

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

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 2^{1st}) First Watch **c. 7:30 P.M.** Wednesday, 12th Nisán (April 1), A.D. 33. Lesson: **Stewardship in the Light of His Coming Continued**⁷ **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).

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 followed by told five more parables.

Then He declared the Conditions on Earth which shall prevail before The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth. The fourth Prevailing Behavior Reveals Laxity of Stewardship (c. 7:15-7:30 P.M.) which 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;** b. **The Teaching (Truth) Received;**
 - c. **Your Time;** d. **Your Talents;** e. **Your Talk;**
 - and f. **Your Treasures:** These include Material Treasures and Spiritual Treasures.

(1) The God views our Material Treasures:

- (A) As 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** which shall 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 those 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 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, and the lack of finances to properly conduct fulfillment of His Commandment has been recognized, all of which has resulted in 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. This is not intended to insult or condemn anyone, but only to instruct what The Word of The God records as to the proper means of handling The **LORD**'s finances so that The God's people be blessed and The **LORD**'s work progress and The local churches individually and The Church Body universally be built up and grow as The Lord Jesus Christ intended His Church to be.

(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.

(b) Recognize What Is Yours or Mine: Nothing! All that we have and are was purchased by The Lord Jesus Christ by His paying the debt of Sin for us on the cross of Calvary, which every human owed. Therefore our bodies, souls, and spirits and every possession of ours was purchased by Him to use as He intends. But He will not force anyone to surrender it. It must be voluntarily surrendered to Him. Until it is surrendered of your own accord it all belongs to Satan. But please consider the consequences that are to be paid at the end of time in the final Judgment Day. You who do appropriate Him and I no longer belong to ourselves, nor to Satan. We now belong to The God. Absolutely **everything** you and I have or ever will have is The God's! Absolutely **nothing** is one's own!

(c) Recognize What The God Claims to Be His and see that it **is** His and that it **is used** for His intended purpose. 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 threefold purpose, i.e. to spread The Gospel throughout the whole Earth, to make disciples and instruct them, and to build His Church. No one else than you can or shall answer for that with which you were entrusted. Otherwise those, who do not see that The God gets it, 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 said that it applies to all humans. You do not desire to be one of those robbers of The God, do you?

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 will not 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 intended and 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. Therefore The God has declared that those who deliberately refuse to give Him that which He claims to be His may endure devouring of all their substance by whatever means He uses, even disasters. How does that relate to you and me?

The storehouse for those 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 **is** used for His intended and declared 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.

Under Old Testament Law the tithe went to the Levites, who were the 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, but the missionaries and teachers are equivalent to the Levites. These bondslave-servants of His are The Lord Jesus Christ’s fellow-workers in building His Church (1 Cor. 3:9-12) locally and worldwide and He expects His redeemed children to participate with Him in caring for these fellow-workers of The Lord Jesus Christ.

(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 and renewed in Malachi’s time until after the foundation of The Church had been laid and was being built upon c. 50 A.D.

In The New Testament The Church which is the Body of Christ is the Temple in Which the Holy Spirit resides since The Temple is called The House of The God

The local church, to which you belong, if she operates her finances according to Scripture with the deacons all together controlling the outflow without partiality and without personal preference, but spiritually and prayerfully sensitive to the exercise of The Holy Spirit and burdens of The God’s people in the congregation, is to be ‘the local bank’ for deposits. Otherwise prayerfully seek to find a doctrinally sound, reputable, financially responsible, and accredited mission or ministry that does not ask for funds or resort to worldly ways, means, or bargains to solicit funds.

(A) How to Determine Where to Give.

If you are concerned as to where to give the tithe and invest it 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 The 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 and support. There is a marked distinction between mere profession of conversion (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. In addition to calling attention to this comparison, some guidelines and warnings were supplied for due and careful consideration.

Special and prayerful consideration should be given to the particular ministry through which you have been brought to Christ and properly disciplined thereafter (Gal. 5:6).

- (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 these four doctrines: 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. Discerning is not judging. How do we know that The Lord Jesus wants His disciples to discern? 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 do 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 APT). Jesus said, ". . . during the process of the humans sleeping, . . . A human enemy did this." Therefore every member, especially the elders or leaders of a local church of The True Body of Christ, The True Church, is to be on guard against false believers inobtrusively 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 another Jesus of the same kind.

When considering the Christ that is proclaimed consider the emphasis upon the kind and result of His death and resurrection immediately on the third day.

(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? (A) The Gospel of The Kingdom of The God; (B) The Gospel of The Kingdom of the heaven(s); (C) Another gospel of a different kind; (D) The pre-gospel of Faith To Abraham; (E) Finally The Everlasting Gospel shall be proclaimed during the Great Tribulation.

(c) 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.

[For further consideration see the booklet on our website, "Have You Got The Gift" @ www.happyheralds.org].

Therefore if any one or two or all of these traits of counterfeit or false pretense are evident, such ministry, church, or organization is 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 efficient? or led by The Holy Spirit? What do the Scriptures say about the way to give? Four things! We are to give cheerfully, abundantly, freely, and confidentially.

(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) but cheerfully. 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 Tim. 6:17). He has given abundantly. He expects that His children, out of love and cheerfulness, to give abundantly. In Second Corinthians, 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" (9:6). 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.

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 resulting in regeneration and Eternal Life.

(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). He said “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. The Lord Jesus recognized it and expressed His gratitude and used her as an example of gratitude to and devoted love for The God unto us all.

(D) Confidentially (Mt. 6:1-4).

Jesus taught His disciples that they are to give confidentially and in secret. He emphasized this by saying, “When doing your charitable giving, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing!” We must not make what we give evident to others in order to be regarded, esteemed, or respected.

(5) Why Give Abundantly unto The **LORD** God.

Some will raise the questions, Why should I give the tithe? Why should I give abundantly over the tithe? There are nine good reasons to consider why you and I should give abundantly above the tithe. Some of the reasons are beneficial to the giver as well as to the work of The Lord.

(A) To Show Gratitude and Appreciation to The God.

By giving, we show gratitude and appreciation to The God for all His blessings, for His wonderful Salvation at such a cost, and for The Truth taught to you at others’ expense. “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely (without-cost and without restraint) you have received, freely (without-cost) give” (Mt. 10:8). This exaltation was given by The Lord Jesus Christ to His twelve disciples when He sent them forth to preach to the house of Israel. In the year and a half that they had been with The Lord Jesus they had received freely, he had cared for them, then He told them, “Freely ye have received, freely give.” We should want to show our gratitude to The God for **all** His blessings to us and one way we can show that gratitude is by giving freely to Him and for Him as He has freely (without-cost and without restraint) given to us.

(B) To Increase the Fruits of Your Righteousness

By giving freely and abundantly over and above the tithe, especially to the servants of Christ (missionaries), who are poor because they have made themselves poor for Christ and the Gospel's sake, we increase the fruits of our righteousness, which are accumulating in Heaven until the Lord comes again to take us to Heaven (2 Cor. 9:6-10 cf. Rev. 19:8).

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6,7).

Paul moved quickly from the topic of ‘sowing and reaping’ to ‘giving.’ What he said in essence is that when we give we are sowing (vs. 8-10). Giving is sowing in the spiritual sense. When we invest in the work of the Lord souls are won, and God will multiply the seeds sown--the money you give to purchase spiritual Gospel seed in order that it might bear fruit. That is why it is vitally important that we be so careful where and to whom we give. Not only is your seed sown, but He will increase the fruit of your righteousness, but only if it serves His intended purpose, salvation **and** discipleship of souls. It's not the fruit of His righteousness (which is imputed to us and is emphasized in the Epistle to the Romans), but the fruits of **your** righteousness. This is the only place in the Bible where your righteousness is found. There is reference to this righteousness in the Book of Revelation. It is called ‘the righteousness of saints’ (19:8). This is a benefit to the giver as well as a reason for giving.

(C) To Prepare a Wedding Garment in Which to Be Married to The Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven.

In Heaven, after the rapture and after the judgment seat of Christ, the bride of Christ, The True Church will be united to Him in a great wedding. The God indicated that the righteousness of saints is going to make up the wedding garment for that blessed occasion (Rev. 19:8).

⁸And it was given to her that she cast around herself a clean and shining garment made of fine linen [special species of flax].

For that garment made of fine linen [special species of flax] is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev. 19:8 APT).

According to the passage in 2 Corinthians this righteousness is giving to God for the care of His servants who are poor because they made themselves poor for the sake of the Gospel. Now you cannot take your treasures with you when you die. All your money is gone; you have no more power over it. But you can send it on ahead. Treasures in Heaven are laid up as treasures on earth are laid down (Lk. 12:33) if they are given to The God for his work. The wedding garment which we will wear at the marriage of The Lamb, The Lord Jesus Christ, is the righteousness of saints, the sacrificial giving to The **LORD** to be used by His bondslave-servants for Salvation and discipleship of souls. This also is an ultimate benefit to the giver.

(D) To Lay-up Treasures in Heaven.

If your treasure is on Earth, your heart is going to be with

that treasure. As you invest in the work of The **LORD**, you 'lay up' treasures in Heaven (Mt. 6:19-21). What these treasures are has not been revealed in Scripture, but are withheld from our knowledge so that we do it out of love and in the generosity of Our **LORD** so that we be greatly surprised in Heaven. All that we know is that the interest rate is 3000 %, 6000 %, and 10,000 percent. As you invest the work of The **LORD**, so you will be concerned about the work of the **LORD**. As you invest in the local church, you become more interested in what is going on in the local church. The more interested you become in the work of The **LORD**, the more The **LORD**, blesses the local church. It's a wonderful cycle! The more treasures you have in Heaven, the more rejoicing you have. The more rejoicing we have, the more rejoicing you have; the more effective The **LORD**'s work is in which you invest, the more desirous you become to give and to lay up treasures in Heaven. This also is a **benefit** to the giver as well as to the receiver and a reason for giving.

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

Conclusion: Today we briefly retraced an abridged portion of our study of Stewardship that was previously covered. Then we reviewed 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. Then we considered the Way to Give unto The **LORD God**. We are to give cheerfully, abundantly, freely out of love, and confidentially because of 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. We added one more specification to the Way to Give, that is give, Confidentially. Finally, we observed four of the nine reasons why the redeemed disciples of The Lord Jesus Christ should give abundantly above the tithe: 1. To Show Gratitude and Appreciation to The God for all His blessings, for His wonderful Salvation at such a cost, and for The Truth taught to you at others' expense; 2. To Increase the Fruits of Your Righteousness; 3. To Prepare a Wedding Garment in Which to Be Married to The Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven; and 4. To Lay-up Treasures in Heaven.

Application: Beginning today what advantage will you take of the four benefits of giving abundantly above the tithe to The God for the care of His bondslave servants and the spread of The Gospel locally and worldwide and making and teaching disciples?

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: Conclude The Reasons for Giving to The God (Mt. 6:19-21; Col. 3:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:6-10; 1 Tim. 5:17,18; Phil. 4:10-17).**