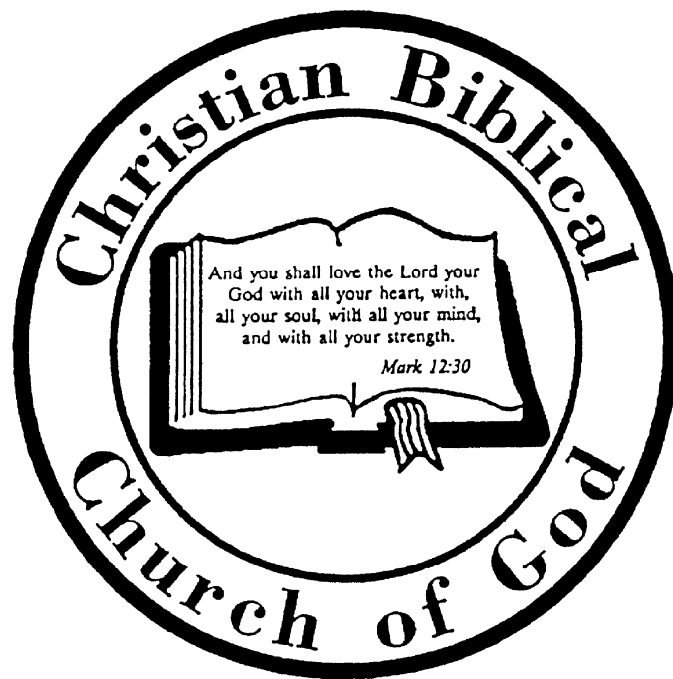


Wealth & Income— The Biblical Truth About Tithes and Offerings



Transcript Book

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Wealth & Income— The Biblical Truth About Tithes and Offerings

Foreword

The biblical truth concerning wealth income and tithes and offerings to God, is presented in this transcript book in a series of eight sermons covering this subject from God's word in the Old and New Testaments. Through the years many churches and denominations have not understood this biblical truth. As a result, many churches merchandise their followers, by constantly begging for money, and extra offerings for special projects. This is especially true in the age in which we are living. So everyone needs to know the true biblical teachings in order that they can obey God in every aspect of their lives in an attitude of love and service.

God is the One Who has created everything, and every human being does not have anything that he or she did not receive from God. In worshiping God in spirit and in truth, we need to recognize this fundamental truth. Since God is Creator of everything that there is, He requires that we acknowledge truth in our worship of Him. God the Father and Jesus Christ, desire our loving obedience in everything that They ask of us, which is also fully demonstrated by our giving of tithes and offerings from the heart.

This book covers the basic biblical truth concerning what Jesus said, "Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God" (Matt. 22:21). Please note: the sermons collated into this book were selected from sermons that were given over several years. As a result, though each lesson is different, a number of basic scriptures are repeated. However, they are approached in each case from a little different perspective. We all know that the best way to learn is through repetition. This is why God has blessed us with His Sabbath and Holy Days every year. We sincerely hope that this transcript book and recorded sermons will help you understand the biblical teachings of wealth, income and tithes and offerings in the Bible.

A special thanks goes to Bonnie Orswell, Laila Patterson and Nancy Spaller for producing the transcripts.

Urban Economics of Jesus' Time

Fred R. Coulter

We're going to have a new look at the time and life of Jesus Christ from an economic point of view, and also from an urban point of view. There's an interesting book, which is really fantastic, called *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey. I'm going to give some quotes out of here. Why this is so significant is because this city was only four miles from Nazareth where Jesus grew up.

This city, as we will see, was a major city. In fact, it was the capital city of Herod Antipas, so it had a major impact on everything. We're going to learn some things concerning finances, economy, some of the parables that Jesus gave and how they relate to the things and even to the city of Sepphoris.

The city of Sepphoris has been all covered over and they have a major archeological dig there; they have been digging for well over ten years. The things that they have discovered are just absolutely amazing.

from the Foreword: *Jesus and the Forgotten City*

Dr. Batey shows how the Sepphoris dig also sheds new light on the kind of carpentry Jesus and His foster-father Joseph pursued in Nazareth; on Jesus' use of terminology from the world of the theater in his discourses, possibly learned at the large Greco-Roman theater excavated at Sepphoris; and on how the realities of urban political life, particularly the role of the kingship, intrude into Jesus' parables, a probable mirror of doings at the court of Herod Antipas.

The economy of first-century Galilee, its politics, its fiscal and taxation system, its geography, climate, commerce, highways, and many other fascinating facets that must have impinged on Jesus come into sharper focus in this book. Small wonder that he peopled his discourses with government officials, merchants, wealthy landowners and tax collectors...

Who were publicans. Whenever we read of tax collectors we're talking about publicans,

...not just farmers, fishermen, and shepherds. The new portrayal of Jesus emerging from these pages does not discard the familiar pastoral background so typical in the Gospels, but in adding a critical "urban edge" to that panorama, Jesus becomes even more realistic—the

savior of the city too, not just the rural redeemer.

The city not only edged dramatically into Jesus' life and ministry, but subsequently became central to the future expansion of Christianity. It was from such metropolitans as Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth and Rome that the faith was carried into the countryside, where the rural sorts—the *pagani* (whence the term "pagan")—were the last to convert. Thus, Christianity, which began in hamlets like Bethlehem and Nazareth in the person of Jesus, finally came full circle through the mediation of urban culture.

No armchair authority, Dr. Batey is an archeologist who has dug at Sepphoris for years, a New Testament scholar who can wield the pen as well as a spade. His extensive use of the present tense at crucial points in this book is purely intentional: the device brings the drama and color of the times quivering to life, whether describing the Battle of Actium that delivered the Roman Empire to Augustus or the agonizing solemnities of the crucifixion at Golgotha....

This is really quite astounding; I enjoyed reading the book. If you have *A Harmony of the Gospels* you can study through the area about the birth of Jesus, and look at the timeframe where we have Jesus born in the fall of 5_{B.C.}

We know that Herod died in 4_{B.C.}, so this gives us great historical background to it, because what happened after Herod the Great died has a great impact on how the Gospel was preached later when Jesus began His ministry following the announcement of John the Baptist.

pg 52—The Division of Herod's Kingdom:

Following the death of Herod the Great, His kingdom was divided, as stipulated in his final will among three of his sons. Antipas inherits Galilee and Peraea and receives the title of "tetrarch," signifying the ruler of one-fourth of a kingdom. Archelaus, the oldest brother of Antipas, becomes ruler of Judea and Samaria, receiving the more important title of "ethnarch," meaning "ruler of a nation." Philip, Herod's son by his wife Cleopatra of Jerusalem, becomes tetrarch of the territories northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

which then is Decapolis or the Ten Cities

Before his sons assumed power, Augustus has to ratify Herod's will. Antipas is sixteen years old, Archelaus eighteen when in May 4_{B.C.} they sail on separate ships from Caesarea to Rome. Each is accompanied by royal family members and a legal council. Antipas and Archelaus both had received their education in Rome. In fact, when Antipas arrives back in Rome in mid-summer, he has been gone from Rome about six months. Lawyers representing Antipas and Archelaus contest Herod's will in the imperial court until early fall. Then Philip arrives with his own delegation. After the summations are eloquently presented to Augustus, he makes the decision to honor Herod's last will virtually as written.

So, they inherit those kingdoms. We'll look at a parable where Jesus said that a noble man went to inherit a kingdom and shall return. Then they spend the winter and come back.

pg 53—When Antipas returns to Galilee from Rome in the spring of 3_{B.C.} he selects the smoldering ruins of Sepphoris...

They had a rebellion there and before that—following Herod's death—the city was burned. Antipas comes back and

...for the location of his new capital. Centrally situated in Galilee, Sepphoris had a long and impressive history as a seat of government. Antipas launches a vast construction project, which lasts throughout the life of Jesus, Who was born in 5_{B.C.} [corrected date]. Sepphoris becomes the nerve center for the government's control of Galilee and Peraea. Political policy, military strategy, economic regulations, and cultural affairs will be administered from this seat of power. Influences from Sepphoris affect the people living in Nazareth and other satellite villages. *Josephus* describes Sepphoris as the largest, most beautiful city in the region.

pg 56—One may envision Antipas riding on his swift Arabian stallion on the crest of the Sepphoris hill, escorted by his elite horse guard. Accompanying Antipas are architects, engineers, city planners like those who recently built Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste, the Jerusalem temple, and Herod's palaces in Jerusalem and Jericho. They pause among the ashes of the broken walls on the summit and

survey the landscape. To the north the broad and rich Bet Netofa Valley is green from the spring rains. The valley stretches from the Mediterranean Sea toward the Jordan Rift and the Sea of Galilee. Verdant forests cover the surrounding hills.

Today they're all barren!

Mount Carmel eighteen miles to the west juts into the Mediterranean. The high ridge to the south hides from view the village of Nazareth nestled around its pleasant spring.

The city plan, laid out on Roman grid pattern adjusted to the contours of the land, has all those constructions typical of the splendid Roman provincial capital—a main east-west street leading to the forum, Antipas' royal residence with an imposing tower that offers a breathtaking panorama, a four-thousand seat theater, [public] bath, bank, archives, gymnasium, basilica, waterworks, and other buildings.

It's really quite a thing to behold. I would like to read from the back part of the book, because this gives a good summary of it:

pg 207—Conclusion

...We have re-discovered a forgotten city. Thousands upon thousands of pieces of datable pottery, a dozen colors of imported marble, fragments of bright frescos artistically molded plaster, smooth round limestone columns are ornately cut capitals, hundreds of coins, scores of whole ceramic vessels, beautiful mosaics, bronze figures, gold chain, carved ivory and other artifacts all demonstrate that Sepphoris in the early and middle Roman periods was indeed a thriving metropolitan.

pg 208—Josephus accurately reported that after the destruction of Sepphoris in 4_{B.C.} Antipas built the city on the grand scale of a splendid Roman capital. The seat of government, Sepphoris boasted Antipas' opulent royal residence, the necessary administrative offices, the royal bank and archives. Government officials and courtiers busily tended the king's affairs. Within the cities, strongly fortified walls stood a great fortress, headquarters of Antipas' secret police and military personnel charged with keeping the peace and protecting the borders.

Sepphoris' economic wealth derived in large measure from the rich deep soil of the Bet Netofa Valley north of the city....

Let's understand that when the Romans conquered it, the Romans owned the land. We will see that that had a great impact on tithes and offerings for people who would tithe and offer to synagogue or to the temple, and later to the Church. It was not a wholly agricultural system. It was, in fact, a merchandizing system. We will see that reflected throughout the New Testament.

Of necessity, those who worked on the land, though they may have been native Jews or Benjaminites or one of the other tribes of Israel—it would be mostly Jews and Benjaminites; Benjaminites in the north around Galilee and the Jews in the south around the area of Judea and Jerusalem—were tenant farmers. They had to give all their crops to the Romans with the exception, I'm sure, of just a few things that they would do like some of the firstfruits and the firstfruit wave offering and so forth.

But everything else was given to the Romans who sold it. They bought it from the tenant farmers and they received money. Their increase was in the form of money. We will see that this becomes very important in understanding how they tithed and offered in the New Testament.

When I was reading this it reminded me very much of Hollister, California, a city of 34,000. However, much more spread out. All around it is the agricultural land, which is owned by corporations. Just like in the days of Jesus, those who worked on the land were more or less serfs. Today we have a lot of the Mexican labor out there, and they are in the same category as serfs. It's really not much different today than it was back then.

...This large area of fertile land, combined with ample annual rainfall produced an abundance supply of food for the city's growing population, soon reaching thirty thousand.

Crops and rental income from Antipas' personal estate in the valley provided a basic source of his considerable wealth....

Then he had his princes below him and what he would do is assign them land for production and they would produce the food, and they would have to bring that all up to Sepphoris or they could have that brought in and they could sell it and bring the tribute into Antipas at Sepphoris.

Sepphoris guarded major trade routes that intersected in the valley. These highways linked Sepphoris commercially with ports on the Mediterranean--Caesarea Maritima Ptolemais (Akko), Tyre, and Sidon—as well as, Jerusalem, the Greek cities of

Decapolis, Antioch, Damascus, and Petra. Taxes collected from merchants and other travelers through Galilee provided lucrative revenues.

We're going to see a little later that specifically named, one apostle named Matthew—a Levite and tax collector—and Zacharias was a tax collector and wealthy. We'll see some very interesting accounts.

During the centuries following the conquest of Alexander the Great, the people living in Galilee were caught up in the cross-currents of traditional Judaism and Greek and Roman cultures. New and attractive ideas and forces challenged old values and assumptions about the meaning of life and the nature of God. To these people, Jesus proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom of God, responded to their questions, and addressed their burning issues. The Gospels portrayed Jesus as skillfully drawing on images from their shared experiences in Galilee—not only pastoral scenes with shepherds and sowers but also urban images with kings, merchants, tax collectors and dramatic actors.

pg 209—The urbanization of Galilee points to the probability that Jesus spoke Greek as well as Aramaic. Present-day debates among New Testament scholars are turning from the question of whether Jesus spoke Greek, to how well He spoke Greek....

Being the Son of God He spoke it fluently!

...Careful study of the Greek text of the Gospels has led to the conclusion that Jesus delivered a number of the parables originally in Greek, rather than Aramaic....

We would have to say that He probably delivered almost all of them in Greek.

...The sayings of Jesus contained in the Gospels, therefore, may be closer to the actual words of Jesus than previously thought.

The realization that Jesus grew up in the shadow of Sepphoris, a burgeoning royal Roman capital city, casts new light on the man and His message—light that changes the perception of Jesus as a rustic from the remote hills of Galilee. The people to whom Jesus proclaimed His message of hope and salvation, whether Jews, Greeks, Romans, or other Gentiles, were struggling with the life's meaning that a culture where Jewish traditions and Greco-Roman urban

values collided. Jesus' teachings reflect a shared awareness of city life with His cosmopolitan audience.

That is quite a thing! This is going to give us a brand new look at the Gospels and give us a little more insight in understanding.

Let's see something about Jesus; He's called the carpenter's son, Mark 6:2: "Now, when the Sabbath Day came, He began to teach in the synagogue..." Of the cities and villages; in Luke 4 it says that He went throughout all of Galilee, preaching the Gospel in every city and every village. We did not know that there were 204 villages. When I mention in *A Harmony of the Gospels* that it took Him quite a while to do that, you can see how long it took Him.

"...and many of those who heard Him were astonished, saying, 'From where did this Man get these things? And what is this wisdom that has been given to Him, that by His hands many miracles are done also? Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' And they were offended in Him." (vs 2-3).

A carpenter during Jesus' day was not one who was limited to working with wood or hammers and nails. He had to be skilled in wood, masonry, stone-cutting, stone-setting, arch-building, door-building. They had to be skilled in all of these things. So, the traditional thing that you see in some of the sketches of Jesus with a shop table, vice, saw, hammer, chisel and so forth, is just all 'out the window' now.

Being a carpenter, and that city being built all during the lifetime of Jesus, do you not suppose that Joseph—Jesus' foster-father—and Jesus and all the other sons of Joseph went up and worked in Sepphoris to build the city? They needed skilled craftsmen to do it. A carpenter was a skilled craftsman.

pgs 80-81—Carpenters fabricate the building's large oak doors and squared the frames of the doors and the windows. Finish carpenters skillfully build interior wood cabinets and furnishings. With simple hand tools a master carpenter produces beautiful results.

One team of carpenters assembles sturdy semicircular forms that support the arches and extended vaults basic to Roman architecture....

They would build those, lay the stones in and then they would set the center stone. Just the very pressure of those stones laid that way would hold everything up.

...Precisely cut stones are laid over these forms until the keystones at the top are fitted snugly in place, locking the entire arch together. Then the wooden frames are removed and reused.

Some carpenters construct huge cranes with ropes and pulleys that can lift heavy stones and rafters. Other sure-footed carpenters walk the beams overhead and swing nimbly from rafter to rafter as they fit them solidly together.

Carpenters with special expertise layout, cut and assemble parts of a waterwheel that can raise the water to the top of the acropolis. The wheel, approximately twelve feet in diameter stands upright and rotates on its horizontal axis. A slave treading on the outer rim turns it. As the wheel rotates, wooden boxes around the outer rim dip down into a lower pool fill with water. The wheel then raises the water and pours it into a trough above....

So, you have a water system!

...A series of these wheels can lift water as high as necessary.

They had everything! They had

- running water
- fountains
- baths
- gymnasiums

I was astounded when I read this book!

pg 129—The Temple Tax: After the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus moves His residence from Nazareth to Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee where Simon Peter lived. [find that in the account in Matthew]

pg 136—Galilee in Jesus' day was small, with an area of about 750 square miles. It measured approximately thirty miles north to south, and twenty-five miles east to west. Bordering Samaria on the south and Phoenicia on the west and north, Galilee's eastern borders followed the course of the Jordan River. It began at Lake Huleh and continued south through the Sea of Galilee along the Jordan River. East of this border were the territories of Gaulanitis and Decapolis.

The hills of Galilee in the north (Upper Galilee) to over 3,300 feet. The broad valleys in the south (Lower Galilee) have the rich soil able to produce a variety and abundance of crops. Annual rainfall in the

north averages forty inches, somewhat less than in the south. Galilee remains today a fertile and productive land. In Antipas' day Galilee supported a population estimated at 200,000, living mostly in small farming villages....

They were tenants working on Roman land.

...Sepphoris, according to Josephus, was the largest city in Galilee, boasting a population estimated at between 25,000 and 30,000. When, as the Gospels say, "Jesus went about all the cities and villages," He would not have traveled far between them...

But in order to do it in the synagogues, it would take quite a while for Him to do it. Sepphoris was on a hill and it dominated everything round about.

Showing some pictures (these can be seen on the video of this sermon at CBCG.org):

- the forum: You can see the arch and the general artist's depiction of what the city was like, what the people wore, and so forth. It gives you an entirely different perspective on the life and times of Jesus.
- artist's aerial view of the city: You can see the coliseum, the forum, the theater, some of the buildings and other things around there. It's really quite an elaborate thing that they have. You can see the wall that's built around it. On top of the wall were the fortifications and the soldiers to guard it. This is really quite a good picture showing the magnificence of the city.
- an apartment: They had three and four story apartments there. This shows what city life was like. The apartment, the street below. They could have a lot of people there, and notice that the streets are all paved. It was really something! They're all paved with stone—there is plenty of stone around that area.
- shopping at the market: They had sophisticated markets. They had stalls and booths; they sold all kinds of products. It was really quite a thing that they had!

It's really very interesting to understand how sophisticated and urban the whole society was during Jesus' day.

- synagogue on the inside: It's very spacious. It has columns to uphold the roof and so forth. Plenty of space to sit in; plenty of room. It shows a depiction of a rabbi reading out of the Scriptures. This could very well be, very typical of the synagogue that Jesus went into in Nazareth on the Day

of Pentecost, 'as His custom was to go on the Sabbath Day and stood up for to read.' That gives you a good idea of what that was like.

Remember that Sepphoris was built on a hill only four miles from Nazareth. Let's see what Jesus said, and the parable and analogy that He drew.

Matthew 5:14: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid." The biggest city was Sepphoris. Where was it? *Right on top of a hill!*

Verse 15: "Neither do they light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket, but on the lampstand; and it shines for all who are in the house. In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men..." (vs 15-16). There we have an example of this.

What about actors? One of the names for actors was 'hupokkrite' from which we get the word today *hypocrite*, which means *a pretender*.

Let's see what Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees; He called them hypocrites, meaning *sanctimonious pretenders!* He did this over and over again in Matt. 23, because these men were only there for the show, for the take, for their own purposes. Though in the name of God, *they were not doing the work of God!*

Matthew 23:13: "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!.... [sanctimonious pretenders; just like a stage player] ...For you devour widows' houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length. Because of this, you shall receive *the* greater judgment. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say..." (vs 13-16).

He calls them hypocrites all the way through. That had a direct reference to the things concerning the theater where the actors were called 'hupokkrites.' Very interesting—isn't it?

Jesus referred to Herod Antipas and calls him 'a fox'—which he was. He actually got Archelaus his brother to be exiled under false pretenses. Then Agrippa was later to take over the area of Jerusalem. Herod Antipas was well aware of Jesus. Remember when Jesus was led away to be questioned by Pilate, Pilate knew that Herod Antipas was in Jerusalem, so he sent Jesus over to be

examined by him. Antipas said, 'Oh, I've been wanting to see you for a long time, hoping that he would see a miracle.

Luke 13:31: "On the same day certain Pharisees came to Him, saying, 'Go out and depart from this place because Herod desires to kill You.' And He said to them, 'Go *and* say to that fox, "Behold, I cast out demons and complete healings today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected; but it is necessary for Me to proceed today and tomorrow and the following *day*; because it is not possible *for* a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem'" (vs 31-33).

Quite a thing—isn't it? Jesus virtually said that Herod Antipas doesn't bother me at all; it's all in God's hands and it's going to be according to God's schedule. So, Jesus called Herod Antipas *a fox*.

Let's look at John the Baptist, because John was beheaded by Herod Antipas; really quite a situation with that. Let's see how that when they came to John the Baptist to be baptized that there also came the Roman soldiers and he told them what they should do and what they should not do.

Luke 3:7: "For this reason, he said to the multitudes who were coming out to be baptized by him, 'You offspring of vipers, who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance; and do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham *for our* father," because I tell you that God has the power to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. But the axe is already being laid to the roots of the trees. Therefore, every tree *that* is not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into *the* fire.' And the multitudes asked him, saying, 'What then shall we do?'" (vs 7-10).

Verse 11: "And he answered *and* said to them, 'The one who has two coats, let him give to the one who has none; and the one who has food, let him do the same.' Now, the [publicans] tax collectors also came to be baptized..." (vs 11-12). They had tax collector stations all along the way. Whenever you passed from one area to another area you paid the tax.

It's just like for truckers, when they go along the highways, they've got to stop at the toll booths and they've got to pay the tax collector. They had the same thing there.

"...and they said to him, 'Master, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Exact nothing beyond that which is appointed to you.' Then those who were soldiers also asked him, saying..." (vs 12-14).

What are we talking about here? *We are*

talking about people who were living in an urban setting! It doesn't say that farmers came. The people came, and notice that their questions reflected what they were doing. This shows a very urban setting.

"...soldiers also asked him, saying... [soldiers of Herod Antipas] ...'And we, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Do not oppress or falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.' But as the people were *filled* with expectation..." (vs 14-15). And John tells them about Jesus to come.

Here's the background of why Herod Antipas hated John the Baptist: Antipas took the divorced wife of his brother and married her. Here Batey gives the explanation:

pg 109-110—Who was Antipas' first wife? Soon after the useful Antipas began the construction of his new capital at Sepphoris in 3_{B.C.}, he married a proud Arabian princess, the daughter of Aretas IV king of Nabataea.

Aretas had sent his troops to assist Varus, the governor of Syria, to crush the rebellion that broke out following Herod the Great's death. Sepphoris was a major town plundered and burned by Aretas' forces during this campaign. It was to his new royal residence at Sepphoris that Antipas brought his Nabataean bride.

Antipas' marriage had clear political and economic advantages. Nabataea encompassed Palestine on the south and east, and shared some forty miles of border with Antipas' Perea.

The Nabataeans controlled the lucrative caravan trade routes in this vast territory and became a proud, powerful and prosperous people. Aretas ruled from his capital at Petra, often called "the rose red city, half as old as time." The marvelous ruins of this ancient city are preserved today, carved in the multicolored sandstone in a hidden valley forty-five miles south of the Dead Sea. Antipas' marriage ratified a strong and valuable ally with his fierce neighbors, granting important trade concessions and promising mutual non-aggression. The long period of peaceful relations that Antipas enjoyed with Aretas suggests that the marriage had a considerable degree of success.

About A.D. 29, Antipas made a trip to Rome to settle some affairs of state in the imperial court of Tiberius. On the way he visited his half brother who probably lived

in Caesarea. During his stay Antipas became enamored with Herodias, his brother's wife, and secretly proposed marriage. Herodias accepted the offer and pledged to marry Antipas when he returned from Rome, provided that he could get rid of his Arab wife. Antipas agreed and sailed to Rome.

Needless to say, that caused problems after he put her away.

Remember, Matthew was a Levite and a tax collector. It's important to keep that in mind. We will see some specific things that Jesus says concerning money relating to Caesar and relating to God. We need to understand that this was a merchandizing society just like we have today. Most of the people did not work on farms. Most of the people lived in villages. Most of them had some trades or other businesses or occupations that they did rather than working in the land.

Matthew 14:3^[transcriber's correction]: "For Herod had arrested John, bound him and put *him* in prison, for the sake of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip; because John had said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her *as your wife*.' ... [which is true, it was not lawful] ... And he desired to put him to death; *but* he feared the multitude because they held him to be a prophet" (vs 3-5). So, they just arrested him and put him in prison.

Verse 6: "Now, when they were celebrating Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before *them*; and it pleased Herod. Therefore, he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. Then, being urged by her mother, she said, 'Give me, here on a platter, the head of John the Baptist.' And the king was grieved; but because of the oaths and those who were sitting with him, he commanded *that it* be given. And he sent *and* beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the damsel, and she brought *it* to her mother" (vs 6-11).

This is a woman's revenge against a preacher who said, 'You are not married to the man you're living with; you have an illegal marriage in God's sight.'

Verse 12: "Then his disciples came, and took the body, and buried it; and they went and told Jesus."

(go to the next track)

There was a time that before John was beheaded he was in prison and he was mystified as to what was going on, because he expected Jesus the Messiah to come and establish the Kingdom of God—he didn't know he was going to die—

hopefully to get him out of prison, set up the Kingdom of God and work side-by-side with Jesus.

Then John's disciples came to Jesus and said, Matthew 11:3: "... 'Are You the One Who is coming, or are we to look for another?'" That's why the question was asked. They were looking for the King to come, the Messiah, the One Who would bring the political, the military and the governmental forces and bring the armies of heaven to put down the Romans.

Verse 4: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and report to John what you hear and see: *The* blind receive sight, and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed, and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised, and *the* poor are evangelized. And blessed is everyone who shall not be offended in Me'" (vs 4-6). Then they went back and told John the Baptist that.

I just wonder if John the Baptist ever really understood. Can you imagine that? Being the one to pave the way for Jesus to come, baptizing Him to 'fulfill all righteousness,' saying to 'believe on the One Who comes after me. I'm not *that* Prophet, I am not Elijah and I'm not the Christ.' Then he's thrown into prison and, lo and behold, the Kingdom of God is not established. I just imagine that he was still wondering when he was killed.

Verse 7: "And as they were leaving, Jesus said to the multitudes concerning John, 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by *the* wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses'" (vs 7-8). Where was the king's house? *In Sepphoris!* Also, in Jericho, had another palace. A direct reference to the type of living that they had and where they were.

Verse 9: "'But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and *one* more excellent than a prophet. For this is *he* of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who shall prepare Your way before You.'" Truly I say to you, there has not arisen among *those* born of women *anyone* greater than John the Baptist. But the one who *is* least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. For from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven is taken **with a great struggle**, and *the* zealous *ones* lay hold on it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who was to come.' The one who has ears to hear, let him hear" (vs 9-15). There we have direct reference to the city of Sepphoris and kings and so forth.

Now let's look at the temple tax. The temple also had a tax, as well as taking tithes and offerings. Most of those tithes and offerings were not in the form of grain or animals, but in the form of money.

Of course, those who would bring the tithes and offerings would bring of their profit—whether they worked on the land or whether they were carpenters, or whatever trade that they had: tax collectors, merchants, caravan owners, they all dealt in money.

Matthew 17:24—here's some tribute money: "Now, after coming to Capernaum, those who received the tribute money came to Peter and said, 'Does not your Master pay tribute?' And he said, 'Yes.' And when he came into the house, Jesus, anticipating his *question*, said, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive custom or tribute? From their own children, or from strangers?' Peter said to Him, 'From strangers.' Jesus said to him, 'Then the children are indeed free. Nevertheless, so that we may not offend them...' (vs 24-27). This is not a temple tax, probably just regular tax by the tax collectors there. A temple tax would have to go to the temple. I think Batey was not correct in saying this was a temple tax.

"...go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you have opened its mouth, you shall find a coin. Take that, and give *it* to them for Me and you" (v 27). What did they also find at Sepphoris? *A lot of fishhooks!* Everything begins to fit into place.

Mathew 18:23—here we have quite a parable using a king: "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man, a *certain* king, who would take account with his servants." Let's notice what is involved here. We are talking about talents. Talents were the way that they measured silver and gold. We're talking again about *money*.

Verse 24: "And after he began to reckon, there was brought to him one debtor who owed *him* ten thousand talents.... [an astronomical amount; hundreds of millions today] ...But since he did not have *anything* to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. Because of this, the servant fell down *and* worshiped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him, and forgave him the debt. Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins; and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, 'Pay me what you owe.' As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' But he would not *listen*; instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed" (vs 24-30).

That means he took him to court, got a judgment and cast him into prison.

Verse 31: "Now, when his fellow servants saw the things *that* had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord... ["...a *certain* king..."] ...*and* related all that had taken place. Then his lord called him *and* said to him, '*You* wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me. Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?' And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him" (vs 31-34).

The reason that Jesus used the king was that kings in those days had absolute sovereignty over the people for life and death. Notice how Jesus concludes this:

Verse 35: "Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, **if each of you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart.**"

Who has absolute sovereignty over life and death? *God the Father!* Now Jesus draws the analogy with a king of the land, now showing in the parable God the Father Who has the absolute sovereignty.

Matthew 22:1—here's another one likened unto a *certain* king: "And again Jesus answered and spoke to them in parables, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a man *who was* a king, who made a wedding feast for his son'" (vs 1-2). And then the whole story about the parable of the marriage supper.

Marriage suppers back then were really *big deals!* In Herod Antipas' house alone, he had 100 bedrooms for guests. Now you get the scene. Picture a royal wedding in Sepphoris. Picture the king sending out all the invitations to everybody far and wide. You don't deny the king! That's why we have the parable here, because God did the same to the Jews for rejecting Christ and not accepting the call to the wedding supper. So, He sent armies and destroyed.

Verse 7—because they refused: "Now, when the king heard *it*, he became angry; and he sent his armies *and* destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." We read at the beginning that's what happened with Sepphoris in 3_{B.C.} with the revolt that took place after the death of Herod the Great.

Verse 8: "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.'" Then the rest of the story, go out and get them and so forth.

Verse 15: "Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech. And they sent their disciples *along* with the

Herodians to Him, saying... [the Herodians were the agents of Herod. This would be from Herod Antipas or maybe his brother Philip.] ...'Master, we know that You are true, and *that You* teach the way of God in Truth, and *that You* are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect *the* persons of men. Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?' But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, 'Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.' And they brought to Him a **silver coin**" (vs 15-19)—a 'danarius' in Greek that they conducted trade with and collected taxes with.

Verse 20: "And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription *is on* this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God'" (vs 20-21).

We're talking about money—aren't we? Here we have that you have to render to God what is due Him in the like manner that you do to Caesar, using money in his hand. It had to do with money. Also confirming the fact that they used money to pay their tithes and to render to God the things that they needed to render. There are many more things that we need to render to God:

- love
- faith
- hope
- obedience

But here specifically this is talking about *money*.

Let's go on and see some other things concerning Jesus' teachings concerning kings, and drawing analogies and giving teaching to His apostles. In this case this happened right at the Passover. That's something! Right at Jesus' last Passover:

Luke 22:24: "And there was also an argument among them, *even* this: which of them should be considered *the* greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the nations lord over them... ['katakuriuo'—*down, dominating down*] ...and those who exercise authority... ['kataexousia'] ...over them are called **benefactors**'" (vs 24-25)—which then are the 'religious' people.

Verse 26: "But *it shall* not be this way *among* you... [quite and absolute going against the hierarchy] ...rather, let the one who is greatest among you be as the younger, and the one who is leading as the one who is serving. For who is greater, the one who is sitting *at the table*, or the one who is serving? *Is* not the one who sits *at the table*? But I am among you as One Who is serving" (vs 26-27).

That's something! The God Who created heaven and earth became a human being and humbled Himself and *served!* Quite a thing for us to understand and contemplate!

Luke 19—here again we're going to see another parable built upon a real life experience. Not only referring to Himself as coming and then going to a far country—that is ascending to heaven and coming back as king—but here we have an analogy that is drawn in a parable. Remember that Philip and Archelaus and Antipas all had to go to Rome to get themselves a kingdom and to return.

Luke 19:12—after they thought the Kingdom of God should appear immediately: "Therefore, He said, 'A certain nobleman... [not yet a king] ...set out to a distant country to receive a kingdom... [to be made king] ...for himself, and to return. And after calling ten of his servants, he gave to them ten pounds...' (vs 12-13).

'Pounds' is money. We're talking in terms of money all the way through. It's really quite stunning when you go through and understand how it is in this book, which shows very clearly that we are dealing with a very highly urbanized society that was a merchandizing society. They used money. They didn't just barter and trade; there was money involved. Here we have 'pounds,' which is money.

"...and said to them, "Trade until I come back." But his citizens hated him and sent an ambassador after him, saying, "We are not willing to have this man reign over us." And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he directed that those servants to whom he had given the money be called to him, in order that he might know what each one had gained by trading'" (vs 13-15). You trade, you make a profit and you have money.

Verse 16: "And the first one came up, saying, 'Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds.' Then he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities'" (vs 16-17). This has analogies concerning spiritual treasure of gold, silver and precious stones, as well. But this also shows using money in the analogy that we're talking about.

Verse 18: "And the second one came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' Then he also said to this one, 'And you be over five cities.' But another came, saying, "Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow'" (vs 18-21). He didn't have faith.

Let me just stop and say right here: *Those who do not believe in tithes and offerings have this same attitude!* That's why it's used here in money. My experience has been that it always gets down to the money. One of the first things that takes place when people get off half-cocked in false doctrines has to do with tithes and offerings.

If you have the attitude that God is harsh, He doesn't demand tithing, well then, you just need to consider: Do you have the attitude that this man had?

Verse 22: "Then he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow. Then why didn't you deposit my money in the bank, so that at my coming I might have received it with interest?'" (vs 22-23).

This shows that they had a banking system. We read here that they had a bank, a central bank right there in Sepphoris and the money would come in from the various areas, be collected there, and guess where they sent the money, the tribute money from there? *Herod would get his cut and then the rest would go the emperor in Rome!* Isn't that something?

Verse 24: "And he said to those who were standing by, 'Take the pound from him, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.' (And they said to him, Lord, he has ten pounds.)" For I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* shall be given; but the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him. Moreover, bring my enemies, those who were not willing *for* me to reign over them, and slay *them* here before me" (vs 24-27).

Let's ask not just about tithing or offering, but about everything:

- Does God rule in your life?
- Is there some area of your life that you don't want God to rule in?
 - ✓ by His laws
 - ✓ by His commandments
 - ✓ by His statutes
 - ✓ by His judgments
 - ✓ by His Word
 - ✓ the things we find in the Old Testament

—which applies today, because 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.'

- Which part of it?

If there's a part of the Word of God that you don't think applies to you, then you need to ask:

- Are you putting yourself in the seat of God to tell God what you will or will not do?

or

- Are you willing to love God, to serve Him, to obey Him and do things that are pleasing in His sight?
- Are you willing to render to God the things that are God's?

You know for sure that you're going to render it to Uncle IRS! If you don't they will come and levy your wages and they will come and take your house and your car and all that you have.

In a spiritual analogy: that which belongs to God is also God's. You need to think about that. I just bring this up because what we are talking about in all of these things has to do with money, because it was a moneyed society.

You hear it said that only Levites can collect tithes. Well, we're going to see that Matthew was a Levite. Barnabas was a Levite. We're going to see, by the time we are finished with this series, that Jesus gave the authority to the Church.

Luke 5:27: "Now, after these things, He went out and saw a **tax collector named Levi**... [He was a Levite and a tax collector and he got it both ways] ...sitting at the tax office, and said to him, 'Follow Me.' Then he arose, leaving everything, and followed Him. And Levi made a great feast for Him in his house, and there were a large number of tax collectors... [there must have been tax collectors everywhere] ...and others who sat down with them. But the scribes and the Pharisees complained to His disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?'" (vs 27-30).

This is the reversal! The Gospel is *reverse thinking*. 'The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.' He came to call sinners to repentance, and not to come a visit the righteous and tell them how good they were. He didn't have to, they already knew it and would tell Him in all their self-righteous pomposity. So, Jesus ignored them.

Verse 31: "Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, 'Those who are in *good* health do not need a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (vs 31-32). There we go! Very interesting—isn't it? Here's a Levi, an apostle; Matthew a Levite, an apostle.

Luke 19—here's the other tax collector Zaccheus. This man was not a Levite in this particular case. Zaccheus was wealthy.

Luke 19:1: "Then *Jesus* entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, a man named Zaccheus *was there*. Now, he was a chief tax collector... [he was the head tax collector] ...and he was rich. And he was seeking to see Jesus, Who He was; but he was not able because of the multitude,

for he was a man of small stature. But after running ahead, in front of *the multitude*, he climbed up into a sycamore *tree*... [this is a special kind of fig tree] ...so that he might see Him; for He was about to pass that *way*. And when He came to the place, Jesus looked up *and* saw him, and said to him, 'Zaccheus, make haste to come down, for today it is necessary for Me to stay at your house'" (vs 1-5). I imagine that he was beside himself; I can just see the scene there.

Verse 6: "And he came down in haste and received Him joyfully. But after seeing *this*, everyone began to criticize, saying, 'He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man'" (vs 6-7). Every tax collector is looked upon as a sinner! How do people view IRS agents today? *Criminals!* But not Zaccheus.

Verse 8: "Then Zaccheus stood *and* said to the Lord, 'Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I return fourfold.'" Where do you find the principle for that? *In the book of Exodus, chapter 23!* What do you know about that?

Verse 9: "And Jesus said to him, 'Today, salvation has come to this house, inasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.'" But because of his attitude and behavior and how he conducted himself: giving half of what he had to the poor; giving back fourfold if he took anything more than he should have taken and by false accusation.

Verse 10: "'For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.' Now, as they were listening to these things, He went on to speak a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately" (vs 10-11).

pg 179-181 from the book: *Jesus and the Forgotten City: Herod Antipas' Tax Structure.*

If you have a government, you've got to keep the money rolling in—don't you? You've got to pay the soldiers, you've got to pay the bureaucrats, you've got to live sumptuously—don't you? *Yes!*

Galilee was strategically located near trade routes. The highway from Damascus in Syria to ports on the Mediterranean Sea ran northeast of the Sea of Galilee to the capital of Sepphoris. From Sepphoris a road led northwest to the city of Ptolemais. Another major roadway went southwest from Sepphoris to Caesarea Maritima and continued along the coastal plain to Egypt. Not far south from Sepphoris a branch of this main road ran through Samaria and then on to Jerusalem. Tolls collected from

travelers, merchants and caravans using this system of roads provided substantial revenues for Antipas' treasury. Levi worked for Antipas' government, collecting tolls at the border crossing of the Jordan River just north of the Sea of Galilee.

That's where he worked. Quite a thing!

Land taxes on numerous small farms of industrious Galilean peasants added to the government's revenues. A harvest when the peasant, with his entire family, gathered the wheat, barley, olives, grapes and flax, Antipas' tax collectors appraised the produce and separated the king's share. Antipas' forty-two-year reign was a peaceful one that allowed his realm to prosper. He provided his subjects peace and security and extracted high taxes in return—but not so high as to inflame a revolt. As long as Antipas could maintain the peace, he might avoid the fate of his brother Archelaus who in A.D. 6 had been removed by Augustus as ethnarch of Jerusalem because of riots.

Also, Antipas' government controlled the fishing rights in the lakes and streams.

...When fishermen such as Peter, Andrew, James and John, had fished all night and docked early in the morning with their fresh catch, Antipas' tax collectors were waiting.

So they could either take the fish or they could pay them money. Being a tax collector, which would you rather handle? Money? *or* Slimy fish? So, you pay them money! They had a moneyed society—didn't they? And also, because of this, the whole tithing system in the New Testament was more based on money than it was on produce. So, we have an analogy here as to what things would be like.

Herod the Great had placed a tax on public purchases and a sales tax on agricultural produce and other commodities. Antipas apparently continued this policy. When a farmer brought his produce to sell at the public market in a city or town, he could be expected to pay a tax on the food sold. The local commissioner of markets, whose responsibility was to regulate weights and measures as well as prices, cooperated with the tax collectors in exacting the sales tax....

That sound just like we have today. You go in and buy something and they ring it up; they do it for the government—don't they?

...Antipas appointed Agrippa, the brother of his wife Herodias, to be commissioner of the markets in the new city of Tiberias. Agrippa did not like the job or the pay and quit. A thirty-six ounce lead weights unearthed in 1985 at Sepphoris reveals the name of a local market inspector, a Jew named "Simon son of Aianos son of Justus."

Antipas also collected an annual pole tax from every male subject fourteen to sixty-five years old.

Augustus set Antipas' annual personal income at the generous sum of two hundred talents....

All the rest would go on to Rome.

...Additional accounts were expended on tribute to Rome, public works, construction of Sepphoris and Tiberias, and Antipas' costly military buildup. Antipas' minister of finance Chuza, monitored fiscal policy and the complicated tax system, noting the appointments of tax collectors and seeing that the amount stipulated in their contracts were promptly paid....

Or they would get a notice. Does that sound familiar? If you don't pay your taxes you get a notice from the IRS—right?

...Detailed records of all important assignments and transactions were kept safe at the archives in Sepphoris and Tiberius.

How about that! A completely moneyed society! I think that is very important for us to understand. We have the urban wealth. Remember the account of the rich man who came to Jesus and said, 'What should I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said, 'Keep the commandments.' *Oh, I've done that!* 'Go sell all that you have.' He was a rich man and he just couldn't do it. He couldn't separate himself from it.

The same factors apply today as was in the days of Jesus. You have rich people who can't give up things. They're looking for salvation in the physical things and cannot find it, and they will never have the satisfaction of it.

Let's talk about the temple. Let's see what Jesus did, and let's understand what they did with the Roman money when they came to Jerusalem, because they couldn't use it to buy sacrifices. What they did when they came to the temple, there were the moneychangers. They had to exchange the Roman money for temple money and then buy a temple-approved animal. Those animals had been purchased by the priests and the Levites so they could sell them.

Here again, all the offerings that were given were actually on a monetary basis of buying them. They didn't transport them up there for the sacrifices any longer, because the Romans owned everything. During the days of Jesus there were tithes and offerings, but there was also a moneyed system, and that's how they did it.

John 2:13: "Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money exchangers sitting *there*." Jesus drove them all out because they were merchandizing and not giving a proper exchange. They were greedy and taking what they shouldn't take right in the temple of God. So, Christ got rid of them and cleansed the temple. Of course, they came back, because He had to do it again just before He was crucified as we find in Mark 11.

Let's see what Jesus said concerning tithing, and how the Pharisees got so nit-picky with the little herbs. Let's also understand that He is bringing this out not to show that the only thing you tithe upon are herbs. But He brings out what should be the insignificant thing of tithing. That's what they fastidiously did.

Luke 11:42: "But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, **but you pass over the judgment and the love of God**... [faith of God (Matt. 23); so they pass over proper judgment] ...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things... [judgment, the love of God, the faith of God] ...and not to set aside those *lesser things*."

So, Jesus shows the extreme that they went to. There are some people who still to this day think that only farmers have to tithe. Let me tell you something, during the days of Jesus—after reading this book—there is no way that only the farmers would be able to tithe. They only received a salary. The Roman government took it, they got paid for it, and if they had an increase then they would tithe on their increase.

Now let's see what the Church operated on and here we find an example of the use of money, the sale of possessions, which is far more than tithing. At this time they were still in Jerusalem because they thought that the Kingdom of God would come in a very short while, so they decided to stay there. A great number of disciples and believers were being added all the time.

Acts 4:33: "And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. For neither was anyone among them in want; for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold *them and* brought the amounts of those *things* that were sold, and laid *the*

money at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was made to each one according to his need” (vs 33-35).

They distributed the money so that they could go out and buy the food and things that they needed to live on.

Verse 36: “And Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which is, being interpreted, “son of consolation”), a Levite, born *in the country* of Cyprus, had land; *and he sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet*” (vs 36-37). Then the story of Ananias and Sapphira where they agreed to sell it, but then they held back and you know the consequences of that. Both of them died! That’s something to think about, too.

1-Corinthians 9—This is the place in the New Testament that clearly shows that the Church is to be run on tithes and offerings. Many people do not like to accept the fact that this is true. But when you read it, when it is properly understood, it is true! Paul talks about that they had authority to exercise over the brethren for the physical things.

1-Corinthians 9:6: “Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right [authority] to refrain from working? Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense? Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it? Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock? Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things? For it is written in the Law of Moses...” (vs 6-9).

What is in the Law of Moses besides just cutting off the ox that treads out the corn? *You have the instructions concerning the tithing and who it was to go to!* We’ll see that he ends up with that; so let’s understand it clearly.

“...‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.’ Is it because God is concerned for oxen? Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes? For our sakes it was written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things? If others participate in this authority over you, much more surely *should* not we?...” (vs 9-12). Be more entitled to do so because I am your apostle and Titus and Timothy are my helpers.

“...Nevertheless, we have not used this authority...” (v 12). He temporarily did not use that power in hopes that they would be converted and do so.

“...but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ. **Don’t you know that those who are laboring in the sacred**

things of the temple live of the things of the temple...” (vs 12-13). What are the things of the temple? *Tithes, offerings, animal sacrifices, firstfruits and those things that would come!*

“...and those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? In the same way also, the Lord did command that **those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel**” (vs 13-14). In the same way as those that worked at the temple—the priests and the Levites—and what did they receive? *The tithes, offerings, firstfruits, etc.!*

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Mark 6:2-3
- 2) Matthew 5: 14-16
- 3) Matthew 23:13-16
- 4) Luke 13:31-33
- 5) Luke 3:7-15
- 6) Matthew 14:3-12
- 7) Matthew 11:3-15
- 8) Matthew 17:24-27
- 9) Matthew 18:23-35
- 10) Matthew 22:1-2, 7-8, 15-21
- 11) Luke 22:24-27
- 12) Luke 19:12-27
- 13) Luke 5:27-32
- 14) Luke 19:1-11
- 15) John 2:13
- 16) Luke 11:42
- 17) Acts 4:33-37
- 18) 1 Corinthians 9:6-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 4
- Exodus 23
- Mark 11
- Matthew 23

Also referenced: Books:

- *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey (amazon.com)
- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Josephus*

FRC:bo
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Economics and Tithing in the New Testament

Fred R. Coulter

Greetings, brethren! This is the second one that we're going to do concerning the economics in Galilee in the days of Jesus. I went through—in the sermon *Urban Economics of Jesus' Time*—in this book *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey and how this city was the capital city of Herod Antipas and was only four miles from Nazareth.

I want to talk a little bit about Jesus' occupation, being a carpenter and a carpenter's son. We will see that that entailed far more than just working with wood. I mentioned a little bit about it in part one of this series. I'm going to mention it again because this had a great impact concerning finances and tithing and economics. When the Romans conquered the area of Galilee and Judea they owned the land.

All farmers and those who had herds became workers for the state: for the princes who were the subordinates of Antipas or Agrippa or Philip. They received money for their wages, so this made it an impossible thing for people to bring their animals for tithing, because they weren't theirs. They could not bring grain for tithing because it wasn't theirs.

The whole economics was a *money society*. We need to understand that. We also need to understand that the city of Sepphoris was a city of 30,000 people and it was about as modern as could be without electricity, built in a very palatial way by Herod Antipas.

I want to cover a little bit about Jesus' occupation. From the book: *Jesus and the Forgotten City* about the revised understanding about Jesus' occupation:

pg 70—This traditional scene of Joseph and Jesus working as carpenters in Nazareth must now be reexamined, keeping in mind the archaeological evidence unearthed at Sepphoris—evidence that places Jesus' early years in an entirely different cultural environment. In 3_{B.C.}, when Jesus is about two years old_[corrected age], Herod Antipas chooses Sepphoris as the site for his new capital of both Galilee and Peraea. For more than three decades while Jesus grows up in nearby Nazareth a huge construction project continues, as Sepphoris rapidly becomes the largest and most influential city in the region. The city's inhabitants,

soon numbering almost thirty thousand, are sophisticated and cosmopolitan Jews, Arabs, Greeks, and Romans.

A ten-minute walk from the Nazareth spring to the top of the ridge north of the village rewards one with the magnificent vista of the broad and fertile Bet Netofa Valley a thousand feet below.

Another thing that astonished me was that Jericho is 1200 feet below sea level. Jerusalem is 2500 feet above sea level. If you go on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem you have an average incline on the road of 6%. That's mountain climbing!

When Jesus and the disciples walked up there it was quite a thing for them to do. We also need to realize that these roads were very well taken care of. All the streets, coming back to Sepphoris, were all paved with stone. The whole city was made out of stone. There was wood used with it, but it was all stone. Here you see this very fertile valley, the Bet Netofa Valley:

The hill of Sepphoris, three miles north, rises almost four hundred feet from the valley floor. This is a beautiful and inviting view toward the site of ancient Sepphoris.

So they would come up to where the spring was in Nazareth and then you go up 400 feet to where the city of Sepphoris was. Jesus said, 'A city set on a hill cannot be hidden'; a good reference to the city of Sepphoris.

Joseph and Jesus knew of the construction of the new capital and would have been acquainted with artisans and other workers employed on the site. Shirley Jackson Case, professor of New Testament at the University of Chicago, made a fascinating observation based on his reading of Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian who knew Sepphoris well. "Very likely 'carpenter' as applied to Jesus meant not simply a worker in wood but one who labored at the building trade in general, and it requires no daring flight of the imagination to picture the youthful Jesus seeking and finding employment in the neighboring city of Sepphoris.

With His father and His brothers to help build the city. Obviously, I'm sure that they wouldn't work on the pagan temple that was there. But they could have worked on the forum, on the theater, the basilica, Herod's palace, or all the apartments that were built

there in Sepphoris. They had three and four story apartments.

The whole economy and everything that was done there is very much like what we have today. It was a money-based economy, not a barter-base! And being a money-based economy, and being in subjection to the Romans, the Jews could not bring their tithes in the form of produce or animals.

Also, God expects people to tithe on their increase. Increase also comes from doing business to have a profit in buying and selling—the parable of the pounds and the talents. All those parables are done in terms of money. Likewise with Jesus, His brothers, and Joseph working there as carpenters, they received money; they received payment.

But whether or not he actually labored there, his presence in the city on various occasions can scarcely be doubted; and in fact of such contracts during the formative years of His young manhood may account for attitudes and opinions that show themselves conspicuously during His public ministry.”

pg 71—Visits of Jesus to Sepphoris are not recorded by the Gospel writers, who give only fragmentary accounts of His life and ministry. After Jesus became widely recognized as an influential religious leader, [Herod] Antipas sought to arrest Him. Sepphoris would not be a safe setting in which to proclaim the coming Kingdom of god. The Gospels do tell of Jesus’ travels throughout all the cities and villages of Galilee and into Phoenicia, Caesarea Philippi, and the Decapolis, as well as journeys through Samaria to Jerusalem in Judea. It is difficult to believe that, during the approximately thirty years that Jesus grew up looking at Sepphoris, he never visited the capital or met the people living and working there. Even casual contacts with the capital would have given Jesus firsthand knowledge of Greco-Roman city planning, architectural design, and sophisticated engineering technology—as well as the cosmopolitan citizens.

Today, we still have the theory of evolution, even in religion, which affects our thinking; that they were just grubby little carpenters working in some outback, rural area, and that all Jesus did was call fishermen and farmers. That’s not the case. We’re going to go back and revisit the account of Matthew—a Levite and tax collector—who was rich!

The walk from Nazareth to Sepphoris takes about an hour. I had driven the distance between Nazareth and the excavations at Sepphoris over four hundred times, but in the summer of 1988 I took the opportunity to walk. I awoke at four A.M., dressed hurriedly, and forced down a breakfast of hot coffee and dry bread spread with jam and peanut butter. When the bus carried the diggers to the excavation at 4:30 A.M., it was still dark. A few minutes later when I left the Galilee Hotel, our home in the center of old Nazareth, the first light of dawn outlined the eastern hills. As I walked toward Mary’s well, the spring of ancient Nazareth, the streets were empty—a sharp contrast to the noise and stifling fumes of the daytime traffic. Here and there I encountered an industrious merchant up early preparing to open his shop. We did not exchange greetings in the darkness.

pg 72—By the time I reached the top of the ridge the sun greeted me and cast its soft amber rays over the low-lying, blue-gray mist in the valley below. Somehow on foot the familiar panorama seemed even more peaceful and inviting. Looking toward the hill of Sepphoris, I recalled again Jesus’ words. “A city set on a hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:14). Strolling down the north side of the ridge and across the gently rolling hills toward Sepphoris, I became keenly aware of the ease with which traffic moved between Nazareth and Sepphoris and wondered how often Jesus may have walked this way.

Sepphoris provides a significant new perspective for understanding the world in which Jesus lived and worked, both as a carpenter and religious teacher. The construction of Antipas’ Sepphoris viewed from the ridge above Nazareth is reminiscent of a scene from Virgil’s epic poem *The Aeneid*...

Then he goes on to describe the epic poem. I read that to let you know that it was truly something very different.

{Showing a picture from the book of Sepphoris looking back toward Nazareth. They have the model city of Sepphoris that they were putting together as they did their archeological excavations and dug up the things that were there.}

Remember, this was filled with shops, merchants, all kinds of services. It had a bank, a government basilica, a coliseum, a theater, a forum and apartments—all contained within it. This was the capital city of Herod Antipas. It was opulent. Also the princes who worked with him came there. The palace of Herod Antipas had 100 bedrooms! So it was no little village in a ditch.

Teachings of Jesus in relationship to economics and wealth:

pg 161—God is the Creator and Sustainer of all life. This message is at the center of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom or reign of God. Faith in God's sovereignty, benevolence, and nearness demands radical obedience. The disciple may no longer measure the value of life by material possessions if he is not rich toward God (Luke 12:15, 21).

Luke 12:15: "And He said to them, 'Watch out, and keep yourselves from covetousness, for no one's life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses.'"

If He said to beware of covetousness then, boy! beware of covetousness today! You have all the ads coming on radio, television, in newspaper, magazines, billboards signs, in stores, and the whole society today is based on covetousness.

Covetousness becomes a *root cause* as to why people claim that they ought not tithe. You need to think about that, because we're going to talk more about tithing. But I want to continue setting the stage for us in understanding of the economics and urban setting in which Jesus lived, worked and preached.

This talks about a rich man who had a lot of ground, v 16: "Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man...'" We read in part one of this series about how fertile the valleys were around Galilee. They brought in abundant crops and it earned a lot of money for Herod Antipas and the princes who owned it. So, a *certain rich man* would have been one of those princes.

"...brought forth abundantly. And he was reasoning within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to lay up my fruit?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater ones, and there will I lay up all my produce and my good things. Then I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest, eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him, "Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?" So *shall*

it be to the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God?" (vs 16-20). Yes, it is true that we have to be *rich* toward God in our:

- character
- attitude
- in building gold, silver and precious stone on the foundation of Jesus Christ

Those are the true riches. But also, we need to understand the things that were taking place during the days of Jesus. This has really been an eye-opener to read and understand this book; to realize how much it is like today. You know that they tithed! You know that they had to bring the Roman money up to the temple and exchange it for the temple money and then put that in the temple treasury.

Here we have a completely different society still functioning by the laws of God, though it was not like it was when the children of Israel first came into the land of Canaan.

pgs 161-162—Once as Jesus started out on a journey, a rich young Jewish ruler ran up to him and knelt down asking...

The young rich Jewish ruler means that he had to be in with the Romans. You could not get wealth unless you were in with the Romans.

...“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus deflects his praise, saying that no one is good except God, and then proceeds with an answer. “You know the commandments: ‘Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” The man responds that he has observed all these commandments from his early youth. Jesus looks lovingly at the man and offers a challenge and an enviable invitation: “You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”....

Let's understand the purpose of this. God would rather have you dedicated to Him, owning no physical goods, than to have physical goods and reject God. That's the whole tale of too many people. The 'tweeners' of that are those who are Laodiceans and they are 'rich and increased with goods'—which they rely upon and *are poor toward God!*

You know what happened: The rich man turned around and went away because he had many goods, and he was sorrowful. He left! He had great possessions!

...In spite, perhaps of, or perhaps because of his wealth, the radical cost of

discipleship was too high (Mark 10:17-22; cf. Matt. 19:16-22; Luke 18:24). This young ruler's love for his wealth prevents him from receiving the "treasures in heaven" that Jesus promises. His greed typifies many Galileans confronted by Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

In the parallel account in Mark 10

Aware of those standing by, Jesus adds a warning: "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God!" Indeed, a camel can pass through the eye of a needle more easily than a rich man can enter the Kingdom (Mark 10:23-25). But those, who for the sake of Jesus and His Gospel, forsake family, lands, and houses, will receive a hundredfold in this life (although with persecutions) and eternal life (Mark 10:29-31; cf. Matt. 19:29-30; Luke 18:28-30).

Let's understand something that is very important. Luke 16:10: "The one who *is* faithful in *the things that are* least is also faithful in much; and the one who *is* unrighteous in *the things that are* least is also unrighteous in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true *riches*?" (vs 10-11).

You need to think and understand about that in your relationship to God concerning tithes and offerings.

Let me just stop and say this: This is not a pitch for more money. This is not to merchandize you. We always live within our budget. We have never mailed out a letter asking for money, and we won't. I've never sent a sermon out pleading for money, and it won't happen. We trust God and ask God to bless the brethren, but it is also part of understanding the Truth of God that you know what God requires so that you can be faithful in those things, whether it is least or whether it is much.

There is a lesson here, v 11: "Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true *riches*?" The "...unrighteous mammon..." by the way is money!

Money is a gauge of part of your relationship with God. Years ago when we were part of the larger Church of God, that became the only gauge of whether you were righteous or not. That can't be! It can't be where it is the only gauge, and send out letters every month; send money and give all you can and so forth. That is merchandizing the people.

Please do not mistake what I am saying in teaching the Truth about the economics during Jesus' time and what I'm saying now, and what I'm bringing out here from the Word of God ***that I'm asking for more money. I'm going to teach the Word of God, and you will have to choose whether you will obey God or not! That is entirely up to you!*** But you also have to understand the consequences if you don't. And I, as a minister, if I do not teach this and do not tell you this—not only this, but concerning Sabbath, Holy Days, faith, love, hope, grace, keeping the commandments of God—all of those things are necessary.

We need to understand that! I just want to set the record straight! I know there are some people who are going to get angry at me. If you're angry at me, then ask yourself:

- Are you angry at me?
- or*
- Are you angry at yourself?
- or*
- Are you angry at God?
- or*
- Are you upset because you have a guilty conscience?

That's what you need to do! The reason I bring this out is very important and these are the words of Jesus:

Verse 12: "And if you have not been faithful in that which *is* another's..." Who owns the tithe? *God does!* It's His! What you do with it then is faithfulness or a degree of faithfulness, or unfaithfulness—depending on what you do.

"...who will give to you your own?" (v 12). In other words, who is going to give you eternal life? You need to think on that.

Here is the Truth, here is a lesson, 13: "No servant is able to serve two masters..." Absolutely true in every principle of everything that you do, whether it be God, another man, an occupation, money, possessions:

"...You cannot serve God and mammon, for either he will hate the one, and he will love the other; or he will hold to *the* one and will despise the other. You **cannot...** ['ou dunatai'—the impossibility] ...serve God and mammon.' Now, the Pharisees who were also covetous, heard all these things; and they ridiculed Him. And He said to them, 'You are those who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination before God'" (vs 13-15). Very profound lessons we can learn!

pg 163—Jesus expresses His radical ethic in the commands, “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36) and “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). Trusting fully in God’s sovereign love, the disciple shares this love with others and so reflects the Divine nature in interpersonal relationships....

That is the most important thing. Tithing—unless you’re robbing God—is not a salvational thing. But it is something that everyone needs to do ‘according to how God has blessed them.’

...Faith in God’s care liberates the disciple from the tyranny of material possessions and “the cares of the world.”....

I think that is really quite a good way to express it.

We’ll go back over the thing concerning Matthew the Levite. A lot of people have said that people in the Church cannot give money to the Church or tithe to the Church because the Levites are still here and the priesthood was still there. Therefore, if they tithe then they would have to tithe to the Levites and then tithe to the Church. If they were not in the synagogue and they were not at the temple, and they were following Christ and the apostles, they had no obligation to that, because they have to leave and forsake that through baptism. That’s a false argument. It’s absolutely nonsensical.

However, I’m bringing out here concerning Matthew the Levi because anyone who was following the apostles could still tithe. Matthew was a Levi, Barnabas was a Levi and many of the priests came obedient to the faith. You need to re-think some of these old clichés that people come up with.

Luke 5:27: “Now, after these things, He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ Then he arose, leaving everything, *and* followed Him” (vs 27-28). That was a lucrative job! He was not like the rich man who refused to sell all of his possessions. He just got up and left it.

Verse 29: “And Levi made a great feast for Him in his house, and there were a large number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.” Quite a thing!

Let’s look at a key thing that has to do with money, with tribute money, Matthew 22:15: “Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech. And they sent their disciples *along* with the Herodians...” (vs 15-16). These were the official ones from Herod Antipas; they were going to try to trick Jesus into saying that

you shouldn’t give taxes to Caesar.

Let’s just stop and think about it. There are a lot of people who lay themselves open for a lot of problems and troubles, unnecessarily so, who say that we need to get out the system, out of social security, get rid of our driver’s licenses, the licenses on our cars, and we need to get back to the Constitution once delivered because it was never provided for in the Constitution.

They fail to realize a very important thing: *We were there once*—weren’t we? As long as there is Satan the devil in the world, given the same amount of time—if there were that much time left; and given that you could get back to the Constitution once delivered—guess where we would be in 200 years? *Exactly the same place!*

Let’s understand the economy and things as they were in Galilee and Judea being under Roman servitude. It’s very much like today. One could say that the taxation of the Romans was illegal because it’s not from God. You want to be crucified? *Their IRS agents were worse than ours!* This answers a question: Should we pay income tax? *Yes!* Jesus gave the answer.

If Jesus would have said not to pay taxes, they would have arrested Him right there, the Herodians would have taken Him and He would have gone before the authorities for teaching people to rebel against the taxes.

“...to Him, saying, ‘Master, we know that You are true, and *that* You teach the way of God in Truth, and *that* You are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect *the* persons of men. Therefore, tell us, what do You think?...’” (vs 16-17). Isn’t this the way a lot of these things go? People sit down and ask: What do you think? Rather than say, ‘What does the Bible say?’

Where people get themselves in more trouble in talking about the Bible is when they talk about it and give their thoughts on it and never open the Bible to really find out what it accurately says! Here we have the same thing:

“...Is it lawful...” (v 17)—according to God’s Law because it certainly was for Roman law; it was the law of Rome: you pay taxes! They had tax collectors everywhere!

“...to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, ‘Why do you tempt Me, *you hypocrites?*’” (vs 17-18). Sanctimonious pretenders—‘hypocrites’ is what they called actors in the theater because they play acted.

Verse 19: “‘Show Me the tribute coin’ And they brought to Him a silver coin [‘danarius’]. And

He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription *is on this?*’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’.... [holding the coin right there in His own hand] ...And He said to them, ‘Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God’” (vs 19-21).

Does God have any requirement concerning wealth? *Yes!* This also shows that in rendering to God they rendered it in money, because there were very few that had their own land where they could go tithing of the grain, or the flock, or herd, and so forth. Plus you had all of the workers: carpenters, shoemakers, clothing makers, leatherworkers people, those who bought and sold merchandise. They didn’t do it for nothing. They all made a profit. A profit is increase!

I’ve covered this before, and I don’t want to sound sarcastic, so let’s go to another Scripture since we are to render unto God the things that are God’s, let’s go to Num. 18. *God* tells us what is His. *God gave it* to the priesthood and the Levites. But in particular, it talks about agricultural things because it takes no brain to figure how to give 10% of your increase if it’s money. Therefore, that does not have to be spelled out in great detail by saying that if you have ten denarii then you give one of the denarii. It’s easy to figure.

But when you have cattle, as they had when they first went into the land, if the land belonged to them and they did it the way that God said, then you have to have specific instructions for it. This becomes very important because it tells us the things that belong to God:

Numbers 18:20: “And the LORD said to Aaron, ‘You shall have no inheritance in their land...’” We have the same thing today. You may own a house; your family may inherit it. In fact, the Levites in the Levitical cities could buy land and own a house. Here where it says *they have no inheritance in the land*, there was no special geographical area called *the tribe of Levi*. They were scattered throughout all the 12 tribes so they could take care of teaching, doing their duties according to the Word of God.

The Levites then would come up to the temple during the Holy Day season and they would all be there and they would have two weeks during the rest of the year when they would come up and work one week as we find in the book of *Josephus*. That’s what it means *no inheritance*. So, if I own a house it’s not an inheritance, though I can pass it on to my children. Levites and priests own houses and they could pass it on to their children.

“...neither shall you have any part among them. I *am* your part and your inheritance among the children of Israel. And behold, I have given the sons

of Levi **all the tithe** in Israel for an inheritance...” (vs 20-21). All the tenth means that on whatever increase there was to be a tenth or a tithe given. If you were a merchantman and you made money, and you would tithe on it. If you bought and sold and made a profit, you would tithe on it.

Just like today, people don’t go into business to lose money. They don’t go into business to give things away. Do you think that God would charge all the farmers and ranchers, making all of them tithe, but not have any of the workers—miners, laborers, carpenters or the craftsman—tithe, though they made a profit and maybe even made more money than some of the ranchers and farmers. That would be very ludicrous to believe, especially in light of the fact the way the economy was during the days of Jesus, and it was a moneyed society. “...all the tithe [tenth] in Israel for an inheritance...”—whatever it was!

The *special circumstances* of the firstfruits, of counting cattle, fruit and so forth, are covered because they’re specific and detailed things that needed to be covered. But if you have a profit in money, it’s very easy to figure.

But it’s still “...all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance for their service which they serve, the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” (v 21).

- What if the Levites lived in an area where they raised a lot of chickens? *All the farmers would bring chickens and eggs and feathers!*
- Can he live on chicken and eggs?
- What would the Levite do with them? *He in turn could turn around and sell them!*
- What if you had five poultry ranchers and each one of them brought you chickens every week? *You’d get sick and tired of chickens—wouldn’t you?*
- How are you going to get some beef? *You’d have to sell them or barter them!*
- How are you going to get a goat?
- How are you going to get some milk?
- How are you going to get some vegetables?
- How are you going to get these other things?
- How are you going to get clothes?
- How are you going to get shoes?

It all evolved down into being a moneyed society whenever you had the urban centers develop. Quite a thing! “...all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance for their service which they serve, the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Verse 22: “Neither must the children of Israel come near the tabernacle of the congregation from this time forward, lest they bear sin and die.

But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity, *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel... [all the tithes from every source] ...which they offer *as* a heave offering to the LORD, **I have given to the Levites to inherit...**” (vs 22-24).

A tithe is also given as an offering. That’s important to understand when we get back to the New Testament.

(go to the next track)

Verse 25: “And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘And you shall speak to the Levites, and you shall say to them, “When you take tithes from the children of Israel, which I have given you...”’” (vs 25-26). That shows that *God owns the tithe*. This clearly establishes it, because He gives it, as something that God owns. *That’s His!*

So, when Jesus held up the coin and said, ‘Whose image and superscription is this?’ and they said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Then He said, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and render to God the things that are God’s,’ He was talking about money, because *the tithe belongs to God* and He gave it to the children of Israel. Subsequently, we’ll see that this was transferred to the Church (1-Cor. 9), which we covered very briefly and this time I’ll go through it in greater detail so we can understand it.

“...which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it for the LORD... [it’s still God’s] ...*even* a tenth of the tithe” (v 26). What would happen was that the Levites, in receiving the tithe, would have to tithe to the priesthood.

Verse 27: “And your heave offering... [Interesting, heave offering could be anything.] ...shall be credited to you as grain of the threshing-floor and as the fullness of the winepress.” This means that they were giving money, based upon the same command where they gave of the corn and where they gave the wine. This could be a tithe of anything.

Verse 28: “So, you also shall offer a heave offering to the LORD of all your tithes, which you receive from the children of Israel. And **you shall give from these the LORD’S heave offering to Aaron the priest.** Out of all your gifts you shall offer every heave offering of the LORD of all the best of them, the Holy part out of it.’ And you shall say to them, ‘When you have lifted up the best of it, then it shall be credited to the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress’” (vs 28-30).

He’s drawing a comparison. He didn’t say it

shall be counted the increase of the threshing floor, meaning only grain; or the increase of the winepress, meaning only wine. This show that you are to use the same principle in determining the tithe of any increase that is made—whether it comes from the land, or whether it comes from labor.

Verse 31: “And you shall eat it in every place, you and your households. For it *is* your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. And you shall bear no sin because of it when you have offered up the best of it. Neither shall you profane the Holy things of the children of Israel, lest you die” (vs 31-32). There we have very clear instructions concerning the tithe.

Let’s see something that is very important. God is against merchandizing. God is against taking advantage: Luke 20:45: “And as all the people were listening, He said to His disciples, ‘Beware of the scribes...’” (vs 45-46). Most of the scribes were Levites. Here they had sinned by going around to take advantage—in this case particularly of widows.

“...who like to walk in robes, and love salutations in the marketplaces, and *the* chief seats in the synagogues, and *the* chief places at the suppers; who devour the houses of widows, and as a pretext pray at great length.... [so they get paid for those long prayers] ...These shall receive the greater judgment” (vs 46-47).

That’s exactly what happens in the Catholic Church today. They don’t believe in tithing, so you pay for the Mass, you pay for the Mass for the dead, you pay the priest, and what happens, they end up merchandizing the people. I’ve seen this over and over again. Whenever someone says, ‘Oh, we don’t have to tithe in the New Testament’—which is entirely incorrect—what do they do? *They devise their own system!* ‘We’ll have pledges!’

- Are you to follow the law of man or the Law of God?
- Should you follow a law of man that replaces a Law of God and say you’re delivered to do that?
- Should we do that?
- Should we end up like the Catholics?

It’s kind of like one man who wrote me a very nasty letter and said, ‘You should not be incorporated as a 501C3 church. What you should do is take in the money and everything you send out you should charge for, and then you should pay taxes on all the money that comes in.’

That’s the silliest proposal that I have ever heard of! God inspired that in this country that the churches can receive tithes and offerings without paying taxes. And for everybody’s information,

there is no required Federal report if you're a 501C3 church organization. The government does not give you a mandate of what to do or what to say or how to run your organization. We run it according to the way that God wants! They're happy with that. But we do pay the taxes of withholding and social security, because that is the law of the land, and we do render unto Caesar those things that are Caesar's. Here is the merchandizing that took place.

Luke 21:1: "When He looked up, He saw the rich men casting their offerings into the treasury." It was money! And the gifts that they were giving, we don't know if this was above tithing, but they would give. Do you not give a tithe? *Yes!* If you give it, it is a gift that you put into the treasury even though God says that it is His.

Verse 2: Then He also saw a certain poor widow drop in two small coins. And He said, 'Of a truth, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all *of them*; for all these have from their abundance cast into the offerings to God... [they had to take the Roman money and convert it into temple money and that's what they put into the offerings of God] ...but she, out of her poverty, did put *in* all the livelihood that she had'" (vs 2-4).

1-Corinthians 9 is where a lot of people go to say, 'Paul did not collect tithes.' Paul was following the principle of the condemnation of Jesus concerning the Pharisees. He said, 'Woe to you Pharisees; you tithe of mint and anise and cumin and you have overlooked the weightier matters of the law: *judgment, mercy and love.*

What Paul was trying to do is he was trying to get the Corinthians to come to the understanding of judgment, mercy and love, so they could then pick up their responsibility of doing the things financially. He said, 'Forgive me this wrong' (2-Cor.); so he admitted that not taking tithes and offerings from the Corinthians was a wrong, and that he robbed other churches; those who say they don't believe in tithing and they setup their own system.

1-Corinthians 9:1: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in *the* Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, without a doubt I am to you. For you are the certification of my apostleship in *the* Lord. My defense to those who are examining me is this" (vs 1-3).

He was being criticized for not doing it, because it was something that the Church was given to do! It was authority over the brethren that God gave to the ministry. Since he wasn't doing it, they criticized him. Here's his answer:

Verse 4: "Do we not have a right...

['*exousia*'—authority; it doesn't mean power in the sense of *power*—'dunamis'—but in the sense of authority] ...to eat and to drink?" How are we going to eat and drink?

Verse 5: "Do we not have a right to take with us a sister, a wife, as also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?" What is this telling us? *The other apostles and the brethren of the Lord*—Judas, Simon, and Cephas (Peter)—not only had wives but also it's implying that they partook of tithing.

Verse 6: "Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working?" If you work and you make money then you support yourself. If you forebear working—meaning you don't work—then you have to be supported somehow. He goes on explaining a very profound principle:

Verse 7: "Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense?...?" When I volunteered for the Army, I stepped forth and they had me get rid of all my civilian things. They cut off all my hair. They gave me all the GI-issues: fatigues, dress uniform, shoes, socks, underwear, a rifle, instruction, food—three meals a day. You don't go and provide that for yourself.

He's saying that it's self-evident that those who are going to serve in the military must also receive wages, must also be provided all of these things.

"...Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it? Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock?" (v 7).

Now, here's an interesting interpretation, v 8: "Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things? For it is written in the Law of Moses..." (vs 8-9). What did we just read in the Law of Moses in Num. 18? *All the tithe went to Levi!* That was transferred over to the ministry. We find that right here and then substantiated legally in Heb. 7_[transcriber's correction].

"...‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.’..." (v 9). Paul is saying with this that this is the least you ought to be able to do. At least give something!

"...Is it because God is concerned for oxen?" (v 9). A lot of animal rights people would be upset with this. And a lot of people interpreting the Scriptures would be upset that Paul was so liberal in interpreting the Scriptures here.

Verse 10: "Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes? For our sakes it was written..." That's something! To take that and apply it directly to the

preaching of the Gospel.

“...so that the one who plows might plow in hope... [we’re to set our hands the plow and not look back] ...and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things?” (vs 10-11). Whether it be food, clothing, money, a place to live; to reap of your *physical* things.

Verse 12: “If others participate in this authority over you...” Who are the *others*? Well, he listed some of them. Who were the others who were taking advantage of it? *The false apostles* (2-Cor. 11). It was authority! They partook in this authority over the brethren.

“...much more surely *should* not we?... [partake in this authority over you] ...Nevertheless, we have not used this authority...” (vs 11-12). So, in circumstances where people are so carnal, and they’re worried about physical things, what he did in Corinth to try and encourage them is to say to himself, ‘Okay, we’re going to do this free’; hoping that they would grow up in knowledge and understanding and they would be able to respond and do the things they needed to do. That’s fine!

“...but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ” (v 12). Remember, there were these false apostles coming in who were also the competition. He wanted to cut off an occasion of those false apostles from collecting the tithes. So, he didn’t do it.

Verse 13: “Don’t you know... [understand] ...that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple...” What are the things of the temple? Not only the sacrifices, not only the tithes of the physical things, but of the money, which was put into the treasury. We saw that that was at the temple.

“...and those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? In the same way also...” (vs 13-14). The Greek word for [al]so is ‘houtos’ meaning *in exactly the same way*. We read:

- Num. 18 that it was all the tithe
- Luke 21 that they put their gifts into the treasury

It was all the things!

Verse 14: “In the same way also the Lord did **command**...” Whether it is *ordained* (KJV) or *command* makes no difference; the Lord is the One Who did it. This is direct New Testament authority that the tithes were transferred to those who preach the Gospel. Absolutely clear!

It says in *exactly the same way* did the Lord

order “...that **those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel**. But I have not used any of these things....” (vs 14-15). He wanted them to be converted first. We’re going to see that he had to take wages or money from other churches.

“...And I have not written these things in order that this might *now* be done to me. For *it would be* better for me to die rather than to have anyone make my boasting void” (vs 14-15). What he was doing is saying, ‘I’m doing this as an example for them that they may be truly converted and quit looking to men and look to Christ.

Verse 16: “For though I preach the Gospel, there is no *reason* for me to boast because an obligation has been laid upon me. And woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if *I do this* against my will, I have been entrusted with a ministry. What then is my reward? That in preaching the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without expense, **so that I may not abuse my authority in the Gospel**” (vs 16-18). So, there was the second part of it. He didn’t want to abuse it. Then he would be free to teach to all. You know all the flack that he would get from the Jews.

We’re going to see some very interesting things in 2-Corinthians 11 and here’s why he did not do it; he explains why: 2-Corinthians 11:1: “I would *that* you might bear with me in a little nonsense; but indeed, do bear with me.” He says, ‘I’m going to be foolish about this, so I want you to listen and pay attention, and bear with me.’

Verse 2: “For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God because I have espoused you to one husband, so that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ” (vs 2-3). He wanted them first to be grounded in Christ, because there were other false apostles and preachers coming.

Verse 4: “For indeed, if someone comes preaching another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different Gospel, which you did not accept, you put up with it as *something* good.” They were broadminded and accepting common ground; very similar to what we have today in the ecumenical movement.

Verse 5: “But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles.” The so-called chief apostles; the hotshot apostles! This has nothing to do with Peter, because Peter was not the chief apostle. I tell you, the different Churches of God have *put up with* all kinds of things

from false prophets. You put up with it and let people push your face into the ground. *No!* Christ does not want that! God does not want that!

Verse 6: “For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet, *I am* not in knowledge; for in all things I have demonstrated this to you.” *You know us inside and out; there’s no reason for you to suspect us or look upon us this way.*

Verse 7: “Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you freely?” This is something that is true: Whenever the Truth is spoken that a person doesn’t like, they tend to find fault with the person:

- he didn’t say it just right
- he was angry
- he’s been critical
- he didn’t do it in a loving manner

The Apostle Paul had the same problem because he was not good looking and was rude in speech, and he told the truth. He says:

Galatians 4:16: “Now then, in speaking the Truth to you, have I become your enemy?” Think of it in the Church of God. If the Truth of God cannot be preached in the Church of God, because we make enemies of those who are listening, **are those who are listening really in the Church of God?**

You need to think about a lot of these things. Not only am I talking about tithes and offerings and things, I’m talking about a lot of important principles in Christian living.

2-Corinthians 11:8: “I robbed other churches... [probably taking more than the tithes that they had, because some of the churches were very small] ...receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you.” In other words, so ‘I could continue doing it without charge.’

Verse 9: “And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone (for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs)...” They had regular things coming to Paul from Macedonia because it was well known that those in Corinth didn’t take care of Paul. So, Paul was trying to preach the Gospel to them in the face of all of these false apostles—and those who were also exercising the authority of tithes and offerings over them—he said, ‘I’m not going to do it so that these people will be converted; so that they will understand the Gospel of Christ. I think it was a lost battle; a lost cause.

“...for I kept myself, and will *continue* to keep myself, from being burdensome to you in anything. As *the Truth* of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of

Achaia... [that’s where Corinth was] ...Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows *I do*. But what I am doing, I will do, so that I may cut off *any* occasion from those who are desiring an occasion...” (vs 9-12). He was doing it to avoid a confrontation that would cause problems with the brethren.

“...so that in the things they boast of, they also may be found even as we *are*” (v 12). That’s referring directly to the false apostles. They gloried in themselves! They gloried in their false gospel! They gloried in being able to take tithes and offering from the brethren! And the brethren didn’t give anything to Paul, because he didn’t ask for it. He did it to “...cut off *any* occasion...” As we will see, Paul was wrong!

Verse 13: “For such *are* false apostles—deceitful workers who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.”

- To exercise that authority over them!
- To preach a false gospel!
- To preach another Jesus!
- To bring another spirit!

Verse 14: “And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works” (vs 14-15). Then Paul goes through listing all the things that he went through.

Let’s understand some of the leverage and the power that some of these false apostles had.

Verse 21: “I speak as though we were under reproach for being weak; but in whatever *way* anyone else is bold (I speak in foolishness), I also am bold. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they *the* seed of Abraham? So am I” (vs 21-22). They would come in and say something like:

- we are from Judea
- we heard Christ
- I was there when He fed the 4,000
- I was there when He fed the 5,000
- let us tell *you* the gospel of Christ, which was *another* gospel

They were going by the physical things, who they were; not by the spiritual things of what Christ wanted.

Verse 23: “Are they servants of Christ? (I am speaking as if I were out of my mind.) So am I, above *and beyond measure*...”

Then he lists all the things that he went through. Everything that he did while all of these

false apostles were mincing around in their long robes and their finery and everything like that, and collecting tithes and offerings from the brethren and putting down Paul saying, ‘If he were really an apostle he would exercise this authority—wouldn’t he?’

Let’s see what he went through, “...in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in imprisonments more frequent, in deaths often... [near death and death watches] ...Five times from *the Jews* I received forty *stripes* less one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I spent in the deep. *I have been* in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from *my own race*, in perils from *the Gentiles*, in perils in *the city*, in perils in *the desert*, in perils on *the sea*, in perils among false brethren” (vs 23-26).

I tell you, Paul had a very unpleasant life! All of this he’s telling the Corinthians, and ‘you didn’t even have the slightest bit of conversion, that even though I didn’t exercise this authority over you, you still didn’t participate.’ That’s the long and short of what he’s saying here. But he said, ‘So be it! I’m not going to collect anything from you because I do not want you to say that *Paul made me do it.*’

Likewise in the situation here: In bringing these sermons I’m not doing it to make you do it. If you don’t feel that you can give any money to a man, then you’d better not do it. But you better go before God and understand what God requires, and you better decide what you need to do according to God leading you with His Spirit what you ought to do.

Now I want to cover something that is *very* important. I’ve seen this over and over again in my *many* years of being a minister.

2-Corinthians 9:6: “But this *I say*: the one who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly... [in the *physical* sense and also in the *spiritual* sense] ...and the one who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Each one as he purposes in his heart, *so let him give*, but not grudgingly or by compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver” (vs 6-7).

Now let’s understand something very, very important and profound: I’ve heard people say, ‘See, we don’t have to give tithes.’ Really what should happen is this: Since in the New Testament it doesn’t require tithing—which is not a true statement—therefore, we should use that as a guideline and anyone who wants to be right with God should give *more* than a tenth.

I’ve heard those platitudes from men whose covetousness is really after the money. You know

what I have found? *Not one has ever given more than a tenth or even close to it!* That is an ideological mask of false brethren or false ministers who do not know the Truth of God. In saying that and in doing that they are misapplying the Scriptures, and *they themselves do not do it!*

I had a occasion of that with a man who wrote me and said, ‘I can no longer follow you, Fred Coulter, because you are not teaching sound doctrine. Nowhere in the New Testament does it teach that we should tithe.’ Well, I just read it to you!

Let’s understand one thing about the tithes and why Paul said, ‘Forgive me for this wrong.’ We’re going to reiterate one point again, and let’s see what God says. As we have already established, God made it clear that the tithe belongs to Him and He gave it to the Levites. He also made it clear through the Apostle Paul and also, obviously, to all the other apostles, that He transferred that authority to the Church.

Please remember that when the Church started out they sold land and brought all the money to the apostles—didn’t they? Far more than a tithe!

Malachi 3:7: “‘From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you,’ says the LORD of hosts....” It’s not just this sentimental, mushy-mushy, emotional feeling. There has to be some substance to it. There has to be something that you do with it. ***You have to return to God! He explains how to do it!***

“...But you say. ‘In what way shall we return?’.... [God says how to do it]: ...Will a man rob God? Yet, you are robbing Me....” (vs 7-8). These things belong to Him. If they didn’t belong to God, how could you rob Him? *Think on that!*

“...But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings! You *are* cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation” (vs 8-9).

Also, I have seen this true as can be: Those who believe in tithing and are faithful, they are blessed according to the promise given here—more than they can receive. They’re blessed in many, *many*, *many* different ways! Those who don’t tithe have to use the tithe to pay for the curses that God brings upon them, because their financial structure generally falls apart. I’ve seen that almost 100% true!

If you’re not going to give what belongs to God, He’s going to make you spend it on something that He would have ordinarily blessed you in. But because you did not want the blessing of God in

tithing, you receive the cursing. So, He is going to let you spend the money that you should have tithed on things of a curse:

- ill health
- not being able to take care of things
- having bills that you need to pay because you can't manage your money
- having a car collapse on you

Whatever it may be, it's going to be eaten up because it belongs to God! That's why He says, "You *are* cursed with a curse..."

Verse 10: "Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove Me..." God challenges you to *prove* Him!

If you just say that you're going to prove God. 'Let's see if He's going to help me.' *Forget it!* You're not doing it in a willing attitude, because you love God. You're doing it because you're compelled to do it, and you might as well continue to live under a curse and spend the money for all those things that you need to spend it on, because you don't willfully and willingly love God and obey Him. That's just the way that it is! We really need to look at the 'facts of life' with this.

"...now with this,' says the LORD of hosts, 'to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is not enough room to receive it.*'" (v 10). Not only physical blessings, but spiritual blessings.

Verse 11: "And I will rebuke the devourer..." That's something! There are many devourers out there in the world!

"...for your sakes, and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,' says the LORD of hosts" (v 11).

- That's what we are to do!
- That's why it's from God!

We will see why the Apostle Paul repented of wronging them for not collecting the tithe, but he said, 'Nevertheless, I still won't do it, because I've started this way and I'm going to leave it up to God to take care of it for you.'

2-Corinthians 12:11: "I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing. Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what *way* was it that you were inferior to the other churches, **except that I myself did not burden**

you? Forgive me this wrong" (vs 11-13). So, he repented of it!

Verse 14: "Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you; for I do not seek what is yours..." We need to understand that, brethren! The tithe belongs to God!

- Do you love God?
- Do you want to obey Him?
- Do you want to serve Him?
- Do you want to do the things that are pleasing to God?
- Do you want the blessings that come with God, because you're lovingly obeying Him?

Not only in keeping the Sabbath and those things, but in everything that belongs to God.

That's why I bring this out. It is not to get more money from you. It is not to have a big stash of cash or however you want to look at it. It is so that you will be able to have the blessings that come from God.

- God expects you to do it in faith
- God expects you to prove Him

God will back up His Word and He will bless and prosper you if you do follow through and give your tithes and offerings according to the way that God has instructed!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Luke 12:15-20
- 2) Luke 16:10-15
- 3) Luke 5:27-29
- 4) Matthew 22:15-21
- 5) Numbers 18:20-32
- 6) Luke 20:45-47
- 7) Luke 21:1-4
- 8) 1 Corinthians 9:1-18
- 9) 2 Corinthians 11:1-7
- 10) Galatians 4:16
- 11) 2 Corinthians 11:8-15, 21-26
- 12) 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
- 13) Malachi 3:7-11
- 14) 2 Corinthians 12:11-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Mark 10

Also referenced: Books:

- *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey (amazon.com)
- *Josephus*

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Transcribed: 11-24-13

Paul, Corinthians and Tithing

Fred R. Coulter

We want to start out by first of all establishing some very profound and important things in the New Testament.

The argument always comes—they do this with the Sabbath, the Holy Days, tithing and many, many other things—if the commandment is not specifically repeated identically in the New Testament then ‘we are not bound to do it.’ We will see that it is an absolute false assumption.

Let’s first of all establish the New Testament as the true Word of God, and the Scriptures of God, which Paul does in Rom. 16; these are his final comments with his last canonization just before he died.

Romans 16:25: “Now, to **Him Who** has the power to establish you, according to my Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ... [He’s talking of God the Father] ...according to *the* revelation of *the* mystery... [that we’re going to be the sons of God at the resurrection] ...that in past ages has been kept secret; but now *is* made manifest, and **by the prophetic Scriptures...**” (vs 25-26). This is not the Old Testament prophets; these are the “...prophetic Scriptures...” that has to do with the New Testament, and I’ll prove that to you in just a minute.

“...according to *the* commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations unto *the* obedience of faith” (v 26). You can’t have obedience to the faith without the New Testament. That’s called *The Word of God* throughout.

Let’s see what the Apostle Paul wrote concerning what he wrote, 1-Corinthians 14:36: “WHAT? Did the Word of God originate with you? Or did it come only to you *and no one else*? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual...” (vs 36-37). There’s a New Testament prophet—not those who prophesied foretelling of events necessarily—in some cases they did—who foretells the Truth of God or the telling forth of the Truth of God.

“...let him acknowledge that the things I write to you **are commandments of the Lord**” (v 37). What do we need to understand concerning this? *We need to understand that just as Moses received from God the things to write*, so likewise did the apostles receive from Christ the things to write. They are, brethren, in the same category as Moses as far as writing the Word of God.

This gives a whole lot more authority to the New Testament than people would like to accept.

Sidebar: from *The Story of the Christian Church* by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut. He has one little comment after introducing the Apostolic Church:

Fifty years after the death of Apostles we have no writing of Timothy or Apollos or anyone else, but when the curtain of history is raised ***we find a church that is totally different*** than the one that the apostles established. (paraphrased)

The reason is that once the New Testament was canonized, all the ministers/apostles had died—Timothy, Titus, Mark, later Polycarp, Polycrates and so forth—what did they do? *They all preached only the Word!* They all subordinated themselves to the writings of the apostles, because that was going to be the instruction book for all Christians until Christ returned.

When read 2-Timothy 3:14, let’s understand what it’s saying, “But *as for* you, continue in the things that you did learn... [The commandments of God; is that not what Paul said?] ...and were assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*; and that from a child you have known the Holy Writings... [this being the Old Testament] ...which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture...**” (vs 14-16). He’s including *all* New Testament Scripture; this includes everything that he has written. This is important in establishing the Word of God.

We’re going to read some Scriptures that are going to kind of needle some people. But nevertheless, **ALL** Scripture; does *all* leave out any? *No!* In the Greek—‘pasa’—this could also mean *every single* Scripture.

“...***is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine...*** [We need doctrine—don’t we?] ...***for conviction...***” (v 16). We all need to be reprov’d; we all reprove even our own selves as we go along. How many times have you said to yourself, ‘That’s dumb!’ Why did you do that?’ Or reproof from the Word of God; help you to set right, go in the way that you need to go.

“...***for correction...*** [that’s a little stronger] ...***for instruction in righteousness...*** [that you may know how to live your life] ...so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work” (vs 16-17). He’s talking directly to Timothy and his ministry. But this applies to everyone who has the Word of God, without a doubt.

Notice what he says in 2-Timothy 4, which substantiates what I said, that all of those who

succeeded the apostles did not succeed them as apostles, but subordinated themselves to the Word of God. Of course, the Catholics accuse us of making the Bible an idol, because we only go by the Bible. Well, that's what Paul said to do—didn't he?

- How are you going to know who is telling the Truth?
- How are you going to know who is lying?
- How are you going to know who is a true prophet or false prophet?

Unless you have some standard to go by, some standard that is above and beyond ordinary men. That's why we have the whole Bible and the New Testament in particular.

2-Timothy 4:1: "I charge you, therefore, in the sight of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **Preach the Word!**...." (vs 1-2). There it is; it can't get any more clear than that. What is to be preached? *The Word!*

- What if some people don't like some of the words of Christ?
- Should we then not preach them?
- What if some people do not like some of the words of the Apostle Paul?
- Even one particular verse?
- Should we forebear preaching it?

We'll see in a minute, absolutely *no!*

"...Be urgent... [be right on top of it; don't let yourself be laggard in it] ...in season and out of season..." (v 2). That shows they were keeping the Holy Days, no doubt about it.

Remember, when Polycrates went to Victor—Bishop of Rome at that time—it was over keeping the 14th Passover. What did Polycrates tell Victor? Victor was demanding that everyone keep Easter on the first Sunday after the full moon of Passover. If they didn't, they would be excommunicated. Polycrates said to Victor, 'Do you want to excommunicate all the churches in Asia?' That's quite a statement. It shows that all the churches in Asia were following the Word of God in season and out of season.

Notice what has to happen, He tells them to "...convict, rebuke, encourage... [edify and uplift] ...with all patience and doctrine. For there shall come a time when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but according to their own lusts they shall accumulate to themselves *a great number of* teachers, having ears itching *to hear what satisfies their cravings*; and they shall turn away their own ears from the Truth; and they shall be turned aside unto myths" (vs 2-4). Of course, that happened!

Why? What do we learn during the Feast of Unleavened Bread? What is the principle? *A little leaven leavens the whole lump!* When you have some Scriptures that kind of gouge you and dig you, and pricks your carnality, and you don't like it, then you begin rejecting them, what are you doing? *You're allowing a little leaven to leaven the whole lump!* It can start with almost anything if you allow it.

Let's see what Jesus said so that we understand this. We will also see that God never intended—contrary to the claims of people who don't want to keep the commandments of God—to restate every commandment in the New Testament. Why do that when it's already stated in the Old Testament and that you have the Holy Writings—which Paul told Timothy were able to 'make you wise unto salvation through Jesus Christ'—so anything that was said in the Old Testament stands on its own and is part of the Word of God, and there is no need to repeat it all in the New Testament.

It's that simple! This is a Scripture that you've heard over and over again, but sometimes in getting into some of these things that get a little thorny and sticky, then what we need to do is go back and relay the foundation of understanding so that we don't get offended; so that if some correction does come, that you're not going to be all bent out of shape at a man—being me or someone else—who says the Truth!

Another standard is this: The Truth of God stands alone—does it not? If someone will speak the Truth of God, though they may be very deficient and very unrighteous in many other areas of their life, does this unrighteousness in their life change the Truth of God? *No!* But it exposes their own unrighteousness—doesn't it?

Jesus said, Matthew 5:17: "Do not think... [don't let it enter your mind—hello, all of those out in Protestant land] ...that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." Those are two sweeping statements. What does that include? *It includes the whole Old Testament!* {Note Luke 24:44—He opened their eyes to the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms }

We need to understand that in reference to the Old Testament, if it is mentioned once in the New Testament it then becomes *all* applicable. That's why you have to understand how Jesus fulfilled the Law. He said, 'I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.'

Note: Appendix H from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version: How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets.* It's all in *A Harmony of the Gospels* in the commentary on the

Sermon on the Mount.

Verse 18: “For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law** until everything has been fulfilled.” Jesus didn’t fulfill all; He fulfilled part. He fulfilled by:

- His life
- His sacrifice
- His death
- His resurrection

—all of the temple ritual, and He destroyed the temple.

- Today we have a greater temple that is in heaven above, and *with the Holy Spirit we are the temple of God!*
- Today we have a greater circumcision than in the flesh; *we have it in the mind!*
- Today we have a greater worship of God, *which is in Spirit and Truth*, not a ritual!

Whenever He fulfilled He set a higher standard of everything, which is another whole sermon. I’m just trying to cover as many bases as I can, so when we get to the nitty-gritty—which we will—I hope you will not be very offended.

Verse 19: “Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments...” What commandment do you consider the least? If you consider it the least, then it is one that you’re going to neglect and sooner or later you will either have to repent and accept it, or you will have to reject it and go on and BAM! *the leaven has grown!*

“...and shall teach men so...” (v 19). Doesn’t that always happen? *Yes! They’ve got to go out and teach men—don’t they?*

“...shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever **shall practice** and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven” (v 19). I want you to understand ‘shall practice’ comes from the Greek word ‘*poieo*.’

What was Jesus’ answer when Satan told Him that He should command these stones be turned into bread? This would have been a misuse of the power that God had given Christ, though He could do it. Did He not turn loaves and fishes—just a few of each—to feed thousands and thousands? It wouldn’t have been anything. All He did is look up into heaven and thank God and told the disciples to go break and feed.

However, if he would have done it at the behest of Satan the devil, who would have been His god? *Satan!* So therefore, He answered Satan as a man. He didn’t meet him as God, He didn’t meet

him as an angel, He met him as a man to show that man can overcome and conquer Satan.

Matthew 4:4: “But He [Jesus] answered *and* said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God.’”” I want you to look at those two words, “...every word...” It becomes important.

Let’s get to the nitty-gritty; this has to do with those who claim that in the New Testament that it does not teach tithing. I’ve said that if you don’t believe the New Testament teaches tithing, bring your cause, show it forth, I’ll be happy to look at it. Not one came! I also want you to please understand that ***I’m covering this to show the Truth of the Scriptures:***

- I’m not covering this because I want money.
- I’m not covering this to merchandize you.
- I’m not covering this to put fear into you.
- I’m not bringing this sermon to extract from you.
- I’m not bringing this because the Church needs money (we have quite a sufficient reserve).

I’m sure that God is going to use it especially when the economic collapse comes, which lo, *it’s going to come!* Rest assured! If you don’t think it’s going to come, you are living in a dream world! When it comes, it is going to be awesome, devastating, breathtaking, and if you happened to live during the depression in the 30s, everything shows very clearly that ‘you ain’t seen nothing yet!’ Let’s just all understand that living in this society the way we live, we are most vulnerable, far more than back then.

I will grant you, when we were in Worldwide (Church of God) every letter beat you over the head for more money. Every sermon beat you over the head for more tithes and offerings. Every one was used in fear against you.

- Does that abuse do away with the laws and commandments of God? *Of course not!*
- Were you hurt by it? *Some were!*

Some were hurt by it so bad that 20-plus years later they still haven’t recovered! Well, maybe it’s time to recover. Paul says that you have to ‘forget those things that are behind and go forward.’

Let’s see what Jesus said, and this becomes important, Matthew 23:23: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have abandoned the more important **matters** of the Law—**judgment, and mercy and faith....**” Let’s first of all understand

that tithing is not on the equivalent of the Ten Commandments. Offerings are not on the equivalent of the Ten Commandments.

“...These... [judgment, mercy and faith] ...you were obligated to do, and not to leave the others undone” (v 23). You should have done that, you’ve been omitting the weightier matters of the Law. I know that surely someone is going to say—which is true—that ‘under the New Covenant we live under the love of God.’ Oh, no doubt about that; that is true!

I want you to follow along with this because this is also something for our modern day Pharisees to understand: Luke 11:37: “Now while He was speaking, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him; and He went in *and* sat down. But the Pharisee, seeing *this*, wondered why He had not first washed... [His hands] ...before dinner.” A great sin! (sarcastically said) This is to help us get the right perspective on things, and too many times we get on our ‘Pharisee high-horse’ and we go galloping down the street over some little thing.

Verse 39: “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Now, you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish...’” In other words, while you need to take care of the outside of you to be clean, presentable and all this sort of thing, what’s *inside* is more important.

“...but inside you are full of greediness and wickedness. Fools, *did* not He Who made the outside also make the inside? Rather, give alms *from* the things that are within; and behold, all things are clean to you” (vs 39-41). In other words, if you do it with the right motivation. Jesus said in Matt. 6 that when you give, ‘don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.’ ***Do not do it for a calculated appearance or political purpose!***

Verse 42: “But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God... [they were passing over the love of God] ...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things...”; that is judgment and love.

- Can you have love and obedience? *Of course!*
- Can you have love and tithing? *Of course!*
- Can you have love and give offerings? *Of course!*

“...and not to set aside those *lesser things*.”

Now let’s show the example of this in Luke 18, and then ask: Why did the Apostle Paul not take tithes from the Corinthians? *and also* in the beginning with the Thessalonians? There’s a reason! As we have seen, ***judgment, faith, mercy and love must be of paramount importance first!***

If you make the mistake of doing as the scribes and Pharisees in putting the monetary things first, and that becomes your whole focal point, then you have missed the whole point of what the Bible is teaching. Love, judgment, mercy and faith are *the weightier matters of the Law!* Remember, in the second commandment that God blesses those who love Him and keep His commandments.

Luke 18:9: “And to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others...” This is what happens when you begin comparing yourself among yourselves, which the Apostle Paul said that if you do, you’re not wise.’

“...He also spoke this parable: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one *was* a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: “God...”’” (vs 9-11).

This tells you when your prayers don’t reach up to God; they go no further than the self. We’ve all done this. Come on! Let’s not think that I’m picking on anybody in particular, we’ve all done this—haven’t we? *Yes!* Have we repented of it? *Of course!* If we do it today, should we continue to repent of it? *Of course!* We’re not to exalt ourselves over people. That’s why if there’s something that I’m doing that’s not correct and you see it, come and tell me. I don’t want to be doing things that are not right. I’m not an end unto myself. I do need your help in things, in a lot of things, so I depend on you for it.

I tell you the one who watches over me more than anyone else, with great diligence, is my wife Dolores. Will she let me know? *In a blink of an eye!* Do I listen to her when she is right? *Yes, I do!* Do I always listen cheerfully? *Not necessarily! But I do listen!* Do I then ask God to help me change? *But of course!* We’re all in this together, so please don’t think it’s me against you; or please don’t think it’s a putting down of you if something is pointed out that you’re not doing correctly; or misunderstanding things.

Here it shows how you think you’re praying to God and you’re not: “...I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners...” (v 11). God doesn’t want you to be an extortioner—does He? So, he’s doing right—*isn’t he? Yes!*

“...unrighteous, adulterers...” (v 11). Does God want you committing adultery? *No!*

“...—or even as this tax collector” (v 11). Now then, what is the sin of the Pharisee? Which is the sin of all of us in judging—*isn’t it? We’re judging the heart and we don’t have a clue what’s in the mind of that individual!*

- Have you done that? *Yes!*

- Have I done that? *Yes!*
- What is it? *It is carnal sin!*
- Can any of you read anyone's mind? *Of course not!*
- Can you wives and you husband by expressions on the face of your spouse—through practice over years of being married—discern the possibility of certain thought?

But you cannot read each other's mind—can you? Even though you may have a batting average of 850%.

Notice that he brags on what he does, v 12: "I fast twice in the week, *and* I give a tithe of everything that I gain." Not just the agricultural products. {See parts 1 & 2 of this series}

There are some people who have just insisted on the fact that the New Testament does not teach tithing. We'll see that it does.

Verse 13: "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.'" It's more important to God that you repent of your sins and that you have a right attitude than to give of everything that you have. Paul said that if you 'give everything that you have and have not love, you're nothing!'

Verse 14—Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted." This is in Matt., Mark and Luke, and this becomes very important; not this particular instance as such, but there is a far more important principle involved here:

Matthew 22:15: "Then the Pharisees went and took counsel *as to* how they might entrap Him in *His* speech. And they sent their disciples *along* with the Herodians..." (vs 15-16). The Herodians were the officials of Herod the king, from his party.

"...to Him, saying, 'Master, we know that You are true, and *that* You teach the way of God in Truth, and *that* You are not concerned about *pleasing* anyone; for You do not respect *the* persons of men. Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?' But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, 'Why do you tempt Me, *you* hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.' And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription *is on* this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God'" (vs 16-21).

- Is that not possessive?

- Does that not mean that there are things that belong to God, and are not yours?
- *Of course!*

God owns the world; He says He owns all the gold, silver and 'all souls are mine.' There are some things that belong to God.

Do you have some things that belong to you? *Of course you do!* What if you came home from Church this afternoon and found that your house was broken into and some of the things that belong to you were missing? How would you feel? *You'd be mad, upset, you'd call 911; the whole nine-yards—wouldn't you?*

God being merciful doesn't react that way necessarily all at once when we do not render to Him the things that are His. However, it can fall into that same category. If it is mentioned once in the New Testament, and the New Testament being the Word of God, is it binding upon us? *Of course!*

We will see that Paul did teach tithing. Though for the Corinthians, and we'll find out why, he did not exercise that authority upon them, though he had the authority to do so. There were reasons.

(go to the next track)

This gives us the basic reason why Paul did not come in and preach tithing first and Christ second:

1-Corinthians 8:11: "And will the weak brother, for whom Christ died, perish on *account of* your knowledge? Now when you sin against the brethren and wound their weak consciences in this way... [we can apply that to any matter] ...you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if meat causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh—not ever—so that I may not cause my brother to stumble" (vs 11-13).

Those that have a weak conscience or those who are carnal and weak in the faith Paul handled differently hoping they would be converted and understand what they needed to do.

Notice how he defends himself, 1-Corinthians 9:1: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in *the* Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, without a doubt I am to you. For you are the certification of my apostleship in *the* Lord. My defense to those who are examining me is this" (vs 1-3). They were saying, 'How could Paul be an apostle, because he is not teaching tithing?'

So, he gives his defense, v 4: "Do we not have a right to eat and to drink? Do we not have a right to take with us a sister, a wife, as also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?"

Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working? Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense? Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it? Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock? Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things? For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn’....” (vs 4-9). What he’s dealing with here is a progression of things.

What if you don’t have anything but an ox and corn? *You’re starting with the very least*—aren’t you? Even in India, the pagan Indians found—by applying this principle to their starving cattle when they were treading out the corn—the cattle that were their beasts of burdens—actually worked better and lived longer if you fed them while they were working. An astounding discovery!

“...Is it because God is concerned for oxen?” (v 9). In this particular interpretation of Scripture, if I would have come up with this interpretation I am sure that many people would write to me to correct me. But since I didn’t, and Paul did, and it’s part of the commandments of God, so be it.

Verse 10: “Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes? For our sakes it was written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things? **If others participate in this authority over you...**” (vs 10-12). That just the way it is in the Greek. Who are the *others* participating in this authority over them? We’ll see later *false apostles!*

“...much more surely *should* not we? Nevertheless, **we have not used this authority**; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ” (v 12). Why?

Let’s get a little background to understand how the Church at Corinth began. Paul came to Corinth and met Aquila and Pricilla and he participated with them in tent-making.

Acts 18:4: “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded *both* Jews and Greeks. Now, when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was stirred in his spirit *and* was earnestly testifying to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* the Christ. But when they set themselves in opposition and were blaspheming, *Paul* shook *his* garments *and* said to them, ‘Your blood *be* upon your own heads. I am pure *of it*. From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles.’ And after departing from there, he went into *the* house of a

certain one named Justus, who worshiped God, whose house adjoined the synagogue” (vs 4-7). Right next door!

Verse 8: “But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized.” What a state of affairs! What did this do to the income of the local synagogue? *Killed it!* That’s one of the reasons why Paul didn’t say, ‘Okay, now that we’re over here, you start tithing.’ He had a greater goal in mind that when they were converted then they would provide for him because they would understand.

Verse 9: “And the Lord said to Paul in a vision in *the* night, ‘Do not be afraid; but speak, and do not be silent, for I am with you; and no one shall set upon you to mistreat you because I have many people in this city.’ And he remained *there* for a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them” (vs 9-11). Then Paul was hauled up before the authorities.

Let’s see the primary reason why Paul did not exercise the authority of tithing. When they were converted he was hoping that they would also understand about tithing.

1-Corinthians 3:1: “And, I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to those who are spiritual, but as to those who are carnal—*even* as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, and not meat; for you were not yet able *to receive spiritual meat*; and neither are you able now, **for you are still carnal**. For since envy and contention and divisions *are* among you, are you not carnal? And *are you not* walking according to human *ways*?” (vs 1-3). That’s why he didn’t do it. Can you imagine the furor of what people would say, being carnal and accuse him of that? He clarifies things:

1-Corinthians 9:12: “If others participate in this authority over you, much more surely *should* not **we**?.... [including Timothy, Silas and so forth] ...Nevertheless, we have not used this authority; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ.”

Now, here’s the New Testament teaching concerning tithing and offerings—very clear. If it’s mentioned once in the New Testament, being the commandments of God, then it’s binding. This talks about the whole system.

Verse 13: “Don’t you know that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple live *of the things* of the temple, *and* those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? **In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel**” (vs 13-14). “In the same way also...” is a

very important phrase. It means that he doesn't have to go back and take the whole block of Scriptures that talk about the things in the Old Testament concerning tithing and put it into the New Testament. It is sufficient that it is done right here with this, v 14.

Let's also notice "...the Lord did command..." The Greek there is 'diataxen,' which means *to command, order, to ordain*. Who commanded that it be done in the same way? Paul? Peter? *No! The Lord!* Paul said, 'I've seen Christ; He taught me "...that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel."

Let's understand that Peter preaches against corruption—doesn't he? Those who receive tithes and offerings from the brethren are accountable to them for how it is done. That's why every year we send out a full financial statement with the receipts. We try to get it down to every last little penny.

1-Peter 5:1: "*The elders who are among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed: Feed the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but with an eager attitude*" (vs 1-2).

You're not to be motivated by money. Money is not the thing to motivate those who are serving Christ. If it is, then they better well do what Paul says.

Verse 3: "Not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but *by* being examples to the flock of God." Of course, we've suffered from both of those—didn't we?

If you have a wound, and you constantly check it and peel the scab every day, will it ever heal? *No!* Those who are still smarting from the things and the abuses of Worldwide Church of God, quit picking the scab! Let it be healed! Their corruption does not do away with the Truth of God—we need to understand that.

Let's look at some other things that Paul said concerning this. Remember, when Paul went to Thessalonica it was an uproar in the synagogue again. This is why Paul did not make tithing—because it's not one of the *weightier matters of the Law*; but it's still part of the Law—he did not go in and preach tithing. He went in and preached Christ so that they would be converted and therefore, they would know that they would have to obey and keep the laws of God.

1-Thessalonians 2:4: "But even as we were approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel, we speak in this manner: as *those* who please not

men, but God, Who proves our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words *with you*, even as you know, nor a cover for covetousness—God is *our witness*" (vs 4-5).

2-Thessalonians 3:7: "For you yourselves understand that *you* should do exactly as we have done because we have not behaved irresponsibly among you, nor did we eat food at someone else's expense, but *we were* working day and night with labor and toil so that we would not be burdensome to anyone among you. **We were not obligated to work because we did not have authority to receive from you; rather, we chose to work in order that we might personally give you a pattern to imitate**" (vs 7-9).

We have the power, being not one of the weightier matters of the Law, because they were new; they were just barely converted when he wrote these two epistles. That's why Paul did not do it.

2-Corinthians 11:7: "Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you freely? I robbed other churches..." (vs 7-8). Who were the ones who tithed faithfully, above and beyond? *The Philippians!*

"...receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you. And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone (for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs)... [that's where Philippi is] ...for I kept myself, and will *continue to keep myself...*" (vs 8-9)—*until you become converted*. If you are so carnal then you might consider being converted.

Paul said that 'other's were partakers of this authority over them' (1-Cor.9). Who was it that was doing it? *It was the false apostles!* They were willing to put up with them, listen to them, pay them; but not Paul!

2-Corinthians 12:9 "But He [Christ] said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing" (vs 9-11). To be commended has some implication toward they should have been supporting him instead of the false apostles.

Verse 12: "Indeed, the signs of an apostle

were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what way was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? **Forgive me this wrong.** Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you..." (vs 12-14).

At this point Paul realized that he perhaps had made a mistake. This is in here for all of us to know, that even though Paul did it to give allowance because of their carnality, for them to become converted and give support and help Paul, to give tithes and offerings, he saw that he was wrong. He said, "...Forgive me this wrong."

Verse 14: "Behold, a third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not burden you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you..." That's why he didn't do it. Because he didn't do it does not mean that it's not a requirement of God.

Remember that we read the things concerning 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and render to God the things that are God's.' God is no respecter of persons—is He? There are people in the world who tithe to their churches and synagogues that God blesses, because God made a covenant with anyone who would do so.

I'm going to read to from a book: *How to Win over Worry* by John Edmund Haggai. I would say this a fairly good book. Part of the worry that people go through is the worry of finances, so he covers it. Let's understand that God said in Jer. 23 that if 'even the false prophets would speak the Word of God, God would back them up.'

How to Win over Worry by John Edmund Haggai; Chapter 19:

He bring this out, which is true:

God is the Owner of all things and we are stewards of God.

Absolutely true! God created us! God has redeemed us! He sustains us!

There are three principles of God's ownership...

Though on the first one, being a Sunday-keeper, he misses the mark.

1) One day out of seven belongs to God

When I first read that, I wondered if he was a Sabbath-keeper, because I was perusing through the book and I found out that no he's not. The promises that God gave in Mal. 3 does not apply just to converted people. Since God is no respecter of persons, those who follow what God teaches will be blessed; blessed in many ways that they may not be able to count in their bank account.

- 2) You need a substitutionary sacrifice
That is you need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!
- 3) We are called to the stewardship of material possessions.

Why do we tithe and give offerings? If you're retired and on a pension you're not required to tithe because that is not an increase from your labor. We have many on our mailing list—who are with us—who are on Social Security, and I dare say that a lot of them fit into the category of the widow who threw the two mites into the treasury (Luke 21).

I'm sure we also have a lot of people who give above and beyond in their abundance, so that others can share and partake of what we do. I know that for a fact.

I also know that there are a lot of people, for whatever reason, do not give anything. I'm not trying to get those who give nothing to give something. I'm trying to tell you, before God, that you need to understand the Truth of God and *you* then have to go to God and face the truth and make whatever decision you have to make. Here is why we tithe and give offerings:

1. In the recognition of God's sovereign ownership of everything that there is.

If we work and get an increase out of what God has created, then he desires back a tenth and with offerings.

2. In the appreciative acknowledgment of God's redeeming grace.
3. In order to surrender your life and talents to God.

Then He has a section here on pg. 168 saying, The Truth about Tithing:

The basis of our monetary responsibility is to tithe. Tithing is paying back to God ten percent of the increase. God doesn't mince His words concerning those who fail to obey. The Bible says that if we fail to pay that ten percent back into the storehouse with faithful regularity, we are a thief and a robber because the things that belong to God is possessive and it means *it's His*.

Therefore, those who try to brainwash people into believing that the responsibility of the tithe was only enforced during the days of the Law—from the time of Moses to the time of Christ—they will tell you that Malachi 3:10 has no relevance for today because it's in the Old Testament.

Well then, forget about the Sabbath.

pg 169—Just as Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedec so are we to pay tithes to Christ. In Heb. 7 this truth is made clear.

I'm reading this lest anyone think that I'm the only one who understands that.

The Son of God Who lives and abides as a Priest continually after the order of Melchizedec received tithes... [from Abraham] ...now because He is an Ever-living Priest.

When paying tithes, Abraham acknowledged Melchizedec's sovereign as a king/priest. Likewise, today when paying the tithe we acknowledge Christ as Sovereign and Lord. Refusal to pay the tithe is a refusal to own Christ as Savior and High Priest. Thus, one makes Christ not only inferior to Melchizedec but also inferior to the Levites.

That is if you don't believe that tithing is in the New Testament, then you are making the priesthood of less value than the Levites, when it never perfected anything.

Then he's got a section: Tithing Didn't Disappear in the New Testament and The Money Belongs to God.

Let's understand something very, very important. The Proverbs say that 'there is a way that seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.'

Malachi 3:6—here is a special covenant: "For I *am* the LORD, I change not. Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*...." (vs 6-7). What's one of the first ways that people begin going away from God?

- Sabbath
- tithes and offerings
- Holy Days

Everywhere along the line—because you cannot live with yourself unless you justify your own actions; lest you have a guilty conscience and you repent—you have to convince yourself that you are right. In convincing yourself that you are right, you always end up with more proof that you are right. If you steal from God—which God calls it stealing, and if that upsets you then your problem is not with me it's with God—you will always have to use that money on things that become burdensome for you. In doing so, you have proof in your own mind, that 'yes, I don't have to tithe, because I need every cent to exist. We have this problem. We have that expense. We have this other thing. Guaranteed, it will always come! God has a first priority on you, in your life and in the things that you have.

"...Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the LORD of hosts" (v 7).

Deuteronomy 8:10: "When you have eaten and are full... [Is that not us today?] ...then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land, which He has given you." How do you bless the Lord God?

Verse 11: "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, a lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*, and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt..." (vs 11-14) and you do not render to Him His tithes and offerings.

That is what it is talking about because it says, v 17: "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of *my* hand has gotten me this wealth.' *Therefore, I did it myself and I owe God nothing!*

When you've forgotten God like the children of Jacob did and God says, 'Return unto me and I will return unto you,' how did He want them to begin? *He wanted them to show some proof of their sincerity!*

Malachi 3:6: "...Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*. **Return to Me, and I will return to you,**' says the LORD of hosts. 'But you say. "In what way shall we return?"... [God answers]: ...Will a man rob God? Yet, you are robbing Me. But you say, "How have we robbed You?"... [Did we go up to heaven and steal from Your throne?] ...**In tithes and offerings!**" (vs 6-8).

- What happens when you rob God?
- Is that not a greater crime than robbing a man?
- What happens?

Verse 9: "You are cursed with a curse..."

- How does that curse come?
 - ✓ Many different ways!
 - ✓ Many different manners!
 - ✓ Many different things!

"...for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation" (v 9). That's why this whole nation is going to go down totally!

Verse 10: "'Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove Me now with this,' says the LORD of hosts... [God challenges you to prove

Him]: ...‘to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is not enough room to receive it.*” You will always have sufficiency in all things. {Note: 2-Cor. 9—God loves a cheerful giver.}

Then notice the promise if you prove God. Claim His promise, v 11: “‘And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...” What do we have for devourers today, besides just the insects on crops? *Everything!*

Someone said they just bought a parcel of land up in the mountains were there’s a lot of rock and stone, and all the neighbors around with their wells only get 2-1/2 gallons a minute from their wells pumping full blast. God blessed him—and he’s been a faithful tithe payer—and the drilling company that put down the well—his well comes in 30 gallons a minute—the man who drilled it said that ‘God must have blessed you.’

“...and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delightful land,’ says the LORD of hosts” (vs 11-12).

Now then, the rest of Mal. 3 talks about all the complainers against God with this. God throws out a challenge to you. He says, ‘All right, you prove Me.’ This is anyone!

Example: At the Feast we ate at this particular restaurant several times because they had hamburgers that weren’t too expensive and they were really good. This same waitress would wait on us and she found out that we were there for the Feast of Tabernacles and she says, ‘Oh, I go to church, too.’ Of course, it was a Protestant church, and without even asking, she said, ‘You know, I’ve learned that as soon as I get home, I take all of my tips, as well as my check, and I set aside 10% to give to my church. And God has always blessed me in it.’

I thought: that’s like the heathen condemning Israel, if you want a parallel. Where those in the Church of God do not have enough faith and trust in God to say that ‘there’s no tithing in the New Testament’ and don’t do so, and cannot even look around see that they’re beset with so many problems that consumes all of their money because they have that attitude.

Then I know of another instance of people who are Sunday-keepers. Doesn’t that kind of remind you of the problem of the uncircumcision and the circumcision with the Jews. You who are in the Church of God who don’t believe in tithing, and condemn all of these Protestants out here—which

for the things that they do that are not right they need to be condemned—yet, if they tithe and God blesses them, does not their obedience make your disobedience a stench in the nose of God and you claim to belong to Him? *Think on it! Yes, indeed, it does!*

Here are the economic circumstances that have happened. There have been people who have lost their businesses. I even heard of an account of one man who was told to declare bankruptcy and because he wanted to be honest he didn’t. He worked out a payment thing. They didn’t have enough money to tithe so they decided ‘we’ll start giving offerings.’ Lo and behold, miraculously their business started recovering, when no one else’s in the same field was. They came to the point where they could again tithe.

So, if your circumstances are that, that’s where you need to begin, to begin in faith and trust, do so. But I thought when I heard those things, what a shame that here we have to fight those people in the Church of God who make the outlandish claim that in the New Testament tithing is not required.

Prove God! It’s a special covenant. You go to God and claim that promise. He said, ‘Prove Me now herewith.’ God is the One Who has laid out the challenge!

I’m bringing this so that you—wherever you are; whoever you are—might recover yourself from the curses that you have brought upon yourself because of this. Not because we’re trying to extort money from you, or to put fear upon you, or to take from you. But so that you may have that blessing—which also comes from God—that many brethren, and even many Protestants share, because God will backup His Word!

In the final analysis, if you’re mad at me, go ahead and be mad at me, I don’t care. But what you need to do is **prove God and have faith in Him! Trust God and let Him work it out!**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 16:25-26
- 2) 1 Corinthians 14:36-37
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:14-17
- 4) 2 Timothy 4:1-4
- 5) Matthew 5:17-19
- 6) Matthew 4:4
- 7) Matthew 23:23
- 8) Luke 11:37-42
- 9) Luke 18:9-14
- 10) Matthew 22:15-21

- 11) 1 Corinthians 8:11-13
- 12) 1 Corinthians 9:1-12
- 13) Acts 18:4-11
- 14) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3
- 15) 1 Corinthians 9:12-14
- 16) 1 Peter 5:1-3
- 17) 1 Thessalonians 2:4-5
- 18) 1 Thessalonians 3:7-9
- 19) 2 Corinthians 11:7-9
- 20) 2 Corinthians 12:19
- 21) Malachi 3:6-7
- 22) Deuteronomy 8:10-14, 17
- 23) Malachi 3:6-12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 6
- Jeremiah 23
- Luke 21
- 2 Corinthians 9

Also referenced:

Books:

- *The Story of the Christian Church* by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut
- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *How to Win over Worry* by John Edmund Haggai

Appendix H from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version: How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets.*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 11-24-13

God Gives You Power to Get Wealth

Fred R. Coulter

How much do you really believe God?

How much are you really committed to God?

These are all the very basic important things. Let's add to something Jesus said: 'When the Son of man comes will He really find faith in the earth?'

- How much do you really believe God?
- How are you willing to prove it?
- How are you willing to back it up?

James said, 'Show me your faith without your works, and I'll show you my faith by my works.' The Greeks says, 'You show me your faith with your works; let's examine your works, which is reflective of your faith, and I will show you my faith by my works.' What's another slang saying? *Put your money where your mouth is! Talk is cheap!*

I want you to read the whole Psa. 50, but we'll cover selective parts of it. We're reaching a time that everything is coming to a climax at the close of the age. Everything in this world, everything with the prophecies, and everything concerning the Word of God—which the world rejects and doesn't want to know or understand—is going to come down in such a great fulfillment and fantastic conclusion {note Daniel/Revelation series} and this ties right in with it.

Psalm 50:1: "The mighty God, God, the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down." God controls the heavens and the earth; He controls everything that is here. It is His!

Men in their stupid vanity like to reject God and think: 'Oh, we'll have freedom of choice and we can do this and that and the other thing. And, God, by the way, help me when I'm in trouble, but don't bother me when I'm in pleasure or comfort.' God let's people do that.

Verse 2: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined forth." That's exactly how Christ is going to come (Matt. 24); He's going to come as the light of day that shines from the east to the west.

Verse 3: "Our God shall come, and He shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, so that He may judge His people" (vs 3-4).

- His Church—which judgment is upon us now

That's what Peter said: 'Judgment is upon the house

of God *now*. And if the righteous be saved with great difficulty, where will the sinner and ungodly be?'

- His people Israel—all 12 tribes
- all the nations of the world—the heathen

It's all coming, but not all at once, but in a step-by-step way.

Verse 5: "Gather My saints unto Me... [this has to be referring to the resurrection; that's what it is: a harvest, a gathering] ...**those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.**"

We want to stop here and talk about this.

- Do you believe in the New Covenant?
- Do you believe that you are under the New Covenant?
- Do you know that you have made a covenant with God by sacrifice?

Two ways:

1. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin!

Not only yours but the whole world; but God has called you to give you an opportunity first.

2. Your sacrifice, no longer animals, is *you!*

Your whole life! That's what Paul says, 'that you be a living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1-2).

When you make a covenant with God by that sacrifice through baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, you're no longer your own, you belong to God.

You can act on your own; you can go your own way if you desire, and know for sure that God is going to deal in your life to correct you or whatever needs to be done to bring you back to Him, because He has a purpose in your life. We need to understand that the covenant that we are in with God is this: ***He has called us to be the Church of the Firstborn!***

Everyone wants salvation! Everyone wants to be first! That's why Jesus said that the 'first shall be last and the last shall be first.' Meaning that God is going to decide.

Let's understand something about the firstborn; we're part of the Church of the Firstborn. God exemplified this when He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. We've been called out of *spiritual* Egypt. God has called us with a 'mighty hand.' We have been called out of *spiritual* Egypt and *spiritual* Sodom for a great and a marvelous

purpose.

Let me tell you something we need to understand: ***The first resurrection is going to be unique for eternity!*** You need to understand that those who come into the Kingdom of God during the Millennium, and those who come into the Kingdom of God via the second resurrection are *never* going to be in the same status and position with God that the Church of the Firstborn is. Let that sink in deeply. Just like there will *never* be a relationship with anyone in the Kingdom of God like it *has been, was and is* with God the Father and Jesus Christ. That will never be duplicated by anyone anywhere.

Likewise with the covenant that we make with God by being baptized, we give our whole life, and we come in this category for a special purpose.

Exodus 13:12: “You shall set apart to the LORD all that opens the womb... [the epitome of this was the birth of Jesus of the virgin Mary; because all animal types were until Christ would come] ...and every firstborn that comes of any animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD’S. And every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem” (vs 12-13). There are many parallels you can draw with that for the New Testament”

- we are redeemed of Christ
- we belong to God
- we are part of the Church of the Firstborn

Let’s see where we find the prophecy of the birth of Church of the Firstborn, which will be dedicated to God through all eternity.

Isaiah 66:7: “‘Before she travailed, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a man child.’ You can tie this in with Christ (Rev.12); with the Church.

Verse 8: “‘Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such *things* like these? Shall the earth be made to bring forth *in* one day?... [talking about the resurrection; the true born again from flesh to spirit] ...*Or* will a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she also gave birth to her children. Will I bring to the birth, and not cause to be born?’ says the LORD. ‘Shall I cause them to be born, and shut the womb?’ says your God” (vs 8-9). Of course not, the resurrection is coming.

Being the Church of the Firstborn, everyone who is in that belongs to God in a special relationship, and has special responsibilities to God. Let’s see how this fits in with what we are going to cover.

How much do you believe God? There is a vast difference in believing *in* God—which even the demons do and James says they ‘tremble’—and *believes in God!* Not only *in* Him, but what He is, what He commands, what He tells us to do—all of that.

Psalm 50:5: “‘Gather My saints unto Me... [that’s the resurrection of the Church of the Firstborn] ...those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice’... [be a living sacrifice (Rom. 12)] ...And the heavens shall declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. Selah” (vs 5-6). Everyone is going to be judged of God; that first comes upon the Church.

Verse 7: “Hear, My people, and I will speak, O Israel... [there’s *physical* Israel and *spiritual* Israel, and God is dealing with both of them] ...and I will testify against you; I am God, even your God. I will not reprove you for your sacrifices...” (vs 7-8).

Verse 12: “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all the fullness of it.”

Let’s come to another aspect of what Jesus said, and what we are to do. {note appendix H—*How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets*}

By the way, a lot of people are under the misconception that Jesus was under the terms of the Old Covenant. Not so! He was in a special covenant between He and God the Father.

Matthew 4:3: “And when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”’” (vs 3-4).

Let’s think about this for minute. Who is required to do this? Church members? People who are baptized? Who is God requiring to do this? *Every human being on earth!* Every single human being on earth is required to do this. Those who don’t have the Spirit of God are required to do it in the *letter of the Law*. Those who have the Spirit of God are required to do it in the *Spirit of the Law*. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”

Quite a thing—isn’t it? You think about that! Think about what it is in the world. Think about why the world is in the mess that it is in. Think about why it has been so overwhelmed with sin; almost like a great tsunami engulfing the whole nation in sin. {note sermon series: *The Addicted Society*}. This nation is almost possessed in drug and sex addiction. Why? *Because they kicked God out!* The pastors and teachers don’t teach them. That’s required by everybody by God!

If you want to go out and live your life contrary to God, God has given you that choice to do. But know that heaven and earth is a testimony against you: That you're going to receive blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience regardless of who you are or where you are in the whole world, down through all time from the time of Adam to the return of Christ.

John 14—here's a dividing line. There is a dividing line between those in the world and those in the Church; those who are the Church of the Firstborn and those who are in the world in the many different stripes of 'religion' and brands of 'Christianity' or paganism that they may have.

John 14:6—a very fundamental Scripture: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.'" A lot of people don't like that statement. They don't like that He is:

- ***the Way!***

They want a way and always leads to God—***big time satanic lie!***

- ***the Truth!***

Because He represented the personification of the Word of God and spoke all the words of the Old Testament as the Lord God of the Old Testament.

- ***the Life!***

No one is going to have eternal life, no one is going to get into the Kingdom of God *except through the Door* (John 10) and Jesus is *the Door!* Any other way is a thief and a robber. That's what He says.

- ***no one comes to the Father except through Me!***

That is exclusive, discriminating, because God made it that way for a great and profound purpose.

Let's talk about *Truth* for just a minute. Which version of the Truth *or* how much of the Truth are you willing to accept? Are people in the world willing to accept? Everyone has an idea; everyone has a belief; everyone has an opinion. Living in this post-modernist age where everything is equal, everyone's opinion is fact. If you don't believe that watch the stupidity of the news and how they try and create news via their opinions and political agendas.

Matthew 7:13—God says: "Enter in through the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it; for narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way that leads to life, and **few are those who find it**" (vs 13-14). Very important! Remember what we covered in John 14: no one is going to come to the Father except through Christ.

If you want a good concordance study, look up *false prophets*. Verse 15: "But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits...." (vs 15-16). If you don't know what fruits to look for; if you don't know what fruits are produced by the Holy Spirit, or fruits of obedience to God that are produce, you won't know what to look for.

"...They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they?... [no they don't] ...In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit" (vs 16-17). Think about that in relationship to many different things:

- families
- individuals
- organizations
- governments
- churches
- religions

—applies to everything!

Verse 18: "A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit." Though people want to try it, going all the way back to Cain.

Verse 19: "Every tree *that is* not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire." That's God's judgment as He said in Ps. 50.

Verse 20: "Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits." There are a lot of 'religious' people in the world. There are a lot of people who say 'Know the Lord.' There are a lot of people who claim they are Christian. If 94% of Americans claim some sort of belief in God, and 76% of them claim to be some sort of Christian or whatever:

- How are you going to know who's who?
- What is the standard that you're going to use?
- How are you going to measure it?
- How are you going to know?

You can't even go into a store a buy something and write a check without identifying who you are.

- How are you going to identify...?

This becomes very important; there're going to be a lot of disillusioned people who thought that they were doing good; who thought that they were doing the will of God, and were to some degree.

Verse 21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; **but the one who is doing the will of My**

Father, Who is in heaven.”

- What is the will of the Father in heaven?
- Do you know what it is?
- Do you understand what it is?
 - ✓ *It's all right here in the Bible!*
 - ✓ *It's the will of God!*
 - ✓ *These are the Words of God!*
 - ✓ *He recorded it for you!*

Verse 22: “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name?....’” How many people are out there in the name of Jesus saying this, that and the other thing?

“...And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name?....” (v 22). Gather great followings!

“...And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?” (v 22)—even miracles? I tell you what, you do a bona fied miracle today—and there are false miracles, demonic miracles—people flock after it like crazy.

Go on the History Channel and watch the special they did on ‘stigmatists’—those who bleed in the same place that Jesus did when He was crucified; *people flock to it. An idol of Mary that’s weeping; they come and worship it.* This is the day of judgment, and everybody is being judged today, and there’s a final judgment at the end.

Verse 23: “And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.’” What is *lawlessness? Doing what you think is right, contrary to the will and commandments of God!* And the greatest form of lawlessness today is right smack-dab in ‘Christianity’:

- that the Lord did away with the Ten Commandments
- that the Lord did away with His laws
 - ✓ *Never happen!*
 - ✓ *Has not occurred!*

Then He gives an example so we will understand, v 24: “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the Rock.”

- Christ is the Rock
- Wisdom comes from God
- the Word of God is Wisdom

Read all of Psa. 119

Verse 25: “And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the Rock.”

In this area we have a lot of floods. What

happens? Everyone who is not up off the low ground they get flooded: mud, destruction! Compare that to your life:

- How is your life?
- Is your life overwhelmed?
- Is it being flooded by circumstances?
- Are you giving yourself over to things that you shouldn’t do?
- What is your life?
- What is your standing before God?

This is what it’s all talking about. If you are truly built upon Christ and Christ is *in* you, whatever trial and difficulty that comes along in your life, *you will come through it, because you believe in God; you trust in God and He will watch over you!*

Even if it costs your life to stand for the Truth, because the day is coming when that’s going to be—not to far around the corner, by the way. Especially when you understand that a federal judge gave an order that the legislature in Indiana could not pray in the name of Jesus, and chaplains cannot use the name of Jesus in the armed services anymore. *Think about it!*

Verse 26: “And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them...” They’ve all heard it, but they haven’t read it. They’ve got a Bible at home, but they haven’t read the Bible. That’s not God’s fault; He made sure they have it.

It’s not hard to understand. What makes the Bible hard to understand is that you see where God says that ‘you shall not’ or ‘you shall do’ and you don’t want to do it. That becomes complicated because you’re unwilling to obey God. You read the Ten Commandments; there is nothing difficult about any of them! They’re all easy to understand, but people are not willing to do it, so *they don’t hear* what God says! “...and does not practice them...” *as a way of life.* Jesus said, ‘I am the Way...’

“...shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand” (v 26). You can build a house upon the sand. Where we live we’ve got a place called Sand City. Sand City is the place to build, because you can layout the foundation, compact the sand; you don’t have to dig through muck and mud; you don’t have to blast through rock, or anything like that. You lay it out. “...who built his house upon the sand...”

Like people who build their houses right next to a river. You see it every year, whenever there is a flood someplace some newsman is there with a camera and watch a house and here comes the river and the whole house collapses and goes down the

river. Take this house: first of all, it's on the wrong foundation, it's on sand, you put the best of everything in it; you make it so fantastic; today you can make it marvelous. You can have it so that when you enter into a room the lights go on. You go in the kitchen and say, 'turn the stove on—the oven on—350⁰. You walk into the laundry room and all you do is push a button, throw your clothes in and it's done.

Whatever it is; you get in your car and you say, 'I'm going to work, give me the best route.' You get in your car and say, 'We're going to a restaurant tonight, what does everybody want? Chinese? Steakhouse?' Whatever! Tell your car, 'Find me Outback Steakhouse' or the best Chinese restaurant in town.' Okay, you go here and you follow the map.

You build a house that is so fantastic, but it's on the wrong foundation. Here's the point, the key, the lesson: ***If you take some of the commandments and precepts of God to build your 'religious' or 'Christian' life' and it's not built on Christ and it's not based on the Word of God, you can build it and it will look good.*** A lot of people will follow, and a lot of people will come and say, 'What a marvelous house.'

Let's take St. Peter's Basilica in Rome for example—the house of idolatry. Do you know where a lot of those stones came from to build St. Peter's Basilica? *From the Coliseum where they murdered and killed Christians!* I think it's very fitting that they built it with those stones—don't you?

All this great edifice, but God said, 'You shall not make any graven image of any likeness of anything that's in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, ***nor bow yourself down them.*** For I the Lord am a jealous God.' God doesn't want anyone worshipping anything other than Him!

Then He says that He brings it on to the third and fourth generation of those that hate Him. A lot of people don't think it. You look at this great funeral that they had of John Paul II. The whole world said, 'This is marvelous!' But it showed the hate and contempt that they have for God with their idolatry! But the world thinks it's wonderful.

If you make idols and bow down to them, you hate God. That's what He says! But 'showing mercy unto thousands of them who love Me and keep My commandments.' (Read John 14—New Testament doctrine).

You can build that house; you can even make it with the best materials; whatever you want. Just like a lot of 'religions' and churches do, they go through the Bible and say, 'This is good, we'll do

this.' Then someone says, 'This other thing over here I don't like to do that.' *Oh, we don't need to do that!*

- How about just a 'wee little cross?'
- How about just a 'wee little necklace?'
- How about just making it 'convenient so that we can all come together on a day that we agree upon?'

Jerusalem is kind of stuck:

- Friday the Muslims close
- Saturday the Jews close
- Sunday the supposed 'Christians' close

Did God sanction all of them? Even if you keep some of the commandments of God and reject Christ, it's not going to work. ***It's either all God's way or no way!***

He said, v 27: "And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; **and it fell, and great was the fall of it.**"

Now let's look at some other things that God says, and see what this ties into.

- Can anyone improve upon God's way?
 - ✓ if God is perfect; *which He is*
 - ✓ if God is righteous; *which He is*
 - ✓ if God is Lawgiver; *which He is*
 - ✓ if God is eternal; *which He is*
 - ✓ if God loves us; *which He does*
- Can anybody improve upon God's way?
- Can we come along and substitute *our* 'good' ideas for God's ideas?

A lot of people may be pleased and satisfied if you do, but is that going to be acceptable with God?

Deut. 8 is the end of the 40-year wandering in the wilderness. God didn't intend for them to be out there 40 years. He brought them up to the 'promised land' within 18 months of coming out of Egypt.

He said, 'I want you to go into the *promised land* and I'll fight for you.' They said, 'Well, we'd better find out what it's like, so let's send in some spies.' They sent in the spies, and they came back and ten out of the twelve spies said, 'We can't do this. People were tall, and the cities are walled.' Joshua and Caleb said, 'No! God will deliver us.'

They didn't believe God! He didn't want them wandering 40 years in the wilderness. But you look at all the rebellions that they had up to that point, too. So, He said, 'All right, My judgment is a year for every day that the spies were spying out the land—40 days/40years! When they got that

sentence, they said, ‘Oh! That’s too much, we’ll go.’ God said, ‘Don’t go!’ *We’ll go!* God said, ‘Don’t go!’ What happened? *They got beaten back!* So, they wandered for 40 years and their bodies were strewn in the wilderness.

When we come at the end of it in the book of Deuteronomy—the second giving of the Law—here’s what Moses was inspired to tell them. How much does it take for people to get the point? *Think about it!*

Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to do that you may live...* [God wants you to live] ...and multiply and go in and possess the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness in order to humble you, **to prove you**, to know what is in your heart...” (vs 1-2). Very important thing!

- What’s in the heart of any human being?
- What’s in your heart?
- What’s in my heart?

If it’s not based on the Truth—all the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth—according to God’s definition of Truth, then it’s all built on sand—isn’t it?

“...to prove you...”—that’s why we go through the life that we do; that’s why we have trials and difficulties. God is proving us and He’s proving us whether we are going to enter into the *spiritual* Kingdom of God through the resurrection. But here it’s applied to Israel and also we can apply it to us today, too.

“...to know what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (v 2). Some people don’t believe in keeping the commandments of God; well then, you go stand on the beach. You go stand on the beach and raise yourself up to the highest level of your bootstraps and shake your fist at God and say, ‘God, I defy You. I don’t want this water to come up here anymore’; when God said that He sets the bounds of the ocean and He says ‘this far and no further.’ You try that with the commandments of God.

- God I don’t like this commandment because it’s not convenient.
- God, I don’t like this commandment because I shouldn’t do it.
- God I don’t like this commandment because...

Like one minister confessed when he found someone who was there in the gym exercising with him that he was a Sabbath-keeper, and the minister

was a Sunday-keeper. And through their conversations the minister would understand—because he would study subsequently—that he ought to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. So, he came back and said, ‘You know, it sure would be good *if we could keep the seventh-day Sabbath*, but my congregation wouldn’t go for it.

We’re going to start talking about something else along with this as He gives us the instruction.

Verse 3: “And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know... [they didn’t understand what it was] ...neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know...”

Here’s what Jesus quoted; that’s why it’s important to understand. Jesus did not give permission for *selective* obedience:

“...that man does not live by bread alone; but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. And you shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you. And you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in His ways and to fear Him” (vs 3-6). Not too much different than John 14:6. You can tie in there: 1-John 2, about keeping the commandments of God, etc.

Verse 7: “For the LORD your God brings you into a good land... [He wants to bless you] ...a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness...” (vs 7-9).

I want you to think about today’s circumstances in which we live. Do we live in a country where we can have bread without scarceness?

“...You shall not lack any *thing* in it. *It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper” (v 9)—and give you all the wealth of the world.

Here’s the problem of human nature. Since we live in the Laodicean age this becomes very important and this will apply to a principle that we’re going to cover.

We had a Sunday-keeping minister come in here and sit in with us until right here. It was very evident that I described the kind of Christianity that he is in to a *T*. ‘We will select and choose what *we* want to do.’ I prepared this sermon before he came. We didn’t know he was coming; he was actually coming here to see if he could rent the building for

another activity. But perfect example: *In hearing they shall hear and not understand! In seeing they shall see and not comprehend!* He couldn't stay for the rest of it.

(go to the next track)

Just a little more about the situation with the Sunday-keeping pastor who was here; it shows this: a perfect example of what Jesus said: *'In hearing they shall hear and not understand! In seeing they shall see and not see!* They want *their own version* of what God wants. That's why I emphasized in the beginning:

- Do you believe God?
- At what point do you come down in your spiritual house to where you no longer believe God and want to believe what you want to believe because of your own circumstances?

That's what it gets down to. It's convenient to believe God as long as everything is fine and wonderful.

- What if you've got to give your life?
- Do you still believe God?

That's what we're into; that's where it is in the Church. Until all the Churches of God and all the ministers of God, and all the brethren of God come to the point of believing and loving God in the covenant that they made with Him, they are going to be in varying degrees of the seven attitudes of the seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3.

With the churches, God was not pleased with most of them—right? Why was that? *Because they only went so far in believing God!* Their sacrifice to God was only so much of their life, not all of it. It was very evident having that Pastor Franklin here to sit through as much as he did.

Here's a very important point, and this is something that we all need to realize and understand. It is a proclivity of human nature. God says:

Deuteronomy 8:10: "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land, which He has given you." What have we done as a people?

- *We have cursed God!*
- *We have despised the good land that He has given us!*
- *We have despised God and His commandments!*

What happens?

- People go out and go their own way!
- Do what they want to do!

Verse 11: "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today." What does He mean in *forgetting God*? Not only in the commandments, but let's see what He emphasizes here the rest of the way through. There still is a problem with some people in the Church, and even some ministers in the Churches of God.

Verse 12: "Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*, and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied" (vs 12-13). That's precisely where we are today. Did not God fulfill that for Israel today? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 14: "Then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God..." That's what people do. One of the ways that people forget God is that they focus in on some corrupt minister or some corrupt brethren and *judge God* on *their* behavior, and that is a fatal mistake. *Your heart be lifted up (KJV)* means that you go against God; that you do as Cain did and start deciding what God should accept from you or not. And you decide how much of God's Word you're going to obey or not.

"...Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, so that He might humble you and **that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end**" (vs 14-16).

- Why has God called us?
- Why do we go through all the things that we go through?

Though we have all the physical comforts in everything; we have a multitude of different trials and difficulties living in this sex-addicted and drug-addicted society and world that we live in now—it affects 80-90 percent of all families, or you know someone who is afflicted by it. Living in a land where everything is so convenient, to keep the Sabbath, the Holy Days, all of these things that run counter to the whole society and counter to the way that the world is.

God wants to do you good in your latter end. What is the greater good that God wants to do in the latter end? What is your latter end? It's not your posterior that you're sitting on. Your latter end is *the resurrection!* Isn't that the greatest good that God

can do for you? *Of course!*

Here's where we're coming, because in this world it all comes down to money, v 17: "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth.'" We are great, wise, inventive people, and we have brought all this to ourselves! As a nation isn't that what we've heard: American ingenuity, etc. Watch out for the Chinese!

What is God talking about in *forgetting* God? Let's understand something about wealth. Who gives you wealth?

Verse 18: "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for **it is He Who gives you power to get wealth**, so that He may confirm His covenant which He has sworn to your fathers as it is this *very* day." The bottom line gets down to since God has given us the world, all mankind, in giving us these things, *God has a share in it!*

People think by their wise investments and manipulations, buying and selling or working or whatever, that they get wealth themselves. Let me [show you] a truism, and absolute living law: *Doesn't matter how hard you work, how smart you are, if God does not bless you, you can't do it.* For a while you may do it through stealth—like the current government—through lying, cheating, etc., and there is prosperity for the wicked for a while—we understand that.

However, let's also understand that in forgetting God—today there is every reason to forget God—because you have so much and because we have so much of our income committed to maintaining what we have—don't we? What is the very first thing that people do? *They quit tithing!* Then what happens? *People get mad and angry about this point!* There are some people who are going to turn off this sermon, because I had the gall and audacity to mention tithing and offering.

What you need to realize is that not everything you make belongs to you. You need to realize that. Whatever you have ***God gave you the power to get wealth!*** God will bless you if you keep His commandments and tithe. What happens?

Verse 19: "And it shall be if you do at all forget the LORD your God and walk after other gods serving them and worshipping them, **I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish**—yes, *perish.*" We can see that happen in the Churches of God. Just witness Worldwide Church of God; they had everything! Yes, they did extract from the brethren in ways that they should not have, but also brethren were guilty of trying to get something from God by following a man. You've got both things in

play there.

- Where are they now? *Worshipping other gods! Sunday-keeping!*
- Where are the campuses? *All three gone!*
- Where are the buildings? *Gone!*
- Why? *Because they rejected God! Forgot God!*

First of all, when you forget God you start doing your own way. When you start doing your own way you start telling God what to do! All of those who do not believe in tithing on their income, and all those churches that do not believe in tithing, but giving offerings, what do they do? *They have another way!* They have 'pledges'; they sell and merchandize things. That's why God gave tithing.

Verse 20: "As the nations whom the LORD destroys before your face, so you shall perish because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God."

Let's see what God said concerning the tithe. Let's understand one thing concerning tithing. A lot of people think that if they tithe and give offerings that somehow they're going to be deprived. *No!* Is God able to bless you because you do? How is God able to bless you? *In many, many ways besides financial gain or whatever!* Understanding the Word of God! Loving God! Our whole relationship with God!

Numbers 18:20: "And the LORD said to Aaron, 'You shall have no inheritance in their land...'" That is the tribe of Levi would not have a geographical territory. They were given different cities within all the tribes of Israel.

"...neither shall you have any part among them. I *am* your part and your inheritance among the children of Israel. And behold, I have given the sons of Levi **all the tithe** in Israel..." (vs 20-21).

- Who did the giving? *God did!*
- Did He give something that was not His? *No!*

This is His! God says in other places that all the gold and all the silver 'is Mine.' This is God's; He gave it!

"...for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (v 21).

All the tithe is an all inclusive statement that is not restricted to agricultural or animal products. If you dig the brass, the iron, gold and silver, is that not wealth that God created? If you extract the oil and the natural gas, is that not wealth that God has created? Did that not come from God? Who made it?

God did! He gave the power to get wealth!

Also, if you work, who gave you the mind, the hands, your body—everything about you—to be able to work and produce? *God did!* Whatever the nature of your work is, *God did it!* If we do not base what we do on the Truth and understand overall that God *owns* the tithes, *that's His!* When people give a tithe they are not giving of their own, they're giving to God what is His! That's what they're doing.

Haggai 1—here again is another principle. Here it was under Joshua and Zerubbabel and they were building the second temple, after they came out of the first contingency coming back from Babylon.

- Have we been called out of Babylon?
- Have we been out of this world?
- *Yes, we have!*

Christ is building a temple—isn't He? *The Church!* We are a temple of God having the Spirit of God in us. So, there are many, many analogies and parables that you can draw.

Haggai 1:2: "Thus the LORD of hosts speaks, saying, 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built."' They all have other things that they're going to do.

This is exactly the situation that we have today—isn't it? 'Well, the Lord didn't return in 1975, 88, 89, 93, 95, 99, 2000, 2004, etc., and it looks like the long haul is still ahead of us. It's not time! We don't know what God has in mind.

Verse 3: "Then came the Word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, 'Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your finished houses, and shall this My house lie waste?'" (vs 3-4). What were they doing? *They weren't tithing; they weren't giving offerings, and they were putting it all into their own properties; their own way of living.*

Let me tell you something that's going to happen one of these days—how soon down the road, I don't know. When I drive around and see all these houses and look at the real estate pages and see all these inflated prices; I see where people are having to make house payment anywhere from \$1,000 to 4,000 *a month*, and have these jobs and everything. One day, something is going to happen. You wait! Because, as the people of Israel living in the land, they have forgotten God and gone after their own lusts and their own ways and stealing from God.

If it belongs to Him, it is His! If you use that which is His... A lot of people are not going to like this. When I gave a sermon and used Mal. 3 I got a nasty letter from someone who is supposed to be a converted church member. Well, I didn't put Mal. 3

in the Bible. So, if you're still smoking put it in your pipe and smoke it.

Verse 5: "And now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Consider your ways.'" Stop and think about what you're doing in relationship to God. Spiritually we can say in relationship to your spiritual building—which you are building before Christ—that God wants you to do. This happens whenever people steal tithes and offerings, this happens—I have never seen fail, yet. I know people who used to tithe, but don't and now they don't have a nickel sideways to do anything, because of everything that has come upon them.

Verse 6: "You have sown much, but bring in little; *you* eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you dress, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes." We're not talking about bringing animals—are we? We are not talking about bringing agricultural goods—are we? *We are talking about wages!* Which most of us are on today—right? Some of you are on the government wage.

"...earns wages to put in a bag with holes." That's what happens when you forget God!

- Yes, you can use it!
- Yes, you can take it!
- Yes, you can steal it!
- Yes, you can forget God!
- Yes, you can be mad at any minister you want to get mad at when he preaches about tithing!

Nevertheless, you stand or fall before God and not by your own thoughts and not by a minister.

Verse 7: "Thus says the LORD of hosts, '**Consider your ways.** Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build this house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified,' says the LORD" (vs 7-8). If we're busy about doing the spiritual building in our lives; about building the spiritual character and qualities of God, as exemplified by Gal. 5 and 2-Pet. 1, then everything that we do will be in that perspective.

We are to be glorified by letting God be glorified in us, by His Spirit, by doing the things that God wants us to do; ***to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being!*** Be dedicated to Him and not the self. He wants you to work.

Verse 9: "'You looked for much, and behold, it came to little!...'" Does that not describe today in this nation? What is happening? *The more they spend the more they have, the more they need and the more in debt they go!* They're about ready to

raise the national debt again, and know that that is going to have a tremendous impact on the financial markets of the world. That's going to happen!

"...And when you brought *it* home, then I blew on it..." (v 9). Instead of having a blessing, it just sort of seems to disappear, because you're spending everything on your own lusts and what you want to get.

"...Why?" says the LORD of hosts. 'Because of My house that is waste, and you, *each* man runs to his own house.'" You go on about your own business; you go on about doing things the way that you want to do them rather than the way God wants it done.

Look, if you are Christ's, body, soul and spirit, then you're to live by every Word of God. Think about it! You have to judge your own circumstances. You have to judge your own way. You have to go before God and yourself. If you say, 'I forgot tithing so I'm going to tithe now so I can get a blessing from God,' don't necessarily think that you're going to. You have to have your heart right with God.

- You're not going to buy salvation!
- You're not going to buy off God!
- Neither are you going to prosper by stealing from God!

Verse 10: "Therefore, the heavens above you have held back the dew, and the earth has held back its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon livestock, and upon all the labor of your hands" (vs 10-11).

And we can say this: *God called for a drought and destruction upon the Churches of God* because of their arrogance, lying, cheating and stealing. Because of the governmental structure that they have, and brethren who were not brethren—false brethren crept in. This has happened to the Church and look where we are today!

Think about it! We're kind of down where it was with Elijah. He ran down to Mt. Horeb and said, 'O God, I, only I.'

- Where are the people of God?
- What are they doing?
- Where are they going?

Let's ask ourselves:

- What are we doing?
- Where are we going?
- How are we headed?
- Are we really building on the Truth of

God?

or

- Are we really building on sand?
- Are we building on Christ?
- What is that we are doing?

It's all going to come out in the long run—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* We're all going to have stand before the throne of God and give account for ourselves! In bringing these things out and talking about them and showing what the Word of God says, don't be mistaken for one minute that I'm trying to club you over the head so you can send in more money.

- We live within our budget!
- We live within what God inspires to be sent in!
- We don't club people over the head to get money!
- We don't send dunning letters, either!

We do mention tithes and offerings, and once a year I give a sermon on tithes and offerings so we can evaluate where we are and where we're going, where we're headed and what we're doing. It's all part of our relationship with God.

Then they repented and they obey the voice of the Lord their God. This is what you obey. You obey the voice of the Lord your God.

What also motivated this sermon was that we send out soft cover New Testaments to those who are incarcerated—*free*. We send out a lot of them. There's this one man in prison who says that he's getting out in ten years. He says, 'I have no money, don't earn any money, but I do have some stamps, so I want to tithe my stamps. My stamps are my tithe.' Here are some pitiful 6-8 stamps and I think: What a testimony that is to those who don't believe in tithing, who have everything! Who lack nothing! And have no room to tithe and spend all their money on whatever, or give a little pittance of something once in a while.

Then I see the widows dedicated to God who send in \$5, \$10, who live on social security. Living on social security you're not required to tithe because that is not an increase to you. That is subsistence living. They send in their offerings from that.

I look at people who have plenty, lots, and do nothing, provide nothing. I'm not judging you. I'm just bringing out some examples so that you can tell yourself—sit down and have a talk with yourself: What am I doing before God? That's what it's about.

If you are right *spiritually* before God, giving tithes, and offerings on the Holy Days,

becomes something that *you want to do, you're willing to do, you plan to do*. God will bless you in everything that you do when you do it.

Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding." Which is what everybody is doing.

Verse 6: "In **all your ways**... [not some of your ways, part of your ways, most of your ways] ...acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Isn't that what you want God to do? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 7: "Do not be wise in your own eyes..." He says:

- don't lean to your own understanding
- don't be wise in your own eyes

"...fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones.... [Note sermon series: *Addicted Society*] ...Honor the LORD with your **substance**..." (vs 7-9). What is that? *Anything! Anything that is wealth that you have!*

In thinking about that inmate that sent the stamps, I know that a lot of people on our mailing list—and we're happy to do so—that don't send anything. We don't charge for things. We give you everything and there are people who send in money so that we can do it.

"...and with the firstfruits of all your increase; and your barns shall be filled *with* plenty, and your presses shall burst *with* new wine" (vs 9-10). In other words, God is going to bless you above and beyond what you think.

Now, I know there are going to be some who say, 'Take me off your mailing list because you read Mal. 3!' All right! Go! You're a free moral agent. Mal. 3 includes more than just tithing. But this is a very interesting thing. Where do you begin?

Malachi 3:7: "'From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the LORD of hosts...."

Do you want God on your side? He tells you how to do it!

"... 'But you say. "In what way shall we return?".... [How are we going to do this, Lord?] ...Will a man rob God?... [If tithing is optional you can't rob God!] ...Yet, you are robbing Me. But you say, "How have we robbed You?"...."' (vs 7-8). How can that be? We haven't gone to heaven; we haven't held up the angels; we haven't gone in and chipped off the gold off your throne.' How have we robbed You?

He says, "... 'In tithes and offerings!'" (v 8). For some people that's like a dagger in the heart when you read that. Then you need to ask:

- Do you believe God?
- Do you believe what Jesus said that 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God?
- What do you really believe?

Verse 9: "You *are* cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation."

- Is this nation in this state right now? *Yes, indeed!*
- Are the Churches of God in this state? *In many cases, yes!*
- What of our personal lives?
- What are the difficulties that we have?
- Could it be that some of them surround this?
- Could it be that in deciding your own way and what you will and will not do, and tell God what to do, just like Cain did?

Just because it comes from the mouth of a minister, you reject it. If I read the Word of God, it is the Word of God and not my words and not my manipulation of it, but speaking the Truth!

Verse 10: "Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And **prove Me**..." God says, 'You prove Me!' He gives you a challenge.

- Are you willing to take up the challenge of God?

God is proving your heart! That's what He says in Deut. 8.

- Are you willing to prove God?
- Are you willing to come to God and say:
 - ✓ I realize what I've done
 - ✓ help me
 - ✓ strengthen me
 - ✓ let me prove You
 - ✓ I come to You and claim Your promise
 - ✓ Not because I'm great, but because You have given Your Word: *Prove Me!*

"...now with this,' says the LORD of hosts, 'to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is not enough room to receive it*' (v 10).

- Can God do that, or not?
- Can God bless what you have, or not?
- *Yes, He can!*

Verse 11: “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...” How many devourers are out there today? A lot of people are so far in debt, what is the greatest devourer that they have? *Interest!* Does that not devour your income?

You get a 30-year loan on a house, the first month you make the payment you pay a pittance—pennies—on the principle. All the rest is interest. You get a loan for \$100,000, by time you pay it back you pay \$220,000! What about credit cards? What about all the mismanagement of your financial life because you haven’t tithed and had the discipline to understand that ***you have to honor God first!*** How many things are you being devoured by? Look at it! I don’t know your life! All I know is the Word of God!

“...and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,’ says the LORD of hosts” (v 11).

- Think about work!
- Think about the job!
- Think about what God can do!
- Think about how many people God has to bless and prosper in this economy so each one of us can have a job so that we can live, exist and we can give God His tithe!

Think about it!

- Where do you work?
- How many people work there?
- How many people does God have to bless so He can bless you?

An amazing thing— isn’t it? Quite an amazing thing!

Verse 12: “And all nations shall call you blessed... [they will at the resurrection] ...for you shall be a delightful land,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘Your words have been all too strong against Me,’ says the LORD...” (vs 12-13).

- we don’t have to keep the Sabbath
- we don’t have to keep the Holy Days
- besides, I’m sure glad I’m a Gentile so I can eat shrimp, lobster and pork—all that stuff

Just like one woman who gave up on God because she was mad at a man. She divorced her husband and went out and got hooked up with a man in the world and started eating all kinds of unclean food. One of the favorite things they would do is eat raw ground pork meat. ***She died*** from eating that raw pork sausage! Someone in the world not knowing the Truth probably would have gotten by with it. But somewhere along the line God has to be severe in His judgment to us if we just utterly reject Him. Think about it!

“... ‘Yet, you say, “What have we spoken so

strongly against You?”” (v 13). ‘God, we love you! We’ll do this, we’ll do that, ‘we’ll do the other thing. But don’t ask me to tithe; don’t ask me to give offerings. I’ll give if I’m willing.’ I’ve heard a lot people who say, ‘I don’t believe in tithing; I believe in giving.’ Oh? How do you do that? *I think we should give more than tithing.* It has never, never failed; they don’t ever come close to doing it.

Verse 14: “You have said, ‘It is vain to serve God; and, what profit is it that we have kept His charge... [any of the commandments] ...and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?’” *Oh yeah, I’ll tithe, yes!* (grudgingly)

Verse 15: “And now we are calling the arrogant blessed...” Look at all those out in the world; they’re prospering; they’re getting along, but I’m having troubles and difficulties.

“...Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered.’ Then those fearing the LORD...” (vs 15-16). It shows the difference if you don’t fear God; if you don’t love God. That’s how you’re going to be toward God—right? *Yes!*

I’ve seen it happen: even those who are called brethren; even those who are so-called elders and ministers in the Church of God come to that point. However, God always has the remnant few that are faithful to serve Him.

Verse 16: “Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD...” This includes the whole gambit of everything. Not just tithes and offerings, but all the commandments of God, all the growing in character and grace and knowledge that we have in the New Testament.

God is writing it down; there’s a book of remembrance. Today in this world you have what is called a credit report. You can go online and get your free credit report. What’s written about you? Well, God has a book of remembrance about each one of us. I wonder what’s under each name? It’s there— isn’t it? Doesn’t God say we’re going to give an account for every idol word that we speak? Isn’t that true? *Yes!*

“...a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD and for those who thought upon His name. ‘And they shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts... [you are the firstfruits] ... ‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels.... [there’s a crown of life that’s going to be made for you] ...And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you

shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him” (vs 16-18).

Where are we today in tithes and offerings? Every year at this time we all get focused in on finances—don’t we? Everybody is waiting for that dreaded 1040 form to come through the mail from the government—or wherever it is in the land that you live in—and the government is going to take its taxes.

You know you’re going to pay, because they’re going to come and get it one way or the other. You do it voluntarily in most cases. However, people feel as though they have liberty to rob God. God somehow is going to overlook it and they’re going to get away with it.

If you can’t get away with it with the federal government or the national government, how do you suppose you’re ever going to do it with God? That’s where we are!

The long and short is this: God loves a cheerful giver!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 50:1-5
- 2) Exodus 13:12-13
- 3) Isaiah 66:7-8
- 4) Psalm 50:5-8, 12
- 5) Matthew 4:3-4
- 6) John 14:6
- 7) Matthew 7:13-27
- 8) Deuteronomy 8:1-20
- 9) Numbers 18:20-21
- 10) Haggai 1:1-11
- 11) Proverbs 3:5-10
- 12) Malachi 3:7-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 24
- Romans 12:1-2
- Revelation 12
- John 10
- Psalm 119
- 1 John 2
- Revelation 2; 3
- Galatians 5
- 2 Peter 1

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Daniel/Revelation*
- *The Addicted Society*

Appendix H from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*—[How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets](#)

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 11-24-13

Tithing Principles in the Bible I

Fred R. Coulter

I'm going to talk about a topic that is very dear to everyone's heart, and that is money—tithes and offerings. I get papers all the time. I got one on tithing that says that in the Old Testament it was physical, then when you come to the New Testament it is spiritual. since you are to tithe of your fruits, you don't have to send in any money to anybody anywhere because:

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (vs 22-23).

Then I got a paper recently from someone who said, the only thing that God requires on tithing and offering are the things that He has created, such as the animals for the firstborn offering and the sacrifices and there's no place that requires absolute tithing on gold, silver, money and things like this. So therefore, today the ministers ought to be as Jesus said to send them out with no money. If you survive, well 'when you come and visit us we'll give you a meal and send you on your way.'

Then they say that there's no place in the New Testament where Jesus took tithes. I read one in *The Journal* and what happens is they focus in on the abuse of tithes by ministers, rarely do they focus in on abuse of tithes by brethren. So, they gauge what they believe based upon how they've been offended by a man. That's the same kind of reasoning as saying, 'Well, because the Jews keep the Sabbath the way that they keep them, therefore, we don't have to keep the Sabbath.'

We're dealing also with a lot of very askewed thinking and the lack of putting the Scriptures together properly. In the research of the paper that was given to me, at the end of it says, 'Well, I hope you embrace the truth.' That is, '*my* view of what *I* believe the truth is,' rather than what the Bible shows.

To cover this properly we need to look at the overall aspect of it. Today we don't deal in animal sacrifices, and we don't deal in gold and silver literally—do we? *No!* How do we deal in money? plastic and paper? If that's the case, then no one anywhere owes anything to God based upon that reasoning. We'll take a look at it and we'll look at every one here.

Those who preach the Gospel should go out and do it without taking anything, because that's what Jesus told the apostles. Sure enough, He did on this occasion; this is after He chose the 12 apostles:

Matthew 10:5: "These twelve Jesus sent out

after commanding them, saying, 'Do not go into *the* way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into a city of the Samaritans.'" A lot of people say that the Gospel should only be preached to the descendants of the Israelites and not to the Gentiles.

- Is what Jesus is going to command here perpetual down through time?

or

- Is it for their first preaching of the Gospel?

Since Jesus wanted to make a point, here's what He told them:

Verse 6: "But go instead to the lost sheep of *the* house of Israel. And *as you are* going, proclaim, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Heal *the* sick. Cleanse *the* lepers. Raise *the* dead. Cast out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. Do not provide gold, nor silver, nor money in your belts, nor a provision bag for *the* way, nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff; **for the workman is worthy of his food** [hire]" (vs 6-10).

How far do you suppose that they went? Look at any map of Judea. Since they didn't go into any of the cities of the Samaritans, the furthest they went is into Judea and then up to Galilee. That's really not very far, and their whole situation was entirely different.

Example: If you watch some things on the History Channel, I watched one about the rise of the Persian Empire. They built a fantastic highway that went from Susa, which is on the eastern slope just outside of the Mesopotamian Valley. They built a road coming up from the Mesopotamian Valley right on up through what is modern day Turkey down to the city of Ephesus.

Then they had a branch that went over to Bosphorus Dardanelle and actually it was Darius who made the first bridge across the Bosphorus by putting boats as pontoons and putting a platform of wood so they could cross it. That's how they came in and conquered that part of it. What they did along the highway is have inns. Just like today, a motel. You come along every 20 miles and here's an inn. You can get food, you can get fodder for your animals, and you can refresh yourself and so forth.

All of this was paid for *with money*. There may be some people that they already knew along the way, that's fine; that's true. But also, if you're doing miracles, people are going to be willing to take you in and feed you, and so forth. So, it's a far different proposition than what we're dealing with today.

Verse 11: “And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there remain until you leave. When you come into the house, salute it; and if the house is indeed worthy, let your peace be upon it. But if it *is* not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you leave *that* house or that city, shake off the dust from your feet. Truly I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for *the* land of Sodom and Gomorrah in *the* day of judgment than for that city” (vs 11-15).

Then he explains what they’re going to do. Part of this is the immediate thing that they were going to do, part of it is also prophetic when you get down a little later on and He says, ‘You will not have gone over all the cities of Israel until the Son of man comes.’ When we read these things we have to understand that there’s an immediate thing that they’re doing and then there’s a prophetic thing for the future and be able to discern the difference.

This is why in studying this and putting it together:

- we need to *rightly divide the Word of God*
- we need to *look at the overall principles* that God is talking about
- we need to *make a proper judgment* concerning what we do today

Mark 6:7: “And He called the twelve to *Him* and began to send them out, two by two; and He gave them authority over unclean spirits. And He commanded them not to take anything for *the* journey except a staff—no bag of provisions, nor bread, nor money in the belt; but *to* be shod with sandals; and not to put on two coats. Then He said to them, ‘Wherever you *go*, *and* come into a house, remain there until you leave *that city*’” (vs 7-10).

Verse 12: “And they went out and proclaimed that *all* should repent. And they cast out many demons; and *they* anointed with oil many sick people, and healed *them*” (vs 12-13).

We have that parallel account in Matt., Mark and Luke. What we see in the command that He gave them that we just read in Matt. 10 was a temporary command. It was not to be in perpetuity, because things were going to change.

Luke 22:35: “And He said to them, ‘When I sent you without purse and provision bag and sandals, did you lack anything?’ And they said, ‘Nothing.’ Then He said to them, ‘Now, however... [He changed it; from this time forward it would be different] ...let the one who has a purse take *it*, *and* likewise *his* provision bag; and let the one who does not have a sword sell his garment and buy *one*’” (vs

35-36). When they were to go out and preach, now it was going to be a different proposition.

Let’s look at the command that Jesus gave in Matt. 28. Now they were to go into all the world. Let’s see how it was a broad command:

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.’ Amen” (vs 18-20).

With this commission, it doesn’t tell us except with a broad perspective of what to do. With this we have to use the rest of the Word of God and we have to make judgments as to how we’re going to do it. We also have to rely on the Spirit of God to lead us in the things that we need to do and where we need to go and how it needs to be done. We find that in the book of Acts. This is quite a thing!

What was one of the things that Jesus taught them to do? One mistake that people make is that they fail to realize a very important thing: ***Not everything has to be restated in the New Testament to apply to New Testament Christians!*** That’s the thing that’s important! We will see much to the chagrin of people what Jesus did concerning tithing, but most people are not willing to accept it because it’s in a summary, rather than ‘you have heard it said in the past that you should tithe; give ***all*** that you have.’ (said cynically and facetiously)

Luke 4:3: “Then the devil said to Him, ‘If You are *the* Son of God, command that this stone become bread.’ But Jesus answered him, saying, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God”’” (vs 3-4). What is Jesus saying here? How many places did He say, ‘Don’t think that the Law and the Prophets have been done away; I didn’t come to abolish it’? What is He saying here? ***We have to live by every Word of God!***

Where was that found? *Since the New Testament wasn’t written, it’s found in the Old Testament!* That’s a very important thing for us to understand. Let’s go to where this is given—Deut. 8. We’ve gone through this in the past and in very great detail, and since some people have been in the Church a very long time—like one woman said to another woman: ‘Don’t you know there is no tithing in the New Testament?’ Generally what happens is—I’ve seen it because I’ve had to handle the money for a long time; I no longer handle it absolutely directly—those who fall for the trap of not tithing... I’ve even heard one man say, ‘Well,

we ought to give, and give more than tithing.’ Did he ever do it? *NO!*

We will see that tithing is a system—tithes and offerings—that God setup, so it’s defined. He defines it, and the reason that He does is so that we won’t have many different schemes and things that people use to try and raise money.

What you need to do is step back and take a broad view and look at it from this point of view: How many churches that don’t believe in tithing, what is it that they have to do? Look at the Catholic Church, they charge for everything! If you want a funeral, you pay a thousand dollars or more. If you want a Mass, you pay for the Mass. If you want the priest to come and visit you, you pay for him coming. Look at all the schemes that other people have.

Look at what happened with Worldwide (Church of God) when they decided they didn’t need tithing. A lot of people said, ‘Well, Worldwide came to the point they didn’t preach about tithing anymore.’ What happened to them? *It was a device to destroy the organization, rather than searching for the Truth!*

Let’s look at something here that in principle helps us to understand what God wants us to know. This is just before they’re going into the ‘promised land.’ Moses says, Deuteronomy 8:1: “All the commandments which I command you this day shall you be diligent to observe *and to do* that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land, which the LORD swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness in order to humble you, to prove you, to know what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not” (vs 1-2). That’s the whole purpose of whatever it is that God wants us to do.

- the Foundation

Let’s understand that *the foundation of the whole Bible is GOD!* That’s why it says in the New Testament that Jesus Christ is the Foundation and you must build on that. But Jesus was the One Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament. Then after God being the foundation, what’s the next steps?

- the Law
- the Prophets

The next thing, which paves the way between the Old and New Testaments is the:

- teachings of Jesus

None of these are fighting against each other. We need to understand that.

- the Gospels

The Gospels tell about what God would tell you if He would come in the flesh and speak to you. Everything you want to know how God would talk to you if He came read and study the Gospels, because that’s what Jesus did.

The whole key is whether you keep the commandments or not. Then you can go to the New Testament and you can see absolutely the commandments are upheld, etc.

Verse 3: “And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger, and then He fed you with manna which you did not know, neither did your fathers know *it*, so that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone... [here’s the quote that Jesus quoted]: ...but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD does man live.”

Just think for a minute the rest of Luke 4 and Matt. 4—what was it that happened? *Jesus was tempted by Satan* to become a magician, for lust of power for the whole world and all the wealth and riches and everything that belongs with it

Think of that as we are reading here in v 4: “Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.” It shows how people get accustomed to something. Can you imagine clothes not wearing out? Can you imagine walking in the desert in all the rough soil and your feet didn’t even swell? I think if we tried to do it today—even with walking boots—it would be a difficult proposition.

Verse 5: “And you shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you. And **you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God** to walk in His ways and to fear Him” (vs 5-6).

If you want to do a little side study: Go through the whole Bible and look up where it says to *keep the commandments*, and how many times does it say it. It’s not really too hard to figure out. But what happens in a lot of these things when people get their own ideas and miss the whole point, they are nudging over to the proposition that God is a liar. That’s basically what’s created this lawless society that we have today, which ‘hangs over the head’ of Protestantism with their false grace and lawlessness in getting rid of the commandments of God.

Verse 7: “For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness. You shall not lack any *thing* in it. *It is* a land whose stones... [I want you to notice what’s

also included here because this becomes very important]: ...are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper” (vs 7-9). What we have here is that all of these things come into a tithing proposition. Why is that?

Psalm 24:1: “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fullness of it, the world, and those who dwell in it.” Everything in the earth God owns!

Let’s look at what Moses says here, and think about this in the overall principle, Deuteronomy 8:10: “When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land, which He has given you. **Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes,** which I command you today” (vs 10-11). That’s very inclusive.

Verse 12: “Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*.” If we don’t fill that prophecy to the full today, I don’t know what does. Look at all the nations of modern Israel and they have the wealth of the world. Though it is a deceptive wealth, because it’s all based now upon debt! They still have fantastic wealth beyond any other people in the world.

Verse 13: “And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply... [which you give tithes and offerings on] ...and your silver and your gold is multiplied...” That’s included in the same thing. We’re going to see that God says that this is *wealth!*

“...and all that you have is multiplied, then you become haughty of heart, and you forget the LORD your God... [that’s exactly what the Laodiceans have done] ...Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage” (vs 13-14). What we need to do is make a *spiritual* comparison here.

- Did God bring us out of Satan’s world?
- Did He call us to come out of it?
- *Yes He did!*
 - ✓ to give us His Spirit
 - ✓ to reveal His way
 - ✓ to give us understanding of His Word

Verse 15: “Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, so that He might humble you and that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end” (vs 15-16). Everything we go through is so that God will bless

us.

Verse 17: “**Beware lest you say in your heart, “My power and the might of *my* hand has gotten me this wealth.”** What does wealth include?

- crops
- animals
- things you dig out of the earth

Verse 18: “But **you shall remember the LORD your God...**” What does that mean? How do you remember God? *By giving what He has said you need to give! By keeping His commandments!*

“...for it is He Who gives you power to get wealth...” (v 18). They’re going to find out later when the dollar collapses—we’ve heard all kinds of warnings that it’s imminent collapse is at hand—and somehow it’s held up. But, lo and behold, it’s going to happen!

“...so that He may confirm His covenant which He has sworn to your fathers as it is this *very* day” (v 18).

Think about this for just a minute: If you’re a farmer and you’re raising wheat, barely and things like that; or if you’re a rancher or shepherd and you give every tenth of the cattle or flock, and you give the firstborn, then you see someone that has a gold mine; you give your tithes, but the one who has the gold mine and has more wealth than you says, ‘I don’t have to tithe.’ Is that included in the power to get wealth that you dig out of the earth and the earth and the fullness thereof belongs to God? *Yes, indeed!*

Psalm 62:8: “Trust in Him at all times...” What is it that you have to trust God in? *That He will fulfill His promise to you if you are faithful in tithes and offerings!* It’s not just restricted to animals and crops.

“...you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them. God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: **that power belongs to God**” (vs 8-11).

Whatever wealth you’re increased with, you have to honor God with it, because He gives you the power to do so. So, we have that together.

Now let’s see how this is applied. A lot of people hate going to Malachi, so where you hate going we will go. I realize that a lot of ministers have used this as leverage over people

to extract as much as they can because they weren't doing things the way that God desired. There are two responsibilities that are necessary in this:

1. those who give the tithes and offerings
2. those who administer them, because they are stewards of God's money

It has to be both ways! Yes, there has been stealing of tithes and offerings by ministers and religious leaders. Yes, there has been stealing of tithes by people who refuse to give them. In both cases what we're dealing with is something that 'two wrongs don't make a right.' Let me just state right here:

- 1) I'm not bring this sermon to get you to send in more money.

What I'm trying to do is preach the Truth of God and love God and keep His commandments.

- 2) I'm not interested in wealth and money and power.

That's not the purpose or goal in my life. That is vanity and that would come to a short end very quickly.

- 3) I do not take tithes myself

We live in a big house that is true. Today, in inflated value—although it's going down quite rapidly in California—we have a large 4200 sq. ft. house, which we paid for the land and house \$75,000 in 1977; it's paid for. I don't need a lot of money. I don't want a lot of money. I don't by flashy cars. I don't wear flashy jewelry and I don't by expensive clothing. Just to set the record straight, sometimes once in a while it's necessary to do that. We have three cars, they're paid for (out of our own money). I have a 'brand new' 1994 Nissan Maximum (I say that a little facetiously), because at 150,000 miles it still runs like a new car. I remember that someone said to me one time: When you drive a new car off the lot, it's used!

I try to deal prudently with our money. I draw a small salary, and I don't need any more. I don't want any more. Let's also understand that in tithing, people do not make their check out to me, they make it out to the Church (Christian Biblical Church of God). I do as Paul; I draw a wage. The tithes belong to God, so therefore, I have to be a steward. It is God's! It is not mine! This is why we give a full report every year. This is why we have an outside accountant do all of the accounting of where the money goes and how it's spent.

We live within the budget that God has sent us. The budget is whatever God sends us, that's fine. What do we use it for?

- to serve the brethren

- to teach the brethren
- to feed the brethren spiritually
- to reach out to new people

There are abuses that have always been. My wife Dolores made a comment to me—Dolores is my conscience and she's about burned in my brain—'Fred, when you speak, just talk,' rather than have a bunch of vanity and stupidity like they have with the Protestants prancing back and forth. 'Just talk!' I've got that burned in the back of my brain.

(go to the next track)

The reason that God defines concerning the things that grow out of the ground and animals differently than He would the things taken out of the ground—copper, brass, gold, silver, oil, and things like this—is because it's very easy to figure ten percent of that—*very easy*. But what goes to the priest He defines; what goes to the Levites He defines—and why He does it. The tithe belongs to God. Let's see what God says:

Numbers 18:20: "And the LORD said to Aaron, 'You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any part among them. I *am* your part and your inheritance among the children of Israel.'" What does that mean?

When they divided the land they separated out cities for the Levites, and they were to live there! They had their own agricultural area around it so that they could have their own food and so forth. Those were not to be taken away from the Levites. The inheritance that the other tribes received was a geographical area of land that you find defined on how they separated the land during the days of Joshua.

It would be like they were given an equivalent of a state for a tribe. No state was given to the Levite. He was given instead cities within those states. There would be Levites spread out among all the tribes of Israel. To compensate them for that, since they didn't have any land that they would own:

Verse 21: "And behold, **I have given the sons of Levi all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance...**" That's important to understand—*all the tenth or tithe*. Does he differentiate it when He says, 'all the tithe'? *No!* that means everything that is tithable.

Let's also understand why this belongs to God, because He gave it. God is not going to give something that doesn't belong to Him. "...for their service which they serve, the service of the tabernacle of the congregation" (v 21).

Verse 24: "But the tithes of the children of

Israel, which they offer *as* a heave offering to the LORD...” A heave offering is a very unusual statement. If you dedicated the land to God, that was also counted as a heave offering. If you gave money, that was counted as a heave offering. If you gave an animal as a sacrifice—for a burnt offering—that was a heave offering. So, the term ‘heave offering’ is a general statement that applies to anything having to do with tithing and offering.

“...I have given to the Levites to inherit. Therefore, I have said to them, ‘Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.’ And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘And you shall speak to the Levites, and you shall say to them, ‘When you take tithes from the children of Israel, which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then **you shall offer up a heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth of the tithe**’” (vs 25-26). So, they were required to tithe as well. Just for people’s inquiring minds, we tithe! We tithe well beyond the tenth.

Verse 27: “And your heave offering shall be credited to you as grain of the threshing-floor and as the fullness of the winepress.” What does this tell us? *That includes more than animals, more than the tithing of the grain and the wine!*

Verse 28: “So, you also shall offer a heave offering to the LORD of all your tithes, which you receive from the children of Israel. And you shall give from these the LORD’S heave offering to Aaron the priest. **Out of all your gifts you shall offer every heave offering of the LORD...**” (vs 28-29).

What does it mean gifts? *These would be the things in the way of money that people would give to the Levites in the way tithes* for services that they would perform for the local community. So, you have a bunch of Levites, say in the tribe of Manasseh, and you have the population come to them and bring them the tithes and offerings. Then they would also bring the gifts, which then would include gold, silver, extra things that were not necessarily listed in the way of grain, wine or animals.

“...of all the best of them, the Holy part out of it.’ And you shall say to them, “When you have lifted up the best of it, then it shall be credited to the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress” (vs 29-30). That is tithing on things other than just the agricultural products.

Let’s see where the priesthood robbed God, Malachi 1:6: “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I *am* a father, where is My honor? And if I *am* a master, where is My fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, **O priests, who despise My**

name. And you say, ‘In what way do we despise Your name?’ You offer defiled bread upon My altar...” (vs 6-7)—which means *not according to the commandments of God*—defiled or polluted!

“...And you say, ‘In what way do we defile You?’ In your saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible’” (v 7). We’re not satisfied with what God gives us. Just like the two sons of Eli—Hophni and Phineas—what did they do? They misappropriated things to themselves right when they brought it to offer, so they could take it *their way* rather than God’s way.

Here it goes even further. They would keep the best for themselves, v 8: “And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it not evil?*.... [they were not doing it according to the way that God said] ...And if you offer the lame and the sick, *is it not evil?*”

After you give the firstfruits, the tithe herd of the flock would pass through the shoot and every tenth one would go to God. So, in that case, if it were lame, that would be acceptable as a tithe. But it wouldn’t be acceptable as a burnt offering. What they did, they kept all the best and gave all the lame, all the blind and so forth. God says, “...*is it not evil?*”

“...Offer it now to your governor....” (v 8). Go to the governor and you say, ‘Here’s this runt of a cow that’s really worthless, but I’m going to give it to you as a gift.’ You wouldn’t quite say it that way.

“...Will he be pleased with you, or accept your person?” says the LORD of hosts. ‘And now entreat the favor of God, that He will be gracious unto you. This has been by your *own* hand, and now will He show regard for you?’ says the LORD of hosts” (vs 8-9).

Here’s the lesson that we have: Anything that we do that is contrary to the Word of God—in the worship and service of God and keeping His commandments—***if we do it our way instead of God’s way, it’s by our means!*** Where did that first begin? *Cain!*

The reason why God didn’t accept his offering was because he didn’t do it according to God’s instructions. He wanted to it by *his means* and *his way!* This becomes very important. If we try to do things *our way*, for example Sunday-keeping. You go to the Lord and say, ‘Hey this is great.’ God says, ‘That’s not My day! That’s by *your* means, not Mine!’ Same way with tithes and offerings.

Verse 10: “Who *is there* among you who will even shut the *temple* doors or kindle a *fire on* My altar without *being paid?*....” They were paid! When you really understand what was at the temple with the gold, silver and everything, it was the

banking center of the Jewish world. There was great wealth that was there because they had tithes coming in the form of money.

“...I have no pleasure in you,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘I will not accept an offering from your hand’” (v 10). It all has to be according the way that God has commanded.

We’ll go through these things and understand what we are dealing with that’s important.

Verse 12: “‘But you are profaning it when you say, ‘The table of the LORD, it *is* polluted; and its fruit, His food, *is* contemptible.’ You also said, ‘Behold, what a weariness *it is!*’ And you have snuffed at it *in contempt,*’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And you bring that which was taken by violence, and the lame, and the sick...’” (vs 12-13).

When you get into the terms of today’s tithes and offerings, if you do away with tithes and offerings, are you not in spiritual principle doing the same thing? *You’re bringing God what’s leftover!* Pretty soon you have nothing leftover, because that’s a living principle that happens, because you don’t believe God; you don’t take up God on His promise or His challenge.

“ ‘...thus you brought an offering. Should I accept it from your hand?’ says the LORD. ‘But cursed *be* a deceiver who has in his flock an *acceptable* male—yet, he vows and sacrifices to the LORD a blemished *one*, for I *am* a great King,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and My name *is* feared among the nations’” (vs 13-14). I want you to think about this in relationship to:

- the Churches of God that don’t believe in tithing
- the Churches of God where they steal tithes—the ministry
- the Churches of God where the brethren steal tithes —because they look at the wrong that the ministers are doing and say, ‘I’m not going to send anything.’

If you’re in a situation like that, what you better do is tithe and put it in the bank and let God direct you where you ought to send it. But nevertheless, don’t take it from God, because notice what happens:

Malachi 2:1: “And now, O priests, this commandment is for you.” this also applies to the ministry. We can go through the New Testament and look at the qualifications for an elder, look at what he needs to do, how he needs to handle it, and so forth.

Verse 2: “‘You will not hear, and if you will not lay *it* to heart to give glory to My name,’ says the

LORD of hosts, ‘then I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yea, I have indeed cursed them *already* because you do not lay *it* to heart.’” This is what happens.

Verse 3: “Behold, I will rebuke your seed; and I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your appointed feasts....” He’s not here talking about tithes and offerings directly, but the whole thing of the abuse of authority of those who are to teach the people.

I’ve had people write in and say, ‘We went to the Feast of Tabernacles and we didn’t hear one word about the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles.’ Or, ‘We went to the Days of Unleavened Bread and didn’t hear one thing concerning about the Days of Unleavened Bread or the meaning of it.’ That’s exactly the same thing that is here. What they are getting is *the dung of men’s ideas* of what they are preaching. Exactly the same thing today.

Verse 4: “‘And you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, so that My covenant might be with Levi,’ says the LORD of hosts.” It was!

What is the covenant that is with those who are ministers and teachers today that God makes. We find it in: 1-Tim. 3 and Matt. 20. How are those who serve the people to be?

- *To be a servant of all;* not a lord over!
- *To be one who gives;* not an extractor!
- *To teach the Word of God in Truth;* not in fables!

We have the same principle that carries over.

Verse 5: “My covenant with him was *one* of life and peace, and I gave them to him *for* fear; that he might fear Me, and he was in awe before My name. The Law of Truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned away many from iniquity” (vs 5-6). This is what we are to do! You can find the parallels in the New Testament.

Verse 7: “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and *the people* should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.” That’s what he was to do.

Here we have misbehavior by the priests and the same kind of misbehavior by the ministers today. Of course, it’s been down through history. I know one thing that is interesting, it says, ‘You that teach the Law, don’t you teach yourself?’ We have to teach ourselves!

One of the things that was mentioned to me: Isn’t it interesting that when you go through and

study the lives of the kings and so forth, that they made gigantic mistakes toward the end of their life. You think about that! My prayer to God is: ‘God, however long I live, please don’t let me fall into that pattern.’ You can see what happened to David. He was probably 50-years-old when he had the affair with Bathsheba. Then he was about 65 when he numbered Israel. Look at Solomon in his old age.

Then look at Hezekiah who did great works for God. He was ready to die and God gave him 15 years. To celebrate when the ambassadors from Babylon came over and Hezekiah showed them all the wealth that was in the kingdom—didn’t hide anything—and became so foolish and selfish that after God gave him another 15 years to live, then God said, ‘All right, since you have done this, there is going to be punishment upon the people, but not in your lifetime. Hezekiah said, ‘That’s good, I’ll have peace in my lifetime.’ So, he turned out to be very self-centered and not thinking about anything in advance.

- What happened?
- How were they punished?
- Who was his son?
- *Manasseh—for 55 years!*

What’s happened to the Church of God because the self-proclaimed leader of the Church was foolish in his old age? *The Church no longer exists!* All the wealth and everything that they had, instead of serving God, they became vain in it and served themselves. I need to let that be indelibly burned in my mind, because maybe there’s something that, as we get older, we become more susceptible to making those kinds of mistakes. We just need to be upfront about it and understand it.

Verse 8: “But you have departed out of the way...” the way of the Lord includes everything:

- all of His commandments
- all of His statutes
- all of His judgments

“...you have caused many to stumble at the Law.... [get made, angry, disillusioned, and turn off and leave God] ...You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,’ says the LORD of hosts.” (v 8). We could say the same thing, the covenant of the ministry for the Church of God today.

Verse 9: “Therefore, I have also made you contemptible and base before all the people...” That can also apply to all of the Protestant ministers. You turn on the television and you see their contemptible and base performances that they have.

I was channel surfing and saw Jimmy Swaggart who got caught in adultery and he cries at

the drop of a hat and getting all the people worked up in a frenzy with his preaching and pacing up and down. Then he was running around on that huge stage and I thought: Doesn’t that fit this; it’s contemptible! What terrible behavior!

Does that honor God? *No!* It causes people who see it—maybe they’re interested in God—say, ‘How can that be of God? This is nonsense!

“...just as you have not kept My ways but have been partial in the Law.’ Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, each man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?” (vs 9-10).

Then it talks about Judah has dealt treacherously and why He hates divorce. I’ll just have to mention here that divorce has been a terrible problem within the Church of God. Divorce and re-marriage has been abused because of contemptible ministers.

Let’s understand that this is not only instruction, but it is also prophecy, Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...” Who is He talking about? *John the Baptist and Himself, as He came as Jesus Christ!*

“...even the Messenger of the covenant... [bringing the New Covenant] ...in Whom you delight. Behold, He comes,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘But who can endure the day of His coming?...’” (vs 1-2). We have in v 1 the first coming; in v 2 we have the second coming:

“...And who shall stand when He appears? For He *is* like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness” (vs 2-3). He literally did that with the priests and Levites in the first century. Did they repent? *No!*

Verse 5: ““And I will come near to you for judgment. And I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against those who swear falsely, and against those who extort from the hired laborer’s wages—and *against* those who turn away the widow, the orphan, and the stranger because they did not fear Me,’ says the LORD of hosts.” All of those things have happened within the Church of God—haven’t they? If you’ve been in the Church of God 30+years, you’ve seen all of that parade before your eyes.

Verse 6: “**For I am the LORD, I change not....** [That’s important to understand. Keep that in mind. What is He talking about next?] ...Therefore,

you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Now we start talking about the abuses of the children of Israel. First of all, He corrects the priests. Then He gives a projection forward to the coming of Christ. Let’s see what He does:

Verse 7: “From the days of your fathers, you have gone away from My statutes, and have not kept *them*....” Deut. 8—When all your wealth is increased and everything that you have is multiplied, you forget God!

“...Return to Me, and I will return to you,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘But you say, “In what way shall we return?” Will a man rob God?...’” (vs 7-8). If the tithes and offerings do not belong to God, then there would be no robbery. If someone steals your neighbor’s car, he hasn’t taken anything from you—has he? You don’t own it.

Same thing if there are no tithes and offerings you can’t steal it. That becomes an important thing because we’re dealing with a principle that God also deals with, which is ‘put your money where your mouth is.’

“...Yet, you are robbing Me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings! You *are* cursed with a curse; for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation” (vs 8-9).

So, things happen when you don’t take care of God’s part of the wealth that you have, even though today it’s kind of an illusionary wealth because it’s based on debt. If you take out any paper money and look at it, that’s what the New Testament calls ‘script.’ It says, ‘*this note is legal tender for all debts public and private.*’ As long as you have the psychological value of it, that’s what it’s worth. But even then we still have increase—don’t we? *Yes, we do!*

Verse 10: “Bring all the tithes... [anything that is of wealth (Deut. 8)] ...into the treasure house...” Some people say that is just for grain and things. Let me tell you very clearly, at the temple they had areas where they stored grain, areas where they stored silver and gold, and many other things that the people brought that they would tithe and give offerings on.

“...so that there may be food in My house. And **prove Me** now with this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is* not enough *room to receive it.*” God says to *prove Me! Test Me!*

That’s why God honors tithing of anyone who tithes; anyone who gives offerings. Satan knows this; it’s an important thing to understand. Even many of the Protestants are blessed in their

tithing, because that is a promise that God has given. It crosses even knowledge and understanding of the Word of God to the best of their ability. If that’s all they know, God will bless them. You can say, ‘God, I’m going to prove You.’

You can’t withhold and ask God to bless you—ask God to prove Himself—before you respond to Him. God is not the One Who left. People are the ones who left God! So, we prove Him!

Verse 11: “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...” There are many devourers. What one of the biggest devourers that people have today with the plastic money and credit cards? *Interest!* What is another devourer? *Poor health; spend all your money!* The woman that said to this other woman, years ago, that you don’t have to tithe. I can tell you exactly what happened to them. They ended up spending all their money on excess doctor bills because they left off tithing to God.

The choice is in our hands. It’s not for ministers to extract from people. By the way, I don’t receive tithes; the Church does; I receive a salary from it. We’ll see that that’s how Paul did it.

“...and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delightful land,’ says the LORD of hosts” (vs 11-12). Let’s just look at modern Israel today and let’s apply this.

- Has this happened?
- Are we cursed in the ground?
- Are we cursed in the cities?

If you remember God in tithes and offerings and you give of what you have, you’re also going to be more bound to remember the rest of His commandments. If you *prove God* He will answer you. But what has happened? *We’ve become selfish! Self-consumed! Spending every dime that we have as a nation on buying things!* There isn’t even a savings rate worth anything—less than 1%. Why? *Because we’re cursed with a curse!*

In the 1980s we were the leading lending nation of the world. Now we’re the greatest debtor that the world has ever seen. All of that is a curse! So, the moral of the story is that if you take from God what is His, He’s going to take from you what is His and also what also is yours—*both!*

This is not in isolation, you need to take the whole chapter: Verse 13: “Your words have been all too strong against Me,’ says the LORD...” ‘We don’t need to do this, we can offer the lame, the blind, the second hand, we don’t have to tithe, offer.’

“...‘Yet, you say, “What have we spoken *so strongly* against You?” You have said, “It *is* vain to serve God; and, what profit *is it* that we have kept His charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?”’” (vs 13-14). They began to look out into the world and look at all of the wicked who prosper in their way and say, ‘Look, I’m struggling here; I need all the these things.’ God promised sufficiency.

Verse 15: ““And now we *are* calling the arrogant blessed. Yea, they that work wickedness are built up, they even tempt God, and are delivered.’ Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor....” (vs 15-16). If you fear the Lord, what do you do?

- you love God
- you keep His commandments
- you give tithes and offerings
- you walk in the commandments of God
- you live your life according to the way of God

“...And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name” (v 16). What does this come down to? *It comes down to eternal life!*

Verse 17: ““And they shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels.... [God is making up a crown for you; God is going to give you true wealth] ...And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’ Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him” (vs 17-18).

Part of serving God is keeping His commandments concerning tithes and offerings!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 5:22-23
- 2) Matthew 10:5-15
- 3) Mark 6:7-10, 12-13
- 4) Luke 22:35-36
- 5) Matthew 28:18-20
- 6) Luke 4:3-4
- 7) Deuteronomy 8:1-9
- 8) Psalm 24:1
- 9) Deuteronomy 8:10-18
- 10) Psalm 62:8-11
- 11) Numbers 18:20-21, 24-30
- 12) Malachi 1:6-10, 12-14

13) Malachi 2:1-10

14) Malachi 3:1-18

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Timothy 3
- Matthew 20

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Transcribed: 12-7-13

Tithing Principles in the Bible II New Testament

Fred R. Coulter

We're going to talk about money, and also as we finished up in part one in Mal. 3, you see the applications coming clear down to the return of Jesus Christ and the reward of the saints when God is making up His jewels for their crowns. To say that is only for the Levitical priesthood we will find today that is not necessarily so. In fact, we will find that it is not so.

I want to talk about money and the ridiculousness of this society as in sports. There have been headlines about a pitcher Barry Zito. He was an ace pitcher for the 'A's' and he became a free agent at the end of the season, so he just signed a seven-year contract for \$126-million for the seven years, which averages out to almost \$18-million a year.

Let's think about this in real terms. It means that if he wins 18 games it costs \$1-million a game for him to win. We also figured out the number of pitches. The A's get along on a budget for about \$50-million for the whole team every year, and they do well. How much is this per pitch? So, we reduce it down from \$1-million to \$750-thousand because he's going to lose some games. So, we'll throw that in the mix, too.

That means \$750-thousand for each game. If he pitches 100 pitches it means every pitch is worth \$7,500. Also, he's the kind of pitcher that when he pitches the batters know how to bat him, so they can have a good chance to get a hit, which is if the pitch is something that they can't really hit, they foul it off—especially after two strikes. He's noted for that. He's gone as high as 15 pitches on a batter.

Let's just say for every batter that he goes 10 pitches, that's \$75,000 for that at bat. If he's pitching to a high-priced batter, you can figure out the reverse going the other way, because there are some batters/players that make \$15-million a year as outfielders. So, every at bat and every strike and ball has a value, too.

Everything is all skewed today. Everyone is all wrapped up in money, merchandizing and the goal is to receive as much money as you can and somehow you are successful.

We're going to talk about not only the laws of God, but we're also going to talk about the principles that are important for us to understand and realize. A lot of people debunk the Old Testament from the New Testament and say this:

- it's not in the New Testament
- Jesus never collected tithes
- Jesus never told the disciples, when He was teaching them in His 3-1/2-year ministry, to collect tithes

Psalm 119:123 shows the attitude and this has to be our attitude. Dolores and I have been discussing this and how it's been used: They've had special on the History Channel all about hell and all the other religions, and how it came into Christianity and so forth.

The way they keep people in line is with *fear*. That's been held over the people of God, too, for a long time. 'If you don't do this you're going into the Lake of Fire.' Well, not necessarily! Maybe some of the ministers who have preached that may be at the head of the line. We'll just have to see in the long run.

God wants us to operate in this manner, with this attitude, toward everything. Jesus said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

Psalm 119:123: "My eyes fail for Your salvation... [that's the whole focus of our lives; that's why God has called us; that's the most important thing] ...and for the word of Your righteousness"—to understand the Word of God, His Truth. When you think about it, and you think about the message to the Laodiceans (Rev. 3), what's their problem? *They're all focused on physical things and getting money, riches, and all this sort of thing!* They don't know the Word of God.

Here we have the two things that we really need to concentrate on in our lives. This is the goal! We understand that:

- God is love!
- He loves us!
- He cares for us!
- He watches over us!
- He's giving us salvation!

There is nothing that God would ask us to do that would not be for good and for a blessing.

Verse 124: "Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy..." Note sermon series: *Keys to Answered Prayer*; this is what we are dealing with on a daily basis: 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive others who sin against us.'

“...and **teach me Your statutes**” (v 124). Many of the things that are included in the Word of God are the statutes of God; this is important, too.

To help anyone who is confused as to what it is to understand about how Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, note: *A Harmony of the Gospels* and Appendix H in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version: How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?* He did, and it means that certain things such as the rituals, physical things that they were to do, such as the blue threads in the bottom of their hems. These have been superseded by the spiritual standard that God has given.

You need to understand that because those have been fulfilled does not mean that God has fulfilled the Ten Commandments to where they're no longer applicable.

Verse 125: “**I am Your servant...**” Which you might say, ‘God has called me.’ You are God’s servant! You are serving God! We’ll talk about this later in relationship to some of the things that Jesus said about ‘whom you serve.’

“...**give me understanding...**” (v 125). This is why having the whole Bible today, we have the greatest opportunity of any people in the history of the whole world, at this time to know and understand the Word of God. This ought to be right in the forefront of what we are doing.

Yet, what do we see? *Even in the Churches of God we see all kinds of different* doctrines, fighting, arguing, quarrelling, and the one-God theory, Docetism theory, the wrong calendar, etc., etc. All within the Church of God because they’re not asking for the true understanding of the Word of God.

We need to understand that no man has a monopoly on the understanding of the Word of God—*no one!* God does! If we come to God with this attitude: Will He not delight in giving us understanding? Will He not want to give us the understanding of His Word?

“...that I may **know Your testimonies...** [everything that God says] ...It is time for the LORD to work... [think about this as a prophecy for today]: ...for they have made void Your Law” (vs 125-126). That’s surely what’s happening in the world today. Think about that!

Verse 127: “Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold.” I’ve said many, many times: If you have big pile of fine gold in a dark room and an old beat up Bible next to it and you bring a contestant in (like on a TV show) and say, ‘I want you to choose what you think is the most valuable thing that you can have.’ You open the door and turn on the spot light—one on the

huge pile of gold and one on the Bible—and you say ‘Choose the most valuable.’ They’ll choose the gold 999 times out of a thousand because they don’t realize that *the Bible contains the words of life, so you can receive eternal life*, and that no amount of gold in the whole world is going to bring you eternal life.

Verse 128: “Therefore, I esteem [consider] all Your precepts... [everything about God] ...concerning **all** things to be right... [notice it’s not *some* things; not concerning just the ones ‘I agree with’] ...and I hate every false way.”

That’s also a part of our righteousness in hating sin. You think about this: If you have particular sins in your life that you need to overcome, the first step in overcoming is asking God to give you a hatred and revulsion for those sins, and ask Him to take it out of your mind. He will do that! That applies for whatever it may be.

We’ll look in the Old Testament because we’re going to talk about Abraham and his love and obedience for God. When God was passing on to Isaac the promises that He gave to Abraham, He said this. This is important for us to understand because we know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are going to be in the Kingdom of God. They, in a sense, were under the New Covenant ahead of time.

God told Isaac, Genesis 26:3: “Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you...” Do you want God with you and to bless you? Think about that! Whenever we go through any one of these things, remember that *God loves you! God will bless you!* And even some of the trials that you go through are going to turn out for a blessing in the long run if you constantly put it in God’s hands.

“...for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands...” (v 3). Unto you and to all of those who have the seed of begetting of God the Father, *God has given the kingdom!* Isn’t that what Jesus said? *‘It is God’s pleasure to give you the kingdom!’* We have something to look forward to better than owning land and owning properties and having cattle and all those sort of things—which Abraham did. Abraham was a very wealthy man, and so was Isaac.

“...and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens...” (vs 3-4). In *The Christian Passover* book and also in *The Day Jesus the Christ Died* we have an excellent explanation of the true origin of the Passover, which really began with Abraham and not just the children of Israel.

“...and will give to your seed all these lands.

And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (v 4). We are living with those blessings.

You talk to anybody who has traveled overseas, when they come back to America and they see all the wealth here and all the things that we have, it’s just an absolute stark contrast. When you go down to San Diego and go on into Mexico—before it was as dangerous as it is now... Years ago we went down there and there was just like there was a curtain that fell right at the border. Here you go from these six-lane highways, lots of cars, big buildings, wonderful homes, great property, wonderful everything, and you go through the gate at Tijuana and you start driving south, you have little two-lane roads with holes, ruts, poor people and things like this.

They don’t have the blessing given to them that was promised to Abraham, and we have received that blessing. I want you to think about it in relationship to this, since we have that blessing: Don’t you think that we ought to be thankful to God in the physical things, because we need all the physical things to live. We have an excess and abundance way beyond, but let’s also understand, as the Apostle Paul wrote: *You have nothing you didn’t receive!* Everything you have comes from God!

If you tried to write about every little thing that Abraham did, how big would the book be? This is a summary. This is what we have to learn to understand about things in the Bible—and this is part of spiritually understanding it.

He gives the key, v 5: “**Because Abraham obeyed My voice...**” Do a study about *obey My voice* and *not obey My voice* and tie that in with Matt. 7 where Jesus said, ‘Everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, will be like a man who built his house upon the rock. The floods came, the winds came and beat upon that house and it didn’t fall, because it was founded on the rock.’

But ‘the one who hears the words and does not do them is like a man who built his house upon the sand.’ River bottom—we see it every year! ‘The winds come, the rain comes and beats upon it and the house falls’ because it sweeps it away!

It’s a breathtaking thing to see a big beautiful house that had a wonderful view over this river—they’re a whole batch of them in Utah—and they hadn’t had a flood there in decades. Last year they had the rain and the floods and a whole bunch of these multimillion dollar houses just collapsed in the flood and went on down in the water. “...obey My voice...” Jesus said very clearly in Matt. 7 about that.

“...and **kept My charge...**” (v 5). Whatever

that may be. You can read in there and maybe divide out charge, commands, etc.

“...**My commandments...**” (v 5)—which means the Ten Commandments were in effect from the beginning. Abraham kept the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath, the Holy Days in the form that God revealed to him then. You go back to Heb. 11 and it talks about Abraham twice:

1. he dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob—a type of the Feast of Tabernacles
2. he was looking for the city of whose Architect and Builder is God

Abraham was told all about New Jerusalem. We’re not told here everything that God told him and showed him and revealed to him. But those two things tell us an awful lot.

“...**My statutes, and My laws**” (v 5). One of the statutes that God has is tithing.

Genesis 28:18: “So, Jacob rose up early in the morning... [after God said that He would bless him and be with him] ...and took the stone, which he had put at his head, and set it *as* a memorial pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place [Bethel] The House of God... [the gate of heaven (v 17) because of the vision that he saw and what God told him] ...But the name of that city *was* Luz at first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘Since...’” (vs 18-20).

There is no ‘if’ in the Hebrew; there are no conditions on God. How many times have I said that all the conditional *ifs* are upon men? God cannot lie! God will not lie!

“...‘Since God will be with me...’” (v 20). That is the proper translation and is in the Hebrew. God promised to be with him:

Verse 15: “And, behold, I *am* with you, and will keep you in every *place* where you go...” It’s not *if* God will be with me. It’s “...Since God will be with me...”

Verse 20: “...and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the LORD be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar shall be God’s house. And of **all** that You shall give me...” (vs 20-22).

People like to divide it down, and in the paper I mentioned earlier, he says, ‘You only tithe on animals and the land and crops, but you don’t tithe on anything else.’ I showed in Deut. 8 that is not correct. Just think how Israel would have been if everyone who grew crops and had animals were the only ones required to tithe.

- What about the merchant who made shoes?
- What about the merchant who made implements of agriculture?

You mean, they would be off the hook? Then that would mean that God is partial.

Verse 22: “And of **all** that You shall give me...” Remember what I said: **You have nothing you didn’t receive!**

“...**I will surely give the tenth to You**” (v 22). This shows the knowledge of tithing goes all the way back to creation.

Hebrews 7:1: “For this Melchisedec... [identified in Heb. 6:20 as Jesus Christ] ...King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, Who met Abraham *as he was* returning from *his* slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, and to Whom **Abraham gave a tenth part of all...**” (vs 1-2).

In analyzing that with v 4: “But consider how great this one *was* to Whom even the patriarch **Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.**” In reading this in v 2, you may think that is referring to the spoils. But what it is really saying is that Abraham faithfully gave and divided out a tenth of **all**, not the spoil from this raid, but of **all** of everything that he had. How can we understand that that is true? *By what we just read in Gen. 26:5!*

Verse 2: “...on the one hand, being interpreted King of Righteousness; and on the other hand, King of Salem, which is King of Peace; without father, without mother, without genealogy; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but having been made like the Son of God, remains a Priest forever” (vs 2-3). That could only describe Christ.

Verse 4: “But consider how great this one *was* to Whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.” There is a difference between a tenth of the spoils and to whom he gave a tenth of **all**.

Now he talks about tithing in a very different way, v 5: “For on the one hand, those from among the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood are commanded by the law to collect tithes from the people...”

This is why as long as Jesus was alive in the flesh, during His ministry, He didn’t take tithes and He didn’t command people to give tithes. Why? *Because as Lord God of the Old Testament He had given them to Levi!* The covenant that He had [with] Israel had not yet come to an end, and that did not come to an end until He had died. That ended, officially, the Old Covenant, then He was free to begin developing the Church, etc.

“...—that is, *from* their brethren—even though they are *all* descended from Abraham; but on the other hand, He Who was not descended from them **received tithes** from Abraham... [not of the spoil] ...and blessed him who had the promises” (vs 5-6).

Did God only bless Abraham when he brought the tithes of the spoils? *or* Did He bless him in Gen. 12, 15, 17, 22 and also through the whole life of Abraham? *Absolutely!*

Verse 7: “Now, it is beyond all doubt *that* the inferior *one* is blessed by the superior *one*. And in the first case, men who die receive tithes; but in the other case, *He received tithes of Whom it is* witnessed that He lives *forever*. And in one sense, Levi, who receives tithes... [at the present time he did] ...also gave tithes through Abraham; for he was still in his forefather’s loins when Melchisedec met him. Therefore...” (vs 7-11).

Paul is drawing a contrast here. Like everything we’re going to see: you have the Old Covenant, you have the New Covenant. What is it that we have found concerning the New Covenant that Jesus did in Matt. 5-7? *and* all the way through His teaching? *He taught the spirit and intent of the Law!* Very important to understand! He also said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.’

Verse 11: “Therefore, if perfection was indeed *possible...*” Let’s understand about *perfection*. In the New Covenant we are to be *perfected with the character of God, the mind of Christ*, through the Spirit of God. It was not possible with the covenant that God gave Israel because God didn’t give the Holy Spirit. That’s why He said in Deut. 5, ‘Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear and obey Me always and keep My commandments.’

So, it wasn’t possible! God did not mean for spiritual perfection to come “...through the Levitical priesthood—for *the law that* the people had received was *based on it*—what further need *was there for* another priest to arise according to the order of Melchisedec, and not to be named after the order of Aaron? For since the priesthood has changed...” (vs 11-12). This has a great meaning.

“...it is obligatory *that* a change of *the priestly law* also take place” (v 12). That means **all the law!** That’s what Jesus did.

- He changed the covenant
- He changed the meaning of the law
- He changed the meaning of everything

In sacrifices, Christ became the sacrifice, and we have a comparison of that in the Old Testament

between the Old and New Covenants. {Note: Appendix I: Comparison Between the Old and New Covenants (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*)}

Verse 13: “Because the One of Whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no one was appointed to serve at the altar.” That’s why Jesus never went to the temple to be a priest there. He is a heavenly priest.

Verse 14: “For *it is* quite evident that our Lord has descended from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning *the* priesthood. And it is even more evident because a different Priest arises according to the order of Melchisedec; Who was not invested according to *the priestly* law of a fleshly commandment, but by *the* power of indestructible life. For He testifies, ‘**You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec.**’” (vs 14-17).

A lot of people argue that the tithe was only for priests, and since the ministers are not priests they should not collect tithes. A spurious argument as we will see.

Here is the verse that the Protestants really, really love, v 18: “For there is indeed an annulment of the earlier commandment *delivered to Aaron...*” That’s everything concerning the priesthood not just tithing. Tithing and offering are included in that. If you *annul* the covenant with Levi and it goes to the covenant with Christ, do you eliminate the Law—all the Laws of God? *Of course not! Jesus made that clear!*

“...because of its weakness and unprofitableness” (v 18). It didn’t give them the heart to obey and love God the way that you do when you have the Spirit of God. It didn’t lead to eternal life; it led to physical life. Let’s understand something about law: **law cannot make you do anything!** It has no power to do so.

- You *choose* to obey God and keep His laws!
- You *choose* to disobey God and not keep His laws!

His laws are still in effect!

Verse 19: “Because the *priestly* law...” [the Old Covenant] ...brought nothing to perfection...”—because the law *defines* what sin is. What brings you to perfection is repentance, the forgiveness of sin and the Holy Spirit of God; and this is what He’s working today.

“...rather, *perfection* is brought about by a superior hope, through which we draw near to God” (v 19). Then it goes on talking about the New

Covenant, which is important for us to understand.

It seems like in almost every sermon that I give on tithes and offerings I go through 1-Cor. 9 and guess what? Almost every year someone comes back with another little technical argument about something because either they didn’t understand it, or I didn’t fully explain it the way that it needs to be understood. That in itself I’ll admit that I probably help create the problem.

But there are some people who are so turned off in giving tithes and offerings because of the stealing by the ministry.

- Whenever men sin, **does that void the Law of God?**
- If ministers misappropriate and misuse tithes and offerings—which we’ve seen a lot of that—**does that do away with the Law?**
- *No!*

It’s the same way if brethren turn around and say, ‘Oh, the ministers have stolen money, I’m not going to send them anything.’

- **Does that do away with the Law?**
- What should you do in a case like that?

If you have doubt, put it in the bank, because that belongs to God (Mal. 3).

- How can you rob God if you take from Him something is not His?

You can’t rob God in that case. But God says, ‘You have robbed Me.’ You say, ‘How?’ God says, ‘In tithes and in offerings.’

(go to the next track)

Let’s go through this again: When did Jesus tell the apostles that they could collect tithes and offerings? We will see, going back to the book of Acts, that from the beginning they dealt in money, not in the offerings of animals and so forth.

{See book: *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey and parts 1 & 2 of this series where it shows the economy of the Roman Empire was actually a merchandizing economy much like we have today.}

Now, sometimes you have to defend yourself, because people come against you with all kinds of things.

1-Corinthians 9:1: “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in *the* Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, without a doubt I am to you. For you are the certification of my apostleship in *the*

Lord. My defense to those who are examining me is this” (vs 1-3).

We will see that Paul did not take tithes and offerings from the Corinthians, and he did that for a purpose, to show them how carnal they were. The reason he didn't do it was because they were so carnal and he didn't want to take it from them lest they would say, 'Oh, he takes money from us.' So, he gave it to them free.

Verse 4: “Do we not have a right to eat and to drink? Do we not have a right to take with us a sister, a wife, as also the other apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, do we not have a right to refrain from working?” (vs 1-6).

I just got a paper from a woman that said ministers ought to work, and that we're only entitled to what food is set before us when we go visiting. Well, pray tell, how am I going to come and visit you? She said, 'Paul worked!' We'll see that Paul did work.

I worked as a loan broker from 1983-1995 and did *the work*, which was much less than we have now, so that's, inclusive counting, 13 years. I did work.

- How much was I able to produce? *Not very much!*
- How much of the Gospel was able to be preached? *Not very much!*

If that's the way all ministers should be, let's go back to what I covered in # 1 of Tithing Principles:

- How are you going to preach the Gospel to the world unless there's some means of support? *'Well, you can have other means of support.'*
- Should you setup a system that is different from what God has given in the Bible?

if you do

- Are you living by every Word of God?

Think about that!

- Why did God give the system of tithes and offerings?
 - ✓ *So that each person could decide in his heart to obey God or not!*
 - ✓ *So that ministers could not extort—though many of them do—above what God has given!*

The truth is that there were times when Paul worked because there were no brethren to support him. There were times when he didn't work, when there were plenty of brethren to support him. And we will see that the brethren tithed to the Church and the Church sent Paul a wage. That's exactly what I

do; I take a wage and I count everything that God sends as *His money* and it has to be administered properly; it has to be accounted for.

Therefore, I have an outside, independent accountant who accounts for all the money and at the end of the year I give you a full detailed Income and Expense Statement. Everything is transparent and aboveboard.

One man came out here for the Feast of Tabernacles and was anxious to see our building. He thought we had a big metal building. He thought we had all kinds of people working for us. We have two small offices of 800 sq. ft. a piece. He was flabbergasted! We operate at perhaps the lowest cost possible, because those who work for the Church, many of them work at home. Jim and Betty Hyles work in their house. Just think how much more they would have to be paid if they lived here in Hollister and how much more rent we would have to pay for all of us to be in the same place? It's likewise with others who work for us.

Raymond Scott who has sent out series for 13 years and is in the process of retiring from it; he worked in his own home. We wanted to give him some enumeration for doing it, but he didn't want any. Think of the space that would be necessary for that.

That's how we operate and why I have jokingly said, 'We are the Church that is, and is not, and yet, is.' That's why we are able to produce what we produce, because we hold the tithes and offerings that God sends in as *His!* We need to make the most of every penny that comes in. That doesn't mean that we aren't generous for those who need help, etc., etc. We do help them! But we don't beg and ask for money, and we're not going to.

In going through these sermons I'm not doing this so I can compel you to send money. If you do it under compulsion—Paul says that God doesn't want it by compulsion—then it's not from the heart. It's the same thing in everything else that you do. If what you do for God is not from the heart, then of what value is it? *Everything!*

- the Sabbath
- the Holy Days
- loving each other
- forgiving each other
- growing in grace and knowledge
- study

Whatever we do! We're to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being. As I started this message, the central focus of what we do is the salvation that God is giving us. He commands us to preach the Gospel. I think when you see the statistic

for the website, *God has increased* the number of visitors many times over from last year. That is a very effective way of reaching people.

1-Corinthians 9:7: “Does anyone at any time serve as a soldier at his own expense?...” *NO!* They sign you up. You give your life to them. They give you food, housing, clothing and weapons!

“...Does anyone plant a vineyard and not eat the fruit of it?...” (v 7). Of course not! Even Noah drank the wine and got drunk. He was so happy and cheerful to be on the other side of the Flood and living that when he was celebrated, he probably drank it when it was new wine. New wine will knock you out flat real soon, real quickly!

“...Or does anyone shepherd a flock and not eat *the meat* and milk from the flock?... [Of course!] ...Am I saying these things *merely* from a human point of view? Or does not the law say the same things?” (vs 7-8).

What we’re going to see here is how Paul applied the Law. It’s very interesting, a very broad interpretation, which means he not only used the Law, but he also gave the overall principle behind the Law—which is important for us to understand.

Verse 9: “For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn.’ Is it because God is concerned for oxen? Or does He not certainly say *this* for our sakes?...” (vs 9-10). Notice how he transferred that to him and those who are working.

“...For our sakes it was written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes the corn in hope might be partaker of his hope. If we have sown to you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your physical things?” (vs 10-11).

Physical things include whatever they may give him; whatever *money* they may give him. If you’re going to go on a boat around the Mediterranean Sea, you’re not going to go up the ship captain and be carrying a recently killed goat and say, ‘Here’s a goat for my passage.’ He will say, ‘How dare you bring that to me, it’s not the age of refrigerators, I can’t keep this.’ *No!* You paid him money; they dealt in money! They had gold, silver and copper coins. The physical things would include whatever they would give.

Verse 12: “If others participate in this authority over you...” Who gives the authority? *God is the One Who gives the authority!* He commanded Levi to take it, and we will see that He commanded the apostles and ministers to collect tithes and offerings. Someone will surely say, ‘When did He do this?’ We will come to a close approximation of

when He probably did it. But the fact is, He did do it!

Verse 12: “If others participate in this authority over you... [those were the false ministers; same thing today] ...much more surely *should* not we? Nevertheless, we have not used this authority; but we have endured all things, so that we might not hinder the Gospel of Christ.”

Paul wanted them to be converted, which was the most important thing. He said, ‘You’re carnal and we can’t teach you spiritual things’ (1-Cor. 3). He wanted them to be converted so that they would understand that everything came from God; but that they would *freely* give rather than having to be reminded.

Verse 13: “**Don’t you know...**”—means that he taught the previously. What did Paul do? *He taught them what God said!*

“...that those who are laboring *in* the sacred things of the temple...” (v 13). What are the things of the temple?

- all the tithes
- the offerings
- the gifts
- the temple tax
- the vows what were given
 - ✓ land
 - ✓ an animal
 - ✓ money

All of this would be called a ‘heave offering’; even the land.

They could also vow the land by coming to the priest and saying, ‘I want to vow the land; how much is it worth?’ The priest would say, ‘thus and such.’ Then he would say to the priest, ‘I want to redeem it so I can continue using it.’ God says that if you redeem it, you can add 20% to it. When you vow something, God expects you to pay, to give.

What is the most important thing that you have vowed to God? **Your life!** *Though baptism!*

“...live *of the things* of the temple, *and* those who are ministering at the altar are partakers with the altar? In the same way also, the Lord did command that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel” (vs 13-14).

If you’re so turned off that you cannot give money to any man, then what you need to do is get right with God. ‘Two wrongs never make a right.’ Stealing from God, whether a minister or a member, doesn’t do away with the Law of God. Example: The Protestants point out the way the Jews keep the Sabbath, so therefore, they say, ‘We don’t want to Judaize so we keep Sunday.’ It’s exactly the same

principle.

Verse 15: “But I have not used any of these things. And I have not written these things in order that this might *now* be done to me. For *it would be* better for me to die rather than to have anyone make my boasting void. For though I preach the Gospel, there is no *reason* for me to boast because an obligation has been laid upon me. And woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel!” (vs 15-16). Paul understood what he was to do, and certainly feared God in the financial matters.

Verse 17: “For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if *I do this* against my will, I have been **entrusted** with a ministry.” Everyone who is a minister, elder or teacher understands that. You’ve been *entrusted* with a ministry to serve the people of God!

Verse 18: “What then is my reward? That in preaching the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without expense...”—which we do. It says in the Old Testament, ‘buy the Truth and sell it not.’ Yet, even one man wrote in and said, ‘Why don’t you not have a non-profit corporation, just set it up as a business and charge for everything that you send out?’ I wrote him back and said, ‘That’s merchandizing the Truth.’ Anyone who writes in, we send it free!

Granted, there are some people out in the world who do not want to get involved in a church until they check it out. That’s why we have an arrangement with amazon.com so people can buy it from York Publishing through amazon.com—York Publishing is *me!* All the money that comes in through York Publishing—which is not very much—we use it for postage expense for the Church. I get no profit from it.

“...so that I may not abuse my authority in the Gospel” (v 18)—which means that Paul was well aware of the things that we have been talking about.

Since Jesus commanded that these things be done in the same way, when did He command it? He didn’t do it while He was in the flesh. He could not do so until He ended the covenant with Israel and ended the covenant with the Levitical priesthood, though there was an overlap of 40 years to give the Jews final warning before God destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

When did Christ do it? He had to do it after He was resurrected and received of God the Father. What do we have? *In Acts 1 He showed Himself the apostles and disciples for 40 days!* That had to be the timeframe in which He did it. Couldn’t be any other time, because it says, ‘The Lord commanded...!’ That means it was a direct

command from the Lord.

Since we don’t have a temple, since we don’t operate in agricultural products. That’s why Deut. 8 includes gold, silver, copper and everything from the land—as well as the agricultural products—and he connects that with the wealth, therefore, those things need to be tithed upon.

Let’s look at something else that’s important for us to understand. This is after the apostles—Peter and John—were released. They were punished for speaking in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:23: “Now, after being released, they came to their own *brethren* and reported to them all *that* the chief priests and elders had said. And when they heard *this*, they lifted up *their* voices to God with one accord and said, ‘O Master, You *are* the God Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that *are* in them, Who by *the* mouth of Your servant David did say, “Why did the nations insolently rage, and the people imagine vain things?”’” (vs 23-25). Also, we need to realize that’s a prophecy for our age today, too.

Verse 26: “““The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.” For of a truth they did gather together against Your Holy Son, Jesus, Whom You did anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with *the* Gentiles and *the* people of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your counsel had predetermined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threatening, and grant that Your servants may speak Your Word with all boldness, by reaching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Son, Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness” (vs 26-31).

When you start doing that and God starts acting, backing it up with signs and wonders and healings:

- Do you think that the apostles were making tents?
- Do you think they were making pottery?
- Do you think they were tailoring clothes?

Remember, even though Jesus told them when they went on their original mission, ‘Don’t take any money, script, food, two sets of sandals, two coats, but you go preach!’ Later He said, ‘Now you buy a sword, you take your purse’; so He changed that commandment.

Let’s see what happened, what had to transpire, and how the New Testament Church was

built financially.

Verse 32: “And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common.” They were willing to really pitch in and help make things go. Much like when they had the offering for building the tabernacle. They all pitched in like it is here.

Verse 33: “And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. For neither was anyone among them in want; for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold *them and* brought the amounts of those *things* that were sold.” That’s more than a tithe. You talk about a ‘heave offering,’ that’s something!

How valuable was it to preach the Gospel for them? Everything that they had and what they were doing, they were following the words of Jesus Christ Who told the rich man who didn’t want to do as Jesus said, ‘Go sell all that you have and come and follow Me.’ That’s what they were doing.

I tell you, if you want to hear an uproar, just think what it would be if I, or any minister, said, ‘Sell everything that you have and send it in’? There would be the news, the media, the accusations, newspaper articles and everything. Think about it!

Verse 35: “And laid *the money* at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was made to each one according to his need.” They took care of food, housing, clothing. Why? *Because many of the brethren who were there came to Jerusalem from other countries to keep Pentecost!* They hadn’t gone home, yet. They had to take care of them; so they were.

Verse 36: “And Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which is, being interpreted, “son of consolation”), a Levite, born *in the country* of Cyprus, had land; *and he sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet*” (vs 36-37). Apparently, he went back to Cyprus, he sold the land, brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet. What did they do with this? *They took care of everyone!* But also preached the Gospel.

Here’s a lesson, and here’s a fearful lesson. That’s why God wants us to do ‘as we purpose in our hearts.’ And the whole thing that Jesus taught back in Matt. 5 was, ‘Let your *yes* be yes, and your *no* be no.’ If you say *yes*, you do it. If you say *no*, you don’t do it. We have that principle right here.

I’m not using this as a fearful thing to say that if you don’t give your tithes and offerings you’re going to drop dead; please understand that!

However, it’s been my observation that through the years that those *who don’t tithe and give offerings* still tithe and give offerings. In what way? *Because they don’t have the blessing of God and they have to pay for the curse!*

One man wrote, ‘I quit tithing and I tithed myself into bankruptcy by paying everything else, because I brought upon myself the curse of God.’ He was able to repent. Ananias and Sapphira did not have that opportunity.

Acts 5:1 “Now, a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price *for himself...*” (vs 1-2). Why? *Because they sold it for more than they intended!* They said, ‘Well, we got more than we figured, so let’s keep back part of it.’ But what was their pledge? *Whatever we sell it for, we’ll give!* Who was their pledge really to? The apostles? *or To God?* ‘As you purpose in your heart, so do.’

“...his wife also being aware of *it*; and he brought a certain portion *and laid it* at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *part* of the price of the estate?’” (vs 2-3). Aren’t you thankful that God hasn’t given ministers today that kind of perception? This was to establish the authority of the apostles, to establish the power of the Church. And in order to preach and in order to reach out, you have got to have money to do it. The Church has always operated on money.

Verse 4: “‘Before it was sold, was it not yours? And after you sold it, was it *not* in your own authority? Why did you contrive this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.’” You can lie to men, but God knows your heart!

Verse 5: “And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired; and great fear came upon all those who heard these things.” I imagine that the scribes and Pharisees, when they heard about this, ‘Oh, man, what is this thing coming to?’ They were probably envious of that and said, ‘Boy, we wish people who withheld tithes and offerings from us would drop dead, too, and then we’d get it.’

Verse 6: “Then the young men wound him up, and carried *him* out *and buried him*. Now, it came to pass about three hours later *that* his wife also came in, not knowing what had taken place. And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me if you sold the estate for so much?’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘Why *is it* that you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of *the* Lord?... [they had the Spirit of God in them, and also Peter having the Spirit of God] ...Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband *are* at the door, and they shall carry you out.’ And she immediately fell down at his feet

and expired. And the young men came in and found her dead; and they carried *her* out *and* buried *her* by her husband. Then great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things” (vs 6-11).

What happened? Of course, a short time later persecution came upon the Church because of these things.

Verse 12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch; and none of the others dared to join them, but the people magnified them; and believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women), insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them” (vs 12-15). It did and they were healed.

Can you imagine the envy and jealousy of the scribes and Pharisees with this happening? They were Levites—John was of the house of Aaron; Barnabas and Matthew were Levites.

Verse 6: “And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees; *and* they were filled with anger. And they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in *the* public hold. But during the night an angel of the Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, ‘Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life” (vs 6-20).

You know what happened then. They were brought before the Sanhedrin the next morning. They said, ‘Okay, we’re all assembled here, now you guards go get them and bring them in here.’ The guards went to get them and said, ‘They’re not there!’ Someone came and said, ‘Guess what? They’re out there preaching in the temple area. The doors are locked. We opened them and there was no one in there.’ This was really a startling thing!

What I want you to understand is that in order to preach the Gospel it takes money. Using any other system but tithes and offerings given to the Church is not right.

Let’s answer the question concerning the Apostle Paul and not collecting tithes and offerings. After he talks about the false apostles and so forth that are coming and preaching a different gospel. Isn’t that true today. Someone comes along with a

‘good idea’ and you say, ‘Oh, that’s a good idea; that’s a wonderful thing.’ That’s how people get into things that are contrary to God’s Word.

2-Corinthians 11:5: “But I consider myself in no way inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles.... [They weren’t apostles!] ...For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet, *I am* not in knowledge; for in all things I have demonstrated this to you. Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you freely?” (vs 5-7).

What did he have to do? Verse 8: “I robbed other churches...”—meaning other churches received tithes and offerings and they had a treasurer, someone who handled it] ...receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you. And when I was present with you and in need, I was not a burden to anyone (for the brethren who came from Macedonia fully supplied my needs)...” (vs 8-9). Here he wasn’t working; though when he first came to Corinth he was with Annanias and Sapphira and they were making tents.

“...for I kept myself, and will *continue to* keep myself, from being burdensome... [to receive money from you] ...to you in anything. *As the Truth* of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows *I do*. But what I am doing, I will do, so that I may cut off *any* occasion from those who are desiring an occasion; so that in the things they boast of, they also may be found even as we *are*” (vs 9-12).

He was saying, ‘Now, let’s prove who is an apostle here.’ That’s why he did this. ‘These other false apostles coming in using this authority over you and you gladly use it, gladly give to them, let them do it. Let them give it up and let’s see what they preach.’ Then he talks about false apostles (v 13) and Satan and so forth.

2-Corinthians 12:10: “For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool *in this* boasting. You have forced me *to do so*, when I ought to have been commended by you. For in no way was I inferior to those highly exalted *so-called* apostles—even if I am nothing. Indeed, the signs of an apostle were demonstrated *by me* in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles among you. For in what *way* was it that you were inferior to the other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? **Forgive me this wrong**” (vs 10-13). So, he admitted that it was wrong, trying to do something to help them.

Let’s understand that even the Apostle Paul

admitted that when he did not follow the way that God had laid out, it became a wrong.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 119:123-128
- 2) Genesis 26:3-5
- 3) Genesis 28:18-20, 15, 20-22
- 4) Hebrews 7:1-2, 4, 2-19
- 5) 1 Corinthians 9:1-18
- 6) Acts 4:23-36
- 7) Acts 5:1-20
- 8) 2 Corinthians 11:5-12
- 9) 2 Corinthians 12:10-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 3
- Matthew 7
- Hebrews 11
- Genesis 28:17
- Deuteronomy 8
- Hebrews 6:20
- Genesis 12; 15; 17; 22
- Matthew 5-7
- Deuteronomy 5
- Malachi 3
- 1 Corinthians 3
- Acts 1
- 2 Corinthians 11:13

Also referenced:

Sermons Series: *Keys to Answered Prayer*

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Day Jesus the Christ Died* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey (amazon.com)

From: *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*:

- Appendix H in *How Did Jesus Fulfill the Law and the Prophets?*
- Appendix I: *Comparison Between the Old and New Covenants*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 12-6-13

Tithing Principles in the Bible III Unrighteous Mammon!

Fred R. Coulter

Let's just review a few Scriptures:

- *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.* That means the Lord of the Old Testament, the Lord of the New Testament, King into all eternity. He doesn't change!
- *Man shall live not by food alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!* (Matt. 4:4).
- *We are to follow the spirit of the Law!*

Remember, tithing and giving of offerings are very important because God says *prove Me by doing!* That doesn't mean you can buy your way into the Kingdom of God.

As I've mentioned, I'm not giving this series of sermons so that you will send more to the Christian Biblical Church of God. I am doing them so you realize the blessings that God is going to give you and everyone thinks, many times, that they are financial blessings when they may not be.

I remember a man who said, 'I started tithing and I lost my job.' Well, six weeks later he found another job that paid 50% more. '**All things do work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.**' You have to keep that in mind.

God says that when you give, and you give liberally, then you will have *sufficiency in all things*. Let's see this principle in action, the principle of faith in tithing and giving, and how God will bless you. Remember what it says, that *God knows what you need before you ask Him*. In asking Him it's not just a matter of your asking, God wants to know that

- you love Him
- you trust Him
- you believe Him

The only reason I'm going through this is so

- you can draw closer to God
- you can trust God
- you can believe Him
- you can reap the benefits and blessings that come from God

Remember this: ***Not all blessings are physical!***

- How much is the knowledge of the Truth worth?

Think on that!

- How much is the knowledge of how the Bible is put together worth?

Of course, ***no amount of money is going to get you into the Kingdom of God!***

- How much is it worth when you pray that you come into the presence of God the Father spiritually? *No amount of money can buy that!*

Here is the whole thing that is true. Keeping the commandments of God:

- part of it's the Ten Commandments
- part of it's the food laws
- part of it's tithing and offering

Those who are on Social Security and pensions, that's not an increase. Many, many people who contribute to the Christian Biblical Church of God are in that category, and they send offerings very faithfully. God doesn't require that you tithe on that because it's not an increase. But whatever is an increase to you—through your labor, work or profit, whatever—then you should tithe on that.

Matthew 6:19: "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth... [which is what the world is after, and it's all going to come crashing in] ...where moth and rust spoil, and where thieves break through and steal; but store up treasures for yourselves in heaven..." (vs 19-20). This doesn't mean that you're going to send a money order through the post office and all of a sudden that it's going to be whisked up to heaven and God is going to use it up there. It means: What are the treasures you have in heaven?

- God's love for you!
- Christ's love for you!
- Your love for Them!
- God's blessing that He gives to you!

One of the treasures that God has stored up in heaven for you is proving God in giving tithes and offerings. Isn't that true? God says that you can prove Him with that. That's part of it.

This is not to get you to give more money, or to extract it from you or anything like that, because if you give grudgingly or by compulsion and you don't do it because you love God, you don't do it because you want to obey God—you only do it because you're told to do it—then that is worthless in itself. You need to understand that the whole thing is ***our love and attitude motivated by the Holy Spirit of God*** to do the things that are pleasing in God's sight.

Let's see how this works, v 21: "For where

your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” That’s true! How about all these day-traders on the stock market. What do they do? *They sit in front of their television or computer all day long to make the trades; looking at the returns.*

You can get up at 2 o’clock in the morning and you go turn on MSNBC and you have worldwide reports on the stock markets, the banking and the price of gold, oil, gas, the value of the euro, the dollar, yen and so forth. Everybody is glued to it. If that’s where your heart is, that’s what you’re going to be doing.

Here’s another part of the attitude, v 22: “The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye be sound, your whole body shall be *full of light.*” This is spiritually speaking. It can also be physical, too. There are some people whom you look at and you can almost say they have an evil eye. Only about two or three times in my whole lifetime have I ever met someone who has that. It’s rather startling.

Verse 23: “But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be *full of darkness....* [Why? *Because you’re not living your life the way God wants!*] ...Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” Satan is able to give an enlightenment that is darkness, because he’s the ‘prince of darkness.’

Here’s another principle, v 24: “No one is able... [no one has the power] ...to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” James calls this ‘double-minded’; unstable (James 1:8).

Have you ever been in a situation on the job where you had two bosses and there’s contention between them and you are stuck in the middle. One boss comes and says, ‘Do this, this way.’ And the other boss comes around and says, ‘Why are you doing it that way.’ *He told me to.* ‘Well, I’m telling you to do it the other way.’

So, the first boss comes back and says, ‘How come you didn’t do it the way that I said?’ *The other boss came and told me that I needed to do it a different way.* You can’t do it! Same thing in everything!

- you cannot serve the true God and another god
- you cannot love your wife and another woman
- you cannot love your husband and another man

What that does, that bifurcates your mind and makes you a living hypocrite and you’re

unstable. “...You cannot serve God and mammon.” If your goal is to make lots of money, you can also go on early morning TV and channel surf and they always have this on there: make lots of money in real estate. Nothing down, buy these houses! Well, the housing market looks like it’s going down, so what’s going to happen? *Zero down, no money, foreclosures!* If it gets really bad, it’ll be just like a house of cards or dominos. Have you ever seen these great domino displays that they set up. You start it by clicking one domino and the whole thing goes. They’ve made them run as long as ten minutes, continuously through a pattern to do it.

Think about that when the economy collapses. It’s going to go down like dominos, not only through the whole economy, but perhaps through the whole world. Then He gives reassurance, and tie this in with Mal. 3;

Verse 25: “Because of this I say to you, do not be anxious about your life *as to* what you shall eat and what you shall drink; nor about your body *as to* what you shall wear. Is not life more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?... [then He gives an example]: ...Observe the birds of heaven: they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor do they gather into granaries; and your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?” (vs 25-26).

At our house on the edge of the front porch, we, for years, have had little sparrows. Now we have a flock of anywhere from 10-20 sparrows. They come around all the time, and there’s always a blackbird that tries to get them. They build their nest, because we have a tile roof and it overlaps on the edge, in between the tiles, and they get up in there. We sit there in the morning and look out the window and here are all the little birdies. After they have their little ones, we remember there was one that was no more than two inches long and it would fly up on the window and it didn’t know how to get food yet, so it would tap on the window.

You look at that and think that’s fantastic, but God’s taking care of it. God has given seed, insects, worms—God is taking care of them.

Verse 27: “But who among you, by taking careful thought... [here is improve yourself, become greater, bigger, stronger, mightier and so forth] ...is able to add one cubit to his stature?” Can’t happen! Or as it says in another place, ‘make something black white.’

Verse 28: “And why are you anxious about clothing?...” Some people are obsessed with clothing. Look at Imelda Marcos, she had 3,000 pairs of shoes! Look at how many men and women are obsessed with dress. They walk into department stores—and department stores know how to do it—

and first shot in is perfume and jewelry.

They even have compulsive buyers. I saw a report on this. Here was this woman, 'Oh, I just love to shop. When I get into the department store I can't help myself.' They've got everything right there, and she just charges everything. Plow through the department store compulsively buying; buy this, that and the other thing! I can tell you that Dolores does not do that! She shops for the 80% off and gets it 90% of the time; very prudent, very wise and knows how to buy.

He says He wants you to have another object lesson, "...Observe the lilies of the field, how they grow: they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I say to you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these" (vs 28-29). He says, 'I want you to think about this.'

Verse 30: "Now, if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven..." We know that in California. We've had a lot of rain, the grass is going to grow and you get out and drive around the hills and it's all green and beautiful. By the middle of May it's all dried up and it's all straw. It's short lived.

"...shall He not much rather clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious..." (v 31). Don't worry about it because God is going to take care of it. He wants us to concentrate on attaining the goal that God has called you to attain to the Kingdom of God and eternal life. That's the overall goal; all these other physical things God will take care of. I have yet to meet any brethren in the Church that God is not doing this to take care of them. God is true to His word!

"...saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothed? For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things'" (vs 31-32). After all, He did make us—didn't He? *Yes!* What about your circumstances? It doesn't mean that you sit in your house or wherever you are and say, 'God, I'm here, take care of me.' NO! He expects you to work, to labor, to plan, to pray about it. God will bless and prosper your way as you do it.

Whether you have much or whether you have little, if you're faithful to God, He'll take care of you. That's a promise that He has given.

Verse 33: "**But as for you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**" That's the way that it's going to have to be.

Let's see a parable about the unrighteous steward and the unrighteous mammon. We'll talk

about money a little later. I'll just have to say that none of us have any *real* money. I want you to think about that as we go along.

Luke 16:1: "And He also said to His disciples, 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and he was accused of wasting his *master's* goods.'" He was the one who would buy and sell. A steward is someone who takes care of someone else's property. We call it today 'a trust.' Same way with the Gospel. Paul said, 'Woe to me if I don't preach the Gospel. If I do it willingly, I have a reward. But if I do it against my will I have a stewardship.' So, either way, he's got to handle it correctly.

Verse 2: "And after calling him, he said to him, 'What *is* this I hear concerning you? Render an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'" We're going to see why the steward was wise. It was at the point that He was accused of wasting all of his master's goods. His master probably didn't figure there was very much left.

Verse 3: "Now the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do, for my lord is taking away the stewardship from me? I am not able to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, that, when I have been removed *from* the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses'" (vs 3-4). Financially you need someone in the world to help you is what it's talking about here.

Verse 5: "And after calling each one of his lord's debtors to *him*, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my lord?'" Obviously, he was dealing in goods and money, as well.

Verse 6: "And he said, 'A hundred baths of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down immediately *and* write fifty.'" Discount sale! Isn't that what happens when a business starts going bad? They have discount sales, and then the prudent buyer comes along. It's like the Proverb says, 'The seller says it's not worth too much.' The buyer says, 'I'll offer you so much' and goes away and says, 'Look what I got.' The seller went away and said, 'I've recovered.' This is what's happening here.

Verse 7: "Then to another he said, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.'" And he said to him, 'Take your bill and write eighty.' And the lord praised the unrighteous steward..." (vs 7-8). When you first read that you wonder why did the lord praise the unrighteous steward. The reason is *he got something* instead of bringing him nothing!

"...because he had acted prudently. For the children of this world are more prudent in their own generation than the children of light" (v 8). We can

learn an awful lot from people in the world on how to manage money, provided they're honest. Also understand that giving tithes and offerings you're going to manage your money better, without a doubt! Always remember this: ***you are going to tithe one way or the other!***

One man said, 'I quit tithing and I tithed all the way to the bankruptcy court.' Or you're going to quit tithing or don't believe in it, and you're going to end up spending it on so many things that you never knew were going to come around.

Verse 9: "And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; so that, when you fail... [financially] ...they may receive you into the age-lasting dwellings." In other words, this is good through this age. You will have someone who will give you a job; someone who will have understanding for you.

Here's the whole lesson, and I want you to think about this in relationship to tithes and offerings. Here's the thing: God says that you have 'robbed Me in tithes and offerings.' What you have is something that is not your own. Also, you can liken this to the Holy Spirit. Having the Holy Spirit is not your own, it comes from God. Developing the character of God comes from God! You can apply many, many things to it this way.

Verse 10: "The one who *is* faithful in the things that are least is also faithful in much... [because it is the heart and mind involved] ...and the one who *is* unrighteous in the things that are least is also unrighteous in much." Do you think God is going to have you in the Kingdom of God if you don't believe in tithing; that he's going to pay you in tithes that people that are going to pay to the kings and priests that reign with Christ? Think about that! Consider that!

Verse 11: "Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which *is* another's, who will give to you your own?.... [We have the same thing here]: ...No servant is able to serve two masters..." (vs 11-13).

- You can't serve yourself and serve God!
- You can't have other gods and serve the true God!
- You can't have idols and serve the true God!
- You can't keep Sunday and have the true God!
- You can't take His name in vain, live in adultery, be murdering and still say that you belong to God!

Verse 14: "Now, the Pharisees who were also covetous, heard all these things; and they ridiculed Him. And He said to them, 'You are those who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination before God'" (vs 14-15).

Then He gave them a lesson, v 16: "The Law and the Prophets *were* until John... [that was the highest authority; there is a higher Authority] ...from that time the Kingdom of God is preached... [beginning with John the Baptist and Jesus Christ—*repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*] ...and everyone zealously strives to enter it. But it is easier *for* heaven and earth to pass away than *for* one tittle of the law to fail." (vs 16-17). We need to consider that in all these things as we look at them.

Does God have a claim on the increase of your money? Since we really don't have *real* money today, does God have a claim on your increase regardless of the means for counting of value?

The Herodians wanted to trip Jesus up on giving tribute to Caesar, Matthew 22:17: "Therefore, tell us, what do You think? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" If you think the IRS is over-gouging, imagine what it was with Caesar.

Verse 18: "But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said, 'Why do you tempt Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tribute coin.'...." (vs 18-19). They brought Him a silver coin. Gold and silver is real money! Gold and silver always has intrinsic value, as well as land.

"...And they brought to Him a silver coin. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription *is on* this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render then the things of Caesar to Caesar, and the things of God to God'" (vs 19-21). Did they render money to God? Did they tithe money to God?

In the Apocrypha writings of the practices of the Jews between the inter-testamental period, they even sent tithes of gold from Babylon to the temple in Jerusalem. Did they tithe money and give it to the temple? In reading this account in Mark 12, we really can't distinguish between tithing and offering. But remember, ***all gold and silver belongs to God!*** The earth is His and everything belongs to Him.

Mark 12:41: "And after sitting down opposite the *temple* treasury..." Let me tell you a little bit about the temple treasury. That was the banking center of the whole Jewish world.

If you had a lot of gold and silver and you wanted to put it somewhere where you could earn a little money, you could send it to Jerusalem. That's why in Matt. 25 Jesus talks about putting the money

in the bank to receive at least interest when he returned to the one who received the one talent. When they destroyed the temple, they got everybody's gold and silver. It wasn't just warehouses of grain, warehouses of lockers of meat hanging, and skins of animals and things like this. No! There was a temple treasury.

"...He observed how the people were casting money into the treasury... [which then is money that belonged to God] ...and many rich ones were putting *in* much" (v 41). It says in Rom. 12 that the one who gives, 'let him give liberally, or generously.'

Verse 42: "And one poor widow came *and* dropped *in* two tiny coins..." The little mites. In *A Harmony of the Gospels* we've got a picture of two little mites. That's like a penny today,

"...which is equal to one copper coin" (v 42). By the way, today it cost more to make copper pennies than its worth. Nothing like a little inflation!

Verse 43: "Then He called His disciples to *Him* and said to them, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put *in* more than all of those who are casting *money* into the treasury. For everyone *else* contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her destitution put *in* as much as she had, *giving* all her living'" (vs 43-44).

That was probably *all of her living* for the immediate future. Whatever that may be. I'm sure that it was not all of her living for the rest of her life, but at least for that particular time. Yes, God does have that claim, and He does expect it.

Let's look at the *deceitfulness* of riches. There is a *deceitfulness* in riches. It's just like the farmer in Luke 12 where he got a great crop and he said, 'Oh, what am I going to do? Soul, build your bigger barns, better granaries, put it all in there and say I've got enough to live for a long time and sit back and take your ease.'

Jesus said, 'You fool, this night your life is required of you.' Isn't it true that there's a Proverb that says, 'Wealth gained improperly, those who do so will die early.' Just observe some of the financial things, some of those who are involved in it. Remember what happened when the crash came in 1929? There were a lot of suicides, men and women jumping out of windows on Wall Street in New York City because everything crashed. All the money that they had, everything came to an end.

Mark 4:18: "And those which were sown among the thorns, these are the ones who hear the Word, but the cares of this life..." (vs 18-19). They're worried about:

- What will my wife think?
- What will my husband think?
- What will my boss think?
- What will my friends think?
- How am I going to live?
- How am I going to get along?
- How can I possibly make it by keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days?

"...and the deceitfulness of riches..." (v 19). 'I've got all these riches and wealth and I've got to somehow take care of it.' Notice what that leads to:

"...and the lusts of other things *that* come into *their lives* choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful" (v 19). God wants us to bring forth a lot of fruit; not just of tithes and offerings, but of character. If you have character you will obey God and you'll take care of tithes and offerings without a doubt.

Let's look at another deceitfulness that is important to understand. Let's tie this in with the Laodiceans, because the Laodiceans are caught up in the *deceitfulness of riches*. What do they say? *I'm rich and increased with goods!* If we aren't living in a Laodiceans society where people are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, I don't know what to tell you.

If you want to know the difference in the wealth in America and a foreign country, just travel to Southern California and go into Tijuana, Mexico, the first city right on the border, and it's like day and night. Then if you drive down to Ensenada, little teeny roads and ruts and everything like this. You just came from America on eight-lanes of freeway. Right down to the gate and you go through and all of a sudden you see a different world: dirt roads, filthy settings, people living in cardboard huts. Amazing!

There's a *deceitfulness of riches*; you don't honor God! What does that lead to with the lust of other things? What is the principle for unleavened bread: ***a little leaven leavens the whole lump!*** I've seen people get angry and mad and bitter! Remember that 'two wrongs don't make a right.' If the money is not administered correctly and reported by the ministry—those who are in charge of it—*that is a wrong*. If you quit tithing and steal from God, *that is a wrong*.

I remember one man who was healed miraculously; he couldn't even walk. He walked later and became a real fine minister, and then he got so disillusioned, he got so bitter, just absolutely bitter of heart, mind and soul, and he just lived the rest of his life in hatefulness. Rather, he should have remembered that 'two wrongs don't make a right.' Why should I let someone else's sin take me away

from God? There may be a time because of that, like some people have done, that they've been faithful with their tithes and offerings and put them in the bank till they could figure out where they needed to send it, where it's used properly. I'm not asking for people to send more money to us. I'm just asking that you get right with God and wherever the storehouse is and you see people doing the work of God, send it there.

I wish that every Church of God would get as right with God as they could, and that combined together—not as one organization, but separately under different administrations—really preach the Gospel, feed the flock, take care of the brethren and produce the things that we need to produce, and not get carried away with the deceitfulness of riches.

Hebrews 3:12: “Beware, brethren, lest perhaps there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief... [you don't believe God, you don't believe Christ] ...in apostatizing from *the* living God. Rather, be encouraging one another each day [daily], while it is called 'today,' **so that none of you become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**” (vs 12-13).

So, if you have the deceitfulness of riches and the deceitfulness of sin combined together you have heap big trouble! You know that things are going to come along!

(go to the next track)

Let's see what Jesus said concerning tithes and offerings. The Pharisees were very factitious in the letter of the Law, but let's see that they had the wrong focus.

Matthew 23:23: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin... [measure it all out] ...but you have abandoned the more important *matters* of the Law—**judgment, and mercy and faith**...”

People can get so focused in on money. Even some of the Churches of God have done that, so focused in on money, and then they get carried away with the *deceitfulness* of riches and overspend. They get themselves in a bind and send out desperate letters to the brethren: ‘Oh, brethren, send in more money!’ Even one said to go to the bank and borrow the money and send it in. That's being hypocritical. That's why we budget; what God sends, that's what we use. That's why we give a detailed accounting every year where the money goes, because we have a stewardship to do it.

Paul took wages; the Church collected the tithes. But notice what Jesus says, “...These *you* were **obligated** to do, and not to leave the others undone” (v 23). In other words, tithing is important,

but it is not the major thing.

The major thing is Matthew 6:33: “But *as for you*, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” The major things are *judgment, mercy and faith!*

Let's see the parallel account, because Luke records something just a little bit differently, Luke 11:39: “Then the Lord said to him...”—after a Pharisee saw that He had not washed His hands properly. You couldn't eat unless you washed your hands. I tell you what, you figure this out: What if you're a skyscraper—a steel beam contractor—and you're up 40 floors? You have your lunch pail and it's time to eat. You take off your gloves, and maybe if there's a little something on your hands you wipe it on your shoulder and open up your lunch bucket and eat. Here's Jesus' answer:

“...‘Now, you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greediness and wickedness.... [God is interested in the heart—*judgment, mercy and faith*] ...Fools... [Jesus pulled no punches!] ...*did* not He Who made the outside also make the inside? Rather, give alms *from* the things that are within...” (vs 39-41). What does that mean?

- you have *compassion*
- you have *mercy*
- you have *understanding*

Instead of everything to such a rigid of the law thing, that you absolutely crucify everyone who doesn't keep the very little letter of it. That's what they were doing—*picky!*

“...and behold, all things are clean to you. But woe to you, Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every herb, but you pass over the judgment and the love of God...” (vs 41-42). You've got to have the love of God! Even the Pharisees understood that you're to *love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and being!* If you do that you're not going to want to do anything against God—correct?

“...It is **obligatory** for you to do these things...” (v 42). Is tithing obligatory? *God says that it's His!* If you have an argument with that, don't take out on me, go take it out on God because He's the One Who gave the laws. He's the One Who said to do this.

“...It is obligatory *for you* to do these things and not to set aside those *lesser things*” (v 42). So, it is a lesser thing; it is not the major thing. That's why speak on this once a year. On occasion, like this, I may have to give more sermons in a row on it.

Maybe next year I won't speak on it, but just as a reminder as we go along. We don't want to focus in on dollars and money. We want to focus in on:

- teaching the brethren
- loving God
- serving God
- providing for the brethren the things that they need to grow in grace and knowledge

The money that we use for it, we're happy to use for it, because that's what it's intended for.

Our cars are paid for; our house is paid for. We don't need lots of money. We don't want lots of money. Our goal is not money. Our goal is to serve the brethren and help them have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, and that's what it's all about.

- for God to bless you
- for you to love God
- for us to love each other

Otherwise, all the money in the world isn't going to amount to a 'hill of beans'—is it? *No!* We need to really keep that in mind.

This is the way that too many people do: They trust in themselves and despise others; they look down on others. 'Oh, I am so righteous! It's like the snobbery of the establishment elite! They tell everyone else how to run their lives, and they steal everybody blind! You have covetousness in government, in lobbyists.

Luke 18:9: "And to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, He also spoke this parable..." That's what happens. When you get so caught up in yourself and your righteousness, you despise other people because you're so good. God doesn't want that. Did Christ do that? *No!* He gave up everything to save us! Are we to have the mind of Christ? *Of course!* It's entirely different.

Jesus said to those who were going to serve that it's not going to be like the Gentiles 'who lord it over,' extract money and beat them up. *No!* You go serve because the one who is greatest is the one who serves the most. Don't get this attitude of despising others, He spoke this parable:

Verse 10: "Two men went up into the temple to pray..." They should go to the temple to pray, when the temple was there. Think about this in relationship to having access to the temple in heaven above and God the Father.

"...the one *was* a Pharisee and the other a tax collector" (v 10). In your own mind translate that 'an IRS agent.' Remember, the government *always*

extracts what they want. Of course, it's true that universally, everywhere in the world, tax collectors are the most despised of all.

Verse 11: "The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself... [he wasn't praying to God; he mentioned God's name, but he was praying to himself while he thanked God] ...in this manner: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men...'" (v 11).

What are you going to do with 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God'? We're not to trust in *our* righteousness. Besides, how can a human being be spiritually righteous unless it's by the Spirit of God, by God's gift of the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ? *You can't do it!*

"...not like other men—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, **and I give a tithe of everything that I gain**" (vs 11-12). Remember, Jesus said that it was *obligatory to do so!* If he tithes of everything that he gained, that means money and everything else.

The tax collector being convicted in his heart had a totally different attitude toward God, v 13: "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.'" Unless there is repentance, praising God and understanding about our weak human condition, and asking God for help and mercy, that puts us in right standing with God.

Verse 14, Jesus said: "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled... [always happens] ...and the one who humbles himself... [to God] ...shall be exalted"—by God in due time. Promotion doesn't come from the north, south, east or west; *it comes from God!*

Look what happens when ministers exalt themselves and begin to beat the face of the brethren for money, or beat them up for 'projects,' or give themselves great, exalted titles. God doesn't want that. If we don't have the love of God, the Spirit of God, all the self-exaltation in the world doesn't gain one wit with God. As a matter of fact, it puts you in dire straights with God when you understand it.

Now let's see how the Church operated, and we're going to see *from the beginning* the Church operated with money. As those who served at the altar and in the temple lived of the things of the temple. The things of the temple were all the sacrifices, tithes and offering of money that was given; they lived of that. Even in a raw agricultural society you've got to have money, because you can't

get everything by barter and trade. Some of the things that you need are hundreds of miles away. You can't barter your eggs for some cloth.

What they would do, even in the west, they would come and there was a merchant who ran a general store, and you bring your eggs and chickens in and you sell them to him and he gives you money, and then you buy what you need and he sells the eggs and chickens to those who need that.

After the disciples were released and told the brethren all that had happened, Acts 4:24: "And when they heard *this*, they lifted up *their* voices to God with one accord and said, 'O Master, You *are* the God Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that *are* in them, Who by *the* mouth of Your servant David did say, "Why did the nations insolently rage, and the people imagine vain things?... [Rage against God!] ...The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ."... [just rehearsing] ...For of a truth they did gather together against Your Holy Son, Jesus, Whom You did anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with *the* Gentiles and *the* people of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your counsel had predetermined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threatening, and grant that Your servants may speak Your Word with all boldness'" (vs 24-29).

What is that going to take? *Sooner or later*—and it's going to be sooner—*they needed money to carry on*, because a lot of the brethren were still there after Pentecost and staying in Jerusalem. They had all things in common. But what they needed first was the power of God.

Verse 30: "'By reaching out Your hand to heal... [and we'll see how that was done miraculously] ...and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Son, Jesus.' And when they had prayed... [How is this for an answer to prayer?]: ...the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with *the* Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul... [that's what God wants us to be] ...neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things common" (vs 30-32).

If you have a lot of people who come in from countries roundabout, they have no place to stay, they're not working and so forth, and you need to share all things.

Verse 33: "And with great power the apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. For neither was anyone among them in want; for as many as were

owners of lands or houses **sold them**..." (vs 33-34). That's much like what happened when Moses called for the offering to build the tabernacle—bring your gold, silver, raiment of purple, blue and red and so forth. They sold them!

"...and brought the amounts of those *things* that were sold, and laid *the money* at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was made to each one according to his need" (vs 34-35). The apostles were stewards of the matter. Later they selected seven other men to handle it because it became too much for the apostles to do and they couldn't administer the Word of God the way that they ought to.

Verse 36: "And Joses, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles (which is, being interpreted, "son of consolation"), a Levite, born *in the country* of Cyprus, had land; *and he sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet"* (vs 36-37).

We're going to see something that is important. It's not the money; the money is secondary. What do you think is the important thing? *Let your 'yes' be yes, and your 'no' be no!* This is what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, because the brethren were selling possessions and bring the money in. Ananias and Sapphira had a piece of property that they sold and they probably got more than they figured.

Let's say in today's terms they were figuring to get \$50,000 and they got \$70,000. Rather than their 'yes' be yes: 'when we sell it we'll bring it all in' they connived and said, 'Let's bring the \$50,000 and we'll keep the \$20,000. This doesn't mean that they went into a starvation mode, but we need to learn the lesson.

Acts 5:1: "Now, a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price *for* himself, his wife also being aware of *it*; and he brought a certain portion *and laid it at the apostles' feet"* (vs 1-2).

- this had to do with giving to the Church
- this had to do with what you determined in your mind
- this had to do with rendering to God the things that are God's

If you say, 'I'm pledging this, you better do it.' You can go back to Lev. 27 and read the principle that if you pledge a house for so much, if you wanted to redeem it you added 20% to it. Here they said they were going to sell it and we're going to give it to the apostles.

Verse 3: "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to

keep back *part* of the price of the estate? Before it was sold, was it not yours?....” (vs 3-4). You had control over it. you didn’t have to volunteer and say that you were going to sell it.

“...And after you sold it, was it *not* in your own authority?... [In other words, you said you were going to give it, and it is was your pledge to God] ...Why did you contrive this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God.’ And when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired; and great fear came upon all those who heard these things” (vs 4-5). That got everybody’s attention—didn’t it? What happened?

Verse 6: “Then the young men wound him up, and carried *him* out *and* buried *him*. Now, it came to pass about three hours later... [that’s fast] ...*that* his wife also came in, not knowing what had taken place. And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me if you sold the estate for so much?’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ Then Peter said to her, ‘Why *is it* that you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of *the* Lord? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband *are* at the door, and they shall carry you out.’ And she immediately fell down at his feet and expired. And the young men came in and found her dead; and they carried *her* out *and* buried *her* by her husband. Then great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard these things” (vs 6-11).

In other words, if God is going to give His power, and if He’s going to have you preach the Gospel and people get together and agree on a certain thing, then their ‘yes’ better be *yes* and their ‘no’ better be *no*. What is it that they pledged after the Declaration of Independence? *Our honor, our wealth and our lives!* That’s what you do when you’re baptized. ***You pledge your whole life to God!***

Then everything exploded with the Church and let’s see what happened here. Remember, before the Passover the scribes and Pharisees were saying of Jesus—after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem—‘Look, the whole world is going after Him, and we are losing.’ All these covetous greedy Pharisees were losing. When people left, what were they losing? *Income! Tithes!*

Let’s see what happened; God has a method in doing these things, v 12: “And many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch... [right there at the temple] ...and none of the others... [who were not of the apostles and brethren] ...dared to join them, but the people magnified them; and believers were added all the more to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women)” (vs 12-14). Imagine this: Talk about sealing the authority and power of the apostles that they are from God.

Verse 15: :Insomuch *that the people were* bringing out the sick into the streets and putting *them* on beds and stretchers, so that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them”—that is be healed! Imagine that? Just walk by and a shadow hits you and you’re well!

Verse 16: “And a multitude from the cities round about also came together to Jerusalem, bringing sick ones and those beset by unclean spirits; *and* they were all healed.” The priests and Sadducees and Pharisees had everybody watching this; they knew this was going on! Can you imagine if we put this in a movie what kind of movie this would make?

Verse 17: “Then the high priest rose up, and all those with him, being of *the* sect of the Sadducees...” and they were happy and delighted and ran out and shook the hands of the apostles and congratulated them on the wondrous works that God had done. ***NO!***

“...*and* they were filled with anger... [covetousness, jealousy] ...And they laid their hands on the apostles... [arrested them] ...and put them in *the* public hold. But during the night an angel of *the* Lord *came and* opened the doors of the prison; and after bringing them out, he said, ‘Go and stand in the temple, *and* speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And after hearing *that*, they entered into the temple at dawn and taught. Now, when the high priest and those with him came, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the elderhood of the sons of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison; and when they returned, they reported, saying, ‘We indeed found the prison locked with all security, and the keepers standing outside in front of the doors; but after opening *them*, we did not find anyone inside.’ And when they heard these words, both the *high* priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priests also, were utterly perplexed as to what this could lead to. But a certain one came *and* reported to them, saying, ‘Behold, the men whom you put in the prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.’” (vs 17-25).

So, they came up gingerly and said, ‘Come on, you’ve got an appointment with the Sanhedrin.’ What did they say?

Verse 27: “And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin...” Can you imagine them all decked out in their finery, the whole group of about 120 in the Sanhedrin looking down at these fishermen? These despised Galileans! Uneducated dolts doing all of this!

“...And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to

teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us.' But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said..." (vs 27-29)—'We're sorry!' **NO!**

"...‘We are obligated to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also the Holy Spirit, which God has given to those who obey Him” (vs 29-32). He was saying in effect, ‘You don’t obey Him so you don’t have the Spirit of God!’ Think about that! That’s the thing we need in our lives, the Holy Spirit of God by loving and obeying Him.

Verse 33: “Now, when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death. But a certain man stood up, a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, Gamaliel by name, a teacher of the law *who was* honored by all the people, *and* commanded *that* the apostles be put out for a short while” (vs 33-34).

Gamaliel said, v 38: “And now I say to you, withdraw from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be from men, it will be overthrown; but if it be from God, you do not have the power to overthrow it. *Take heed*, lest you be found to be fighting even against God” (vs 38-39). So they beat them and let them go.

Now let’s see how the Church was run by money. Tithing in the New Testament is different than tithing in the Old Testament, because the Church always ran on money. Let’s see the instructions that Peter gave to the elders. The elders were the ones who became the stewards of the tithes and offerings. That’s why when Paul said that he ‘took wages’ from other churches’ they sent him money.

- Did they send him oxen?
- Did they send him a goat?
- Did they send him a 100 lb. sack of wheat and say ‘good luck, Paul’?
- *No! They sent him money!*

1-Peter 5:1: “*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an *eyewitness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed.” That’s when they saw him transfigured on the Holy Mount.

Verse 2: “Feed the flock of God *that is* among you... [Acts 20:28_[transcriber’s correction]—purchased with His blood] ...exercising oversight not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of

dishonest gain...” That is collecting tithes and offerings and not handling it in a proper way.

“...but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions; but *by* being examples to the flock *of God*” (vs 2-3). That’s why there was the warning with it.

Let’s see one of the requirements of an overseer or an elder. The pope says, ‘I’ve taken a poverty vow, but he administers the greatest fortune in the world and has everything that he needs.

1-Timothy 3:1: “Faithful *is* the saying, ‘If any man aspires *to be* an overseer...” The *KJV* says ‘bishop’; that’s one of the badly translated verses in the New Testament. You’re *to oversee*, and with that you don’t need a hierarchy.

“...he desires a good work.’ Now then, it is obligatory *that* the overseer be blameless, *the* husband of one wife, vigilant, serious-minded, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching; not given to much wine, not a bully, not greedy for selfish gain; but kind, not a quarreler, not a lover of money...” (vs 1-3)—because he’ll take it to himself.

There’s a Catholic priest who has made millions and millions by sending out written little blessings. People send in money; he charges for it. I’ve even had one man say, ‘Well, why are you a non-profit corporation? Why don’t you just become a regular business and then you sell everything that you have?’ God says, ‘Buy the Truth and sell it not!’ So, we don’t sell it.

The first part of 1-Tim. 5 talks about widow relief in the Church, that if she’s a widow she can be put on the Church roll. We give a lot of assistance out, as well, and everything that we do is to help the brethren build that relationship with God. That’s what is the important thing. I don’t need notoriety, I don’t want notoriety, fame, or people to treat me as some great thing. I’m not! I’m a sinner like everyone of us. ‘All of have sinned and come short of the glory of God!’

1-Timothy 5:17: “Let the *ordained* elders... [that’s differentiated from elder men in the Church] ...who are leading well be counted worthy of double honor...” That could also be remuneration. They had full-time ministers just like Paul when he was full-time. There were times when he worked. There were times when he was full-time. When he was full-time he ‘drew wages.’

“...especially those **who are laboring** in the Word and doctrine” (v 17)—teaching doctrine; also it can mean they were copying down the Epistles of Paul and the apostles to circulate them to the other congregations working in the Word of God.

Verse 18: “For the Scripture says, ‘You shall

not muzzle an ox treading out *the* corn,' and, 'The workman *is* worthy of his hire.'" They had administration of the monetary tithes and offerings that the brethren were given, and they paid the ministers and did those things.

Let's look at something else. After all is said and done, I remember a man way back in about 1993 came up to me and said, 'I want to talk to you about tithing. I don't believe that the New Testament Church ought to tithe.' I said, 'Well, let's not spoil the Feast, let's talk about it another time.' He wanted to have some big knockdown drag out. Let's see what we are to do?

After all of this, if you're not convinced about tithes and offerings, let me then just challenge you. Don't you think that you ought to be generous in what you give? This man told me, 'I give more than tithing.' Which I found out later that, no, he didn't. He didn't give anything. And saying that he didn't believe in tithing was an excuse to steal what belonged to God.

Notice the whole thing that we are to do, Romans 12:2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God." Again, the focus is on that. Then Paul talks about all the gifts that different ones in the Church had.

Verse 8: "Or the one who is encouraging, *let him tend* to encouragement; the one who is giving, *let it be* with generosity..." So, if after all of this you still don't believe in tithing and you still don't see the principles in the New Testament and connecting that with the things in the Old Testament, etc., then why don't you take v 8 and let your giving "...*be* with generosity..."? ***Because whether you believe it or not, it belongs to God!***

Those are the things that we need to know, realize and understand. I hope this covers everything. {note book: *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey (amazon.com). It shows the economics in the time of Jesus. If you're still not convinced, then go through the whole series on tithing. }

Today we don't have real money. Real money is based on gold and silver, and the U.S. dollar used to say, 'Give to the bearer on demand gold or silver.' Today it doesn't say that. It says, 'This note (which is an I.O.U.) is legal tender for all debts public and private.' So, the Federal Reserve is just printing, *printing, printing!* They've printed so much that there are rumors that countries are going to sue the Federal Reserve, so they're going to take

off the Federal Reserve note and it's going to be worth even less.

Money is only of value as long as people agree to what the value is. There's something that takes away from it, which is inflation, because they aren't trusting in God.

Now let's look at some other money, because you don't have any money. This is phony money/funny money—not real money. 'Well, I have money in the bank.' Do you? *No, you don't!* Read very carefully, if a check bounces, it says 'insufficient funds.' You talk about unrighteous mammon! Today we have the most unrighteous mammon in the world—don't we?

It's just in a bank account and the banks never lose—do they? You get it from one bank and you put it another bank and it's all in the banking system. The banking system never loses anything! If you have good credit, they want you in debt so you can pay the interest! They can loan out the money for every hundred dollars that you put in they can loan out \$88. If they loan out 88% of the money they have, they have a 12% reserve—sometimes they even get it down to a 5% reserve—and in extreme runs on the bank the Federal Reserve will say, 'We'll go to 1%!' They know that they have so much money in the bank.

Then if you take that \$88 and re-deposit it back in their bank then that becomes an asset for them again, because they have the money in the bank and they can loan 88% of that ad infinitum. That's how money is created out of thin air!

It's created out of thin air even more: since you have such good credit we will give you a line of credit and we will verify it by a plastic card. I have one that is CitiBank Master Card. I pay it every month. Another one I use for the Church is American Express. My Master Card they said, 'Okay, you have such good credit you have a \$14,000 line of credit.' My American Express says, 'Okay, you have such good credit you now have a line of credit of \$20,000—all on paper, all thin air, all nothing! If you have a checkbook, look at that, that's no money; that's a piece of paper and you pass that around as money.

So, we have the most *unrighteous mammon* in the world. What if the bank computer system blows up and it loses everybody's accounts, and they can't retrieve it? *It's gone!* You talk about losing. You don't have any money. You don't have wealth.

If you don't believe in tithing on the unrighteous mammon, what are you going to do when Christ says, 'Why didn't you do it?' Think on

that for a minute! Plastic and paper and digitized funds, it's all going to come crashing pretty soon!

Also, all the interest that all these bankers make, if you can't use Satan's money, take his money and use it to preach the Gospel, which he hates, and you don't want to tithe on that, you may have some tall explaining to do at the resurrection. You think about that the next time you talk about how much money that you have!

There are some people that go just absolutely bananas when they get credit cards. A TV ad shows this nice looking guy and he's got this big home and he's out on his power mower mowing the front lawn. It shows him going in his nice SUV going down to the country club. Then in the last show it shows him in the backyard with a barbeque and everybody there. He says, 'And you ask me how I do this? I'm in debt up to my eyeballs!' So, they say, 'Refinance and go in debt again, get lower payments.'

My advice to you is to ***get out of debt as much as you can!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:19-33
- 2) Luke 16:1-17
- 3) Matthew 22:17-21
- 4) Mark 12:41-44
- 5) Mark 4:18-19
- 6) Hebrews 3:12-13
- 7) Matthew 23:23
- 8) Matthew 6:33
- 9) Luke 11:39-42
- 10) Luke 18:9-14
- 11) Acts 4:24-37
- 12) Acts 5:1-25, 27-34, 38-39
- 13) 1 Peter 5:1-3
- 14) 1 Timothy 3:1-3
- 15) 1 Timothy 5:17-18
- 16) Romans 12:2, 8

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 4:4
- James 1:8
- Malachi 3
- Matthew 25
- Romans 12
- Luke 12
- Leviticus 27
- Acts 20:28

Also referenced:

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Jesus and the Forgotten City—New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* by Richard A. Batey (amazon.com)

FRC:bo

Transcribed: 12-6-13

Wealth and Debt God's Way vs Man's Way

Fred R. Coulter

Here are some principles we all need to remember:

1. you cannot go in debt to get out of debt
That's exactly what the whole nation is doing
2. you cannot borrow to get rich
With a proper investment you may increase your wealth, but we'll talk about what happens to it.
3. you can never get ahead by gambling or cheating

All those things permeate this society today. I think it's really interesting that this younger generation coming up is so used to credit cards, debt cards, online banking that they have no sense of the value of anything except the digital amount that is on their screen.

The reason why we have the housing market as bad as it is because too many people, when they go in debt look at the monthly payment rather than the total aggregate amount of debt. They never see a time when they are not working to be able to make the money to pay the debt. As long as everything stays in equilibrium they can get along pretty well. But with the high prices that they have with the houses, it's completely artificial.

If Cleveland, Ohio, is anything of a signal what's going to happen in the housing market because of the sub-prime and the not so sub-prime, then it will get into the prime and then the very elite, that they won't be able to pay if it continues to go the way that it is. Houses in Cleveland, Ohio, are selling about one-third of their peak of what they sold a year ago (2007). Same thing is happening with all the digital wealth.

Why does this happen? *Because of covetousness!* Everyone wants something for nothing, or something so cheap that *they think* they get it for nothing. Let's see some principles because the long and short of it is that ***you can never defy God's way and succeed!*** You might for a while. For example, a bank robber may rob the bank and have the money, but will he succeed? *or* Will he get caught? The only one who has succeeded so far is the man who bailed out over southern Washington from the 727 with \$200,000. They found some of the money but never found him. Where is he? Did he succeed? or die?

People are willing to take a risk on gambling and lose everything they have and wonder why they're poor. A lot of the wealth that we see in the

world today is not real wealth because it's not based on God's way; it is based upon man's way.

Proverbs 23:4: "Do not weary yourself to be rich..." There's a proper increase that people can make. There's a proper profit that people can do. But don't make your whole life's goal to be rich. Why? *The riches will blind the eyes!*

Verse 5: When your eyes look upon it, *it is gone!*.... [that's a very good description of all of this digital wealth] For surely *riches* make wings for themselves, and they fly *into* heaven like an eagle." Does that not describe the stock market today?

There's something that happens with wealth. It also affects your spiritual life. We'll talk a little bit about tithing today, but the truth is that tithing is only one aspect of it. You cannot tithe and borrow yourself up to the bottom of your nose and everything work out well. Here's what happens, and this does not mean that you go to the other extreme:

Matthew 13:22: "And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and **the deceitfulness of riches** choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." This is telling us the most important thing is *God's Way, Jesus Christ, eternal life, etc.*

There is a way that God shows that we will have sufficiency in all things. But notice "...the *deceitfulness* of riches..."—which it is! Look at the deceitfulness of the banking system and let's see where that is rooted. Let's see where all of this is bound up in. Of course, who is the inspiration behind it? *Satan the devil!* He's got a system where you can get your wealth now: by borrowing, going in debt and working in his system. Sooner or later it will catch up with you. They're even worrying about an international or worldwide recession. It's all based on deceitfulness!

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" And it's covetous above all things—isn't it? *Yes!*

Verse 10: "I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. As the quail that hatches eggs it has not laid; in the same way he who gets riches, and not by right... [there's a right way to do it] ...shall leave them in the middle of his days, and in his end he shall be a fool" (vs 10-11). That's pretty well self-explanatory—isn't it?

Yes, indeed!

That's the way the economic system is. Within that, God's people—if they follow God's way and do what God says—He can help you work through that system that you're not taken down; provided you're not in debt up to your nose. That's why tithing is a good thing, because it helps you discipline yourself with what you have. It helps you see what you really need and really don't need.

With the way that it's coming, everyone is going to have to tighten their belts and figure out the priorities that they need to have. The book of Proverbs is quite good in that, but let's look at Solomon: he had all the wealth and God blessed him with everything. What did he do? *He turned his back on God and lamented!* He lamented in the book of Ecclesiastes; he said, 'Oh, what's going to happen? *'If I die I'm going to leave it to someone else, because I can't take it with me!* Who knows whether he will be a fool or a wise man?' So, his son Rehoboam took over and he ended up being a fool!

Proverbs 18:11: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit." In other words, if he follows the deception of wealth—especially in today's world—it's going to end up being a deceitful and conceited thing.

All true riches come from God! God says, 'All gold and silver are Mine.' Anyone who has any gold or silver, remember, you're only a custodian for what God has given you to use. Just like with the earth; He's given man dominion over the earth and he can use it God's way or man's way combined with Satan. The laws are all automatic and are going to happen.

Psalms 104:24: "O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures." Then it talks about the sea and the great glory of God and His creation and so forth.

Psa. 112 shows our whole attitude; what we need to do, trusting in God and looking to Him for everything: Psalm 112:1: "Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house..." (vs 1-3).

Of course, we're going to talk about the spiritual riches, too, because that is greater than the physical riches. In tithing of your increase or giving offerings from what you have, if you are just looking for the physical to come back to you, then you're missing the whole point. It has to be what is the spiritual benefit of loving God, receiving His Spirit and everything so we keep in it in proper

perspective.

Verse 4: "To the upright there arises light in the darkness; he is gracious and full of compassion and righteousness. It is well with the man who is gracious and lends freely; **who conducts his affairs with justice**" (vs 4-5). You need to guide your affairs with:

- discretion
- wisdom
- soundness
- balance

Do not wait—as most people do—until there is a crisis. If you live in the desert and water is scarce, if you do not build a big cistern so when it does rain and you can let the water go into the cistern—then you can have water in the dry times—and you wait until a crisis and there's no water left, because you didn't prepare, *don't blame God!*

That's why we have the Proverb that says to 'go to the ant, sluggard' and see what the ant does. You have to guide your affairs with discretion and

- not with the *deceitfulness* of riches
- not with the *wild abandon* to make a great amount of money
- not in *covetousness* to increase the self

—but with discretion, and with God involved in it using the commandments and principles of God, realizing the final goal of everything we do is *spiritual character*.

Currently there is a minister who has beat up his people, who says that if you retain your assets and don't sell them and send them to me in tens, fifties and hundreds of thousands of dollars, you are trusting in riches. Why should we trust *him* with it? Now's the time to be teaching the people of God to prepare, and how to survive with the coming recession; not have them go borrow money on their houses, sell their 401Ks and turn in their IRA accounts and send it all to him—who 'has great, huge plans, that if you knew what they were you would be amazed!' ***He doesn't tell them what he's going to do!***

Everything must be based upon the Word of God. The people of God are not to be merchandized (1-Pet. 5). The warning by Peter is, 'Do not treat the brethren as if they are your own personal possessions!' They're not! They belong to God! Everything belongs to God!

This is why we need to have a full-rounded approach to what we do concerning wealth, concerning tithing, concerning our financial affairs.

Verse 6: “Surely he shall not be moved forever; the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings...” (vs 6-7). That’s all we’re hearing is a lot of “...evil tidings...” ***Don’t be afraid!*** Put yourself in God’s hands in all circumstances and He’ll provide a way out.

I remember the story I saw on TV. There was a man in Germany who was a Seventh Day Adventist who was drafted into the Wehrmacht and he told them he could not work on the Sabbath. He thought for sure that he’d be executed. Well, he wasn’t! They sent him to work in the transportation department, and he got every Sabbath off as a mechanic because all the other mechanics kept Sunday.

All through the war he kept the Sabbath, he wasn’t involved in killing people; he took care of the equipment. You talk about dire circumstances; looks like there’s no way you’re going to make it. He got the notice and read it, ‘You are to report to the army, the Wehrmacht!’

This is what’s important in everything, “...**his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. His heart is established; he shall not be afraid** until he sees his desire upon his enemies” (vs 7-8). You compare that with James 1—if any lack faith, let him ask God and He will give it. If not they you’re going to be unstable like the waters driven by the wind. And James talks about those who are unstable, double-minded. You can’t have one foot in the world and one foot in the Church so to speak. You have to be completely devoted to God and He will help you, He will see you through.

Now, let’s get a proper perspective on assets, tithes and offerings. Remember this: *no church has any claim on any asset that you have built up yourself according to the blessings of God*—period! What you do with what you have in the long run is up to you. Remember that an inheritance stays in the family. I had a question sent to me. This party wrote in and said, ‘We received an inheritance from our family and the minister said that we needed to tithe on it. Well, if we tithed on it, we would have to sell it to tithe. What does God say about it?’

I told them that the inheritance stays in the family; that’s the way God wants it. If there’s sufficient that you can give an offering on it, that’s up to you, but you have to decide what to do. But to totally tithe on an inheritance as a demand by a minister is not Godly! In lots of cases the inheritance is all the children have.

Here is the how principle is involved; it is more than just ‘Okay, I will tithe; God bless me,’ far

more than that. It involves a whole way of life. As we read this let’s remember the spiritual fulfillment of this:

Proverbs 3:1: “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments... [New Testament doctrine] ...for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you” (vs 1-2). We can add in there *eternal life*. That’s the whole goal, *eternal life!*

Verse 3: “Do not let mercy and Truth forsake you...” Mercy and Truth, love and forgiveness are all paramount before anything else, because after all is that not what we want when we go to God and repent and we ask forgiveness for our sins.

Remember the parable where this man was forgiven 10,000 talents because the lord had mercy on him; then he went out and got a fellow servant who owed him 10 pence and got hold of him and choked him and threw him in prison and said, ‘you stay there until you pay me all.’ When the lord heard that, he went back canceled the forgiveness to the first man and said, ‘You go in there until you pay the uttermost farthing.’

Mercy and Truth are the most important things that we have to have! Being merciful does not mean being emotionally stupid. In mercy, when God forgave the man who was waiting to go down into the pool (John 5), after He healed him, He saw the man and what did He tell him? *Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you!* So, it doesn’t mean blanket mercy, blanket forgiveness, everything is fine, everything is well with no obligation.

“...bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart” (v 3)—so that you have the right heart before God; you’re merciful, kind and understanding, but you’re not foolish. If you have Truth, then you’re going to weigh everything according to the wisdom of God.

Verse 4: “And you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart...” (vs 4-5). Notice this:

- v 1—let your heart
- v 3—bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart
- v 5—trust in the LORD with all your heart

This is the kind of dedication that God wants. This is in the *spirit*, the whole attitude of everything. Where it says to ‘guide your affairs with discretion’—here’s the answer:

“...and **lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge**

Him, and He shall direct your paths” (vs 5-6). These vs, 1-6, put together everything we’ve covered up to this point. This is why I tell people that tithing alone is not going to solve their problems... What if you’re really in debt and you need to get out of debt; well then, give offerings until you’re out of debt! ***Never ignore God!*** Do what you can do and acknowledge God in everything that you do. It begins with:

- your faith
- your trust
- your heart
- mercy
- forgiveness
- discretion

All of those things combined!

Verse 7: “Do not be wise in your own eyes...” If you’re successful in something, acknowledge God. Don’t say, ‘Oh, look at how smart I was. Boy! I got that just in time; I made a bucket of money.’ *Thank God for it!*

“...fear the LORD and depart from evil. It shall be health to your navel and marrow to your bones” (vs 7-8). Of course, that is health to the body.

How many people lose their health when all of their wealth goes? How many have even committed suicide? They’re making some comparisons now between 1928 & 2008—which is 80 years; 2x40—there may be something significant to the numbers, but we don’t know. What happened in 1929 when everything all fell out? *They were committing suicide! Jumping out windows!* People were absolutely devastated! They all ended up with nothing!

Sooner or later the payment to God comes due—individually and nationally! If you won’t honor God then He’ll take away everything that you have as a nation. We’re right on the borderline of this.

Just consider how fragile things are economically, because there’s no incumbent President running and the leading candidates are all frightful indeed! [transcriber’s note: talking about the 2008 election cycle] The world is going to look at our economics and look at the falling dollar. Yes, they’re going to leap in and rescue the banks, but they’re going to own them!

We’re all of a sudden going to see *the stranger* in a position to oppress us! All of a sudden! Almost like BAM! overnight! If they further take down the interest rate, we’re going to see things go down even more, because there’s no defined person that the world can trust as President of the United States! This 2008 is the most trepidatious year that

we are going to face. We’ll have to look and see what that’s going to bring. That’s why all of these things are important for us to realize.

Verse 9: “Honor the LORD with your substance... [He gave it! He created it! Everything comes from Him!] ...and with the firstfruits of all your increase; and your barns shall be filled *with* plenty, and your presses shall burst *with* new wine” (vs 9-10).

Of course, today in being wise, let me just suggest this. Begin buying a little bit every week, when you go to the market, to store away for some tough times, because it may come time when the markets are shut down. You don’t know what’s going to happen. Buy a little, store a little!

God gave the warning to Israel, and Deut. 8 tells us why as a nation that we are where we are and such economic problems face us. All the way through the desert, feeding them with manna, having them walk through the desert to humble them, to prove them, to try them, to know what was in their heart that they should learn the lesson that they have to live by every Word of God.

Deuteronomy 8:7, Moses says: “For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness. You shall not lack any *thing* in it. *It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper” (vs 7-9). That is a short summary of the history of America. Then he gives a warning:

Verse 10: “When you have eaten and are full... [the fall never comes until you have reached the apex] ...then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land, which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today” (vs 10-11). What does it mean to forget the Lord? Keeping His commandments and so forth? *That means obeying God* in everything! (Prov. 3)

Verse 12: “Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*... [and you have huge mortgages that you cannot pay] ...and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then you become haughty of heart, **and you forget the LORD your God** Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage” (vs 12-14). Consider that God’s calling:

- to have His Spirit

- to understand His Word

Verse 15: “Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness... [whatever trials you have in your life today] ...with fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, Who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, so **that He might humble you and that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end**” (vs 15-16).

If there’s anything that God has to do—which He doesn’t like to do—it is to judge the wicked and destroy them! That’s why He says, ‘O wicked, why will you die? Turn! Turn! Repent!’ (Ezek. 33). That’s what He’s talking about!

Verse 17: “Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth.’” *America is the richest nation on earth:*

- because of the industriousness of the people
- because of the ingenuity of the people
- because we are the technological leaders of the world

NO! That’s not true! What did we do when we had the wealth of the world at our doorstep at the end of WWII? Look what we did with it: We squandered it on all the ‘lovers’! There are other prophecies that show that the ‘lovers’ are going to hate us, even though they buy us out!

Do you think that when Pres. Bush was in Saudi Arabia *begging* for the Saudis to lower the price of oil—which they probably will—that those were ‘kisses’ of sincerity, or ‘kisses’ of cynical men realizing ‘we’ve got you in the palm of our hands’? *The latter, I’m sure!*

Verse 18, the reason we have everything so deceitful today: “But you shall remember the LORD your God, for **it is He Who gives you power to get wealth...**” When you remember that, and everything you do is based upon your complete relationship with God, and everything you do in the way of offering and tithing is based upon that. There is never a time to exploit the people of God to give money to a church or ministry, because when that happens, you not only destroy the ministry, but you also destroy the people. Not only economically, but you cause a great deal of spiritual distress!

Look at what happened to the most wealthy church in the history of the Churches of God. Is it all gone? *Yes, indeed!* It’s like Solomon said, ‘When I die, who knows what my successor will do?’ All of that is punishment because the Church got into the

way of the world, exploiting brethren—thinking that they were like cash-cows to give money to the Church—so they could build their empires and buildings and so forth. God said, ‘Enough is enough!’

Nevertheless, that doesn’t change the laws and commandments of God. But what He wants is the brethren in the Church to have a spiritual relationship with Him, and then let His blessings come from there, not try and create a façade of wealth, because it will all be taken!

Is it gone? *Yes! It’s all gone!* Whenever I go to Southern California, I have an occasion to go by the former campus and headquarters, and it’s sad, indeed! But it reminds me of what God said He would do to Jerusalem that the *strangers would pass by it after it’s destruction and hiss* because of God’s punishment! We are paying the price

- a) as a nation
 - b) as a church
- and in the final analysis*
- c) the whole world

Let’s look at what God says, and this works at any time. I’m not going to beat you over the head with these Scriptures, but nevertheless, these are true at all times.

Remember what happened when Elijah was sent to the widow? What did the widow say? *Oh, you’ve come here to destroy me!* Elijah said, ‘No, I want you to make a cake for me, and I’m told that I should stay at your house.’ She says, ‘I only have enough for me to eat and my son; if I give it to you we will die.’ What happened? *God provided the flour, the oil for however long Elijah was there—about three years!* So, God is able to bless in the most meager of circumstances! We need to understand that!

Malachi 3:8: “Will a man rob God? Yet, you are robbing Me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings! You *are* cursed with a curse...” (vs 8-9). Either way you go, if you don’t obey God you end up with a curse.

“...for you are robbing Me, *even* this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the treasure house, so that there may be food in My house. And prove Me now with this,’ says the LORD of hosts...” (vs 9-10). Here’s a challenge God gives to everyone, and we need to take God up on it:

“...‘to see if I will not surely open the windows of heaven for you, and pour out a blessing for you, until *there is* not enough *room to receive it*’” (v 10). It really means that you will always have sufficient!

Verse 11: “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and it shall not destroy the fruit of your ground...” In other words, today if we are wise and operate correctly, and we honor God with our substance, God will make sure that we have enough. But we have to be wise and operate in that way. Paul says the same thing in 2-Cor. 9; that God is able to provide us with sufficiency. We need to keep that in mind, because beyond that He’s offering us eternal life! We’ll see some of the pitfalls that people get into concerning wealth. This is why there is always a financial reckoning. Notice who this is directed to:

Psalm 49:1: “Hear this, all you people; give ear, all inhabitants of the world... [this is quite a broad Psalm] ...both low and high, rich and poor together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the thoughts of my heart shall be of understanding” (vs 1-3). God is interested in, first, a relationship with Him!

Verse 4: “I will incline my ear to a parable; I will open my dark saying upon the lyre.... [this is David speaking] ...Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my supplanters surrounds me? Those who trust in their wealth and in their many riches boast themselves. No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (vs 4-7).

In the final analysis God is saying, ‘All the wealth is going to disappear!’ Isn’t that going to happen when Christ returns? Where is it all going? *God is going to take it all to Himself, because He’s the One Who gave it!*

(go to the next track)

Talking about the deceitfulness of man, Psalm 52:1: “Why do you boast yourself in evil, O mighty man? The mercy of God endures forever.” This is comparing man’s way with God’s way!

Verse 2: “Your tongue devises destruction, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, and lying more than to speak righteousness. Selah. You love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue. God will likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your tent, and root you out of the land of the living. Selah. And the righteous shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying...” (vs 2-6).

This shows some of the protection that God is going to give us. Remember, in any downturn there are always jobs, there is always work, there are always things that are still going on. God is able to bless and protect you in that, while you avoid all the things of evil.

Verse 7: “Behold, the man who did not make God his stronghold, but trusted in the

abundance of his riches. He strengthened himself in his wickedness.”

If that doesn’t describe the banking system of the world, and the business of the world, I don’t know what does. It’s all based on lying and deceit— isn’t it? *Yes!* That’s what’s happening with the mortgages; we coned the whole world into accepting the most lying and deceitful instruments of mortgages and claimed that they would be good for investment to earn money, and it’s all falling apart.

I saw one part of it that people will put the keys in the mail and the banks call that ‘jingle mail’ because when they get the keys in the mail they know it’s from a house that’s been abandoned. One man did that, but left five pigs in the house to tear it apart.

It’s appropriate that we continue to talk about some of these economic times. It’s absolutely true; they’re going to happen. This means it’s an opportunity to grow in faith, knowledge and understanding of God. You must have the spiritual riches that come from God!

Psalm 62:1: “Only for God does my soul wait in silence; from Him comes my salvation. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you imagine mischief against a man? You shall be slain, all of you; you shall be like a bowing wall and as a tottering fence. They only consult to cast him down from his great height; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse. Selah.” (vs 1-4). Is that not true of the whole society? *Yes!*

Verse 5: “My soul, wait in silence for God alone; for from Him comes my hope.” Rather than look at this as gloom and doom—there is going to be a lot of gloom and doom. Look at from the point of view that it’s opportunity to trust God even more. It’s going to give you an opportunity to develop your relationship with God even more. Also, remember that as human beings we *react* to crises—don’t we? *Yes!* Well, here you can react to the crisis that is coming.

Verse 6: “He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; **I shall not be moved.**” I’m sure there will be a lot of people saying that ‘I lost all my money in this venture, that venture or the other venture, so the blessing of God may not be true. You’re being moved because you did not operate with discretion and wisdom when you had the opportunity to do so.

But spiritually, v 7: “In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God. **Trust in Him at all times**, you people...”

(vs 7-8). Whether it's good, bad or indifferent; whether it's in wealth, in want, regardless of what it is.

"...pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah" (v 8). This shows what I'm trying to bring out here. The most important thing in these times is your relationship with God.

Verse 9: "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie..." WOW! Does that not describe the rich of the world? the leaders of the world?

"...when weighed in the balance... [this is God weighing them in the balance] ...they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression..." (vs 9-10). That's what some ministers are doing asking people to send all their wealth to them; you're *oppressing them!*

"...and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, **do not set your heart upon them**" (v 10). That's exactly what has happened in America today.

- riches increased
- it was all on paper
- they set their hearts on them
- they made their lives work on them

What's going to happen? *It's going to blow up!*

Verse 11: "God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God." As we read before, ***the power to get wealth belongs to God, and it only happens God's way!*** Every other form of wealth, unless you get into and out of it before the bottom falls out, it's going to fall out!

Verse 12: "Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work."

Ecclesiastes 5:18: "Behold that which I have seen: *It is* good and right for one to eat and to drink, and to see good in all his labor that he labors under the sun all the days of his life, which God gives him; for it *is* his portion. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and has given him power to eat of it and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor—this *is* the gift of God. For he does not often consider the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of his heart" (vs 18-20).

Ecclesiastes 6:1: "There is an evil, which I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy upon men: A man to whom God has given riches, wealth, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires

for his life, yet, God does not give him power to eat of it, but a stranger eats it. This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil disease" (vs 1-2). We're right at the cusp in the nation of that happening.

Spiritual Riches of GOD

Let's look at some of the *true riches, the spiritual riches* of God. What we need to do in this is to draw closer to God. Every time there is something that comes along, like we have here.

I remember that in 1979 that in order to cure 'stagflation' they raised the interest rate to 19%! BANG! Now when we're facing 'stagflation' they want to lower the interest rate, which is going to increase the 'stagflation.' Amazing! Everybody has their mind on the physical things, but now let's look on the *spiritual* things! *The true riches of God!* Out of all these experiences that we go through, out of all the topsy-turvyness that we see in the world, this is what we need to look to: You need to hunger and thirst for God's way as it says right here:

Psalm 119:123: "My eyes fail for Your salvation..." In other words it's so fantastic that even David could not see the full end of it.

"...and for the Word of Your righteousness. Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statutes" (vs 123-124). We can learn that with what we're going through today; have God deal with us with mercy, operate with wisdom.

Verse 125: "I am Your servant; give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies. It is time for the LORD to work, for they have made void Your Law" (vs 125-126). Whenever you've come to a point that they've made void the Law of God in the and, then God is going to work. Here's what needs to be our response to that:

Verse 127: "Therefore, **I love Your commandments above gold**—yea, above fine gold." They have these programs where the contestants are to choose, and they look into this dark room and all of a sudden two lights come on and on one table is a pile of fine gold stacked up. Then the other light comes on and here's an old tattered and torn Bible. You say, 'Choose which one has the most value.' They will choose the gold first! Rare would it be for someone to say, 'If I have the Word of God, that will teach me how I can get what's on the other table.' This is our attitude:

- once you get past the covetousness of self
- once you get past the deceitfulness of riches
- once you trust in the Word of God as greater than the physical things around you

Verse 128: "Therefore, I esteem all Your

precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way.” There we have the beginning of *true spiritual riches*.

We’re going to see something very interesting, and here is a New Testament principle that Jesus applies to the Church.

Proverbs 13:7: “There are *those* who pretend to be rich, yet *have* nothing...” There are some people who have wealth and have nothing. Look at the wealthy in the world today, especially some of these young rock stars—where are they today? Wealth just makes no difference; they have so much money they don’t know what to do, and their lives are a total shambles!

“...and those who pretend to be poor, yet, *have* great riches” (v 7). Let’s see this in action *spiritually*. We will see this in action as God talks to the Church. You can’t have the New Testament without the Old, because every principle from the New Testament comes from the Old and spiritually magnifies what is in the Old. It’s just living principle that is there. As you study the Word of God and understand that, the more you’re going to understand God’s Word.

Revelation 2:8: “And to the angel of the Church of *the* Smyrneans write: These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive. ‘I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich)... [this is the one who makes himself as nothing, but is rich] ...and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life” (vs 8-10).

Today the Laodicean would say, ‘God, that’s not fair.’ But what is more important than anything else but the *crown of life*? Isn’t that true? *Yes!* So, He says, ‘Though you are in poverty, you are rich spiritually, which tells us today that when these things come upon us—and as we see the economy around us going the way that it’s going—we need to concentrate with our spiritual relationship with God to be rich spiritually.

Verse 11: “The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.”

Now let’s look at the one who makes himself wealthy but has nothing. You can’t avoid going to the Church of the Laodiceans in this. You can say that here in Rev. 3 is an exact fulfillment of

Prov. 13:7:

Revelation 3:14: “And to the angel of the Church of *the* Laodiceans, write: ‘These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginner of the creation of God. “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth”’” (vs 14-16). This gives us an opportunity—doesn’t it? Remember that every crisis that comes along—personally, family, living in a country—is an opportunity to grow spiritually, to learn the lessons of trusting in God.

I think it’s important that the Laodiceans are the only ones that talk back to God, v 17: “For you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’...” Remember what it said? Don’t trust in riches when they come? What were the Laodiceans doing? *Trusting in riches!*

I remember many people walking around the campus in Pasadena and saying, ‘Look at all that God has blessed us with; this is like the Kingdom of God on earth! What more could we want?’ What do we have with the Protestants today, with their get-along, good religion—I direct you to Joel Olsteen—16,000 in three services on Sunday! He tells them how good they are, and your best life now.

Let’s see how that works out with the coming recession. He never commands them to repent of sin. He tells them that they should ‘do good.’ Unless you repent of sin, all the good that you do can never amount to anything spiritually in the long run. So, they’re sitting there with wealth and I think that Joel Olsteen’s church is the epitome of a Laodicean church. They have so much money coming in they don’t know what to do with it.

“...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me... [through a relationship with God] ...gold purified by fire so that you may be rich; and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see” (vs 17-18).

Let’s see what Paul is talking about using the same analogy, which also tells us that *the spiritual riches are the most important thing!* Let’s also see something about how Paul views his ministry and the ministry of all ministers. We all need to take this view. In this, whatever any minister speaks to the brethren, he better be speaking to himself also.

{Note sermon: *A Minister Preaches to Himself*} Some people didn’t get the point of it, but

the point was that I had just heard of this minister who graspingly and greedily had asked for everything that the brethren had. *It's the other way around!*

This is very important because it puts us all in the right perspective. Any minister—I include myself—who does not teach the brethren to have a relationship with God is no minister indeed. God has chosen men to teach and they had better be faithful, and their faithfulness depends on their personal relationship with God rather than just preaching and teaching people to respond to them. This is why corporate churches are a thing of the past.

1-Corinthians 3:5: “Who then is Paul?....” He didn’t say, ‘Brethren! You’d better obey me because I’m God’s only apostle on earth!’ *NO!* He said: “Who then is Paul?....” He counted himself ‘less than the least’ of all the brethren!

“...And who *is* Apollos?....” (v 5). People like to follow men and throw one man up in the face of another man and so forth.

“...*They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted *and* Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is* God Who gives the increase” (vs 5-7). God wants all of us to grow to the fullness and stature of Christ, so that all of us, as disciples, can become as the teacher, of Whom Christ is the Teacher.

Verse 8: “Now, he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” That applies to those who build on what they preach and that also applies to the minister in what he is preaching and teaching. Remember, God’s judgment is on those who are preaching and teaching, as well.

Verse 9: “For we are God’s fellow workers; *and* you are God’s husbandry, *even* God’s building.” Isn’t that something! Therefore, anyone who does not preach the Word of God is not a fellow worker with God or Christ.

Verse 10: “As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*. For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ” (vs 10-11). *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one comes to the Father except through Me!* (John 14:6)

- not another way
- not another Jesus
- not another thought

- not good platitudes
- not sweet words that make the carnal heart purr

—but those who bring people to God through repentance and yielding to God and loving Him and keeping His commandments.

Verse 12: “Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation...” Here God has us all to build with the help of God and His Spirit. What are we building? See how this ties in with the Laodiceans (Rev. 3).

“...gold...” (v 12)—most precious thing that there is in the world as far as physical things go. What did Jesus say? *Buy of Me gold tried in the fire!* That is

- *spiritual* growth
- *spiritual* understanding
- *spiritual* character

“...gold, silver, precious stones...” (v 12). All three of these improve in fire. Precious stones are made from the heat of the earth, but they have to be polished, ground, cut and so forth, that’s all the work of God’s working with you. Many of us are like the precious stones—we’re hard; we’re difficult—but God still works with us.

Here’s the easy way, the Laodicean way, “...wood, hay *or* stubble” (v 12). In order to get gold you have to work for it. You have pan for it, mine for it; takes a lot of labor, a lot of work; same way with silver and precious stones. *Wood*, you can just go gather it. *Hay*, you can just cut it down. *Stubble*, nothing to it, no work. What’s going to happen?

Verse 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire...” This does not mean the Lake of Fire. This means *the trial by fire that we go through with the difficulties that we are confronted with!* It’s going to prove you:

- Do you still believe God?
- Do you still esteem everything of God above fine gold and riches?
- Do you still love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being, regardless of the circumstances that you are confronted with?

“...and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is. If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire” (vs 13-15).

So, we have the comparison between the maximum and the minimum. The Laodiceans wanting to maximize their physical riches and

trusting in them may end up with the minimum, because when the fire comes and tries it, POOF! It's going to be like the riches we talked about in the book of Proverbs—it flies away!

Revelation 3:18: "...and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see." In other words, we've got to look at things through the eyes of God's Word in everything that we do. It depends on our spiritual relationship with God.

Verse 19: "As many as I love..." So, whatever difficulties we are going to go through, God still loves us. {Note sermon: *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 in Love Series)} God loves you always, through all circumstances unto the end!

"...I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock..." (vs 19-20). This can refer to the soon coming of Christ, or God standing *spiritually* in front of you—the Spirit of Christ—knocking at the door of your mind! This is with the guilty conscience that God has smitten people with so that they return to Him.

"...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door..." (v 20). Isn't that amazing? Here are people who have shut Christ out; yet, He desires to come in. Will they open the door?

If they will, "...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (v 20). That's talking about a relationship; sitting down together as friends eating. But the spiritual relationship where it is that 'the Lord is good' means that the Word of the Lord is good.

Verse 21: "To the one who overcomes will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne."

Riches of CHRIST

We're going to talk about the *riches of Christ!* Paul talks about the riches of God in several places. Let's begin and this is the time to really understand it and grasp it.

Ephesians 1:4: "According as He has personally chosen us..." The place to begin to get your spiritual relationship back in balance with God is to understand your calling. **God**—through all that there is in the world—**has personally chosen each one of us!** That's an amazing thing to understand. It's way above our heads to fully comprehend it. This is why we believe what God says. There's no action that we can do with this; He's the One Who has done the action.

"...for Himself before *the* foundation of *the*

world..." (v 4). That sounds like He knew we would exist before the foundation of the world. That's not so, because there would be no personal choice in it at all. But before the foundation of the world:

"...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love" (v 4). That was the standard that God set before the foundation of the world, not that it was fatalism and that God chose us because He had to choose us, and he didn't choose someone else because He didn't choose them. God chooses those who repent, otherwise there would be no repentance in this relationship at all!

Verse 5: "Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will, to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the **riches** of His grace" (vs 5-7).

That's the true spiritual riches that come from God! *It comes first from Christ!* What we know and understand of the Word of God, the Plan of God, count those as greater riches than whatever wealth that you may have anywhere of any kind.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will..." (vs 8-9). Do you understand the Plan of God? How do you understand it? *God has made it know through His Word, through His Spirit.*

"...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself" (v 9). This is where we get our spiritual bearings, by going back and seeing the true spiritual riches, and see what God has done.

Verse 10: "That in *the* Divine plan for the fulfilling of *the* times..." Taking the word 'dispensation' (*KJV*) and making dispensationalism is a slight of hand, and does diminish from the Word of God because they come through and cherry-pick whatever they want and they get down to the point that all you have to do is 'believe' and you're saved. There's more to it than that!

"...He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance..." (vs 10-11). That is wealth, riches; and He is going to give us the riches of not only the earth, beginning with the Millennium, but also of the universe. We are going to share the inheritance that Christ has—right? *Yes!*

"...having been predestinated according to His purpose... [according to His will] ...Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will; that we might be to *the* praise of His

glory, who first trusted in the Christ” (vs 11-12). That is something!

Verse 13: “In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” And the thing that is the most valuable thing that you have, which you cannot put any money on, any value on in terms of dollars and cents or physical assets, is *the Spirit of God!* That’s where we need to focus on.

“...the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory” (vs 13-14).

Eph. 3 tells us more about God’s plan, but it also tells us how Paul looks at himself. Ephesians 3:4: “So that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of Christ), which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His Holy apostles... [all of them, not just to Paul; that it’s magnified even more] ...and prophets by *the* Spirit; that the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, **which was given to me through the inner working of His power**” (vs 4-7).

- not by him
- not by who he was
- not by his intellect

Verse 8: “**To me**, who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the Gospel among the Gentiles—even the **unsearchable riches of Christ.**”

- There is the true wealth!
- There is the true gold!

That’s why when we are baptized we count everything but loss for Christ, as Paul said in Philip. 3.

Verse 9: “And that I might enlighten all *as to* what *is* the fellowship of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

We have the understanding of it today in a great and powerful way! That’s what we need to look to, not the physical things, not trying to make the world better; only Christ can do that.

Verse 10: “So that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, according to *His* eternal purpose, which He

has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence **through His very own faith**” (vs 10-12). That is through the Spirit of God that He gives to us.

Verse 13: “So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for* your glory.” Here he writes the greatest, most inspirational things when he was in prison in Rome—Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

Verse 16: “That He may grant you...” This is what we need to look to in the time of physical stress that is coming, because it’s going to be the *spiritual riches* that will see us through time of the diminishing of physical riches.

“...according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man... [Whenever everything else fails and falls around you]: ...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [of God’s plan] ...and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (vs 16-19).

- That’s the *goal!*
- That’s the *purpose!*
- That is the *end!*
- This is what God wants to do!

When we face these times—which are coming—**let’s face them with the true spiritual riches**; take care of our physical riches the best that we can. **Ask God to bless us and prosper us in what we can, and to see us through the difficult times that lie ahead.**

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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- 1) Proverbs 23:4-5
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- 3) Jeremiah 17:9-11
- 4) Proverbs 18:11
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- 6) Psalm 112:1-8
- 7) Proverbs 3:1-10
- 8) Deuteronomy 8:7-18
- 9) Malachi 3:8-11
- 10) Psalm 49:1-7
- 11) Psalm 52:1-7
- 12) Psalm 62:1-12
- 13) Ecclesiastes 5:18-20
- 14) Ecclesiastes 6:1-2

- 15) Psalm 119:123-128
- 16) Proverbs 13:7
- 17) Revelation 2:8-11
- 18) Revelation 3:14-18
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Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Peter 5
- James 1
- John 5
- Ezekiel 33
- 2 Corinthians 9
- John 14:6
- Philippians 3

Also referenced: Sermons:

- *A Minister Preaches to Himself*
- *Remember, When All Else Fails, God Loves You* (#1 in Love Series)

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