

THE COMING FINANCIAL SHAKING OF THE CHURCH

Introduction

The Prophets clearly reveal in scripture the very purpose on how the provisions and riches of this life are to be used. The covenant merciful God has promised to meet our needs in this life as we seek Him and trust Him in our daily walk. King David writes in Psalm 37:19 that even in difficult times, God's people would have their needs satisfied. Jesus promised in Matthew 6:33 that all our needs would be met if we seek Him first and made His Kingdom and will the priority of our lives. We need a paradigm shift and learn to be content in having our needs met in order that we can surrender more of ourselves to God in this life. God has issues with the self-indulgent believer, the Church that lives unto itself while His works lay dormant. Exactly what are we building?

I. WHY GOD ASKS US TO SOW OUR MONEY

God is the rightful owner of all the earth and over all that is in it. Why then does He ask us to give of our earnings if He has more than enough? The one thing God will never violate is our will. He desires a people that will choose to willingly serve Him with a heart that longs for Him. Of all possessions of this life, our money is the most precious thing to most people. Because money is so attachable to our hearts, God simply asks that we give back a portion of what He has given to us. He gives it to us for us to be good stewards. It's already His to begin with and He wants to see if we are willing to manage it with a faithful heart. When we choose to use it for ourselves, we force Him to deal with us over this issue.

- A. Haggai was God's prophetic voice to rebuke God's people for their unfaithful stewardship. The Lord mercifully moved upon the Persian Kings to allow the Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, God's House of Prayer.

Isaiah 44:28 "Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."

(see also Ezra 1:1-4)

- B. The Lord made it clear through Haggai that He was not pleased with how the Jewish exiles returning back to Jerusalem had responded to the mandate of rebuilding the temple.

Haggai 1:7-11 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways!”⁸ Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the LORD.⁹ “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the LORD of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.¹¹ For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

1. We are to consider our ways. What are we building in life with the resources He has given us?
 2. We are to build His house. This is what brings God pleasure. He is asking us to *Partner* with Him by investing into our spiritual lives and build what He is emphasizing today.
 3. Many in the Body of Christ are lacking because we are not agreeing with what He is asking us to build. God wants His temple built, His House of Prayer.
 4. The earth, the weather, our lands and our crops will not cooperate to bring about the intended fruit from our labors.
- C. The Lord’s goodness is so abundant that He wants to make sure that the needs of His people are met. The principle of ***sowing and reaping*** will be in effect as long as the earth remains. Sowing is God’s method of blessing His people.

Genesis 8:22 “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.”

Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 “***But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.***”

Galatians 6:7-10 “***Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.***”

1. ***Genesis 8:22*** –Seed time and harvest are an eternal principle established by God before the tithe was even established through Moses.
 - A. Seedtime –“Sowing, fruit, planting, sowing-time”
 - B. Harvest –“Reaped harvest, the crop, the reaper”
2. ***Luke 6:38*** –Three times Jesus uses the word “give” to stress the importance of being an extravagant giver. It is the same Greek word given to us that describes the Father’s generosity of providing His Son in John 3:16, the Holy Spirit’s generosity in giving us spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-8 and Jesus’ generosity in giving us His peace in John 14:27. The principle of Luke 6 is that God will measure back to us according to the measure we give. How much do you believe God for is determined by how much you give to God.
3. ***1 Corinthians 9:6-8*** –The Apostle Paul plainly teaches us: “He who sows (to sow, scatter) sparingly (stingily) will also reap (harvest) sparingly (stingily). In other words, if we are stingy with God, He will be stingy with us. But he who sows (to sow, scatter) bountifully (to superimpose, set over, above, or on something else) shall also reap (harvest) bountifully (to superimpose, set over, above, or on something else). God loves when we give to Him from a cheerful heart and not of necessity (distress or needful).
4. ***Galatians 6:7-8*** –Paul again stress this key operating principle of the Kingdom. He tells us not to be deceived (err, be seduced, be out of the way). Because whatever we sow (to sow, scatter) that we will also reap (crop, harvest). He encourages us not to become weary (become weak, to fail in heart) in doing good because in due season (convenient time) we will reap (harvest) if we faint not (do not relax).

II. THE PROPHET HAGGAI CONNECTED GOD'S BLESSINGS DIRECTLY IN PORPORTION TO ONE'S GIVING

- A. Haggai proclaims the word of God to the returned Jewish exiles, why they were not prospering or progressing in several areas of their lives.

Haggai 1:7-11 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways!⁸ Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the LORD.⁹ “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the LORD of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house.¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.¹¹ For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.”

- B. Without the House of Prayer (temple) being established, this made the Jewish exiles vulnerable to their enemies and gave cause to the many hindering factors their lives were facing. Throughout the writings of the prophets, God made clearly known to the Jewish nation that their success as a people would be directly dependent on God's presence being in their midst. This could only be done by keeping God's house a priority in their spiritual and national affairs.

1 Kings 9:3 “And the LORD said to him: “I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.”

2 Chronicles 29:25 “And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets.”

Zechariah 4:8-9 “Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.”

Mark 11:17 “Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’?^[a] But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’”

- C. When God's people choose to ignore the real purpose for the existence of the Church, we forfeit the many benefits that come in along when we fulfill God's will as a spiritual community. The negative consequences are a result of:
1. No offerings offered unto God.
 2. No prayers offered on behalf of the people
 3. No worship offered to draw near to God
 4. No ministry offered unto God that brings the favor of the Lord
 5. No ministry offered to the people of God to meet their spiritual needs

III. THE PROPHET MALACHI CONNECTED GOD'S BLESSINGS DIRECTLY IN PRORPORTION TO ONE'S GIIVING

- A. Like Haggai, Malachi too rebuked God's people but mainly the priests for their lack of priority in giving God their best in their worship of Him.

Malachi 1:10-14 "Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you," Says the LORD of hosts, "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you profane it, In that you say, The table of the LORD^{al} is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.' You also say 'Oh, what weariness!' And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD.¹⁴ "But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished -For I am a great King," Says the LORD of hosts, "And My name is to be feared among the nations."

- B. The Lord went on to accuse His own people of "stealing from Him." The people replied back to Malachi, God's messenger, "In what way have we robbed you." God responded back through Malachi. "In tithes and offerings."

Malachi 3:8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings."

- C. The Lord then sends one of the sharpest rebukes to His own people that we can find in all of scripture. It has been one of the most divisive statements that is even debated among believers today.

Malachi 3:9 “You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.”

Holding back the tithe and offering is one of the reasons why so many of God’s people are in the mess that they are in. Family and marriage problems, children away from God, continually lacking financially, spiritual harassment from the enemy, etc. The Prophet Malachi declared that God curses His own people when we choose to ignore His revealed will for our lives.

- D. A Curse? Yes, God said a curse! Why, how and what kind? Because the purpose of the offering was to satisfy the requirements of God and because offerings please God.

Genesis 8:20-22 “Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. “While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease.”

1 Kings 8:5-6 “Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. ⁶ Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim.

1 Kings 8:10-11 “And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹ so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.”

- E. The Solution to once again receive the favor of God upon our lives is to REPENT!

Malachi 3:7-8 "Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, ' In what way shall we return? "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, In what way have we robbed You?" In tithes and offerings."

1. The devourer will have no access to our lives- v.11
2. Our provisions will be a blessed and protected-v.11
3. We will become a blessed people among others-v.12
4. God would bring justice and judgment in our behalf against (Mal 3:5):
 - a. Witchcraft in our land
 - b. Adultery and all forms of perversion
 - c. Lying and deception among the people
 - d. Corporate greed stealing from the workers
 - e. The injustice against the widows and the orphans and the immigrants in our midst

THE LACK OF WORSHIP, PRAYER, MINISTRY AND OF THE WORD IS WHAT BRINGS A CURSE UPON A PEOPLE AND A NATION.

IV. IS THE TITHE A NEW TESTAMENT COMMAND AND IS IT RELEVANT FOR US TODAY?

- A. The tithe was practiced by Abraham who was before Moses and before the Law of the Tithe.

Genesis 14:18-20 "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said: " Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all."

- B. Jesus affirmed tithes and offerings

Luke 11:42 “But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”

Luke 21:1-4 “And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³ So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; ⁴ for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.”

- C. Extravagant offerings will be given to Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.

Psalm 72:10-11 “The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him...¹⁵ And He shall live; And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; Prayer also will be made for Him continually, And daily He shall be praised.”