and dedicate to the ministry of handling the finances spiritually, seven spiritually qualified men to serve as deacons (Acts 6:1-6). Ever since in The True Church, the men who proved qualified have become deacons having this responsibility of distributing the finances.

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 of The God's people in the congregation is to be 'the local bank' for deposits.

(A) 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 or .com.] 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 properly disciplined thereafter. 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).

(B) 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. Consider The Jesus, The Christ, The Gospel, and The Spirit that is proclaimed!

(a) Consider The Jesus, The Christ, that is proclaimed! Remember what the apostle Paul wrote to Corinthians concerning Satan and his servants' gospel. (2 Cor. 11:4,13-15). This 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 big difference between judging and discerning or distinguishing between two antagonistic parties, especially when the antagonism is subtly against The God and His Son, The Lord Jesus Christ. The God expects us not to judge; but rather to discern, especially to discern false Christs and false prophets (Mt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22). 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, produces 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 member 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 means telling the future or uttering under influence) could really be enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is true! 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). However, The saints of The True Church have been sleeping over the years and many professing believers have succumbed to the false teaching which has crept into the churches.

When considering the Christ that is proclaimed consider the emphasis upon the kind and result of His death and the resurrection immediately on the third day. There are those preachers and 'churches' that emphasize or teach a cross death and a resurrection on Wednesday or Thursday but not Friday with a resurrection on Sunday of different years differing from A.D. 21 to A.D. 36.

(b) Consider The Gospel that is preached or proclaimed. Did you know that there are five different gospels recorded in The New Testament, four that are other than The Gospel of The Christ?

(1) The Gospel of The Kingdom of The God which is The

Gospel of The Christ with fourteen different titles, plus two more using pronouns; The Gospel of: The Kingdom (Mk. 1:14,15; Mt. 26:13; Mk. 1:1; 14:9; 14:15; 16:15; Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:1; 1:9; 1:16; 10:15; 15:19; 2:Cor. 2:12; 4:4; Eph. 1:13; 2 Thes. 1:8; 1 Tim 1:1; plus Rom. 2:16; 1 Thes. 1:5). This is The Only Gospel in the present time that results in Regeneration and Eternal Life

(2) The Gospel of The Kingdom of the heaven(s), a repentance gospel that provided the way for Israelites to prepare for the appearance of The Prophesied Messiah to begin His Reign. This was the Gospel that was preached before The Crucifixion, Resurrection-Ascension of The Lord Jesus Christ. Although still proclaimed by many today, it does not provide regeneration and Eternal Life but a false claim to do so. Therefore in our day it is a false gospel, first disclosed by The apostle Paul as another different kind of gospel first to the Galatians in A.D. 49 (Gal. 1:6,8,9) and reinforced as a false gospel to the Corinthians in A.D. 57 (2 Cor. 11:4,13-15).

(3) Another gospel of a different kind (Gal. 1:6,8,9; 2 Cor. 11:4). The Greek adjective *ἕτερος* (heteros) means another of a different kind while *ἄλλος* (állos) means another of a different kind. Paul is using contrast here. Another gospel of a different kind is a contrivance of Satan and his emissaries to alter The Truth slightly through false prophets and false christos so as to deceive and mislead even the very elect if possible (Mt. 24:24) and entrap humans to embrace his false, deadly doctrine very close to The Truth but antagonistic to The Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel of The Kingdom of The God

(4) The pre-gospel of faith to Abraham was applicable to Israel and all nations that would exhibit the faith that Abraham exhibited from Abraham's day until John The Baptizer proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 3:8).

(E) Finally The Everlasting Gospel that shall be proclaimed during the Great Tribulation, a period of thee-and-a-half years just before The Revelation and The Parousia (appearance of The Lord Jesus Christ to Earth) occurs (Rev. 14:6,7).

(3) Consider The Spirit that is proclaimed (Jn. 16:7-13-15). If it is The Holy Spirit Whom Jesus sent, He shall guide into all Truth and shall not speak of, nor call attention to, Himself but only speaks that which shall glorify The Lord Jesus Christ, totally unlike the spirit that is proclaimed by the charismatics of the past century or the spirit that motivates those who proclaim an easy believism gospel which does not proclaim total repentance and faith which does not include an exchange of masters and a completely new life in Christ.

[For further consideration of The Gift of The Holy Spirit, it is recommended that the booklet on our website, "Have You Got The Gift" be consulted under the category of 'Books' by addressing www.happyheralds.org or .com.]

Therefore if any one or two or all of these traits of counterfeit or false pretense are evident, such ministry, church, or organization are not worthy to receive The Lord's money.

(4) The Way to Give unto The LORD God.

What attitude does God expect us to have toward giving? How is giving to be considered? As a matter of fact? or as a ritual? or to be practical? or efficiently? or spiritually? What do the Scriptures say about the way to give? Three things! We are to give cheerfully, abundantly, and freely.

(A) Cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6,7).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that we are to give with purpose of heart (2 Cor. 9:6,7). Our giving is not to be ‘grudgingly’ rendered, ‘or of necessity’ (because you feel obligated). If you give out of obligation with a grudge, you might as well keep it. “God loveth a cheerful giver.” The Greek word here is *heelahrón*, from which we get the English word ‘hilarious.’ It also carries the meaning of ‘not grudgingly.’

The God has given to us so much: His Son, His Salvation from sin, Eternal Life, all spiritual blessings, and He will yet have us share the inheritance of Christ. All is given so cheerfully, and God wants you to give in the same spirit, cheerfully to Him.

(B) Abundantly (1 Tim. 6:17; 2 Cor. 8:1-4; 9:11,12).

The God continually gives “us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17). He has given abundantly. He expects that His children, out of love and cheerfulness, to give abundantly. In Second Corinthians chapter nine, Paul firstly likened giving to sowing seed in a garden or farm. “But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (v. 6). Then he spoke of “being enriched in everything to all bountifulness” and “the administration of this service (giving to the Lord) . . . is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God” (9:11,12). Also, Paul wrote of the churches of **Mahkehdohnéeah** (Macedonia), “that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” (8:1-4). Not according to the riches of their wealth nor out of their riches, but out of their poverty they gave not only liberally, but abundantly. We can never out-give The God. But we can give to The God in like manner as He gave to us, abundantly. Read of the example King David set for giving abundantly to build The Temple (1 Chronicles 29:3-8). Should we not follow his example in building The House of The God, His Church as King David, the leaders, and then the people followed his example?

(C) Freely (Rom. 3:24; 8:32; Mt. 10:8; Lk. 21:1-4).

God has given to us freely. We have been “justified **freely**^[gratuitously] by His grace” (Rom. 3:24). “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also **freely**^[graciously-freely] give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). Jesus said, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life **freely**^[for nothing and unreservedly] . . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life **freely**” (Rev. 21:6; 22:17). He taught His disciples, “**Freely** ye have received, freely give” (Mt. 10:8). ‘Freely’ is an adverb meaning ‘without cost’ or ‘without restraint.’ Because we have so freely received undeservedly, unreservedly, and without cost or obligation, we are to give unreservedly and without cost or obligation.

The poor widow, who out of her poverty gave her all, caught the eye of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 21:1-4). The rich men

cast in their gifts out of their abundance. But “this poor widow hath cast in more than they all” (v.3) because out of her penury she gave all the living that she had, the last two tiny coins. It seemed so small to her that she must put in all that she had, only two mites, equal to one-eighth of a cent. Such a little bit to men. It seemed so little to give, yet so much to her. It was her all! And God took notice! He saw the spirit of sacrifice. Freely she gave the last she had, joyfully. And The Lord Jesus recognized it and expressed His gratitude and used her as an example. She set an example of gratitude to and devoted love for The God to us all. Will you follow her example to give freely out of however little or much you may have for His divine purpose? How will you give to The God? Cheerfully, abundantly, and freely as God prospers you? Or sparingly, reluctantly, and grudgingly?

It will never be any easier to give abundantly, freely, and cheerfully to The God, nor to merely give the tithe than it is right after your salvation when your love for Christ is motivated by deep appreciation for His vicarious death and wonderful salvation!

But then there is the matter of how much? Paul gave the answer to that when he exhorted the Corinthians to give. The way that The God has taught His people from the beginning of the nation of Israel, which was exemplified by their father Abraham when *Mehl-khee-sehdéhk* (Melchisedec) met him (Gen. 14:17-20 cf. Heb. 7:1,2). God wants us to give **proportionately** (1 Cor. 16:1,2). Abraham, who is the father of all the children of faith gave tithes (plural), namely tenths, minimally twenty percent, but in increments of ten percent.

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 where to give and observed how and where The Early Church deposited the giving by the saints throughout the history of The True Church and how we can follow in their steps. Then we considered How and What to Consider in order to Properly Determine Where to Give. Be sure to consider The Jesus, The Christ, The Gospel, and The Spirit that is proclaimed! Be sure to distinguish between the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and The Kingdom of The God! Be sure that The Gospel that is preached results in Regeneration and Eternal Life! Be sure that the Spirit that is proclaimed focuses attention to The Lord Jesus Christ and not Himself.

Before closing today’s study we considered the Way to Give unto The **LORD** God. We are to give cheerfully, abundantly, and freely out of love for all that The Lord Jesus Christ did for us to provide salvation, regeneration, and Eternal Life and not out of obligation or pressure by pleading or bargaining?

Application: Beginning today what steps will you and I take to improve our stewardship and our giving practices?

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: The Reasons for Giving to The God (2 Cor. 9:6,7; 8:1-4; 9:11,12; Rom. 3:24; 8:32; Lk. 21:1-4; Mt. 6:19-21; Phil. 4:10-17).**