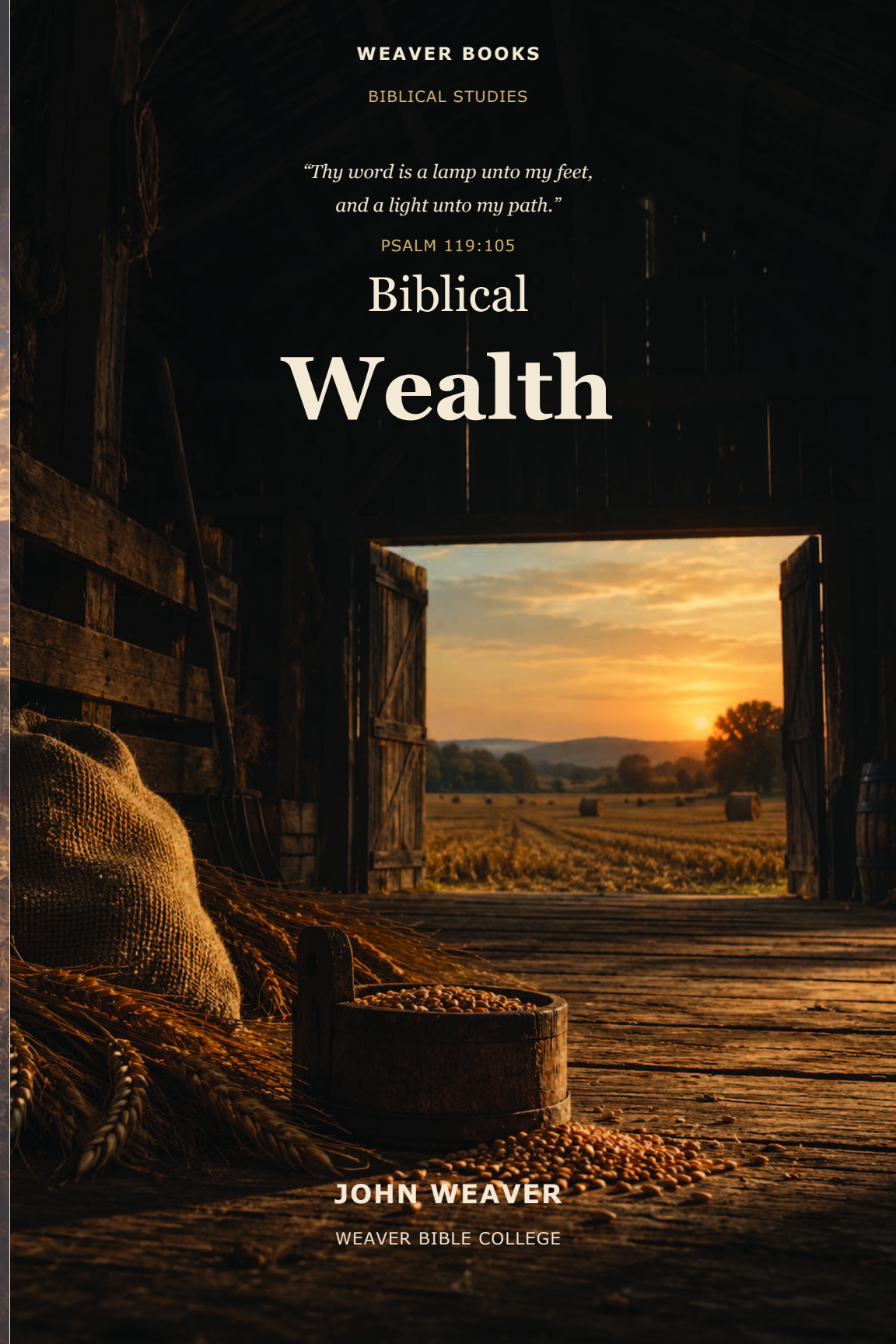
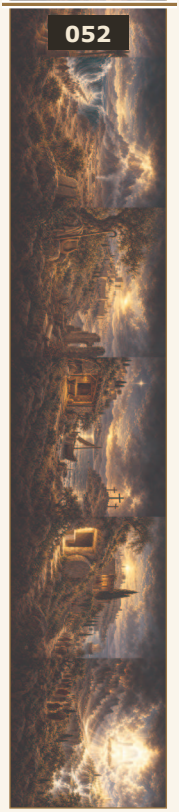

WEAVER BOOKS
BIBLICAL STUDIES
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."
PSALM 119:105
Biblical
Wealth
JOHN WEAVER
WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE





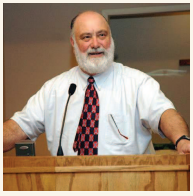
The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof.

PSALM 24:1, EXCERPT

Wealth raises questions of purpose as well as possession. John Weaver considers work, provision, charity, obedience, and the stewardship of gifts received from God. This series examines economic life within a covenantal framework, challenging both the pursuit of riches as an end and the assumption that material resources lie outside Christian responsibility.

“Riches are not to be sought as an end in themselves, but only as a means to the end.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

BOOK 052

WEAVER BOOKS

Biblical Wealth

Covenant Theology

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

LIBRARY BOOK 052

Biblical Wealth

John Weaver

Weaver Books
Weaver Bible College

Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

Contents

Chapter 1: Biblical Wealth - Part One of Eight 7

Introduction and Scripture Reading 7

The Misinterpretation of Wealth in Scripture 9

The Origin of the Idea that Wealth is Sinful 9

Thomas Aquinas and the Sacred-Secular Divide 10

Historical Consequences: Renaissance, Reformation, and Asceticism 12

Biblical View of Matter and Dominion 16

God as the Sovereign Source of Wealth 19

God's Ownership and Man's Stewardship 21

Chapter 2: Biblical Wealth - Part Two of Eight 27

Introduction: One Sacred Sphere 27

Wealth as a Sign of God's Favor: General Principle 32

Wealth as a Curse to the Wicked 34

The Perplexity of the Righteous: Psalm 73 36

Covenantal Obedience 40

The Two Hinges of God's Blessing 40

Applications and Conclusion 46

Chapter 3: Biblical Wealth - Part Three of Eight 49

Introduction and Scripture Reading 49

The Purpose of Wealth 50

Review of Previous Teachings on Wealth 50

The Purpose of Wealth: To Establish God's Covenant 51

The Covenant Promise and Its Fulfillment in Christ 51

The Dominion Mandate in Genesis 54

The Nature and Scope of the Dominion Mandate 55

The Fall and Its Effects on Culture 58

Restoration in Christ, the Last Adam 61

The Great Commission as the Expanded Dominion Mandate 66

The Inescapability of Culture and the Role of Wealth 68
Chapter 4: Biblical Wealth - Part Four of Eight 71
Introduction and Review 71
The Theology of the Tithes 72
The Tithes Belong to the Lord 73
Abraham's Example of Tithing 76
Distinction Between Civil Tax and Tithes 78
Consequences of Rejecting God's Rule 79
The History of the Tithes 81
Historical Summary of the Tithes 82
The Tithe as God's Tax and Its Social Implications 82
Illustration of Political Corruption 84
The Three Biblical Tithes and Applications 86
Chapter 5: Biblical Wealth - Part Five of Eight 89
Introduction and Review of Series 89
The Tithes Belong to the Lord 90
The Three Tithes 91
The Three Tithes and Their Purpose 91
The Levitical Tithe: Support for the Levites 91
The Levites' Duties and Education Role 95
The Levites' Economic Status 97
The Levites' Obligation to Tithe 100
The Poor Tithe: Care for the Needy 101
Principles of the Poor Tithe 102
Application and Conclusion 106
Chapter 6: Biblical Wealth - Part Six of Eight 109
Introduction and Review 109
The Tithe of Rejoicing Introduced 110
Joy in the Old Testament 112
Rejoicing as a Command 113

Why We Are Commanded to Rejoice 114
The Tithe of Rejoicing 117
Principles of the Tithe of Rejoicing 118
Proper Use and Decapitalization 121
God's Tithe vs. Man's Tithe 124
Consequences of Not Rejoicing in God 125
Chapter 7: Biblical Wealth - Part Seven of Eight 127
The Doctrine of Charity 128
Introduction: The Need for Biblical Charity 128
Charity Is Never Promiscuous but Always Selective 130
The Basic Form of Charity: Gleaning 134
The Poor Tithe as an Essential Part of Charity 137
Distinction Between Works of Mercy and Charity 138
Biblical Charity Illustrated: Widows in 1 Timothy 5 143
False Charity Is Theft 144
Conclusion: Stewardship and Refusal to Help the Ungodly 145
Chapter 8: The Implications of God's Taxation 147
Introduction and Reading of Deuteronomy 26 147
Tithing as a Recognition of God's Sovereignty 149
Tithing as a Realization of the Sovereignty of Grace 152
Tithing as a Reality of the Sacredness of Worship 154
Tithing as a Reasonable Test of Obedience 157
Tithing as a Reliance on God's Blessing 159
Tithing as a Remembrance of the Covenantal Bond 160
Conclusion and Prayer 163
Topical Index 167
Scripture Index 171
Study Guide Link 179

CHAPTER 1

Biblical Wealth

Part One of Eight

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 8:1-20 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

"All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."

"Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

> Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee 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 oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee

The Lord led Israel through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water. He brought them forth water out of the rock of flint and fed them in the wilderness with manna, which their fathers knew not, that he might humble them and prove them, to do them good at their latter end. And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

If Israel forgot the Lord, walked after other gods, served them, and worshipped them, they would surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyed before their face, so would they perish because they would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord their God.

Verses 17 and 18 are going to be our main text for several messages: “And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.”

Everyone knows about those nasty rich men who have all the money and use it to manipulate people, nations, and countries. As wicked as many rich men are, it may surprise you to learn that wealth, per se, is not condemned in the Word of God.

The Misinterpretation of Wealth in Scripture

Rather, wealth is commended and necessary when it is used for the right end. Ungodly, unbiblical, and wicked means of acquiring wealth are condemned in Scripture, as is using wealth for the wrong end or purpose. Material riches are regarded by Scripture as neither good nor bad in and of themselves. Their goodness or badness is determined by how they are acquired and how they are used. The prevalent idea in this country and in Christianity as a whole that wealth and riches are somehow unbiblical or unspiritual rests upon a false exegesis and a misinterpretation of Scripture.

Some of the Scriptures that folks usually get that idea from by misinterpreting them are 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 8 through 10, where the Bible says it is the love of money that is the root of all evil. It is not money, but the love of money. Mark 10, verses 17 through 27, records the rich young ruler. Luke chapter 12, verses 15 through 21, records the rich farmer.

These passages are used by some to try to teach that wealth or riches are evil in and of themselves. We will look at those passages later, as well as some others. One thing the Bible is absolutely crystal clear about is this: there are many dangers, snares, and temptations involved with wealth. The Bible makes that exceedingly clear.

The Origin of the Idea that Wealth is Sinful

Where did the idea arise that wealth and riches were sinful in and of themselves? Who was the promoter of that concept? I could ask the same question another way: Where and when did poverty become equated with spirituality? The mentality of many people is that if you are wealthy, then very obviously you must be wicked in some area and in some way. If you are poor, then somehow you have to be spiritual, or at least not as bad as those wicked rich people.

Now here is a name that you need to remember: Thomas Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas lived from 1225 to 1274 AD. He was a Roman Catholic theologian, philosopher, and logician. His teachings are summarized under the name of Thomism. Thomas Aquinas was canonized—that is, made a saint according to Roman Catholic theology—in 1327. Remember, he died in 1274. He was made a doctor of the church in 1567, and Pope Leo XIII exalted his teachings to the status of the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church in 1879. Anything you want to know about the Roman Catholic Church, in one sense of the word, you might and would probably find in the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, because his philosophy was made its official philosophy. What did Thomas do? He tried to synthesize—that is, bring and bind together—the teaching of Christianity with the teaching of Greek philosophy.

Thomas Aquinas and the Sacred-Secular Divide

Especially the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Thomas Aquinas held to a natural theology and believed that natural reason, based upon a natural grace, would enable Christians to argue—not merely argue, but carry on a discussion and dialogue—with unbelievers, even if they rejected the Word of God as supernatural revelation. So Thomas Aquinas either did not believe the Bible, or he did not understand its teachings.

Thomas Aquinas was saying that, based upon natural reasoning and natural grace, Christians have the ability to carry on a dialogue and try to convert unbelievers, even if the unbeliever does not accept the Bible as the divine revelation of God. But look at 1 Corinthians chapter 2, verse 4. The apostle Paul says, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Look what the Apostle Paul is saying. When I came to see you, I did not try to argue or rationalize you into Christianity. I did not want your faith to stand in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but I wanted your faith to be grounded by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

In verse 11, Paul says, "For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Underline that: "Even so the things of God knoweth" what? "No man." How many men by nature understand the things of God? None. In verse 14 he says, "But the natural man"—that is, the unsaved man, man by nature—"receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Man by nature does not have the ability, nor the capability, of understanding the things of God.

Now, what was Thomas Aquinas doing? He was saying that we could argue and rationalize with unbelievers, even though unbelievers rejected the Word of God. Well, 1 Corinthians chapter 2 makes that a very fallacious argument. You cannot, because man by nature does not understand the things of God.

The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas divided life into two separate spheres or two separate areas. The first sphere was the natural or secular sphere, which was common to all men and society. It was open to all men. The second sphere was the sacred sphere of faith, which was reserved to the church and to the Christian. It was open only to the church and to believers. He had divided one's life into compartments, placing the natural or secular sphere over here and the sacred sphere over here.

The secular compartment could be one's everyday life, based upon one's own logic and one's own reasoning ability. The second sphere, or second compartment, was one's faith, Christianity, or belief, based upon faith. He maintained that these two things were totally separate. They did not need to meet.

This unbiblical dichotomy made the sphere of faith inaccessible and unapproachable by reason. It is true that you cannot reason or argue anyone into Christianity. But it is also true that the Christian faith is the most reasonable and the most logical thing there is, based upon the Word of God. Aquinas was saying, in effect, that you do not need reason or thought if you are a believer. He made faith inaccessible and unnecessary to reason, while making the secular sphere unimportant and unnecessary to faith. You do not need faith

to live over here, and you do not need reason to believe over here; they are two totally different things.

I'm going to show you before I finish this series that, following this philosophy, it is only a matter of time before some people become so heavenly minded, they are no earthly good. Since faith, according to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and according to the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, was separated from everyday life, it brought churchianity into existence. You know what churchianity is, don't you? That's when you come to church on Sunday, act all sweet and pious and loving, worship God, and then go home.

Then Monday through Saturday, you do whatever you want to do, live however you want to live, and live like the devil. It does not matter. See, that is what this philosophy has done: it has divided life into the secular and into the sacred. What it does is this: it then emancipates secular life from under the sovereignty of God and the law of God. That means the secular life and the secular man are free to run headlong into the world without God and without any restrictions whatsoever. Consequently, we now have a rise in what we would call secular science—Darwinianism, that is, evolution. You have the rise of hordes of philosophies and isms, all under the umbrella of secular humanism.

Historical Consequences: Renaissance, Reformation, and Asceticism

I do not care if you talk about existentialism. I do not care if you talk about "I'm okay, you're okay." I do not care what ism you talk about; it all comes under the umbrella of secular humanism. Consequently, we also have a humanistic economics, which is separate from the Word of God and violative of the Word of God, and has only as its end the honor and the glory of man and the benefits of man.

So what Thomas Aquinas did was this: he basically split man into the material and into the spiritual. In doing that, he was following the teachings of the Greek philosophers. The medieval church followed that philosophy as well, and it effectively separated them not only from truth, but also from the real world.

This secularization without God led to the Renaissance in the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, which was totally and thoroughly humanistic. All the Renaissance did was glorify and deify man. It was the same Reformation in the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries that sought to bring man back under the law-word of God, showing that God was sovereign. On the one hand, you have the Renaissance, which is humanistic; on the other hand, you have the Reformation, which is biblical, trying to bring society and culture back under the law of God. It was the same spirit of humanism that produced the Enlightenment of the seventeenth century with all of its rationalism, skepticism, and atheism. Once again, men like George Whitefield, Rowland Hill, the Tennents, and many others sought to bring people back to the Word of God and back to the law of God.

Thomas Aquinas and his philosophy is pagan to the nth degree. This philosophy gave contempt for anything material. It is true that the Greeks taught this philosophy before Thomas came along, but Thomas Aquinas made it popular. It was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and extended throughout Christendom by that church. There are many Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians who are Roman Catholic to the core and do not even realize it. You can never have been a Roman Catholic, never have gone to a Roman Catholic church, and know nothing about Roman Catholic theology, yet act like a good Catholic, because you have unknowingly and unwittingly been influenced by the philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church. This philosophy gave rise to the monks, monasteries, hermits, religious paupers, vagabonds, ascetics, and all kinds of numbskulls who tried to parade their spirituality and devotedness to sacred things by denying and abhorring anything material.

The idea in that period was basically this: If you were born poor, do not seek wealth, because you have the advantage; you are ahead of the game. If you were born rich, tough stuff. The only thing you can do is give it away and become poor like us, so you can be more spiritual.

When I was in college and took my first course in philosophy, I hated it. I despised it. Why should I want to learn about Aristotle

and Plato? That was my idea. For all of you students who are in college, let me tell you this.

My wife can back this up: I made practically all A's when I was in college. Not that I was just that smart, but I did apply myself. I had a philosophy. If I took a subject, liked it, and wanted to learn it, I would do well in it and make an A. But if I got a subject that I absolutely despised and hated, I made sure I made an A in that too, because I wanted to make dead sure I never had to repeat it again. Well, I didn't like philosophy.

I thought, What possible help could knowing what Plato and Aristotle taught be to me as a Christian who believes the Bible? Then it dawned on me: if I knew their errors, I could spot those errors in my life and in the lives of others. I could see where an unbiblical and pagan philosophy had invaded my life and the lives of others. By the way, I hope you don't despise philosophy. The word philosophy is made up of two words, phileo, “I love,” and sophia, “wisdom.” Philosophy simply means love of wisdom. God is the chief philosopher, for He is wisdom incarnate.

Greek philosophy was basically dualistic. It had two tailpipes: the spiritual and the material. Greek philosophy taught that the spiritual was good. Forms and ideas would fit into the spiritual. But it also taught that matter—anything made up of matter—was inherently evil in and of itself. That meant the world, because it was matter, was evil; our bodies, because they were made of matter, were evil; and money, because it was made of matter, was evil. Therefore, if you wanted to be spiritual, you had to purge yourself from anything material. That was the philosophy of the Greeks. Whether you followed Plato, Aristotle, the Gnostics, or the Manichaeans, each believed that matter was somehow inherently evil in and of itself.

I want to give you a quote from a book written by Rushdoony, The Flight from Humanity. I read this book a number of years ago, and I have never forgotten this illustration. While I was thinking about teaching this series, I went back and pulled it out. I want you to understand that it was this philosophy that led to the asceticism and mysticism of the early church. Asceticism means that people simply withdrew from society; they withdrew from culture.

And they would have these weird, crazy, way-out ideas. That's mysticism. Let me show you the concept that was prevalent in the medieval church. Here's a quotation from Rushdoony's book, The Flight from Humanity:

"When after a very hot journey, Jovinus washed his tired feet and hands in very cold water and then stretched out to rest, the holy Melania rebuked him. Melania approached him like a wise mother approaching her own son, and she scoffed at his weakness, saying, 'How can a warm-blooded young man like you dare to pamper your flesh in that way?'

"Do you not know that this is the source of much harm? Look, I am sixty years old, and neither my feet, nor my face, nor any of my members except for the tips of my finger has touched water. Although I am afflicted with many ailments, and my doctors urge me, I have not yet made concessions to my bodily desires, nor have I ever used a couch for resting, nor have I ever made a journey on a litter."

Here was a woman approaching a man for washing his hands and feet and resting. She says, "Do you not know that this is a source of much harm?" In other words, I'm spiritual. I'm a super saint. I don't give in to my flesh. And I love Rushdoony's comment. After quoting that, he says, "We learn nothing about biblical holiness from Melania, although we do begin to realize what the odor of sanctity could have meant." The odor of sanctity. Well, she hadn't washed in 60 years. I guess she could have had an odor.

One other short paragraph says: "Killing the body, short of suicide, was common practice. For the body was treated as an enemy. When a Theban ascetic, Dorotheus, was asked, 'What are you doing, father, killing your body in such heat?' he answered, 'It kills me, I will kill it.' Suicidal self-mortification was called sanctification. The body, the flesh, was the enemy of sanctification, and it had to be whipped, rolled on thorns, and abused in order to enhance spirituality. We are told of Ammonius that he never pampered his flesh when desire rose up in revolt."

But he heated an iron in a fire and applied it to his limbs so that he became ulcerated all over. Why would people do crazy things like

that? Because they believed that the body was inherently evil. Look at those Roman Catholic monks. Why would they crawl on crushed glass, beat themselves, or cut themselves? Because they believed that their body was evil, and they were driving out the evil, denying their body, and somehow becoming more spiritual.

Did you know there was a man by the name of Simon the Stylite? In fact, there is a whole group of people called the Stylites. They got up on a pillar, sat on that pillar, and refused to come down for ten or twenty years. How did they eat or drink? Whatever anybody had to throw or take up there to them, they would receive; they would not come down.

In the same book by Rushdoony, In Flight from Humanity, he talks about one man who looked down, saw a bug biting him, reached down, and killed it. When the blood that had been sucked from his body came out, he became guilt-stricken because he had killed that creature. Thus, he went out into the marsh and sat there for several months, letting the insects bite him incessantly. When he came back home, no one recognized him. He was so ulcerated and disfigured from the insect bites. But he was getting his body under subjection.

Let me make a statement and listen carefully: That is paganism to the nth degree. I do not care whether that teaching comes from Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, the Roman Catholic Church, the First Baptist Church, or the Methodist Episcopal Church. I do not care what or where it comes from; it is pagan to the nth degree. Sin is not in anything material. Sin is in the human heart. When God created the world, He beheld everything that He created and said, "Behold, it is not good, it's not evil, it's good."

Biblical View of Matter and Dominion

Matter is not sinful in and of itself. It has never been and it can never be. You remember back in the 1920s and 30s, there was the temperance movement concerning evil alcohol. Alcohol is not evil in and of itself. If it were evil in and of itself, you could not use it in medicine. I am not telling you to go out and drink or get drunk. But the point is that alcohol is not the problem; the sin in the human heart is the problem that leads to its abuse. Anytime you start

locating sin in anything material, it is pagan to the nth degree. Since they believed that matter was inherently evil, anything that could pamper the flesh—and money could pamper the flesh very easily—had to be evil as well.

Men, both godly and ungodly, want and desire material blessings. If the church refuses to provide the lawful means of acquiring wealth through God's law-word, then the secular world will provide its version.

One of the problems in our country today is that we have allowed ungodly men to formulate and dictate ungodly economic principles in our lives. One of these days, I am going to bring a message and show you, not only historically but biblically, the truth about paper money. It has a long history. There is a reason why those hard money clauses are in the Constitution of the United States: Congress shall have the power to coin money and to regulate the value thereof. No state shall make anything but gold and silver as legal. There are reasons why that is in the Constitution of the United States.

When the church refuses to teach the whole counsel of God and refuses to speak on the issues, she removes herself from areas of influence. Worse than that, she turns those areas over to the ungodly. Man was made in the image of God. Therefore, God created him with original righteousness, holiness, and dominion.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 9:1-2 (KJV)

> Man is a dominion-oriented being. Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."
>
> What did God give man? God gave man dominion.

After the flood, when Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth stepped out of the ark, Genesis 9 says, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Here is the repeat of this dominion mandate: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered." Is man dominion oriented?

Psalm 8 says:

"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

Man, by nature, is dominion-oriented. It is just that simple. However, when man sinned, fell, and rebelled against God and His law, that dominion became perverted. Instead of wanting dominion for God's honor and glory, and doing things the way God wants them done, man now wants dominion for his own sake. Instead of having dominion over the earth, fallen man wants dominion over other men.

Now, what did our Lord do when He came? He came to restore that which He took not away. What did man lose in the fall? We lost our righteousness, our holiness, and our life, basically. We also lost the exercise of a godly dominion. Psalm 69, verse 4, says—and this Messianic Psalm is repeated in the New Testament—

As applied specifically to Jesus Christ, Psalm 69, verse 4, says, "They that hate me without a cause"—you'll find that in John 15:25—"they that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away."

What did our Lord do? He restored that which He took not away. The Bible says in Ephesians 4, verses 22 and 24, that He's given us back a righteousness and holiness. You'll find it in Colossians 3, verses 9 through 10. He gave us back, once again, a righteousness and a holiness and a life. The Bible says in 1 Peter 3, verse 18, that He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us back unto God. Because of what our Lord has done in restoring that which He took not away, He's restored our life, our righteousness, our holiness, and our godly dominion.

Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 31, Scripture says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

If we as God's people are to subdue education, government, art, agriculture, and business, it takes money. It takes wealth. The same principle applies to the church. If we have a Christian or Southern history conference, it requires money. If we go on a missionary trip, it requires money. If we have an evangelistic endeavor, it requires money. God has brought us back through Jesus Christ to the exercise of a godly dominion, and in that godly dominion, He tells us about biblical wealth and how to use that wealth.

God as the Sovereign Source of Wealth

Today I want you to go back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 8 and look at verse 18. I want you to see the source of wealth. Look at verse 17, because God is warning us: "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." God says, don't you begin to boast. Don't you become arrogant, haughty, and heady, and high-minded. Don't you think that you have that just because you worked for it and planned. No, said God. Look in verse 18: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." God specifically designates

Himself as the source of wealth. God is the source of all class distinctions.

God is the source of all class distinctions. First Samuel 2:7-8 says, “The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.” What did the Bible say? The Lord maketh poor, and the Lord maketh rich. Who is the source of the class distinctions in this world? God. You know why one nation is rich and others poor? God. You know why some people in the nation are rich and others are poor? God. He is the source of all wealth.

The key issue here is sovereignty. God is the sovereign owner and ruler of all. Does not God have an absolute right to dispense His gifts, His grace, His mercies, and His blessings as He sees fit? Of course He does.

If I had 100 bucks in this room and said, “Doc, I'm going to give you 20. Doc, I'm going to give you 20. Doc, I'm going to give you 20”—three docs in a row—and then said, “I'm going to give the other 40 over here to change the man,” somebody might say, “Well, wait a minute, Brother Weaver. You didn't give me any money.” Do I owe you any money? No. Was it not my money? Yes. Did I not have a right to do with it as I pleased? Yes. May I give it to whomever I choose? Of course I can.

If I can do that, do you think God is any less able to do the same? God is the sovereign owner of all, and the Bible stresses this truth over and over, including Deuteronomy 10:14.

“Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.” Someone tell me how much of this universe belongs to God? What about all the material blessings and wealth in this universe? To whom do they belong? God.

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 24. It is amazing how many times the Word of God repeats the same truth over and over. Psalm 24, verse 1, says, “The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the

world, and they that dwell therein." How much belongs to God? Absolutely everything. Look at Psalm 115, verse 15: "Ye are blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth." Look at Psalm 121, verse 2: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." Look at Psalm 124, verse 8: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Look at Psalm 134, verse 3: "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion." Over and over, God says He is the owner, He is the creator, and He is the one that made heaven and earth.

Now, I want you to understand, since God is sovereign, God also rules over His creation. Look in your Bibles to the book of Leviticus, chapter 25, verse 23. You remember, He put Israel on the land and divided the land to them. He tells the people, "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." Who owns this earth? God does. And God has the absolute right to do with this earth as He pleases. He has the absolute right to tell us how we may use or not use His earth.

God's Ownership and Man's Stewardship

Now, let me point something out to you. Did you know that God even limits civil government? He not only limits them in a number of ways, but one specific way He limits them is from their expropriating the property of His people. Look in your Bibles to the book of Ezekiel, chapter 46. Let us begin reading with verse 16; in fact, let us read verse 16 so you can see the context: "Thus saith the Lord God;"

God said the prince, the civil ruler, had no authority to take the property of other people. In Ezekiel, if the prince gave a gift to one of his sons, the inheritance would be his sons' possession. If he gave a gift from his inheritance to a servant, it would return to the prince in the year of liberty; but his inheritance would remain his sons'. Moreover, the prince was not to take the people's inheritance by oppression and thrust them out of their possession. He was to give his sons an inheritance out of his own possession, so that God's people would not be scattered from their possessions.

If you do not believe God is serious about this, read 1 Kings 21, where God killed Ahab and Jezebel for stealing Naboth's property. God said, "It is mine." Every one of us has heard of eminent domain.

It means that the state says it can come in and take whatever it wants for the public good, usually by condemning or expropriating the property. They are supposed to pay you for it, but that is neither here nor there.

Here is what Black's Law Dictionary says: "Eminent domain. The power to take private property for public use by the state, municipalities, and private persons or corporations authorized to exercise functions of public character." It continues: "The right of eminent domain is the right of the state, through its regular organization, to assert, either temporarily or permanently, its dominion over any portion of the soil of the state on account of public exigency and for the public good." Thus, the state says that if it wants to put a road through Allison Tyre's house, it can condemn the house, take the property, and put its road there because the community needs a shortcut.

There have been people who lived on land with their families for hundreds of years, and the land was confiscated. If you lived on your family farm and someone offered you $2,000 an acre while raising $1,000 an acre, would that make it right?

It's not the amount of money that matters. That is your family's inheritance. It has been passed down for years. And now the state says, well, we'll just take it. God says no, the prince cannot do that. If the prince wants to use his property, that's fine. If he wants to give his property away, that's fine. But he can't give ours away. Under scriptural law, all property, the whole earth, belongs to God, who is the sole owner. Man may only take titles under God and according to God's law.

In Leviticus 25, verses 1 through 7, God told the Israelites that every seventh year would be a sabbatical year. The land would rest. They were not to plant in that seventh year. Does not the owner have the right to tell you how to use his property? Of course he does. In Leviticus 25, verses 8 through 23, not only were they to let the land rest every seven years, they were to multiply seven times seven. When they reached the 49th year, it would be a sabbatical year, and the 50th year would be a year of jubilee. It also would be a year of rest. So, two years in a row, they could not plant. This is my land. You will let the land rest. You will let the land keep its sap.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 7:1-10 (KJV)

But since the earth is the Lord's, does He not have the absolute right to kick anyone off His land who will not pay Him His rent? Well, of course He does. Just like if you own houses and a renter will not pay you the rent, you dispossess him, you kick him out, go find you another house. Or if the renter is abusing and destroying your house, you have the right to kick him out.

"When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;" God's kicking them out. Come bring His people in that land. "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

"But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face."

What did God do? God said, “I’m taking you into the land, and I’m going to kick out seven nations that are greater and mightier than you.” Why was He kicking them out? Because they would not give God honor and glory. They would not pay Him their rent. They would not worship the one true and living God. They worshiped false gods and were wicked, ungodly, and reprobate. God rightly dispossessed them and brought in the people who said, “Now you pay me my rent.”

Let me ask you a question. Why did Judah go into Babylonian captivity for seventy years? Do not answer out loud; think about it. Why did God send the Babylonians, those Chaldeans, against Judah? They destroyed their cities, killed many of them, and took them into captivity for seventy years. Why? Let me show you. Turn in your Bibles to two passages: Jeremiah 50 and 2 Chronicles 36.

We will read Jeremiah 50 first. Look at verse 34: “Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.” Wait; you still have not understood it: “That he may give rest to the land.”

Now go back to 2 Chronicles 36. Here is why God sent the children of Judah into captivity for seventy years. Begin with verse 19, where they were captured, the house of God was burned, and the wall of Jerusalem was broken down—all Nebuchadnezzar’s doing: “And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.”

The children of Israel disobeyed God. They did not keep those sabbaths. God said, “Didn't I tell you that I was the owner of this land? Didn't I tell you that land was supposed to rest every seventh year and every 49th and 50th year? I tell you what I'll do. You will not follow my orders on how to keep my land. I'll give my land rest. I'll put you in captivity for 70 years, and I'll see that my land enjoys

her sabbaths." The issue is sovereignty. God is the owner of everything, and He is the source of all wealth.

Proverbs 22, verse 2, says, "The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." God makes rich, and God makes poor.

The first application is this: it is not wealth, per se, that is condemned in Scripture. Rather, it is wealth that is gotten dishonestly and wickedly, or wealth used for the wrong ends or by the wrong means.

Secondly, if we desire wealth, if we desire to prosper and succeed, we must seek God alone. Why? For He's the source of all wealth. What did He say in Matthew 6 and verse 33? "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." You put Him first. You don't seek money first; you seek Him first. As you seek Him, all the other things shall be added. He deserves first place.

Third, we must learn that motives are important. We don't seek wealth for wealth's sake, but only that we may further the kingdom of God and bring honor and glory to Him. The next time you tend to think that anything material is wicked in and of itself, and say, "Oh, that's pagan," remember: "No, I'm not a Greek. I'm not a Roman Catholic. I'm a believer, and I believe the Scripture." There is a proper way to enjoy all that God has given to us.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us, that You would teach us, and build us up in the most holy faith. May we not imbibe Greek philosophy, but only the philosophy of the Word of God, and be scriptural in every area of our lives. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Biblical Wealth

Part Two of Eight

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 8:1-20 (KJV)

Introduction: One Sacred Sphere

All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

> Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee 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 oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee

The Lord led Israel "forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God."

Now turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 2. I dealt with this passage last week, but I am going to read it again this week because we are still dealing with sovereignty. Last week, it was the

sovereignty and the source of wealth. This week, it is the sovereignty and the subjects of wealth. In 1 Samuel 2, look at verses 7 and 8.

Here the Word of God says: "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them."

Verse 7 says it is the Lord that maketh poor, and of course it is the Lord that maketh rich. Now, as you go back to Deuteronomy 8 and verse 18, you remember, he says, "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth."

Last week, I began with a rather long introduction because I dealt with a philosophy known as Thomism, the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, a Roman Catholic theologian, logician, and philosopher. The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas was accepted and received in 1879, I believe it is, by the Pope and established as the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church.

I pointed out that Thomas Aquinas tried to synthesize—that is, to draw, bring together, and bind together—the teachings of Greek philosophy and the teachings of the Bible, particularly the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. In the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, and especially in Greek philosophy, the Greeks were dualistic. They believed there were two spheres: the sphere of matter, which was inherently evil, and the sphere of spirit, form, or ideas, which was inherently good.

Thomas took the teachings, especially of Plato and Aristotle, and said that men could be spoken to about the Bible using philosophy, especially Greek philosophies, even if they did not accept the Bible as a supernatural revelation of God.

Because he made this teaching popular, it has come down through the Roman Catholic Church and infected countless millions of Christians. Many Christians who have never been to a Roman Catholic Church and would never dream of going to one are good Roman Catholics in their philosophy, and do not even realize it,

because they have been affected and infected with Thomism, or the teachings of Thomas Aquinas.

He was the one who began separating everything into two spheres, the secular and the sacred. That is where churchanity developed. People can come to church on Sunday morning and feel spiritual, pious, and holy, then go out Monday through Saturday and live as if God does not exist, or as if God had never spoken. Their lives are totally alienated from the truth of God Monday through Saturday. Why? Because they have fallen to the concept that life is divided into two spheres.

For the child of God, there is no such division. The biblical philosophy teaches that there is only one sphere, and that is the sacred. First Corinthians 10:31, connected with Colossians 3, ought to show emphatically that there is only one sphere for the child of God.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Whether you eat or drink, dig in a ditch, wash dishes, fly an airplane, drive an automobile, or sell insurance—whatever you do, do all to the honor and glory of God. There is one sphere, not two spheres.

Colossians 3:23 states it just as bluntly: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Whatever you do, you do it for God's honor and God's glory.

Let me make this principle exceedingly clear. For the Christian, there is no such thing as a king's X. There is no such thing as neutral territory. There is no such thing as time out. Every activity, every attitude, and every action is to be brought in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is only one sphere for the child of God, and that is the sacred. To us, everything is sacred. Second Corinthians 10:5 says, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” How many thoughts are you and

I allowed that are unbiblical? None. Everything we do in word or deed, whatever we do, is to be done for God's honor and God's glory.

There can only be one sphere since God is the creator of all things in heaven and in earth. There are many implications of the doctrine of creation, but one is simply this: God reigns sovereignly and supremely over all of his creation. Therefore, as his creatures, he demands that we honor and glorify him. Certainly, if we are His children by faith in Jesus Christ, we have a double demand laid upon us: we must bring honor and glory to Him.

Our Christian worldview, our biblical philosophy, is to guide, regulate, and control our lives twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week. In other words, we must be godly in our homes as well as in our hearts. We must be godly at work as well as at play. Our Lord said it like this in 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 19: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

We have an obligation, a command, to depart from iniquity. In fact, we are not only to depart from iniquity; we are also to depart from anything that has the appearance of evil. For the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 22, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

To make it short, we cannot be pagan in any area of our lives. There is no such thing as a secular sphere where God has no influence and no control, and where we have no obligations to Him. His Word is to rule our lives and our conduct in every area, in every sphere. It is just that simple. God is sovereign, and God rules over His creature and over His creation.

Today, I am going to pick up where I left off last week: last week dealing with the sovereignty and the source of wealth; today, the sovereignty and the subjects of wealth. Look back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 8, and once again, look at verse 18: “But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.” It is He that giveth power to get wealth. You do need to remember 1 Samuel 2, verse 7, where he says, “The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich.” Then in verse 8, it is the Lord that lifts up

the beggar out of the dunghill. That is an illustration of how God makes one rich.

Since God is sovereign and since He is the source of wealth, you need to consider the subjects of wealth. When you understand that God makes one rich and God makes one poor, a question automatically arises: Can wealth, riches, or prosperity always be regarded as a sign of God's favor or as a sign of God's blessings?

Wealth as a Sign of God's Favor: General Principle

It is true, especially in the Old Testament economy, and it could also be true in the New Testament economy, that, generally speaking, material blessings were indeed a sign of God's favor. Please understand: I said generally speaking. There are general principles in the Bible, but there are always exceptions to those general principles.

For instance, Proverbs 23 says, "Beat thy child with a rod; if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Does that mean that every child who has ever been beaten with a rod is going to heaven? No. It means that, generally speaking, if you discipline your child according to the teaching of the Word of God, with God's blessing upon those means and upon that discipline, then the child may be converted. But that does not mean that every child who has ever been whipped with a rod is going to heaven. If it did, the best evangelistic method we could choose would be to get a rod in each hand and go out and beat the devil out of everybody.

It is a general principle. In the Old Testament, usually wealth was a sign of God's favor and blessing. I know there are exceptions to that, and I will deal with them in just a moment. But consider Abraham. In Genesis 13, we see, generally speaking, how wealth was indeed a favor and blessing of God.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 13:2; Genesis 14:13-23 (KJV)

Genesis 13, beginning with verse 2, says that Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

In chapter 14, Abraham rescues his nephew Lot. Verse 13 says, "And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the

Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan."

Three hundred and eighteen trained servants, or trained slaves, were born in his own house. If he had 318 slaves born in his own house, how many did he have who were not born there? The family of Abraham was probably several thousand. Verse 15 says, "And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus."

"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Abram said, "I'm not going to take a penny from you because I don't want you to say that you made me rich. You did not make me rich." Look at Genesis 24 and verse 1.

You know the story: Abraham is seeking a bride for his son Isaac. The Bible said, “And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and

the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." Note that phrase: "the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things."

In the same chapter, the servant tells how God had blessed Abraham: "And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath." Look at the extreme wealth Abraham had, and God gave it to him. Abraham probably had several thousand people in his household. Remember, there was another title given Abraham: he was called the friend of God.

But look at Isaac, the son of Abraham. Genesis chapter 26 says, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants." "And the Philistines envied him." Look down in verse 16 at what the Philistines finally said. Abimelech said unto Isaac, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." Isaac was living in the land of the Philistines, yet he had more people than they did. He had more wealth than they did. "Go from us."

I am not going to spend my time this morning showing you only how God blessed these individuals materially. If we considered Jacob, David, Solomon, Job, and a multitude of others, we would literally be here all day. It is true that God blessed these men with wealth, and He blessed them with a great deal of it. There is no arguing that. Generally speaking, there is a general rule: the blessings of God and the favor of God are sometimes evidenced by great wealth.

Wealth as a Curse to the Wicked

You say, "Wait a minute, Pastor. As I read the Bible, I also find that there were others who were extremely wealthy, who were ungodly, unholy, and were not interested in anything that was righteous. Moreover, some hated God and hated His law, and yet they were wealthy. How do we explain that?" Well, you have to remember that

that which is a blessing to one person could also be a curse to another. Let me explain that. Do you realize the very blessings of God, when they are abused and misused, become a snare and a destruction?

Psalm 69 records the prayer of the psalmist against the wicked. In verse 22, David makes this prayer request: “Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.” Now, let their table become a snare. The table simply refers to that which they are given, that which they are supplied with, and that which they are blessed with. Instead of being thankful unto God, the giver of all things, what does the table become? It becomes a carnal security to those who trust in the table. So he says, let their table, let that which has been given unto them, become a snare unto them; and that which should have been for their benefit, let it become a trap unto them.

The Puritans had a saying: “God oftentimes curses his enemies with riches.” How could they say such a thing? Because wealth and riches, misused and abused, always become a source of self-confidence, transgression, condemnation, and destruction.

Here is a passage that most people do not even know is in the Bible. Job 12:6 says, “The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.” Why would God bring abundantly into the hands of someone who is a robber, a thief, or someone who is wicked and wrong? Why would God bring material wealth and riches into their hands?

The answer for those who trust in wealth is their own condemnation and destruction. Psalm 62:10 says, "Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them." If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. What is he saying? You do not sit back and glory in the fact, "Well, I've got millions. I've got hundreds of thousands." No, you do not set your heart upon wealth. Our hearts are to be set upon God and God alone.

Proverbs 11:4 says, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death." Now watch: riches profit not

in the day of wrath. What do you suppose the Kennedy wealth or the Rockefeller wealth will do for them the day they die? Nothing. Riches profit not in the day of wrath. Do you realize that all the wealth in the world cannot extend your life one minute beyond the time that God has ordained for you to die? It cannot. Riches profit not in the day of wrath.

Proverbs 11:28 says, "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch." He that trusteth in his riches shall fall. What do rich men normally do? Trust in their riches. They trust in that which God has given them, and it is for their own destruction.

Riches per se are not condemned in the Scripture. Wealth is not condemned in the Scripture. It is the abuse and the misuse of riches and wealth that is condemned. God said, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Now He is saying very obviously, "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall." Some will not take heed to God's warning. They trust in the wealth God has given them rather than in God Himself.

Proverbs 18:11 says, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." The rich man's wealth is his strong city. I can show you verses in the Bible where the rich say, "I shall never be in adversity as other men are." They do not think anything is ever going to happen to them. The wicked say that. They do not think God will ever judge them, chastise them, or condemn them. Yet they trust in their wealth.

Prosperity in and of itself is not a sign of godliness. Oftentimes it is a sign of destruction, depending upon how the prosperity is handled.

Psalm 73 is exceedingly applicable today. It is the psalm of Asaph. David did not write all the Psalms; he wrote most of them. Solomon wrote some, Asaph wrote some, and a few others wrote some as well.

The Perplexity of the Righteous: Psalm 73

We have, in one sense, the same perplexity that Asaph and others had in the Old Testament. Stop and think about this in light of

Christianity. I am not crying when I tell you this; I am using it as an illustration.

Here we sit in a little building with the truth, doing everything we can to get the truth out. We send, I do not know how many, audio tapes out every week, along with CDs and DVDs. All the sermons are on sermonaudio.com. I have received letters, and I am thankful for them, from just about every country in the world, from people who have listened to the messages on the Internet, CD, DVD, or audio. Yet here we are limited. We do not have much, but we have the truth and truly want to get it out.

Now compare our situation with the money that the Crystal Cathedral gets, or with the money of someone who denies the deity of Christ. Here are humongous church buildings with thousands of people that do nothing rather than build buildings. As Hosea says, Israel had forgotten their Maker and built temples.

Is that not perplexing? Can you not ask yourself, “Lord, why do You not give us millions? Why do You give it to them? Look what we could do with it.” The point is that Asaph had the same problem, and we must come to the answer Asaph came to.

Asaph says, “Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.” He roots his conclusion at the very beginning: “Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.”

Why did Asaph enter a period of depression, discouragement, and despair? He explains, “For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” The wicked were prospering, he said, while he was not. “For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.” In other words, the ungodly do not have the problems we have.

“Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.” Most of us would like a decent automobile, but they drive Jaguars. “They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.”

"They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth." In other words, they curse God and man as well; it does not matter to them. "Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches."

Think of the Bilderbergers, the CFR, and the Skull and Bones Society. Do you know any poor people among those? No. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. These are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase in riches.

Now look at what Asaph says in verse 13: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." What good has it done me to be obedient, godly, and holy? What good has it done me to live by God's Word? He says, "I've cleansed my heart in vain. I've washed my hands in innocency." Instead of being blessed and prosperous, he is the one suffering, trying to do what is right. Meanwhile, look at the wicked: they have everything, and they hate God.

He says in verse 14, "For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

"Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee." When Asaph saw their end, he thanked God that he was not one of them and did not have everything they had. God would despise and destroy them.

But Asaph would have God. He would rather be a Christian, a child of God, and suffer and do without than have the riches of the wicked.

Now listen to me, folks. God oftentimes curses his enemies with riches. Why? For their own condemnation. For their own destruction. That's what he said in Psalm 73. But let me just show you very quickly a couple of verses. I want you to understand something. Then in reality, it really doesn't matter what the wicked have. And you know why? Because ultimately, we're going to end up with all of it.

You say, what are you talking about? Well, let me show you. Look in your Bibles for Proverbs chapter 13, verse 22. Proverbs 13, verse 22.

But the Bible says, "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." Well, who's going to ultimately end up with everything? The just. The just. You know, it is so amazing. You can take a child and hold up a quarter and say, you see this quarter? Yes, sir. I will either give you this quarter right now, or if you will wait a week from now, I'll give you a $10 bill. You know what the child's going to normally do? He's going to take the quarter. Doesn't understand, doesn't want to wait. But you know a lot of adults are like that.

That's why we're dead up to our eyeballs. We want what we want right now. We don't want to wait. God says you just wait because the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just. Look in your Bibles to Proverbs 28 and verse 8. Proverbs 28 verse 8. Here it is again stated a different way. Proverbs 28 verse 8: "He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance"

"he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor." So what are the ungodly doing? They're actually just collecting it all together for those who are going to be obedient to God. And if you want a plainer verse, look in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 3. 1 Corinthians chapter 3. And let's begin reading there with verse 21. I wish I had time to give you the entire context of 1 Corinthians 1 through 4, but let me just give you 1 Corinthians 3, beginning there at verse 21. Look what the Apostle Paul says.

"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Covenantal Obedience

How much is the Christian going to end up with? Everything. I would rather wait and get everything than be sinful and just get a little. Why in the world would you be envious of the wicked when you understand that they are just laying it up for you and you are going to eventually get it? Everything in this world is ours.

Prosperity cannot be viewed or regarded as a sign of God's blessing in every instance. But as a general rule, it is true that God does bless His own. If I were to ask you how many in this room are blessed today, the answer would be every one of us. None of us have gone hungry. We may not be multimillionaires, but we are not hungry, naked, or sick. God does bless His own; there is no two ways about that.

The Two Hinges of God's Blessing

What do God's blessings hinge upon? It may not be possible to answer that question totally or exclusively. It may not even be possible to answer it in every individual case, but I can give you two hinges upon which the door of God's blessings usually swings. The door of God's blessing usually swings upon two principles. The first hinge is covenantal obedience, and the second hinge is individual responsibility. Let us consider first the hinge of covenantal obedience.

Turn back in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 8, because we are going to be looking at this passage more closely in just a moment. Covenantal obedience simply refers to bringing our lives into submission to God's Word, which literally means obeying Him in every area of our lives.

John Owen, who has been called the prince of the Puritans and the prince of preachers, said this in describing the nature of a covenant: "An absolute, complete covenant is a voluntary

convention, pact, or agreement between distinct persons about the ordering and dispensing of things in their power unto mutual concern and advantage."

I can reduce that still further: a covenant is when you enter into a mutual agreement, a benefit being assured upon the fulfillment of certain conditions. In a covenant, if you want the benefits, you fulfill the conditions. Isn't that simple? If you want the benefits of a covenant, you fulfill the conditions.

Alice and I are married. That is a covenantal relationship. If I want the benefits of a wife, I must fulfill my responsibilities as a husband. If I want the blessings, if I want the benefits, I must meet the conditions.

Now look in Deuteronomy 8, beginning with verse 11, at what I am talking about: covenantal obedience. God gives us a warning: "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day." Verse 11 is indeed a warning, and it is a warning about forgetting God.

Forgetting God does not mean that you fail to think about Him twenty-four hours a day. It is impossible to think about God twenty-four hours a day. The next thing you know, there will be a thought in your mind saying, What am I going to eat for dinner? What am I going to have for supper? Forgetting God does not mean that you keep Him on your mind twenty-four hours a day. Forgetting God is more than that. In this context of Deuteronomy 8, forgetting God is disobedience. Forgetting God is a refusal to obey His law. "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day."

If I ask what I am going to have for dinner, I am going to say, How do I honor God in this selection? How do I honor God in eating this meal? I think about Him, but I think about Him as I obey Him, and you cannot obey Him without thinking about Him. When you forget Him, it means that you disobey Him. You disobey His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes.

Moreover, forgetting God is not simply disobedience; forgetting God includes a failure to recognize and acknowledge His blessings, and it is a despisement of His providential dealings. Look at verse 12: “Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee”

God brought Israel "forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end."

Then, beginning in verse 12, Moses warns: Lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have a good house, healthy herds and flocks, and your silver and gold is multiplied—everything you have is multiplied, and your freezer is full—your heart be lifted up. What does the lifting up of the heart culminate in? Verse 17 says, "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." I earned it. I worked for it. It is mine.

Wealth is not by natural right; it is God's gift. Ask yourself one question: What do you deserve from God? The answer is that, if you deserve anything, it is justice—and you do not want that. Therefore, anything that you have, God gave you. Your wealth, no matter how small or how great, is God's gift. Everything that you receive outside of justice is God's gift, God's mercy. God says you had better beware lest you forget that one simple thing: He gives you everything.

Read Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. In those passages are the blessings and the curses. In Deuteronomy 28, the first fourteen verses speak of the blessings of God.

One of our cows had twins. Our grandson Tripp asked, "Papa, do cows normally have twins?" The answer was no. They do occasionally, but it is rare. I told him, "This is just part of the blessings of God." When you obey God and honor Him, His blessings

will be upon your cattle and everything else. The fact that we had a cow that had twins is a sign of God's blessing; therefore, we give God the honor and glory for these two calves.

And of course, He's already claimed one of them, but that's all right too. I am simply pointing out that here are the blessings and the curses. I am talking about covenantal obedience. Someone may object: “But Brother Weaver, you told me to read Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, and you are preaching from Deuteronomy 8 yourself. These are all Old Testament passages.” It does not matter. The Old Testament is equally the Word of God as the New Testament. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are covenantal in nature. It is true that the Old Testament is a covenant, but it is equally true that the New Testament is a covenant. In Luke 22:20, our Lord uses the word covenant: “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.” The word testament is diatheke in Greek, the same word translated covenant in Hebrews 8 and 9 and many other places.

In fact, when you get to Hebrews 8 and verse 6, the Bible talks about the New Testament as a better covenant. When you talk about the covenants—the Adamic covenant, the Noahic covenant, the Sinaitic covenant, the Davidic covenant, or the Abrahamic covenant—every covenant is nothing more than an aspect of and a manifestation of the everlasting covenant spoken of in Hebrews 13:20: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.” So it is true that the New Testament is coming to us just like the Old Testament. It seems like I remember reading somewhere in my Bible that our Lord said something like this: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Covenantal. Covenantal obedience.

The first hinge is covenantal obedience. The second hinge is individual responsibility. Let me explain that. Covenantal obedience does not negate personal responsibility. Somebody says, “Well, we’ve obeyed. Let’s just sit back and wait for the blessings to pour in.” No, it is not enough to obey. We must obey God, but we also must fulfill all our responsibilities in every sphere and in every area of our lives.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs 28 and verse 20. We are going to be looking at a number of passages here in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 28, verse 20 says, "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." Now note the first part: a faithful man shall abound with blessings. I want you to understand that it is only faithful men who abound with blessings—not the lazy, not the indolent, not the haphazard, not the worthless, not the slothful, and not the wasteful. Only faithful men shall abound with blessings.

Look in Proverbs 27, beginning there in verse 23. Proverbs 27, verse 23: "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds." "For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation? The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered. The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field. And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens." Now, wait a minute. How in the world are we going to have clothing enough and food enough?

"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds."

Diligence is not something that you do occasionally. Diligence requires a continuous activity. It seems to me that our Lord told Timothy, in 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse 2, that he was to preach the word; he was to be instant in season, out of season. In other words, he was to be diligent. Diligence requires a continual activity.

Let me return to the illustration of this calf. One of the calves we are raising is on a bottle, and they like to eat every four hours. But let us suppose that Alice and I were diligent in feeding that calf every four hours for the first week, and then, for the next two weeks, we ceased to be diligent and simply quit feeding. Would you like to tell me what the state of my calf is going to be? Dead.

You and I cannot sit back and say, "I was diligent one time in my life. I used to be diligent." No. Diligence requires a constant and continual activity. We are talking about individual responsibility. Proverbs 6, beginning with verse 6, says: "Go to the ant, thou

sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

Have you ever seen an ant resting? No. Those ants diligently store up in the summer so they'll have something for the winter. They are diligent even in seeking food during the winter down south and in building their nest in your yard, especially the fire ants—everywhere. But look what he says: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard. Consider her ways, and be wise." Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands.

Proverbs 10:4-5 says, "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." He that dealeth with a slack hand becometh poor, but it is only the hand of the diligent that becometh rich.

Proverbs 24:30 says, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."

The slothful does not take care of his garden. There is another verse: "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting." The point is this: diligent labor produces wealth when the blessings of God rest upon that labor.

Sloth is wickedness. Laziness is sin. The blessings of God are promised to the faithful only as they diligently fulfill their responsibilities before God. I have known people, and you have known people, that will lay out of work when there is no reason to lay out of work. There is a difference between being sick and sorry. When I am sick, I want the bed, and I want my wife to bring me tea,

wait on me, doctor me, humor me, and pet me every now and then. But if I simply get up one morning and say, “I am not sick, but I just do not feel like doing anything. I am going to stay in bed,” that is sorriness. When you get up and start doing what you are obligated and responsible to do, that is when you start feeling better.

God has ordained it where our feelings are never ever to lead us, but to follow. Whenever we do what is right, we feel right. God is saying, “It is the diligent that shall be made rich.”

Applications and Conclusion

Lawful wealth, biblical wealth, is wealth that comes to man as he abides by and obeys God's law, applying work, thrift, and forethought to his activities. The door of God's blessings swings upon two hinges: covenantal obedience and individual responsibility.

The first application is this: wealth, in and of itself, is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing or favor. It can be a sign of fraud, theft, and wickedness. In James, chapter 5, wealth becomes destruction and condemnation. James is not condemning the rich for being rich, but for abusing what God has given them: “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”

Why? “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.”

What are they doing? They are abusing and misusing the wealth that God has given them. Proverbs 16:19 says, “Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Riches in and of themselves do not mean that someone has the blessing and favor of God.

The second application is this: a general rule can be stated based upon individual responsibility. Where there is no character, there is no capitalization. When a man will not work, think, plan, or use forethought, when he does not have the character to do those things, usually there is not going to be any capitalization. He is not going to get wealthy or rich because he does not have the character to follow through on what needs to be done.

Where these unbiblical attributes exist—that is, laziness, slothfulness, and indolence—you can mark her down. God is not going to honor those unbiblical attributes. Although God blesses obedience and honest labor, riches are not to be sought as an end in themselves, but only as a means to the end. As God said in Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." And then all these other things shall be added unto you.

It is not riches we seek, but God. As we obey Him and fulfill our responsibility, we seek His blessings upon our work, our obedience, and our efforts. He is the one that giveth us power to get wealth. The subjects of wealth are, generally speaking, those who are covenantally obedient and who fulfill their individual responsibilities.

Father, we ask that you would help us and teach us, building us up in the most holy faith. May we understand the importance and necessity of covenantal obedience as well as individual responsibility. Teach us, Lord, to do thy will, to do thy work, and to obey thy word. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Biblical Wealth

Part Three of Eight

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 8:11-20 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 11:

"Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.

> And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.
>
> "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant, which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day."

The Purpose of Wealth

Review of Previous Teachings on Wealth

We have been dealing with the biblical doctrine of wealth, and so far we have looked at the sovereignty and the source of wealth. Very clearly, the Word of God says, “It is the Lord thy God who giveth thee power to get wealth.” I demonstrated from history the philosophy of Thomism, where Thomas Aquinas introduced into Christian history his philosophy that caused us to try to separate everything into two spheres: the secular and the sacred. For the child of God, there is only one sphere, and that is the sacred. Everything that we do, we are to do for God’s honor and God’s glory.

Then, secondly, we looked at the sovereignty of God and the subjects of wealth. I pointed out 1 Samuel 2, verses 7 and 8, where he said it is God who lifteth up one and taketh down another. It is God who makes rich, and it is God who makes poor. God is absolutely sovereign in the distribution of His gifts and blessings.

But God usually channels His blessings. The door of God’s blessing usually swings upon two hinges. The first is covenantal obedience, and the second is individual responsibility. We are responsible to obey the Word of God and, at the same time, fulfill our individual responsibilities. Laziness and indolence are sins; they are wicked and ungodly.

Usually, God gives those blessings upon the hinges of covenantal obedience and individual responsibility. The Bible contains general promises and general principles, and these rest upon God's absolute sovereignty. It is true that you could be covenantally obedient and individually responsible and never have wealth. That falls back upon God's absolute sovereignty: He gives as He pleases, based upon His infinite wisdom. Usually speaking, however, if we use the means God has ordained, follow His Word, and obey Him, God usually blesses in some way like that.

The Purpose of Wealth: To Establish God's Covenant

Now the question is this: What is the purpose of wealth? If God graciously and sovereignly bestows wealth upon us as we obey His law, fulfill our covenantal obligations, and remain individually responsible, what in the world are we to do with that wealth? Should we waste it, abuse it, or misuse it? Should we simply lavish it upon ourselves? In order to answer that question correctly, we must understand the purpose of wealth.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 7:9-15 (KJV)

> Now, it is true that it is God who gives us power to get wealth. But what is His purpose in allowing us to have that wealth? Why does He graciously bestow that wealth upon us? The answer is very simple. God does not give us that wealth because of our merits or because of our worthiness. Verse 18 says, "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." Why? "That he may establish his covenant, which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day." The purpose in wealth is to establish God's covenant.
>
> Someone may say, "Brother Weaver, you've got to understand that this promise was given to Abraham and his descendants." Yes. But look at Deuteronomy chapter 7, beginning with verse 9:

The Covenant Promise and Its Fulfillment in Christ

> "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

> and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: and he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people. There shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee."
>
> Verse 9 says, "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments..." How long? "...to a thousand generations."

Now, let me go a little bit further. If you say, “But Brother Weaver, still, all of this is Abraham and his seed,” I will concur with you. But you have to understand who the real, true, genuine seed of Abraham really is. Galatians 3:16 says, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Who is the true seed of Abraham? The answer is Jesus Christ.

Do you remember what our Lord said in John 8? “Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” Why? Because Jesus Christ is the true seed of Abraham. Galatians 3:29 says, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” If you belong to Christ, then in Him you are Abraham’s seed and also heirs according to the promise. Everything that God promised to Abraham was basically promised to Jesus Christ. If we are in Jesus Christ, then, of course, we are heirs according to all of those promises.

Now, if these verses are insufficient, may I remind you of Deuteronomy 8:18? It says, “But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.” The interesting thing is this: the phrase “sware unto thy fathers” occurs nine times in the Old Testament. It occurs in Exodus 13:5; Deuteronomy 6:10 and 18; Deuteronomy 7:12 and 13; Deuteronomy 8:18; Deuteronomy 9:5; Deuteronomy 28:11; and Deuteronomy 30:20. Each of the nine occurrences of the phrase “which he sware unto thy fathers” is found in the book of Deuteronomy, except for the one in the book of Exodus. Nine times it occurs in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is considered the fulfillment of the promise when it is said, “which he sware unto the fathers.” Acts 3:22 says: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Jesus Christ is here the fulfillment of the promise made to the fathers.

Acts 5:30 says: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

Romans 9:5 makes this clear: “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Note that phrase, “Whose are the fathers?” All of these promises were given to the fathers, out of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came; that is, Christ came through them, who is over all, God blessed for ever.

Romans 15:8 says: “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promises made unto the fathers. He is the true covenantal fulfillment. In Him we have salvation. In Him we have a home. In Him we have a land. In Him we have everything that we need, for He is our all and in all.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 1:26-28 (KJV)

Now, if you understand that, you may with confidence then look at the purpose of wealth. Go back in your Bibles to the book of Genesis chapter 1, and let’s begin by reading verses 26 through 28. Notice Genesis 1 verse 26:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

The Dominion Mandate in Genesis

Now let me ask you a question. What was man's first responsibility under God? What was man's first responsibility under God? Well, according to Genesis 1, verses 26 through 28, it was to fulfill God's dominion charter. Now, this charter is sometimes referred to as the dominion mandate, the cultural mandate, or the great charter. So Genesis 1, 26 through 28 is called the cultural mandate, the dominion charter, or the dominion mandate, or the great charter.

Whichever name you use, it speaks of the same revealed truth. I will probably use the terms interchangeably today. However, I will be speaking more probably using the term cultural mandate or dominion mandate. Now let me define my terms. Let me define, first of all, the word culture. The word culture literally means to educate, to refine, to cultivate. Sometimes this word is used in reference to the cultivation of plants and animals, especially with a view of

improving them. Sometimes the word is used in the training, improvement, and refinement of the mind, of morals,

of taste, of society, or education, or any sphere whatsoever. The word mandate refers then to an authoritative requirement, a command, an order, or a charge. So when you talk about a cultural mandate, you're talking about a charge, an order, a command that God has given in reference to culture, the totality of culture, or the totality of dominion. Now, the cultural or dominion mandate, then, refers simply to this: It refers to covenantal man's responsibility to subdue the earth and to exercise dominion over that earth under God.

Now look in your Bibles to Genesis 2 and verse 16. The Bible says, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying..."

The Nature and Scope of the Dominion Mandate

Now the Hebrew word for commanded literally means to put under an oath or to put under charge. That means this, that Adam was put under a covenant on which he gave his word. So Adam then was covenantally bound, he was covenantally responsible to obey God. God had given him the obligation to subdue the earth, to exercise a godly dominion or a godly culture over the earth. Now listen carefully. Adam did not have the authority to abuse, misuse, destroy, hinder, or thwart, or pervert God's creation. He had the authority to use the earth on God's terms. He did not have the authority to misuse the earth.

It is important that you understand that sovereignty and ownership are intertwined. They go together. What did he say in Psalm 24:1? “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Why does the earth and everything in it belong to God? Because he is the creator of it. He is the owner of it. Consequently, he is sovereign over it. Therefore, God has the absolute right to tell man how man can use his earth, what man may do, and what man may not do.

God gave Adam dominion over the earth, over everything in the earth. When God created Adam, he created him to be his vicegerent, or, to use a term with which we are more familiar, his vice president.

In other words, as God's vice president, Adam was responsible and accountable to rule under God. The very first words Adam heard from God were these: "Have dominion."

That is what he said in Genesis 1:26: "Have dominion." You have dominion over the earth; you have dominion over everything. I hope you understand that I am talking about the purpose of wealth. The purpose of wealth, initially and originally, is to carry out God's cultural mandate, or God's dominion mandate.

You may say, "Brother Weaver, I don't understand how important culture is." Let me explain the importance of culture in a simple sentence: culture is merely religion externalized. That is all culture is. A culture is distinctive when it is based upon a distinctive religion.

Why are there so many different cultures in the world—the African culture, the Oriental culture, and the Indian culture? Cultures are different because religions are different. Your culture is nothing more than the outworking of your religion, or the lack thereof.

We have had in the South a distinctive Southern culture. Why do we have a Southern culture rather than a Northern, Eastern, or Western culture? Because the South was the Bible Belt and was based basically upon Biblical Christianity. Our Southern culture was far more Christian than that of the North, the East, or the West.

The more we exercise a Christian worldview, the more our culture will become Christian. The less we exercise a Christian worldview, the more our culture will become pagan. Culture is vitally important. You cannot have a change in culture without a change in theology. In actuality, it is your change in theology that precedes a change in culture.

When I was a boy, you did not have the open promoting of sodomy. Why did our culture change? Because we changed theology. We dropped the Word of God. Every cultural change is preceded by a theological change.

The most basic truth is that God Himself is the source of all culture. He created the world. He issued the cultural mandate. He created man as a dominion-oriented creature, and He placed everything under man's hands. Thus, all culture is ultimately the

handiwork of God, even though it is done through the agency of man.

This cultural mandate was reissued to Noah and his sons after the flood. Genesis 9:1 says, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

That is the same thing God told Adam and Eve. Verse 2 says, "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." God says, "I've given everything into your hands."

This dominion, or cultural mandate, is repeated in Psalm 8. Look at the latter part of this brief Psalm, beginning with verse 4:

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

By the way, do you realize that the trade routes in the ocean were discovered by a Christian man, Matthew Fontaine Maury? How were those routes discovered? Maury was reading Scripture and read, “and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” He said, “If God says there’s paths in the sea, then there’s paths in the sea.” He discovered the ocean currents and the trade routes that moved ships far more quickly than simply trying to sail anywhere else.

This is an exercise of dominion. This is exactly what I am talking about. Matthew Fontaine Maury, who also was a Confederate, discovered the paths in the ocean.

I want to deal with this later, but understand that the Great Commission, whether we realize it or not, is also an aspect of the cultural, or dominion, mandate.

The Fall and Its Effects on Culture

Look in Genesis chapter 1, beginning with verse 26. Here we have the dominion mandate: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Think of the cultural implications in the first command to exercise dominion.

Adam was to subdue the earth. That was an agricultural task, Genesis 1:28 and 2:15. He was to cultivate the friendship of his wife. That was a socio-cultural task, Genesis 2:18, 23 and 24. He was to tend to the plants and flowers. That was a horticultural task, Genesis 1:29 through 30 and 2:15. He was to cultivate bees and horses, an apicultural and equicultural task. He was to cultivate himself, a physical cultural and vocal cultural task.

Moreover, he was to rest on the Sabbath day, a liturgical cultural task. Everything Adam did had significance to culture. He was to take created nature and turn it into a culture that would glorify and honor his Creator. That was his commission and task.

Instead of obedience, Adam and Eve endeavored to evade the tasks assigned by God. They violated God's law, endeavoring to become a law unto themselves—or, as the serpent's temptation put it, to become gods themselves. So what happened? Man fell, according to Genesis 3, from his original state of purity, holiness, righteousness, and knowledge.

Here is one of the problems we face today: everything has been perverted by the fall. Whether one is speaking of a pagan culture or a Christian culture, there will not be a perfect Christian culture today, because it has been tainted by the fall.

That does not mean we cannot come close or that we should not strive and work toward that end, but we must understand that there

will never be perfection until our Lord returns. This is what I mean when I say that even in a Christian culture, it is not perfect. You know what the Bible says in Proverbs 21:4? “Even the plowing of the wicked is sin.” Isn’t that amazing?

God requires a man to earn his living by the sweat of his brow. Then man goes out and plows, and God says it is sin. Why? Is he not exercising culture? Yes, but he is not doing it for God’s honor and glory. When the wicked do not plow in faith, it is sin. What does the Bible say in Romans 14:23? “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” That means when you and I, as Christians, try to do something but do not do it in faith, it is still sin.

That is why you are not going to have perfection. At the same time, you must understand that Adam was required to subdue the earth. He was required to exercise a godly dominion and bring everything into obedience and submission to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” God planted the garden eastward in Eden, so the garden was only a little part of it. “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

Remember that Adam was created with original righteousness, knowledge, and holiness. God put him in this garden to dress it and keep it. Have you ever asked yourself what would have happened if Adam and Eve had not sinned, if they had obeyed God? There would not have been any sin or death, and every descendant of Adam and Eve would be alive on this earth today. If Adam had not sinned, where would the blessing of God upon Adam and Eve and their progeny be today? Where would He put them all? Stop and think about every individual who has ever been born and lived still being alive today.

Where would those people be? Now, I’ll tell you what I think—and I’m underlining think—I believe that Eden was nothing less than a laboratory experiment. If Adam had succeeded and obeyed God, I believe his descendants would have gone out from him and cultivated the entire world. And if that would be too little, then the

entire universe. But Adam sinned. Adam fell. He didn't like to be vice president; he wanted to be president.

Before I go any further, I want to stress several points that are vitally important. First of all, there was work before the fall. Adam had to keep the garden and dress it. Naturally, it was not attended with the sweat, blood, and tears that we think of today, nor the drudgery we associate with it, but it was still work. Work is not a result of sin.

Had Adam and Eve not sinned, we would not simply be lying around in a hammock, having grapes dropped in our mouths, being swung back and forth, and doing nothing all day long. We would still be working, but there would be no drudgery, sweat, blood, or tears. Work was before the fall; it was ordered and commanded by God.

Secondly, sin and laziness are not only in direct contradiction to God's command; they are also in direct contradiction to our created nature. God created man to work and to be dominion-oriented. Thus, those who hate work basically hate and destroy themselves, just as a welfare mentality destroys not only culture but society.

Thirdly, disobedience to God does not bring relief or freedom. What was the temptation? "Ye shall be as gods, knowing"—that is, determining for yourself—"right and wrong." You can get rid of this bondage; you do not need to be vice president; you can be president. Disobedience never brings liberty or freedom. All it brings is bondage and suffering. Look in Genesis three and verse 17.

After man fell, he still had to work, but God said in Genesis 3:17, "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; and in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The drudgery, heartache, sweat, blood, and tears that now attend work are a result of the fall. But work was not a result of the fall.

Had Adam and Eve not sinned, you would not have to weed your garden; it would take care of itself. You would not have to add herbicides, pesticides, chemicals, and all that kind of junk that fouls up your system and destroys your body. All of that is a result of our sin against God. Whenever we want relief from trouble and problems, the easiest route is always obedience to God.

God created man in the garden and gave him a task: "You exercise dominion. You cultivate this earth. You bring everything into obedience to me." Adam sinned and fell, so God drove him out of the garden and placed cherubims there with flaming swords to keep him from coming back in. He left us in a state of misery and wretchedness.

Is that the end of the story? Thankfully, the answer is no. In His grace and mercy, God sent another man, the last Adam.

Restoration in Christ, the Last Adam

In First Corinthians 15, beginning with verse 45, there are two terms that we should see in relationship to this truth. We read: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Note in verse 45 that Jesus Christ is called the last Adam. Also, in verse 47, Jesus Christ is called the second man: "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."

Before explaining the significance of these terms, consider this question: Do you realize that there is a comparison and a contrast between the first Adam and the last Adam in Romans chapter 5? In Romans chapter 5 we have the failure of the first Adam and the success of the last Adam. You have the disobedience of the first Adam in Romans chapter 5 and the victory of the last Adam in Romans chapter 5. That will be considered further.

Why is Christ, in verse 47, called the second man? Very obviously, chronologically speaking, He could not be the second man, because once God created Adam, until Christ came, there were millions who lived between the two of them. So how can Christ be called the second man?

Christ is called the second man because He is the second man in time who sustained a federal headship and relationship with the people. In that sense, He was the second man. There are only two men who ever lived who had a federal headship and a federal relationship with the people. The first one was the first Adam, and the second one is the second man, the last Adam, Jesus Christ. This is what is meant by a federal headship and relationship.

Romans 5:12 gives us a contrast between the first Adam and the second Adam: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Note what it says: "Wherefore, as by one man"—just one man—"sin entered into the world." What was the result? "And death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." Why? "For that all have sinned." When did all sin? All of us sinned in Adam once and for all. Why? He was our federal representative; he was our head. What he did, we did.

When he fell, we fell. When he sinned, we sinned. That means you and I are not only sinners by nature or by choice; we are also sinners by imputation. His sin was charged to the account of his posterity. You say, "Brother Weaver, had I been in that garden, I would have never sinned." Yes, you would have. You would have done exactly what Adam did. You were in him. What he did, you did, and it was imputed to your account; it was charged to your account.

You say, "But I don't like that." If you don't like that, then you don't like salvation, because that is exactly why Christ is called the second man. Jesus Christ came in the same position as a federal head and federal representative of his people.

Romans 6:4-5 says, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

Ephesians 2:5-7 says, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

In Christ, we were crucified with him, died with him, buried with him, raised from the dead with him, and are now seated at the right hand of God in him. Why? Because he is our federal head and our federal representative. What he did, we did.

The reformer Martin Luther said it like this: "There are only two men: Adam and Christ. And everyone hangs from their girdles." You are either in Adam and lost as a hound dog, or you are in Christ and saved, sanctified, and on your way to being glorified. The first Adam failed, but the second man, the last Adam, succeeds. In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Christ is called not only the second man but also the last Adam, because he is the last one to sustain a federal headship and a federal relationship with a people. There will never, ever be another Adam. There was the first Adam; there is the second man, Christ, who is also called the last Adam.

If you are not saved by Jesus Christ, you never will be saved. If you do not like his salvation, there is no reason to wait for another. There will never be another salvation or another Savior. That is why, in Acts 4:12, the apostle Peter said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." It is Christ or nothing. He is the last Adam. There is no other salvation in anyone else.

Did we lose more in the first Adam than we gained in the last Adam? Would we have been better off if Adam had never sinned, or will we be better off since he sinned and Christ has come? Very obviously, we are better off because he sinned and Christ has come.

Colossians 1:18 says, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Did you hear that? In all things, Jesus Christ must have the preeminence. Jesus Christ is the

God-man par excellence. Adam, a mere man, could never have the preeminence because Jesus Christ is perfect man and perfect God. He is the God-man.

Now, what did Jesus Christ do for us? Look at Psalm 69:4: “They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.” This verse is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament in John 15:25. I am not asking you to turn there, but notice the latter part of verse 4, where Christ says, “then I restored that which I took not away.”

What does it mean that Christ restored that which he did not take away? In order to answer that question, you must ask, What did we have in Adam originally? In Adam, we had original knowledge and holiness and righteousness and dominion. It is true that Adam did walk with God. He did have knowledge. He was also created with original righteousness and holiness, and God gave him a dominion mandate.

Now the question is, What did Christ restore for us? What did we lose in Adam? First of all, we lost knowledge. Look, first of all, to the book of Ephesians, chapter 4, and the book of Colossians, chapter 3. We had knowledge in Adam, but we lost it in the fall. Now what happens? Everyone knows and can quote this verse, Second Timothy 3:16 and 17.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God"—that is, God-breathed, theopneustos, exhaled. All scripture is exhaled out of the mouth of God—"and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." The Bible is the word of God. It is knowledge. Now listen to John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Verse 14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Adam had knowledge. But in Christ, we have knowledge and wisdom incarnate. We have the total revelation of God in Jesus

Christ. What does Christ restore for us? Ephesians 4:21 says, "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:"—"that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Colossians 3:10 says, "and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

What do we get back in Christ? We get back not just the knowledge that Adam had, but far more than that, because we get the full and final revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

You say, "But Brother Weaver, you don't understand. We had original righteousness and holiness in Adam." That's true. Ephesians 4:24 says, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

In Jesus Christ, we have a righteousness and a holiness that far surpasses that which Adam had. Adam's holiness and righteousness were mutable, meaning changeable. Adam could sin, and he did sin, and he lost his original righteousness and holiness. Our righteousness and holiness are immutable, unchangeable. Why? Because they are in Jesus Christ and not in us. Moreover, they are absolute perfection, for they are God Himself. In Christ, He not only restores our knowledge; He restores our righteousness and our holiness.

But you say, "Adam had dominion." Matthew 28:18 says, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power

“All authority, all jurisdiction, all power, all authority, all jurisdiction is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” The word for power is exousia. We now have all authority in heaven and earth in Jesus Christ.

Adam may have had dominion and authority in the garden, perhaps even authority over the earth, but he did not have all authority in heaven and earth. We now have in Christ a complete

and total worldly dominion. The Great Commission simply expands the cultural mandate, or dominion mandate, of Genesis 1:26–28.

The Great Commission as the Expanded Dominion Mandate

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In other words, our commission is to teach the whole counsel of God, the total revealed Word of God, to the entire world. The Great Commission reaches all nations. It demonstrates God's total, absolute sovereignty, which Christ now exercises, because one cannot issue mandates or send ambassadors into other countries without authority to do so. Christ has all authority.

Do you know where we have messed up as Christians? Do you know why today we are so absolutely anemic? Most of us have interpreted the Great Commission simply as a commission to win souls. That is not what the Great Commission is about. Once someone is converted to Christ, that is only a first step. He said, "You teach them to observe everything that I've commanded." What has He commanded? The entire Word of God.

We see someone converted to Christ and say, "We're happy; let's go on our way." We never teach them, instruct them, build them up, or tell them, "Look, there's a whole world to conquer and bring in submission to Jesus Christ." I have a book. Some of you would like to read it. I would be glad for you to read it. It is a wonderful little book.

Francis Nigel Lee wrote The Central Significance of Culture. I read it years ago, and it made a great impact upon me. Here are several paragraphs from that book:

"All men are to be engaged in cultural activity, for all men are covenantally obliged to obey God's commands to Adam. It has been stated above that the Adamic covenant of cultural works was made with all of Adam's future descendants, no less than it was made with Adam himself. For in Adam as its federal head and legal representative, all mankind is obligated to keep and execute this covenant. Indeed, Adam could never fulfill the covenant by discharging all those cultural tasks by himself alone.

“He needed a humanity to help him do so. Although these tasks sound easy by virtue of the simplicity with which they are described in Genesis, in actual fact they embrace every possible aspect of all human endeavor. Adam's own agricultural task began by cultivating the Garden of Eden in its simplicity. Yet in Adam, as its federal head, all mankind was required to develop every acre and subdue the entire earth. Adam's own nautical task commenced with asserting his authority over a few fish, but mankind was and is ultimately destined to achieve total dominion over all the world's oceans, to become king of its seas in all their fullness. Adam's engineering tasks were originally to collect gold, bdellium, and onyx stone, but under mankind this was to develop into gigantic mines, factories, and automobiles throughout the world. Man's military task was initially to keep the garden, that is, to guard it against the intrusion of sin and the devil.

“But after the advent of sin, this task was ultimately to embrace all the armies of soldiers, doctors, and policemen throughout all the ages of the entire world, guarding the interests of mankind and fighting against the consequences of sin and the works of the devil. The unfolding of the world's culture is thus the task of all humanity by virtue of all humanity's involvement in the Adamic covenant of works. In the command to have dominion over the land, we are commissioned to operate tractors, trucks, and automobiles. In the command to have dominion over the air, we find the germ of all aeronautics: airplanes, rockets, Sputnik satellites. In the command to have dominion over the sea, we are enjoined to construct great ocean liners, bathyscaphes, and submarines and to form the ocean beds. In the command to have dominion over the cattle and the beasts of the field, or the earth, we have the blueprint of all cattle ranching, sheep farming, and livestock husbandry.”

The command to exploit the creeping thing naturally includes the silkworm and the rock lobster, and hence points to the development of the rock lobster trade and the silk industry. In reference to man's task of giving names to all the animals, we find the germ of all natural sciences as represented by zoology. Truly, Adam could never undertake all these tasks alone, and neither was this expected of him. When God made the covenant of works with Adam, he made it with all of his descendants as well. This is one of the chief reasons

why God commanded man to multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it. Adam could never subdue it alone. Only by multiplying could man subdue the earth, namely, subdue it in and through his descendants. So God committed these tremendous tasks of developing the world's culture to all mankind: to every scientist, every farmer, every technician, every teacher, every housewife, every one of us.

The Inescapability of Culture and the Role of Wealth

All of us are involved in culture. We have a culture; we cannot escape it. The question is, what kind of culture will we have? Will we have a Christian culture or a pagan culture? Why is it that God gives wealth, blessings, and intellect? Why are some men doctors and others engineers? Why are some men preachers and others housewives? Why are some individuals economists? God gives different talents and different blessings because every one of us is to engage in a dominion aspect of cultivating and bringing all culture into submission to the Word of God, for the honor and glory of God, in whatever field He has given us.

Wealth is needed and necessary to accomplish those tasks. Cornelius Van Til, one of the greatest thinkers in times past, defined culture in this way: “Culture, then, is any and all human effort and labor expended upon the cosmos, that is on the world, to unearth its treasures and its riches and bring them into the service of man for the enrichment of human existence unto the glory of God.”

“Whatsoever ye do, in word and deed, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the honor and glory of God.” The church’s mission is not merely to win souls. That is an aspect of it. The church’s mission is to glorify Jesus Christ in everything. We have limited our mission, narrowing it down. If you wanted your mule to plow straight, you put blinders on it.

That is what has happened to most Christians. They have blinders; all they can see is through one little tunnel. They have tunnel vision and do not even know that the entire world is out there to be conquered and brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Why does God give us wealth? We can enjoy some of it, and we lay up an inheritance for our children and our children’s children. That

is biblical. But first and foremost, it is so that we can bring His covenant to pass and conquer through Him and for Him, to whom belongs glory both now and forever.

Let us pray. Father, speak to our hearts. Help us, Lord, to understand that Thou hast given us a mandate to subdue, exercise dominion, and bring everything into conformity to Your Word. Enable us, Lord, to live for Thee and accomplish this in some measure. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Biblical Wealth

Part Four of Eight

Introduction and Review

Malachi chapter 3, verse 7: “Even from the days of your fathers you are gone away from mine ordinances and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But you said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet have you robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, for you shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.”

By way of review, in the first message we looked at the sovereignty and the source of wealth. In Deuteronomy 8, the Word of God says it is the Lord thy God who gives the power to get wealth. All wealth ultimately is from God and God alone. We also considered how the idea of a secular sphere and a sacred sphere came from the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. For the child of God, however, there is no division between the secular and the sacred; everything is sacred. Whatever you do in word or deed, whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, you do it all to the honor and the glory of God.

Secondly, we looked at the sovereignty of God and the subjects of wealth. First Samuel 2, verse 7, says that it is God who maketh rich and who maketh poor. It is God that lifts up a beggar out of the dunghill. Although God is absolutely, totally sovereign, He has the right to dispense His gifts and blessings as He pleases. He gives us two general principles upon which His blessings usually hinge: covenantal obedience and individual responsibility.

The Theology of the Tithes

It is true that we may be covenantally obedient, fulfill our responsibilities as we should, and yet not have wealth. In that case, we bow to God's sovereignty and say that it is His will. Usually, however, when God does give wealth, He does so as we are covenantally obedient and as we are fulfilling our individual responsibility.

Last week, we looked at the purpose of wealth from Deuteronomy 8:18: that we may fulfill His covenant. I went back and showed you from Genesis 1 the dominion mandate, that great covenant, charter, or cultural mandate, where God demanded that we conquer and exercise dominion in this world for His honor and His glory. I showed you where the first Adam failed, but then God sent a last Adam, a second man who sustained a federal headship and a federal representation. In Christ we succeeded. In Christ there is victory.

Therefore, in Christ we are sent into all nations, preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God and demanding that men bow their knee to Jesus Christ, who is indeed Lord of all. You remember the Bible says in 1 Peter 3:18 that Christ died, the just for the unjust. Why? That He might bring us back to God. In the garden, man ran

from God. Now, in Christ, we are brought back to God in order that we might obey Him. The purpose of wealth, then, is that we might fulfill the covenant which God swear unto the fathers. That covenant has its final fruition and final fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ expanded that dominion mandate in the Great Commission.

Today we are going to talk about the theology of the tithes. This is still biblical wealth, but biblical wealth number four: the theology of the tithes. It is impossible to talk about biblical wealth apart from a full discussion on the subject of the tithes.

The Tithes Belong to the Lord

Apparently, the tithes and the act of tithing are misunderstood by the vast majority of professing Christians. I can assure you that a few earnest believers understand the importance of the tithes. Many of you have seen and read the bumper sticker that simply says, "Honk if you love Jesus." Someone came out with an answer to that asinine bumper sticker: "Tithe if you love Jesus; anybody can honk." At least someone grasped that there was more to loving the Lord than simply honking a horn. Notice that I have used the word tithes, the plural of tithe. The reason is that there is, in actuality, more than one tithe in the Bible.

In Malachi 3:8, that question is asked: "Will a man rob God? Yet have you robbed me. But you say, Where have we robbed thee?" The answer is, "In tithes," plural, "and offerings." Then, in verse 10, God says, "Bring you all the tithes," plural, "into the storehouse."

I am sure that the average Christian knows he is responsible to tithe, but most Christians do not know that there is more than one tithe. They could not name the tithes, nor could they discuss the importance of the tithes. Since this is an introductory message on the theology of the tithes, I want to make one principle exceedingly clear at the very beginning: The tithes belong unto the Lord.

You are going to hear me repeat this several times during this message and probably in the next one or two messages that follow. Although the tithes may be given to men, used by men, or administered through the instrumentality of men, they are foundationally the property of God Himself. I will deal with this

thought more probably in the last message of this series, but I want you to understand that the tithes do not belong to men, nor do they belong to the church; they belong to God.

I can prove that in one verse, although I will show you more. In Malachi 3:8, the question is not, "Will a man rob the church? Will a man rob the preacher?" No. It is, "Will a man rob God?" Then they ask, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" And He answers, "In tithes and in offerings." Tithes, therefore, preeminently belong to God. They are the property of God Himself.

Moreover, the Scripture emphatically declares this. Leviticus 27:30 says, "And all the tithe of the land, whether the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." All of the tithe of the land, whether the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. Whatever tithes there are, whatever tithes exist, they belong to God exclusively.

Second Kings 4:42 says, “And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits,” that is, tithes, “twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof.” And Elisha said, “Give unto the people, that they may eat.”

A very important truth is taught in this passage. If you look in verse 38, the Bible says, “And Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him. And he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.” Elisha came to Gilgal. Where was Gilgal? It was not very far from Jericho. Who was it that brought these tithes to Elisha? According to verse 42, it was a man from Baal-shalisha.

What is significant about this incident? Baal-shalisha literally means “Lord of Shalisha,” and it was usually in the foothills of Ephraim. What is significant about that? Ephraim was one of the northern tribes, not one of the southern tribes. Ephraim, along with the other northern tribes, had apostatized, and they had set up the golden calves in Dan and in Bethel.

When one grasps this simple fact—that the tithes belonged to the Lord—he understands why this man traveled from Baal-shalisha and

brought those tithes to Elisha in Gilgal. Why? He was refusing to give his tithes to an apostate priesthood that would further an apostate worship. He traveled on foot, in all probability, or at least on a donkey of some kind, to make sure that his tithes were given to the man of God and to the ministry that the man of God had. What ministry did Elisha have? Everybody knows that Elisha was a prophet.

But go back to verse 38: “And Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him.” What in the world is he talking about—the sons of the prophets? Elisha had a school for the prophets, what you and I would call a Bible institute or a Bible college.

And you know how many students he had? We'll skip down to verse 43. "And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men?" So there were approximately a hundred students that Elisha had. And Elisha, the man of God, was teaching these young preachers to be men of God and to be prophets of God. So, very obviously, this man then came to make sure that a man who believed the Word of God, who stood for God, had the tithes and used them in the ministry of God.

Now, if you understand this principle, then you understand that the tithe is the Lord's, and it cannot be given to the enemies of God. It must be given to God for the furtherance of His truth, His honor, His kingdom, and His people. The tithes do not belong to the church. They do not belong to the producer. They belong to God. And the tithes cannot be given to an apostate church without being given against God and not unto God. Therefore, the tithes must be given to holy, godly causes.

Now, the priests and the Levites, to whom one of the tithes was originally given, had charge not only of religion, but education and various other functions that we're going to discover as we get into this teaching later on. Now, before I proceed, I want to point out a relationship that exists between the tithes and biblical wealth.

Abraham's Example of Tithing

Now it is true that Malachi chapter 3, and I'll cover this later, that it is not just a personal blessing, but a national blessing. But you've got to remember this, that nations are made up of individuals. And God cannot bless a nation without blessing individuals who are in that nation. So look in your Bibles, if you would please, at Genesis chapter 14. And let's begin reading there with verse 12. Genesis 14 and verse 12.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 14:12-24 (KJV)

> You remember that Lot has been taken captive by these kings who have attacked Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 14, verse 12: "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants," or trained slaves, which is actually the word, "born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan." Now, I want you to note how great Abram really was, for he had 318 trained fighting men who were born in his own house. I told you earlier probably Abram had a household of at least 2,000 people. 318 born in his own house. "And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus."
>
> "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he," that is, Melchizedek, "blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he," Abram, "gave him," Melchizedek, "tithes of all.

> And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made"

"Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Melchizedek, God's priest, came to meet him. There are a number of passages in which Melchizedek comes into play. Hebrews chapter 7, beginning with verse 1, speaks of him and Abraham tithing to him: "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham."

Hebrews goes on to show how Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek because Levi was yet in the loins of Abraham. The point is that Abraham gave him tithes of all. Why did Abraham refuse the offer of the king? The king said, "You just give me the people and you take all the goods for yourself."

There had been a number of kings who came together to defeat Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, so evidently there was a great, huge spoil. Abraham said, "I refuse to take even from a thread to a shoelatchet," lest the king say that he made Abram rich. It was not the king of Sodom that made Abram rich. It was the Lord God of heaven and earth. God had sovereignly blessed Abraham and providentially protected him; He had given him everything that he

had. Therefore Abram tithed all to Melchizedek. The tithe is a recognition of God's sovereignty, His Lordship, and His providence. Everything Abraham was and everything he had was from God Himself.

In Malachi chapter 1, verse 6, God questions the people: “A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?” If God is a father, where is His honor? If He is a master, where is His fear? Where is His recognition?

When you dishonor God and do not recognize His sovereignty, lordship, and providence, you do not tithe. When you tithe, it is indeed an honoring of the Lord and a recognition of this simple truth. I am not going to get into the tithes today; I will do that next week. But to understand the importance of the tithes, you must distinguish between what I will simply call the civil tax and the tithes. There was a civil tax, and the civil tax was supposed to support the civil order.

Distinction Between Civil Tax and Tithes

It was to be the same for each man, whether rich or poor. In Exodus chapter 30, beginning with verse 11, we read: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. Now watch. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the

tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before”

"The Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." Now let me point something out. This head tax, this poll tax, was the same for each individual. It did not matter if you were rich or poor. Why? Because everyone has the same interest in justice. This civil tax supported not only the court system, but the militia system as well. In other words, it was solely for the protection of the people and rendering justice. Here was an equal amount paid by poor and rich alike, because everyone had the same interest in justice. The Levites were not just teachers and educators; they were also judges. And so they took this civil tax.

Consequences of Rejecting God's Rule

What happens when men reject the rule of God? Israel demanded a king that they might be like other nations. In 1 Samuel, chapter 8, beginning in verse 11, God says, "All right, you want a king? I'm going to let you have it. But Samuel is going to tell you what manner of king you have." And he said, "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. And he will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants."

The price for rejecting God and God's law and God's rule is exceedingly high. You are going to have a civil government that is despotic, tyrannical, bureaucratic, and purely thieving. The tithes

were to support not only the ecclesiastical realm, but the entire fabric of the social order.

Many people do not realize that in early America, the civil governments demanded tithing. They did not control the tithe, but they did demand it. R. J. Rushdoony, in his book Tithing and Dominion, gives this historical review: "When America was colonized, the settlers in every colony made biblical law their basic law."

He continues: "There was no tax on property. This was basic to biblical liberty. The inscription on the Liberty Bell is taken from the biblical land law, ‘Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof,’ Leviticus 25:10. In the first session of the Continental Congress in 1774, Congress denied that Parliament could tax real property."

In 1774, Congress denied Parliament the power to tax real property. Gottfried Dietze summarized the American opinion concerning property at that time: "the delegates felt it should be free from seizure and taxation."

During the First American War for Independence in 1776, the Americans tried to persuade the Canadians to join them in fighting the British. One argument was, "If we don't stop it, the next thing you know, they'll be trying to tax our property." I imagine now the Canadians wish they had joined with us, but that is all right.

Rushdoony tells us where the property tax came in: "The property tax came in very slowly, and it appeared first in New England, coinciding with the spread of deism and Unitarianism, as well as atheism. Such anti-Christian men saw the state as man's savior, and as a result, they favored placing more and more power in the hands of the state. The South was the last area to accept the property tax, and it was largely forced on the South by post-Civil War reconstruction. Moreover, as far as possible, when the property tax was adopted in the pre-Civil War era, conservative elements limited it to the county and retained the legal requirements that only owners of real property could vote at the county level."

It is grievous to think that someone entrusted with a stewardship of property can be told by people who have no property what to do

with the property God has given him, including what he can and cannot pay on it. Yet when property tax originated, property owners were the only ones who could vote at the county level.

Rushdoony says, “Today the property tax is in effect a rent for the use of our own land. The state has the power of confiscation for nonpayment and also the right of eminent domain. This is, in terms of the Bible, a mark of tyranny, as both the law and the story of Naboth’s vineyard makes clear.” The tithe, he says, “is God’s tax for the use of His earth.” It is not a gift to God; only when giving exceeds the tithe is it called a gift or offering. The tithe is required of all men by God. Failure to pay it brings God’s curse, while yielding God His due results in so great a blessing that there should be not room enough to receive it, according to Malachi chapter 3. The tithe was used for a variety of purposes.

It supported Israel’s religious and educational institutions, as well as those of colonial and early America. In the United States, the tithe was legally binding on all men for many years, and failure to pay it was a civil offense. It supported churches, Christian schools, and colleges. When Virginia repealed its law making payment mandatory, George Washington expressed his disapproval in a letter to George Mason on October 3, 1785. He stated that he believed in making people pay toward the support of that which they profess.

It is remarkable that, when our country was founded, each colony adopted biblical law and demanded that people tithe. The state did not receive the tithe; rather, the colonies declared that if we are a Christian people, this is what we should do.

The History of the Tithes

You will find out later what all these tithes did. For now, I am showing that when we reject God's law, the only substitute is man's law. When we reject God's kingdom, it is only for the implementation of man's kingdom.

John R. Richardson has written a book entitled Christian Economics, in which he summarized the history of the tithes under eight points. I added a ninth point. If you grasp this little outline, you can study the tithes yourself.

Historical Summary of the Tithes

First, God originated the tithes. They did not originate with man, the church, or the preacher. I am not taking time now to go over all the Scriptures proving every point; I am simply giving you the points. God originated the tithes. Secondly, Abraham embraced the tithes. We just read that in Genesis chapter 14: Abraham gave tithes of all. Thirdly, Jacob continued the tithes. You remember?

Jacob said, "Lord, if you bless me, I will give you a portion of all that you give me." So Jacob continued the tithes.

Fourthly, Moses incorporated the tithes. The tithes existed before the Mosaic law: God originated the tithes, Abraham embraced the tithes, Jacob continued the tithes, Moses incorporated the tithes, and Nehemiah restored the tithes. During the seventy-year captivity in Babylon, all of that fell into misuse and disuse; when Nehemiah returned, he restored the tithes.

Sixth, Malachi demands the tithes. Seventh, Christ commended the tithes. The only time I can recall that Christ ever commended the Pharisees was when He said to them in Matthew 23, "You tithe mint and anise and cummin, and these things ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Christ commended the tithes. Eighth, Paul explained the tithes. Ninth, the Pharisees perverted the tithes. Of course, they perverted everything. The gift without the giver is bare. In fact, the Apostle Paul said they first gave up themselves. It was the Pharisees who perverted it.

The Tithe as God's Tax and Its Social Implications

Rushdoony, in Institutes of Biblical Law, says, "Every crime is an offense against God's law order. But certain acts are in particular singled out as especially offensive. One of these is the failure to tithe, which is described as robbing God."

"Before analyzing the implications of that fact, let us review the basic laws in this area. The basic civil tax in Scripture, the only tax, is the poll or head tax, paid by every man 20 years of age and older." Exodus 30 describes it. "The same tax was assessed on all men. The rich shall not give more, the poor shall not give less. Why? All have the same stake in justice and therefore all pay the same tax. Second,

no man is allowed to tax his own future by means of debt. The length of debt is limited to six years," Deuteronomy 15. "No man has a right to mortgage his future since his life belongs to God. Thirdly, the tithe is required of all men."

The tithe is a tax for the use of God's earth. It is not only Christians who are obligated to tithe. We should be more than obligated because we have been redeemed, but ungodly, reprobate men breathe God's air, use God's earth, and benefit from it just as the godly do. Since the tithe is a tax, they are therefore required to honor the Lord and recognize the source of all blessing. As the Bible says in Proverbs 3, “Honour the Lord with the firstfruits of thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty.” The tithe was and is God's tax for the use of His earth.

The principle of first is very important in the Bible. God always demanded the first: the first of the sheep, the first of the oxen, the first of the grapes, and the first of the fruits. Why did God demand the first? Because the first is a percentage. When you give the first, it is a recognition that everything else came from Him as well. You are saying that you are dedicating the rest to God and recognizing that He gave it all to you.

Rushdoony writes, “If this be true”—that God demands every man to tithe and that the first is important—“why then is the failure to tithe held to be robbing God? The answer is very clear. Without the tithe, a totalitarian state progressively develops to play God over society. With the tithe, the rule of society is restored to God through His ordained tax.”

He continues: “A variety of agencies are created by the tithe to minister to the needs of godly society and to provide the needs of social finances. The tithe belongs neither to the church nor state. It belongs to God and is to be given by God's people to those who will administer it under God. The social consequences are ably described by Ewing.” Ewing writes, “If we were living in a theocracy with the divine constitution, the tithe would cover everything.”

If we were living under biblical law, the tithe would cover everything: justice, the army, and all other needs. At present, however, we are living under man-made governments. They collect

their own taxes, but the tithe still belongs to God: "Render therefore to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The extra tax exacted by government today is the penalty we pay for not accepting God's rule over us nationally. Israel was told of this very thing when she demanded a king to become like other nations, and he misappropriated the tithe.

"In view of the radical implications of the tithe for society, the failure of the church to teach its importance and meaning constitutes a form of robbing God as surely as does the failure to pay the tithe."

Illustration of Political Corruption

When churches fail to teach the importance of the tithe, that is equally robbing God as failing to pay it. Without the tithes, the need for social financing remains. If social financing is not carried out by Christians, it will be fulfilled by the state. The state will always exact far more than God ever demanded in the first place, because it is always a bureaucratic entity.

Consider some public charities. You can give a hundred dollars to one, and the poor may receive only one or two dollars; the rest is consumed by bureaucracy. Whenever there is a denial of God's program, there will always be tyranny, corruption, and misappropriation.

Everybody has probably heard of Boss Tweed, but I am not talking about him today. I am going to tell you about Thomas Joseph Pendergast, whom many have never heard of. Pendergast was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1873. He had nine brothers and sisters. In the 1890s, he worked in his brother's saloon in the West Bottoms. His older brother taught him about the city's political system and the advantages of controlling blocks of voters, as well as the advantage of controlling a lot of money.

Thomas Pendergast also controlled Kansas City as a businessman. He gave workers jobs, helped elect politicians, and the entire Kansas City machine made a profit that filled his pockets. What Pendergast did was very, very devious and very, very smart.

At that particular time, most professing Christians were regularly and faithfully paying the tithes. Pendergast saw an opportunity not

only to control more votes, but also to control more money. His political machine told the Christians, “Look, you’re paying ten and fifteen percent? Why, that’s ridiculous. You don’t have to pay that amount. We can just take a few bucks from each individual, and we’ll have a sufficiency. Just let everybody give a little.”

Income tax was not established until 1913, and the Social Security tax was not established until 1935. How in the world did America ever function socially and politically before 1913 and 1935? It functioned without debt, or without very much debt. What Pendergast was saying was, “We’re just going to tax everybody just a little, and we’re going to have enough.”

After his brother’s death, Pendergast began to rule the Democratic arena. Under Pendergast, prohibition did not stop his city from having alcohol and gambling. Many elections were fixed to keep his cronies in power. In return, Pendergast companies, one of which was Ready Mix Concrete, were rewarded government contracts under a forty-million-dollar bond program. The city constructed many civic buildings during the Depression; Pendergast built them, supplied the materials, and became exceedingly rich.

Thomas Joseph Pendergast hand-picked Harry S. Truman, the 1934 candidate for the United States Senate. Truman was Pendergast’s man.

All I am trying to show you is the importance of the tithes. When one denies the will and the Word of God, it is only that he may establish the will and the word of man. The truth is, we are either going to be ruled by God or ruled by man. When we deny the rule of God, we condemn ourselves to be ruled by man.

Do you know why we are in such social and political upheaval and turmoil in this country? Because we have denied God. The reason we are in such economic straits is that we have denied God’s plan of taxation.

I am not going to develop these today; I will develop them next week if I have time, or divide them into two if I do not. But I am going to give you, first of all, the three tithes of Scripture. There are three. Do not get bent out of shape; it is not thirty percent every year. I will explain that later. But there are three.

The Three Biblical Tithes and Applications

There is the Levitical tithe, what is known as the festival tithe or the tithe of rejoicing, and the poor tithe. God tells you exactly how to do this, how it is to be used, and what is to be accomplished in it.

Without the tithes, there cannot be a restoration of the Christian social order. It is impossible. We can sit here and say, "Oh, I would to God things were the way they ought to be." But until you and I actually start doing what God requires, they will never, ever be the way they ought to be.

God's law is a plan of dominion, and you cannot exercise dominion without financing. His tithes are a means of accomplishing dominion. When you fail to tithe, there is no dominion, and that means the state steps in and takes over. Nature abhors a vacuum. Whenever Christians make a vacuum, it will always be filled by the state. Unless we restore God's plan, there will not be a restoration of Christian social order.

Each individual is responsible to be faithful unto the Lord. The pastor cannot be faithful for you, and the church cannot be faithful for you. Out of all the times the Bible talks about discipline, church discipline, you never find anybody in the Bible being disciplined for not tithing. Why? Because tithing, or failure to tithe, is such an offense against God that God takes care of that one Himself.

He will either bless you or curse you. It is not my responsibility to stand over your shoulder and ask, "Are you tithing?" It is not even my responsibility to ask, "Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?" That is your responsibility. I might remind you of it, but I cannot live your life or make you do what is right. Each of us must assume that responsibility for ourselves.

We have got to remember this: God keeps the record. The pastor does not; God does. Sometimes I have double-tithed. "How do you do that, Pastor?" Sometimes I cannot remember whether I did it or did not, so I say, "Well, just to make sure, I am going to do it again." "Well, that is silly." No, that is not silly. I would rather give God the benefit of the doubt.

I already appreciate everything He has given me and everything He's done for me. And if I'm in error, I'd rather err on His behalf than on my behalf.

You and I cannot begin to recognize, honor, and glorify God apart from the tithes. Why? Because the tithes are recognition of God's sovereignty, of His Lordship. When we tithe, we're saying, "You are the true God of heaven and earth. And besides Thee, there's none else."

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for Jesus Christ. We thank you for the Word of God. We pray, Father, that you would help us to see the importance of the tithe. Without it, there can be no godly dominion. Without it, there can be no restoration of a Christian social order. Help us to understand: if we refuse to be ruled by Thee, we condemn ourselves to be ruled by man. Help us to be faithful in all that we do. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

Biblical Wealth

Part Five of Eight

Introduction and Review of Series

Malachi 3, verse 7: “Even from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But you said, wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me, but you say wherein have we robbed thee in tithes and offerings? You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me, even this old nation. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts. If I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all the nation shall call you blessed, for you shall be in a lightsome land, saith the Lord.”

In this series on biblical wealth, we have looked at the theology of the tithes. Let us rehearse these things so we can tie them together. We have looked at the sovereignty and the source of wealth from Deuteronomy 8:18, where God says that we are not to forget that it is God who gives us the power to get wealth. I pointed out how Greek philosophy and the teachings of Thomas Aquinas have filtered down into the average Christian household. Instead of having a biblical worldview and a biblical concept, most of us have a pagan or Roman Catholic concept of wealth and try to divide everything into the secular and the sacred. For the child of God, everything is sacred.

Then we looked at the sovereignty and the subjects of wealth. In 1 Samuel 2, Scripture says that it is the Lord who makes rich and makes poor, and who lifts up the beggar out of the dunghill, that He may set him among the princes. Once again, God in His sovereignty is the One who chooses the subjects of wealth.

Understanding God's sovereignty, the hinges of God's blessing are usually two: covenantal obedience and individual responsibility. The door of God's blessing usually swings upon covenantal obedience and individual responsibility.

You and I may be covenantally obedient and individually responsible and never have wealth. In that case, we understand that this is in the sovereignty of God. But when God does give wealth, it is usually based upon those two hinges, and that door of blessing swings on those hinges. Thirdly, we looked at the purpose of wealth, because He said He gave wealth that He may keep the covenant which He sware unto thy fathers.

So we went back and saw that dominion mandate, that great charter, and showed how everything is to be subdued and brought in subjection unto God for His honor and His glory. In other words, it is so that we may bring into fruition all that God has ordained and that we may serve Him and His Kingdom.

The Tithes Belong to the Lord

Last week I began showing you the importance of the tithes. There was one important truth that you must always understand: the tithes do not belong to an individual. They do not belong to a church or a

corporation. They belong to the Lord Himself. In Leviticus 27:30, God says it plainly: “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, it is the Lord's. It is wholly unto the Lord.” So the tithes belong unto the Lord.

They are to be used for the furtherance of His kingdom, for His honor, and His glory. Without the tithes, statism usurps and replaces the kingdom of God with the kingdom of man. In other words, when you deny the tithes, you put yourself in the position where you can have a totalitarian and tyrannical state. There can be no restoration of a Christian order apart from the restoration of the tithes.

The Three Tithes

The Three Tithes and Their Purpose

In Malachi chapter 3, verse 8, God says that we have robbed Him in tithes and in offerings. Then, in verse 10, He says, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.” The reason the word tithes is in the plural is because there are three tithes mentioned in the Bible. Today, we will cover the first two. I am going to devote an entire message next week to the third tithe, because it is so misunderstood and so very seldom obeyed. I want you to see that it is unique, and God has ordained it for a certain purpose. Today we are going to look at the first two tithes. Each tithe is important, and each one is designed for a particular purpose.

The tithes demonstrate the care, concern, and compassion that are to be exhibited and exercised in the Christian’s life. The first tithe that we are going to look at, everyone knows about: the Levitical tithe. Sometimes it is called the social tithe. In the book of Numbers, chapter 18, notice verses 20 and 21:

The Levitical Tithe: Support for the Levites

“And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an

inheritance for their service, which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

I am going to stop right there; we will develop this more fully shortly. But note, if you would, in verse 21: "I have given the children of Levi all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance."

You have to remember that the tithes belong unto the Lord. What does that imply? Since they are His, He is the one who designates to whom they are to be given and how they are to be used.

Let me tell you another simple principle. All three of these tithes that we are going to be looking at are based upon one's increase. Therefore, no tithe is more important than or greater than another. All three have equal importance and equal significance.

The Levites were given unto Aaron and his family as a substitute for the firstborn of the children of Israel. In Numbers chapter 3, God declared that the firstborn of everything was to be His—not just the firstborn of cats and sheep, but even the firstborn of humans. Therefore, He substituted the tribe of Levi for the firstborn among the Israelites.

Numbers 3:5 says, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him, and they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle and congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and his sons. They are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons. And they shall wait on the priest's office. And the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the firstborn that opened in the matrix among the children of Israel. Therefore, the Levites shall be mine, because all the firstborn are mine. For on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. Mine shall they be. I am the Lord."

What God did was take the entire tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn of every child of Israel. The Levitical order consisted of the descendants of Levi's three sons, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. Aaron and his issue constituted the priestly order.

The age and qualifications for Levitical service were also specified in Numbers chapter 4. God left nothing undone. The Levites were to serve from thirty to fifty years of age. They were not included among the armies of Israel; this is found in Numbers chapters 1, 2, and 26. When the warriors were numbered in Israel, the tribe of Levi was never numbered. That does not mean the Levites were not warriors or could not fight. Many times individual Levites did indeed fight in battles, and some went to David. Notice Numbers chapter 1, verse 51.

The Levites certainly had a warrior mentality. Numbers 1:51 says, "and when the tabernacle is set in forward, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is pitched, the Levites shall set it up, and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death." Who do you think was doing the executing? It was the Levites. They were armed, they had weapons, and they put to death anybody who came near that tabernacle. I have preached in times past on warrior priests and demonstrated the fighting abilities of the Levites.

Numbers 18:22 says, "Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come out of the tabernacle of the congregation; 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, and 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, which they offer as an offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit. Therefore, I said unto them, among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."

They were charged with the protection of the tabernacle and, later, with the protection of Aaron and all his sons. It was the duty of the Levites to pick up and move the tent wherever the children of Israel traveled, to set it up, to wait upon them, and to perform the services of the sanctuary. They were wholly consecrated unto the Lord.

Numbers 18:2 says, "And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee. But thou and thy son shall minister before the tabernacle of witness." The Levites were to keep the charge of the tabernacle, but there were limitations placed upon them: "...and they shall keep the charge, and the charge of the tabernacle, only they shall not come neither vessels nor the sanctuary, nor the altar, that neither they nor ye also die." They were to keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation for all its service, while the stranger was not to come near. They were also to keep the charge of the sanctuary and the charge of the altar.

"There shall be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel." God says, "I've taken your brethren, the Levites, from among the children of Israel. To you they are given as a gift for the Lord to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." So the children of Levite were wholly given to the household of Aaron. Since they were wholly consecrated to the Lord, they had no territorial possessions. What does that mean?

Do you remember when the land was divided between the twelve tribes? Levite never had a division of the land. Why? Look at Numbers chapter 18, verse 20: "And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them. I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel." Remember that Aaron was a Levite as well. Therefore, what is said of Aaron is also said of the Levites. If you would turn to Deuteronomy chapter 10 and look at verse 9—Deuteronomy 10, verse 9.

Note what God says concerning Levi: “Wherefore, Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren. The Lord is his inheritance according as the Lord thy God promised him.” Once again, the tribe of Levi had no inheritance. This is repeated a number of times in Scripture. Deuteronomy 18:1–2 says, “The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel. They shall eat of the offerings of the Lord made by fire and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren. The Lord is their inheritance, as he has said unto them.”

So they received no division of the land. That did not mean they had absolutely no place to live. Out of all the other tribes, 48 cities were assigned unto them, and 13 of those cities were simply for the priests and the priests' families to dwell in. Each also had what is called in the Bible suburbs or commons. That was a place where they could have their herds and flocks out in the fields. They also had their vineyards.

You will find that in Numbers 35:2–5. These cities were assigned to them throughout the land; they were scattered throughout all Israel. Moreover, six of the Levitical cities were known as cities of refuge. Someone who had slain another innocently, or, as we would call it, accidentally, could run there and be protected from the avenger of blood. Also, nine of these cities were in Judah, three in Naphtali, and four in other tribes.

The Levites were scattered throughout all Israel because it was their responsibility to keep alive the knowledge and service of God. We just read how the Levites were to take down the tabernacle, move it, and set it up. Still, although they could take it down and set it up, they had no business in the holy place or in the most holy place. That was reserved for Aaron and his sons.

The Levites' Duties and Education Role

But now let me ask you a question. Did the Levites do anything other than move and set up the tabernacle? And the answer is emphatically yes. It is an interesting study just to go through your Bible and find out everything that the Levites did. But I want to tell you first and foremost, their primary duty was education. They were to educate the people. They were to educate civil authorities. They were to educate the congregation at large. Let me just show you. I'm going to show you a number of other things that they did in just a moment.

Look in your Bibles, first of all, to Leviticus, chapter 10, verse 11. Note, if you would, what the Bible says. Here is why God gave these Levites: "and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." So the Levites had a peculiar responsibility to teach all of the law of God.

Look in Deuteronomy 17 and verse 18. Here's an interesting statement to show you once again that they did teach civil authorities. That passage deals with when Israel selects a king. Notice what the Bible says: "and it shall be when he sit upon the throne of his kingdom that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites, and it shall be with him He shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes to do them." So the king then, the civil authority, had to have his own personal copy of the word of God. And naturally, it would be the Levites who would be teaching him and instructing him.

You'll notice as you read your Bible, John was certainly one of those who instructed the king. There were numerous men who instructed the king. Here they were teaching. Look in Deuteronomy 31, beginning with verse 9: "And Moses commanded them, saying, at the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the Feast of the Tabernacles. When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing."

Now look what God demands: "Gather the people together, men and women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

Many times it was indeed the Levites who read all of this law and instructed the people. Deuteronomy 33:10 says, "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar." Thus, the primary duty of the Levites was not merely moving the tabernacle hither and yon. After the wilderness wanderings, the tabernacle was set up and remained in one particular place, especially Shiloh for a long period of time. They were educators. This is also seen in 2 Chronicles 17:7-9 and Nehemiah 8:9, where the people stood for half a day while the Word of God was read to them.

These Levites were also singers, musicians, and composers, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 15:16-24 and chapter 25:1-7. They were officers and judges, according to 1 Chronicles 23:4 and 26:29-32. Who better to judge than those who know the law of God? It was their responsibility to teach. Moreover, the Levites were medical practitioners. In Leviticus 13, the priest had to examine leprosy and determine whether something was leprosy or simply an infection in the skin. He therefore needed some medical knowledge. These Levites did more than move the tabernacle around.

They were singers, musicians, and composers. They were judges and civil officers. They were medical practitioners. But their primary responsibility was education in the totality of the law of God. They had to know the law and how to apply the law.

Let me remind you of the first message in this series. I showed you how Greek philosophy has infiltrated Christian thought. Instead of being biblical and having a Christian worldview, most of us are pagan to the core, because somehow we have swallowed the lie of Greek philosophy and the teachings of Thomas Aquinas: that we are to despise material wealth, and that wealth is in and of itself evil. Therefore, we tend to think that anyone associated with the ministry in any way should be rather poor.

The Levites' Economic Status

I want you to understand that I am not teaching a prosperity gospel at this point. I am not talking about that. I am showing you that this concept is absolutely contrary to Scripture. Many of us have heard the old story about the young preacher who came to his first church. Any young preacher, when he gets to that first church, wants everything right, and he wants to be right.

He was in a prayer meeting with some of the people, and as he was praying aloud, he prayed, "Lord, keep me poor and humble." When it came time for the old deacon to pray, he said, "Lord, you've heard the request of the pastor. You just keep him humble, we'll keep him poor." The point is that God's servants, even in the Old Testament, were never ever to be second-class or second-rate citizens.

Although the Levites had no inheritance of the land in Israel, God Himself and the ministry was their part and their inheritance. That did not mean they were to be poverty-stricken. The belief that the Levites, or ministers of the word of God in any age, should reveal their piety by their poverty is ungodly. The tribe of Levi should have been quite wealthy. Why? Because they would be receiving a larger share from all the Israelites. There were twelve tribes.

One of them is taken, which means eleven tribes. What is ten percent of eleven? You automatically have another ten percent, but remember this: the half-tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh basically formed another tribe on the other side of the river. So now you have twelve tribes. If all these people were tithing to the Levites, the Levites were receiving 120%. You follow me?

The point I am making is that they would have had, on average, 20% more than the average Israelite. Moreover, when you read the Scripture, you find that if you were going to tithe on trees or fruit in Leviticus 27:30–33, and wanted to redeem it—suppose you had a good crop of pears and wanted those pears for yourself to make pear preserves—God said you might redeem them, but you had to pay the value of the pears plus 20%. Moreover, God got the firstborn of all the cattle.

Here you are tithing a nice young bull. You do not need him, but he is a firstborn, and the Levites have him in their pasture for a couple of years. Then your old bull dies. You think about that young bull you tithed and realize you could redeem him, but you would have to pay his value plus 20%. You see what I am saying? It seems that in everything that happened, the Levites usually got about 20% more.

Let me point something out, and I want you to think about this. I have often said that if there were a congregation with only ten families, and each tithed faithfully, the pastor, not counting the expenses of the building and so forth, would be living at the same level as all the other people. You follow me? It would not matter whether Doc made $100,000 a year, Henry made $10,000, or Ed made $70,000. Ten percent of ten is still 100%. I would be living no better and no worse than anybody else. However, when you consider

that a pastor is to be held to a higher standard, for instance, he is to be given the hospitality.

The point is simple. I have more company in my house than you ever have at your house. There is hardly ever a week that goes by that we do not have company of some sort or some missionary passing through. About 20 percent more usually covers all the extra expenses. It is amazing to find this in the Bible: everything they did was usually about 20 percent more. The fact that the Levites received the largest average from the yearly harvest gives us two important principles.

First, the Levites were not the poor in Israel. Their life was not to be one of misery and poverty. As a whole, they were to be equal to all the other members of society and slightly above them because of all the other expenses they had.

Second, the services the Levites provided were to be profitable not only for them, but also for the congregation. God said that the tithes the Levites received were as though they were the corn of the threshing floor and the fullness of the winepress, Numbers 18, verse 27. What does that mean? The Levites did not have the land. They were not out there growing crops. They were studying, preaching, teaching, and ministering. And God says your ministry as is, as if you had all of this.

In other words, the returns they received from their ministerial services were no different in principle from the returns the other Israelites received from their land, trees, herbs, vineyards, and flocks. It was the same thing. Simply because God was their inheritance and their capital, rather than farm and pasture land, did not mean that the tribe of Levi was to suffer and be poor. Their capital was the Lord and His Word.

Their capital was the Lord and His Word. If you and I have a sick animal in this congregation, we're going to see Dr. Holmes. What is his capital, his ability to minister to animals, to doctor animals? If my neck needs cracking, I'll go to a good chiropractor. Why? Well, that's his ability. That's his ministry. That's his service. If I need a table made, I'll go see Henry. Now, however, if you want to be taught, if you want to hear the Word of God, who do you go see?

Your pastor. The knowledge of the Lord and the knowledge of His Word is capital, just like operating instruments, just like a chiropractic table, just like a room full of bandsaws and drills and skill saws and that kind of thing. It's the capital.

The Levites' Obligation to Tithe

The Levites, therefore, because the Lord was their capital, because the Lord was their resource and His word, were obligated to teach, apply, and carry out the implications of God's law into every area of their life, and to help other people do exactly the same.

The Levites received tithes from all Israel, who were tithing to those teaching them the law of God. But the Levites were also obligated to tithe. Numbers 18, beginning with verse 25, says, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speaketh the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe."

"And this is your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corner of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus you shall offer a heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes which you receive in the children of Israel, and you shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering unto Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts you shall offer every heave offering of the Lord of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it."

Although the Levites received tithes, they were required to tithe. Just because a Levite was a Levite did not mean that he could pay a tithe to himself. To whom, then, did these Levites tithe?

They tithed to the high priest. The high priest and his family were the only persons in Israel who were not obligated to tithe. Why? It was through the high priest that God Himself actually ruled Israel.

The fact that the Levites had to tithe on the tithes they received establishes a biblical principle: it does not matter what a person's occupation is or what type of business he is involved in; no one is exempt from paying God His due. The only person exempt was the

high priest, and the only reason he was exempt was because it was through him that God actually ruled Israel.

Now, do we have a high priest? You better believe we do. Our High Priest is no longer Aaron; our High Priest is the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4 tells us that He is our Great High Priest, and it is through Jesus Christ that God sovereignly rules and reigns over all. Therefore, we are obligated and required to tithe in recognition of His mediatorship and His priesthood. It is through Jesus Christ that God rules the world.

You remember Hebrews 1? The Bible said that in times past, God spoke to the fathers by the prophets and by different ways. But He has in these last days spoken to us through His Son, by whom He made the world. So God now rules through Jesus Christ.

What is the purpose of the Levitical tithe? Its purpose is to enforce upon the hearts and souls of men that God alone is the Lord and Creator of man, his society, and his world. God is God. I want to show you this in the last message that I bring on the implications of the tithe. But as Samuel Chadwick, a pastor who lived from 1860 to 1912, said, “No man can rob God without starving his own soul.” So there was the Levitical tithe.

Very quickly, through the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 14, here is the second tithe that I am going to deal with today. It is the poor tithe. I am not going to go into great depth in this because I think it should be exceedingly obvious. Look in Deuteronomy chapter 14, beginning with verse 28.

The Poor Tithe: Care for the Needy

At the end of three years, thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite—notice how God always remembers the Levites—because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow which are within thy gates shall come and shall eat and be satisfied, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 26 and verse 12. God mentions this poor tithe: "Well, now it's made an end of tithing. All

the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is a year of tithing, and has given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates and be filled." The poor tithe was collected once every three years, and it was also ten percent. It was for the Levite—not that he was poor, but God wanted to make sure that he was always remembered—the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. This is known as the poor tithe.

There were other means available for helping people who were in distress. There was the law of gleaning, and there were what are known as poor loans. I am going to show you the difference between biblical charity and an act of mercy. There are some people we cannot help. Some people God forbids us to help. But there are other ways to help people besides the poor tithe, because this poor tithe was given once every three years.

Principles of the Poor Tithe

Let me make at least six statements of principle concerning the poor tithe. First, if the poor tithe was faithfully tithed, the usurpation of government in this area would eventually disappear. In a godly order, the group best instructed in the law will have far-reaching social services to render. Consequently, without the collection and distribution of the poor tithe, either the state assumes control, or wealthy individuals and certain foundations assume control of what we would know as social services or welfare.

What does the tithe do? The tithe places control of society in the hands of the tithers—not the state, wealthy individuals, or foundations. If the poor tithe were faithfully given, as well as the Levitical tithe, it would remove the state from the jurisdiction it has stolen and render that responsibility to those who often deserve it. The poor tithe is a means of strengthening a godly society.

It cannot be used to subsidize evil, sloth, or apostasy. Would you care to figure out what is the number one problem with governmental welfare today? They give it to people who do not deserve it. They are indiscriminate. If you do not work, you get it. If you have forty babies, you get it. It becomes a means of making people more irresponsible, because they can have money, never work, and never face responsibility.

My wife can tell you that we heard a man talk about his brother-in-law. He was a black man, and his brother-in-law had, if I remember correctly, thirty-six children. Of course, not by a lie. He did not have one. Thirty-six—somebody is feeding them, but not him. So you see what I am saying? Social financing is necessary. There is a biblical plan for it. But, dear friend, either the people of God will undertake it or the state will. You and I cannot build a godly society apart from obedience to God's law. There are people who need help, and they need to be helped on a biblical basis; but there are other people who should not ever be helped. I will tell you that in just a moment.

Thirdly, the poor tithe was given locally. What does that mean? The proposition is clear: if the poor tithe is given locally, I know whom I am giving to. If Henry is sorry and will not work, while Ed is doing the best he can and still cannot make it, I am going to give mine to Ed. Henry can do without. Someone may say, “Brother Weaver, I do not think that is fair.” I do not know whether you think it is fair or not, but it sure is biblical. You know what the Bible says in 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 10? “If any will not work, help me out, neither should he eat.” It is just that simple: If any will not work, neither should he eat.

As much as possible, we are to know the character of the people to whom we give our money. I am not going to give money to a dope addict or a drunkard. Now, if he is hungry, I might buy him a hamburger, but I am not going to buy him a hamburger and hand it to him. I am not going to give him the money and trust him to go buy the hamburger. The point is, there are some folks we cannot help; we should not help them. And gossip, a man is too lazy to work, neither should he eat.

This does not mean that we cannot give nationally or internationally. There are times we can, but even when we do, we are responsible to know whom we are helping and why we are helping.

If you look in your Bibles at 1 Corinthians chapter 16, beginning with verse 1, the apostle Paul says: “Now concerning the election for the Saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings

when I come. And when I come, whomsoever you shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me."

What did Paul say? He said they were taking up an offering for the poor in Jerusalem. There was a famine in Jerusalem. The churches of Galatia were not in Jerusalem, not even near Jerusalem, yet this money was to go to those poor people. They were to take it up, and whomever they appointed to take the money there could see for themselves that it was a genuine, legitimate need and return to report to them.

"Or if you like, if you want to send me along with them, fine, I'll go as well." But what is Paul saying? "I want you to know to whom you're giving this money, and for what reason." When the poor tithe was given locally, of course, that meant we knew. We knew the character of the people to whom we were giving.

A fourth principle is this: Since the poor tithe teaches us to care for those who, through no fault of their own, cannot care for themselves, in that sense of the word, we're like our Heavenly Father.

What are you talking about? Look in your Bibles, first of all, to Exodus 22:22. God says, "You shall not afflict any widow nor fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise and they cried all unto me, I will surely hear their cry. And my wrath will wax hot, and I will kill you with a sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." God said, you better not abuse the widows and the orphans.

Then Psalm 68:5 says of God, "That He is a Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation." He's the father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows.

By aiding those individuals who are genuinely in need, who are deserving of need, we keep them from falling into what you and I would know as chronic and debilitating poverty. Thus, what it does is provide stability for the family.

Look in your Bible at Acts chapter 6. You will see that the early church did this. In fact, this is the incident where the first deacons were chosen. As you look at this text, understand that the first

deacons were chosen not to run the church, not to run the pastor, and not to control and manipulate. They were chosen for one reason: to be servants to the pastors, helping them feed the widows so that the preachers could give themselves to prayer, study, and the preaching of the Word.

Acts chapter 6, beginning with verse 1, says, “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there was a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.” Why? “Because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” In other words, the Grecian widows were saying, “Y’all are giving more food to those Hebrew widows than you are. You don’t love us. You don’t like us.” Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them and said, “It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.” Did you hear that? “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”

What business? The business of waiting on the widows and taking care of them. “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” Why were the first deacons chosen? To relieve the preachers from the obligation of taking care of the widows so that they could give themselves to the education of the people through study and prayer. These widows were being taken care of, and that was the reason those deacons were appointed to begin with.

I was preaching in Mobile, Alabama. There was a fellow there who was an air-conditioning man. He came to church one night, and his hand and arm were swelled like a balloon. I called his name and said, “What in the world happened to you?” He said, “I was pulling the window unit out, and I stuck my hand in it, and a black widow bit me.” This fellow was a deacon.

When the Bible tells you to take care of the widows, that is not what he is talking about. It is not spiders that you are to be taking care of. You do not feed them; you feed men and women who have needs. But that is exactly what we are talking about. I want you to understand something about this poor tithe. Although we help people who have genuine needs, we cannot help them in such a way

that the recipient becomes dependent upon the giver. The help cannot be a permanent arrangement.

It is not a welfare system. It is a means to help individuals become self-reliant and to give them the edge they need to get back on their feet. Since the poor tithes were collected every third year, if we were to give annually, we would be giving approximately an additional 3.33 percent, which goes into a benevolent fund. Whether most of you know it or not, we do have a benevolent fund. We have some shekels in it—not a great deal—but that fund has been used to help some of our own people when they were out of work, or when unexpected illness, sickness, and other things arose that they could not handle at that particular time. It has been used for witness. It has been used the way it should be used.

In the Old Testament, you have to remember, they were basically an agricultural economy. We are not necessarily that today. But the reason this was given every third year was to teach them to be frugal and future-oriented. They knew it would be another three years before another poor tithe came around, so they had better learn to make use of what they had and plan for the future.

If we are to give to those who are worthy of receiving, it means that we must know the recipient, and the recipient must know us. Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 14, verse 29: "And the Levite, because he hath no partner or inheritance with thee, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow which are within thy gates shall come and eat and be satisfied that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest." If they come and eat with you and you share with them, what does that mean? You know them, and they know you.

Application and Conclusion

For years, our church has helped wives whose husbands were in prison for the faith's sake, and we still do. This is not usually a matter of someone being so poor that she cannot exist. The head of the household, the breadwinner, has been taken away. The money we send maintains the strength of that family until the breadwinner is released and can return to earning money.

We have done this for years, perhaps ever since our church came into existence. Every family we have helped has called me after the husband was released and back on his feet, saying, “Pastor, I’ve got a job. I’m working. We’re thankful for the help. Please stop sending us money and use it for someone else who now needs it more than we do.” Everyone, without exception.

I will show you later that biblical charity is for the strengthening of a godly society. Even the poor tithe strengthens a godly society.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You today for Jesus Christ, for the Word of God, and for His truth. Lord, help us understand that there are indeed implications in these tithes. We will either obey You and be ruled by You, or disobey You and be ruled by man. We cannot sin against You without destroying ourselves. Help us see that, in order to have a godly society, we must follow Your law, Your Word, and Your truth. Make us obedient in every area of our lives. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

Biblical Wealth

Part Six of Eight

Introduction and Review

Let us open our Bibles to Malachi chapter three. Although we will not stay there, I have used this passage for the last several weeks, and I think you will understand why. Malachi chapter three, beginning with verse seven: “Even from the days of your fathers, you're going away from mine ordinances and have not kept them. Return to me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But you said, ‘Wherein shall we return?’ Will a man rob God, yet you have robbed me? But you say, ‘Wherein have we robbed thee?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts. If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the

Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, for you shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts."

Turn also to Exodus chapter 34 and Deuteronomy 14, so that you will be ready to begin there. For the last five weeks or so, I have been preaching on the doctrine of biblical wealth, and in the last several weeks on biblical wealth and the theology of the tithes. I have covered the source and sovereignty of wealth from Deuteronomy chapter 8; the sovereignty of God and the subjects of wealth, not only from Deuteronomy 8, but also 1 Samuel chapter 2. I have shown you the purpose of wealth from Deuteronomy 8, that it might fulfill the covenant of God. Then, of course, I showed you the importance of the tithes.

I demonstrated from Scripture, and I am going to do so again today, that whenever you deny God's tithes, it is in order that the state, or man in some form or fashion, may usurp the jurisdiction that belongs to God alone. Last week I dealt with the Levitical and poor tithe. The Levitical tithe was a ten-percent tithe, basically for the teaching ministry. The poor tithe was once every three years, also ten percent, averaging about three and a third percent per year.

Remember the passage quoted from the book of Leviticus, chapter 27 and verse 30, where God says specifically that the tithes are His. They do not belong to the church. They do not belong to man. They belong to God. Since the tithes belong to God, God has the absolute sovereign right to tell us how those tithes are to be used. It is important for us to understand that without the tithes, statism usurps and replaces the kingdom of God with the kingdom of man. There can be absolutely no restoration of a Christian order apart from the tithes, simply because everything requires money. That is how God has ordained for His kingdom to be extended.

The Tithe of Rejoicing Introduced

We dealt with the Levitical tithe and the poor tithe last week. Today we come to the third tithe in Scripture, the tithe of rejoicing. Look in Exodus, chapter 34, beginning with verse 22. We will see this same truth in Deuteronomy. Exodus 34:22 says, "And thou shalt observe the Feast of Weeks, and the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Thrice, or three times in the

year, shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel." Three times a year they were to appear before the God of Israel.

Verse 24 says, "For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders. Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year."

In Deuteronomy 14:22-26, we read: "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thine wine, and thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks, that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, then thou shalt turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose."

"And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth. And thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household. And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him, for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee."

The tithe of rejoicing is also known as the festival tithe. One of the most misunderstood and misused tithes is the tithe of rejoicing. God demanded that three times a year all the males had to appear before Him, and when they appeared, they were not to appear empty-handed. Deuteronomy 16:16-17 gives the same truth found in Exodus 34, while adding this: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose."

Of course, we know that it was Jerusalem. "In the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in the Feast of Weeks, in the Feast of Tabernacles, and they shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord thy

God which he hath given unto him." Not only in Exodus 34, but also in Deuteronomy 16, all the men were required to attend these feasts at Jerusalem.

Most of the time, the wives and children went as well. It was like what you and I would call a religious family vacation. Three times a year, for these feasts, they had to be there. There were seven feasts: Passover, the most important of the feasts; the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed Passover; the Feast of Firstfruits; the Feast of Pentecost; the Feast of Trumpets; the Feast of Tabernacles; and, of course, the Day of Atonement. Some of these things went together, but God demanded that three times a year they appear before Him in Jerusalem. When they appeared, they could not appear empty-handed.

Joy in the Old Testament

Let me set the stage for what I am about to teach by demonstrating a truth that most people have never comprehended: even in the Old Testament, under the law, there was to be joy.

We understand that we have the fullness of joy in Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is the fullness of the manifestation of God. Jesus Christ is God, and in Him is fullness of joy. But what we have not comprehended is that even in the Old Testament, one of the predominating truths was joy. In fact, one of the greatest verses concerning joy comes from the Old Testament: Nehemiah 8:10, “For the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

The word joy occurs 102 times in 95 verses in the Old Testament. The word rejoice occurs 147 times in 142 verses in the Old Testament. In the book of Deuteronomy, which is the book of the law, the word rejoice occurs 13 times. There is an emphasis, even in the Old Testament, on joy and rejoicing. Do not think that under the law or in the Old Testament life was to be dead, dull, lifeless, and joyless. No. Joy was to be a predominating factor even in the Old Testament.

With the feast of rejoicing, or the tithe of rejoicing, this festival tithe, rejoicing was to be a predominating truth. Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 12.

Rejoicing as a Command

In Deuteronomy chapter 12, beginning with verse 7, notice: “And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.” Note the phrase, “and ye shall rejoice,” in all that you put your hand unto. It is not just an individual; it is the entire house.

Look in verse 12: “And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.” The whole family is to rejoice.

Verse 18 says: “But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.” Isn’t it interesting how he emphasizes rejoicing?

Now look in Deuteronomy 14:26. Here we are talking about the tithe of rejoicing: “And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth. And thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.”

It's amazing how often God repeats the same truth. In Deuteronomy 16, He says, “And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there.” He continues in verse 14: “And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord shall choose, because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine

increase, and in all the works of thine hands. Therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."

Deuteronomy 26:11 says, "Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." Deuteronomy 27:7 adds, "And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God."

Why We Are Commanded to Rejoice

Before explaining the tithe of rejoicing, or the festival tithe, allow me to ask you a question: Why are we commanded to rejoice? Why are we commanded to be joyous? There are several answers, but I want to summarize one for you. First and foremost, we are to recognize our creaturehood. It is God who has made us.

According to Psalm 100, we are the sheep of His pasture; we are His handiwork. He is the Creator, and we are the creatures. Recognizing that we are creatures God has made, we must understand that He made us for His pleasure, His honor, and His glory. God has done what He has done for our good and His glory, and God does not make any mistakes. What does that mean?

Therefore, we are obligated to rejoice before Him as His creatures. We are not autonomous—that is, independent—nor can we ever be. We do not endeavor to become little gods, or our own god, and thus try to be independent from Him. Rather, we rejoice in the fact that we are absolutely, totally dependent upon Him. We recognize our creaturehood. What do we do when we fail to recognize it? When we overextend ourselves and go beyond our own limitations, we deny our creaturehood and play God.

We are God's creatures, and therefore we have limitations. We are not God, and we never will be God; we are His creatures. Psalm 103 gives us two of the most consoling, most comforting verses in the entire Bible: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust." The Lord pities those who fear Him because He knows our frame and remembers that we are dust.

When the Bible says that He knows our frame, what does that mean? It means He knows what we can do and what we cannot do. He knows what we can take and what we cannot take. God remembers that we are creatures. He remembers that we are dust. It is we who many times forget that we are dust. What do we do? We push and push and push, overextending ourselves until we become exhausted, exasperated, and miserable. There is no joy nor rejoicing in our lives because we have forgotten the first and most basic catechetical question. Here is that first and most basic catechetical question: What is the chief duty of man? The answer is to glorify God. And what? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. What is our most basic duty? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

It is not a sin to be tired. I get tired. Do you realize that our Lord was tired? That is what the Bible says in John 4; that is why He sat on the well and rested. It is not a sin to be tired, but it is a sin to overextend ourselves to the point that we exhaust the very marrow from our bones, so that our family, our friends, our life, and even the ministry become drudgery instead of joy.

Once you understand that we are creatures, that we have limitations, and that there is a certain place we can go and no further, you will come to realize that God alone is God.

Let me show you another illustration of the fact that we oftentimes deny our creaturehood in the fact that most of us long for what you and I would call the simple life. We often look back to our childhood, or the good old days, when life was simpler.

I've often told people that young people do not realize how stupid they really are until they get grown. I remember when I was a teenager, I just could not wait to get away from home and get out from under the orders my father and mother would give me. So what did I do? I joined the army.

Now everybody tells me what to do. They tell me when to get up, when to go to bed, what I can eat, and what I can't eat. I'm going to spend every hour of my day under someone else's direction. When you get grown, you think, What a fool I was to want to get away from home. My father bought all my food. He bought all my clothes. He paid every bill I had. It was his car, his gas, his tires, and his

insurance. All I did was make money and then spend his. And we think back, Boy, those were the good old days.

Our oldest granddaughter, who is now sixteen, was four or five when she looked at Alice and said, “Granny, what was it like in the old days?” You know, just like she would know. Our youngest granddaughter, only ten, came to Alice just a year ago and said, “Granny, I just bought the prettiest old-timey pattern that you've ever seen.”

She kind of likes the Confederate dress, so Alice was thinking of the 1800s. And guess what? When Alice saw the pattern, it was a pattern made in the 1980s. An old-timey pattern. That ought to tell you something about my wife. She's just old-timey, that's all.

We long for the simple life. Let me tell you something, folks: life has never been simple. I don't care what age you're talking about. Even in the old days there were problems. It was just a different set of problems from the ones we experience on a daily basis. Are you listening? We will never, ever have a simple life. You know why? The desire for simplicity is the desire to be God. Only God is the most simple being. Only God has no problems. All of us are faced with a multitude of problems.

Joy is not to be found in simplicity. Joy is to be found in obedience.

Joy is not found in simplicity, but joy is found in obedience. James writes, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations,” that is, multicolored or various temptations. These are not temptations to do evil; the word means testings or trials. He says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into different trials and different testings.” Why? “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Notice, he does not say, “Endeavor to live a simple life with no problems.” No, he says you count it all joy because you can be just as obedient in testing and trials as you can be when there are no testings and trials. In fact, Romans chapter five tells us that we exult—that is, we jump up and down—in our trials and tribulations. Why? Because we know that those trials and tribulations, as long as

we are obedient, are going to produce patience, and patience ultimately is going to produce hope in our lives.

The desire for simplicity is the desire to be as God. What does God require of us? God requires that you and I be faithful, that we be obedient, that we do the best we can for God's honor and God's glory, do it in faith, and then rest. In that way, you can rejoice. Rejoicing is a principle of the law as well as the gospel.

Let me give you an illustration. I read this years ago. R. A. Torrey was a preacher in times past, and he had a song leader named Homer Hammontree, whose nickname was Ham. I recently saw on SermonAudio.com that Homer Hammontree's voice has been preserved. Even from a hundred and something years back, you can still hear his voice and him singing. Torrey was preaching in a meeting, and Homer was doing the singing. He sang wonderfully, and Torrey preached wonderfully.

The Tithe of Rejoicing

At the end of the service, nobody was converted. No one was saved. Torrey went to his room, where Ham was sharing the room, and sat down and read the paper. Ham was walking back and forth, pacing. He said, "I don't understand it. The music was fine. The preaching was wonderful. I don't understand why nobody was converted." Torrey looked at him, closed his papers, and said, "I was faithful. I did what God wanted me to do, and I preached what God wanted me to preach. And I'm satisfied."

The next night, the same thing happened. The third night, the same thing happened. Ham was pacing back and forth. On the next night, it looked like the bottom fell out, and people were converted and convicted. Ham was walking up and down, rejoicing and shouting, while Torrey was sitting there trying to read the paper. Finally, he closed the paper and said, "Ham, sit down and shut up."

He said, "I am no more happier tonight than I had been the previous nights. I was faithful. I did what God wanted me to do. I preached what God wanted me to preach. And in that, I rest." You see the principle? God requires obedience. Once we've been

obedient, whether it's a test, or a trial, or whatever it is, we can simply sit back and rest.

I'm talking about the tithe of rejoicing. I want you to understand that the tithe of rejoicing was a stated annual season of rejoicing. Three times a year, all those men and their families appeared before the Lord God in Jerusalem. It is true that you and I are to rejoice always. That's what the Bible tells us. We're to rejoice always. But in the tithe of rejoicing, there was a stated annual tithe of rejoicing, and it was the time of those feasts at Jerusalem.

Principles of the Tithe of Rejoicing

The equivalent to those feasts today would be a type of celebration that you and I would have with our entire family. The tithe of rejoicing is 10%, just like the Levitical tithe. Just like the poor tithe, however, the poor tithe was collected only once every three years. But this tithe of rejoicing is also ten percent, and it is spent on you and your family. In the Old Testament, the tithe would be spent in Jerusalem at the seven annual feasts. Why was it to be spent only at Jerusalem in the Old Testament? The answer is simple: because in Jerusalem was where the tabernacle was located, and later on the temple. Why was the tabernacle and the temple located there? Because that is the place that God has chosen. What is the significance, then, of the tabernacle and the temple? It was the throne room of God, where God ruled among his people.

In Jesus Christ, we do not necessarily have to go to Jerusalem. Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning. Therefore, we may rejoice before Him in any place. The tithe of rejoicing teaches us to rejoice in Jesus Christ with the full consciousness of our redemption. We must rejoice before Him, realizing that salvation is His work, and His work alone. It is not ours.

Deuteronomy 12 begins to show certain principles relating to this festival tithe, or tithe of rejoicing: “Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there,” which was Jerusalem. “Then shall you bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which you vowed to

the Lord. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters and your menservants and your maidservants and the Levite that is within your gates, forasmuch as he hath no part or inheritance with you. Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest, but in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there shalt thou offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which is given thee, the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as the roebuck, and as the hart, etc."

Verse 17 continues: "Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or of the firstlings of thy herd, or of thy flock, nor of any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor of thy freewill offerings, nor of any of thy offerings of thine hand." In other words, God says you can eat certain things in your own home, but He is speaking about the tithe of rejoicing: "But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. Thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thy hands unto. Take heed to thyself, and forsake not the Levite, as long as thou livest upon the earth."

Let me point out that this passage gives several general principles concerning the tithe of rejoicing. First, the tithe of rejoicing could not be partaken of at home. As he said in verse 17: "Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, of thine wine, and thine oil, the firstlings of thy herds." In other words, during this tithe, you could not stay home and spend this money on yourself. No.

The second general principle is found in verse 18: the purpose of this tithe was one of rejoicing. "But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thy hands unto." In other words, it had to be a stated season of rejoicing.

God has given us two general directives. First, this time could not be spent at home. Second, it had to do with rejoicing.

Deuteronomy chapter 14 gives more specifics, beginning with verse 22: "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, and thine wine, and thine oil, the firstlings of thy herds, and thy flocks, that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always."

The place that he chose was Jerusalem. It would be easy for those who lived in Jerusalem or in the surrounding area to take their sheep, oxen, wine, or whatever they wanted to take. But what if someone lived in the tribe of Dan, in the territory of Dan, or way down south in the city of Beersheba? That was a long way.

What does God say? "And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it, or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose, to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, then thou shalt turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and thou shalt go to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose."

Instead of becoming aggravated, frustrated, and miserable trying to drive cattle, sheep, and goats on a long journey, God says, just sell them and turn them into money.

Make it easy on yourself, because it is to be a time of rejoicing. We may turn it into money. Let me go back to verse 23, because I want to emphasize this. Why does God want us to spend this tithe upon ourselves and our families? Here is why: “And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thine wine, and thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks.” Why? “That thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.”

I want you to understand one thing, and I am going to emphasize this several times before I close today. The purpose of this tithe of rejoicing is not only so that we can have a good time, but so that we can learn to fear the Lord our God. In other words, it must make us

more holy and more knowledgeable. There has to be an educational aspect to this tithe.

Verses 24 and 25 tell us we can turn it into money. Verse 25 says, “Thou shalt turn it into money and bind up the money in thine hand, and thou shalt go to the place which the Lord thy God shall choose.” Once you have the money in your hand and are there, what can you do with it? Verse 26 says, “And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, or desireth, for oxen, for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth, and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household.”

Now God says you can spend the money on whatever you want. If you want a good steak, wonderful. If you want mutton, have at it. If you want a glass of wine, you may have that. If you want a glass of strong drink, have that. Immediately when this verse is read, someone objects and says, “Well, wine is not wine.”

Proper Use and Decapitalization

Strong drink is not strong drink. Yes, it is. The next thing people come across when they read this verse is this: If it means wine, if it means strong drink, does that mean I can get drunk? The answer is absolutely not. Why? Drunkenness is a sin. What did he say? “That you may learn to fear the Lord thy God.” Would you commit such a sin in the presence of God? By the way, skip down to verse 26. He says, “And whatsoever thy soul desireth, thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God.” “Thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God. Thou and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thine household.” Would you get drunk in the presence of the Lord thy God? The answer is no. Would you get drunk before your children? I would hope the answer would be no. Would you teach your children to be drunkards? I would hope the answer would be no. Drunkenness is a sin. It is forbidden.

God says that if you exercise this tithe, it must be where you can learn to fear Him. How in the world can you learn to fear God by disobeying God? The answer is, you cannot. Anyone who has a desire to be drunk has a real spiritual problem.

It is not my intent today to deal with the subject of alcohol, but I will tell you this: If you will be honest with the Scripture, you will find in the Bible a commendation of alcohol and a condemnation of alcohol. Both are in the Scripture. When it is properly used, there is no sin involved. When it is misused and abused, there is sin, wickedness, and rebellion.

The very fact that anyone would misuse and abuse alcohol indicates that his lusts, desires, and sins have never been conquered by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The same could be said of any inordinate desire. But what God is saying is this: This is a time of rejoicing. It is a time when you are learning, having a good time, and having fun as a family. You are spending this money on yourself so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God.

The principle that lies beneath this tithe is decapitalization. You are decapitalizing yourself by ten percent, because you are spending this money on yourself, your family, and the Levite. For this very reason, most people do not like this tithe. Why? Because it decapitalizes. I want to tell you what this tithe of rejoicing does: It takes the wind out of our sails.

All of us have sacrificed in times past, some more than others, in the service of the Lord. We do not boast of that sacrifice, and we certainly would never do that, but we are comfortable with the knowledge that we have gone the extra mile a number of times. Even when we look around in our homes, we try to supply our families with whatever they need, whether it is a new refrigerator, a new stove, or a new bedroom suite. We can take a little pride or boastfulness in the fact that we have taken care of our family. When we are faithful in giving and sacrificing, we are comfortable with the fact that we have done that and are taking care of our family.

However, when we come to the tithe of rejoicing and decapitalize ourselves by 10 percent, it makes it so that we cannot rejoice in our works. How in the world can we boastfully say to God, “Look, God, aren’t I wonderful? I just blew several thousand dollars on myself”? It takes the wind out of our sails, because we have just spent that money on ourselves and our family. We cannot stand up and say, “Oh Lord, look what I have just sacrificed and done for You.” No, we have done this for ourselves and for our family. It may have been in

obedience to God, but the money was spent on ourselves. Here is the principle of decapitalization: this tithe makes us totally dependent upon God.

It also demonstrates our dependence upon Him and our trust in Him. How can I say that? Because faith is required to decapitalize ourselves. In doing so, in obedience to Him, we believe and trust Him that He will recapitalize us. Do you remember the passage in Deuteronomy 8 and verse 18? “For it is the Lord thy God who giveth thee power to get wealth.” The obedience to this tithe is a demonstration of our total dependence upon Him. We realize our needs, but then we understand that God realizes our needs as well. Thus, in obedience to Him, we trust Him to supply those needs even while we are decapitalizing ourselves at His command.

Let me emphasize one truth again. It is extremely important. In fulfilling this command to rejoice, we must understand that we cannot violate or disobey any other commands.

When God says, “thou shalt spend thy money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after,” you must understand that there is a good usage of the word lust in the Bible and a bad usage. In the New Testament, lust literally means to set your desire upon something. Our Lord looked at His disciples and said, “With desire I have desired to eat this last supper with you.” The word desire is the word lust. Literally, He said, “With lust I have lusted after this last supper with you.” Now, did our Lord sin?

The answer is no, of course not. Lust can be good or bad; it does not necessarily have to be bad. When our Lord says that you may spend this money on whatsoever your soul lusts after, He is saying that you may spend that money rejoicing before Him in whatever area you desire, so long as you learn to fear Him.

Let me give you a couple of illustrations. If I had a hobby, I suppose it would be hunting. I enjoy hunting, though I do not get to do much of it.

I have a Christian friend in Idaho who wants to start a camping and hunting ministry. He is interested in taking, especially, preachers out and keeping them in the woods for a week or two at a time, showing them God’s creation and giving them time away from

a phone to study, pray, and fellowship with one another. That is certainly not a bad idea, because most preachers I know need to get away for a week or two.

That would be an excellent time for rejoicing, or the family could go. Our family cannot. Another possibility is going to a Bible conference. All of us, as individuals and families, have things we enjoy more than other individuals and families. If there is a ball involved, I do not like it. I am not a sportsman in that sense of the word. Some folks love sports; I do not care anything about sports.

Whatever we do with the tithe of rejoicing, it is to be a time to learn to fear the Lord thy God. One of the things that Alice and I particularly enjoy is going to Rocky Mountain National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Yellowstone, just to look at God's creation. I want to tell you something, folks. If you want to be insignificant, just for a moment, get up on top of El Capitan or Half Dome and look down at that valley. Look around at all those things that God has made, and it will sink you to your knees. Whatever you do with the tithe of rejoicing, there must be an educational aspect of that tithe.

God's Tithe vs. Man's Tithe

Before I try to tie this together, let me deal with one objection. Some of you are going to say, "Well, Brother Weaver, I've just never heard of this tithe before. I've certainly never observed it. I've just never even heard of it. It just seems so strange." The answer is very simple. Just because you've never heard of it doesn't mean it's not true or real. That's why Ephesians 4 tells us that he gave some pastor-teachers alive so that they can be teachers and instruct the people in what God would have to say.

We will either celebrate God's tithe of rejoicing, or we will celebrate man's tithe of rejoicing. When we deny God's tithe of rejoicing, it is only that we may establish the state's tithe of rejoicing. Have you ever thought about why we have state holidays, state parks, state recreational centers, state playgrounds, state hunting and management services, state programs, and state services? I've heard people say, "Isn't it wonderful? The state has provided all this for us." All people hold to a tithe of rejoicing, believers and

non-believers. The difference is whose tithe of rejoicing we believe in and hold to. Do we believe and hold to God's tithe of rejoicing or man's? If we obey God in His path of rejoicing, He receives the honor and the glory.

We rejoice in His salvation and His provision. If we do not obey God, then ultimately we rejoice in man and what man gives us, and man will get the honor and the glory.

In Deuteronomy 28, you have the blessings and the curses. Everyone knows that Israel went into captivity. The ten northern tribes went to Assyria, and the two southern tribes went to Babylon. There were many other times they were in captivity as well. God says, if you obey Me, I am going to bless you; if you disobey Me, I am going to curse you. Notice part of the curses, beginning in verse 45: "Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed." Why? "Because thou hearkenest not unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee," and "they shall be upon thee for a sign and a wonder and upon thy seed forever."

Consequences of Not Rejoicing in God

Here it is: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things. Therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee." Because you did not serve God with joyfulness and gladness of heart in the abundance of all things, you did not want to rejoice in God; you wanted to rejoice in man. God says, if you do not serve Me, you will serve man. If you will not serve Me with joy and gladness, you will serve your enemies.

God's people are servants, and we will serve one way or the other. We will either serve God or serve man. The tithe of rejoicing is a means of serving God as you rejoice before Him in everything He has given you. You are acknowledging your total dependence upon Him, trusting Him, and thanking Him for everything He has done for you. The tithe is spent on yourself and your family, remembering the

Levites, but basically upon you and your family. The only thing God says is that you must learn to fear the Lord thy God. There must be an educational aspect as you worship and rejoice before Him. Let us pray.

Father, speak to us. Teach us, build us up in the holy faith. May we learn to rejoice in Thee and serve Thee with gladness of heart for the abundance of all You have given us. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 7

Biblical Wealth

Part Seven of Eight

SCRIPTURE READING - Leviticus 19:9-10; Leviticus 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-22 (KJV)

Leviticus chapter 19, verses 9 and 10: "And when you reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest, and thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of the vineyard, thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord your God."

In Leviticus chapter 23, verse 22: "And when you reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest. Neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest. Thou shalt leave them unto the poor and to the stranger. I am the Lord your God."

Then in Deuteronomy 24, beginning with verse 19: "When thou cuttest down thine harvest in the field, and hast forgotten a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it. It shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow, that the

> Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again. It shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterwards. It shall be for the stranger, and for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt. Therefore I command thee to do this thing."

The Doctrine of Charity

Introduction: The Need for Biblical Charity

We have been studying the biblical doctrine of wealth for the last six weeks, and I hope that as you have followed me in this study, you have understood the sovereignty and the source of wealth, the sovereignty and the subjects of wealth, and the purpose of wealth. Then, of course, we went over the three tithes mentioned in the Bible: the Levitical tithe, the poor tithe, and the tithe of rejoicing, or the festival tithe, which I covered last week.

Today we come to the subject of biblical wealth and the doctrine of charity. Let me tell you that the doctrine of charity is extremely important. In fact, today's views of charity are usually either sentimental or anarchistic. I am going to explain the use of those two words. I use the word sentimental because, in one sense, a lot of people's views on charity are simply based upon their own feelings, their own sentiments, or their own emotions.

For instance, usually when you see some type of advertisement for world relief or children relief on television, they show you the picture of a starving child with a pot belly and flies all around him, or a child with his ribs showing and still the flies all around. In other words, what they are doing is appealing to your emotions and appealing to your sentiments, and they want you to give. Usually, a lot of people do give based upon that appeal. But after the pictures cease, the giving also ceases, because all it was based upon was pure sentiment or emotions, and that was it.

Especially during the seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas, we are inundated with sermons, editorials, cartoons, and articles that

suggest, “How dare we enjoy the abundance which God has given us when there are so many in the world that are poor, hungry, and starving?” The interesting thing is this: it never occurs to most people that God does bless covenantal obedience and individual responsibility, and that God does curse covenantal disobedience and individual irresponsibility.

Now let me ask you a question. I want you to think about this. Shall we despise God and His graciousness simply because some people are covenantally disobedient and individually irresponsible? Shall you and I despise the riches of God's grace simply because God does not choose to give to everyone equally? Stop and think about that. In fact, let me show you a Scripture.

In Matthew 20, our Lord is talking about giving His own gifts. When one of the workers begins to complain that He has blessed the one who worked one hour equally with the one who worked eight hours, notice what our Lord says in Matthew 20 and verse 15: “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?” Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?

Let me ask you a question. Are you obligated to reach in your pocket and just give me a $50 bill? No. Are you obligated to reach in your pocket and give Henry a $100 bill? No. The very fact that you do happen to give to me or happen to give to Henry is really and truly an act of grace. It is not a duty. It is not an obligation. And the fact is, God really and truly does not owe anyone anything but justice. When God gives His grace, gifts, and blessings, it is based upon His own sovereignty, and He has the sovereign right to do with His own as He pleases.

When I talk about our views of charity being sentimental, I mean, on the one hand, that there are many individuals who give based only upon sentiment, based only upon their feelings, and based only upon their emotions. I also use the word anarchistic because, usually, on the opposite hand, if the view of charity is not sentimental, it is anarchistic. By that I mean it is contrary to the law of God. An excellent example of anarchistic charity is the foreign aid programs that are instituted by our own government.

By our government, by governmental decree, we must have pity upon all human need, even if it happens to be pity upon our enemies who are planning and devising our own destruction. Witness the numerous welfare programs that maintain promiscuous pity and charity for everyone, regardless of their character, conduct, and indolence.

If there was ever a time when we need a clear understanding of what the Bible teaches on charity, it certainly is today. We have got to understand two words. The first one is compassion, and the second one is pity, because compassion and pity are fundamental to the biblical doctrine of charity.

The word compassion is very easily explained. Our English word compassion uses "com" as a preposition meaning "with," and "passion" means to suffer. Compassion simply means to suffer with. But I particularly like the Greek word. I never will forget when I learned this word forty years ago, I guess it was. It became one of my all-time favorite Greek words. I used to love to say it. The Greek word for compassion is splagchnizomai. It means to yearn with all your bowels.

The ancients believed the seat of the affections was in the bowels. I told my wife coming over here this morning, "I want to tell you something. I've probably never told you this before. I love you with all my guts." She said, "You know, somehow I just don't think that's romantic." I said, "Well, if I say I love you with all my bowels, does that help?" No, she said, "It's still not romantic. I'd rather hear 'heart,' you know." But that is what compassion literally means: to have a yearning of the bowels, because they believed that the seat of the affections was in the bowels. The word pity simply means to be gracious or kind, or to have lovingkindness. Compassion and pity are essential elements in biblical charity.

Charity Is Never Promiscuous but Always Selective

The very first point is this: Charity is never promiscuous on God's part. It is always selective. Charity is never promiscuous on God's part; it is always selective. Therefore, it should be that way on ours, which I shall demonstrate in just a moment.

Proverbs 19, verse 17, says, “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord. And that which he hath given will he repay him again.” He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord. When we have pity upon the poor, God says we are lending unto the Lord. And that which he hath given, that is, to the poor, He, God, will pay him again. Understand that Proverbs 19:17 is what we would call a general principle. What is a general principle? A general principle is something applicable most of the time, but it is not applicable all of the time.

In other words, it is true, generally speaking, but there are exceptions. We've got numerous general principles in the Bible. The two that I always tell you is, "He that giveth a wife giveth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord." Generally that's true. But some men have gotten a wife, didn't get a good thing. Some women got a husband, didn't get a good thing. That's a general principle. I know some men that have gone through living hell. Some women too. How about this one?

"Beat thy child with a rod. If thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die, thou shalt deliver his soul from hell." Does that mean every child that's ever been beat with a rod is going to heaven? Well, of course not. It's a general principle that means that if you discipline your child the way God tells you and bring that child up the way God tells you, generally speaking, the child will be converted. Not necessarily every time.

I've known children that have been disciplined, brought up in church, in a Christian school, in a Christian household, and are mean as a devil and lost as a hound dog. It's a general principle.

Now, it is true, generally speaking, that when we give to the poor, we're lending unto the Lord. But I'm here to tell you that there are some poor that God does not expect us to give unto. He does not expect us to give unto the wicked and the evil poor. When we give to the wicked and the evil, we're not working for the Lord or lending to the Lord, we're working against the Lord.

Now let me begin by making a statement, and I'll show it to you from Scripture. It'll shock you. But here it is. There are certain individuals in the Bible that God forbids us to have pity or

compassion upon. Now listen to that. There are certain individuals upon whom God forbids us to have pity or compassion upon.

Now that is not hard-heartedness. It is a matter of principle. Biblical charity is always exercised in accordance with Scripture. For instance, look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 13 and verse 8. I'm just showing you that there are numerous individuals upon whom we are not to have compassion. Without me going into the context of Deuteronomy chapter 13, here is someone in your own family that is seeking to seduce you and turn you away from the worship of the one true and the living God, and get you to worship idols. Look what God says. Deuteronomy 13, verse 8: "Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him. Thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

In Deuteronomy 13, God says, “If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or thy wife, or thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee saying…” What is God saying? It does not matter if someone is close to you. If they try to seduce you into idolatry, “thou shalt not consent unto them, nor hearken to them, neither shall thine eye pity him.”

What are you to do? God says you are to turn him over to the elders, where he can have a trial and be put to death. You are not to have pity or compassion upon someone who is trying to seduce you into idolatry.

Look in Deuteronomy chapter 19 and verse 13. Here is a man who has premeditatedly murdered. What does God say? “Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.” If any man hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him, and smites him mortally so that he dies, then flees to a city of refuge, the elders are to send for him and deliver him to the avenger of blood, that he may die. “Thine eye shall not pity him.” What is God saying?

Here's someone that murders another man premeditatedly. The court sentences him to death in the electric chair. Someone says, “I feel so sorry for that man.” I don't. God said he's to have no pity, no

compassion. Execute him. Put him to death. Look in your Bibles to chapter 19, verse 21. God said, “Thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

Now, in this instance, God is talking about delivering justice. You're not to pity a poor man in his cause. If a poor man is done wrong, he's not to receive pity just because he's poor. God says you're to deliver justice, not pity, not compassion. Look in Deuteronomy 25 and verse 12. Here's a woman that has done something she should not have done. God says, “Thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.” There are individuals upon whom we are not to have pity. God does not always have pity Himself. Therefore, we should not always have pity either.

There comes a time when God will have no pity and no compassion. Look in your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 13 and verse 14. Now God is speaking, and here's what God says: “And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord, I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.” What did God say that He's going to do to the wicked? He said He's going to destroy them. He will not have pity upon them. All you have to do is read the book of Lamentations, chapters 2 and 3, and see what God did there to those people.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Ezekiel chapter 5 and verse 11. This doesn't occur just simply one time, but it occurs over and over in the Bible. Ezekiel 5, verse 11, God says, “Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thy abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee, neither shall mine eyes spare, neither will I have any pity.” Sounds like to me there's a time when God will not exercise pity or compassion.

Zechariah 11:6 says, "For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. But, lo, I will deliver the men, every one, into his neighbor's hands, and into the hand of his king, and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land." There comes a time when even God Himself does not exercise pity or compassion.

Now, while it is true that God's blessings, generally speaking, are upon all—don't you remember Matthew 5:45, where He said He causes the sun to rise upon the just and the unjust alike, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust alike?—yet God reserves His pity and His compassion towards those who are godly. God does not dispense His charity promiscuously. He is always selective. And therefore we should be like Him.

Now, secondly, I want you to follow with me because I'm going to tie these things together for you. The basic form of charity in the Bible was gleaning. That's why I began by reading Leviticus 19:9-10, Leviticus 23:22, and Deuteronomy 24:19-22, where God says that you are not to glean the corners of your field.

The Basic Form of Charity: Gleaning

If you drop the sheaf, don't go back and pick it up; leave it. Why? It's for the poor. It's for the fatherless. It's for the widow. It's for the strangers.

Now, there is a law of gleaning in the Bible. In that law, landowners were forbidden an absolute total harvest. They could not go back over and continue gleaning the fields until they had gotten every grain, every ear of corn, every olive, and every grape that was there. No, the leftovers were for the strangers, the poor, and the widows.

Now, I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Ruth, and let me show you something. Although gleaning was a form of charity, gleaning was a privilege and not a right. What do I mean by that? Well, let's suppose Henry owns 200 acres of land, and he has 200 acres of corn planted on that land. He's reaped that corn. He's harvested it. And there's some corn simply lying around on the ground. Just because something is lying around on the ground, does that mean I have the absolute right to go on his property and pick it up and take it without his knowledge and without his permission? What's the answer? No, that'd be theft. Now, watch what happens in Ruth chapter 2, beginning there with verse 5. Everyone knows this story.

“Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, ‘Whose damsel is this?’ And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, ‘It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves. So she came and continued even from the morning until now that she tarried a little in the house.’ Then said Boaz unto Ruth, ‘Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.’ Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, ‘Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?’ And Boaz answered and said unto her, ‘It hath been fully showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband, and how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.’

Note first that Ruth asked permission to glean. She said, ‘I pray you, let me glean after the reapers among the sheaves.’ She had to ask permission from the head steward. But when Boaz, who owned the land, came and saw her, he asked the steward, ‘Whose damsel is this?’

“I don't know this woman. Why did you let her glean in my field?” When the man explained, “Well, this is the Moabitish woman that came back with Naomi,” Boaz said, “Oh, Miss Ruth, I'll tell you what you do. You stay right here by my reapers. You drink of the water that my young men have drawn. Nobody's going to touch you. You refresh yourself here. And here's why. I know that you left your father and your mother. I know that you've taken care of your mother-in-law. I know that you've come to trust under the wings of the sovereign God of Israel. I know everything about your honor and your integrity and heretofore all that you've done, and so I want you to glean in my fields.”

Boaz also told his reapers and young men to give her a special blessing. “And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, ‘Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not. And let some also fall handfuls of purpose for her, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.’”

Although gleaning was charity, it was only given to the deserving poor. What happened to the undeserving poor—to the drunkard, the slothful, and the lazy man who was poor? They either shaped up or starved to death. What does the Bible say in 2 Thessalonians 3:10? “If any will not work, what? Neither should he eat.” You had a choice. You could be honorable, have character and integrity, do what was right, work, and glean; or you could remain lazy, slothful, and wicked and starve. It is just that simple.

Gleaning was charity, but gleaning was also work. It was hard, back-breaking work, harder and more difficult than regular harvesting because of the scarcity of the product being gleaned. However, one who was diligent could always secure enough food to keep himself from starving. Biblical charity is designed to give the recipient self-respect and satisfaction. It requires work. The individual out gleaning has worked hard to get what little he has obtained, yet he has secured enough to support his family so they will not starve. He has self-respect because he knows he has worked for it, and satisfaction because he has fulfilled his family's needs and did it himself.

Everyone knows of the fraudulent, vile, and wicked welfare system in America. We are traitors to our own constitution in the fact that we aid our enemies. We promote fornication and adultery by subsidizing immorality. We encourage laziness, idleness, and slothfulness by giving to those who either do not want to work or will not work. And we penalize those who will work by coercively confiscating their assets in order to give to those who will not work.

That is not charity. That is theft, plain and simple. Walter Williams wrote an article entitled “Socialism is Evil.” He argued that it was immoral, not to mention unconstitutional, for Congress, through the tax code, to confiscate the earnings of one American to give to another American in the forms of prescription drugs, social security, food stamps, foreign subsidies, or airline bailouts. It is

immoral because it forcibly uses one person to serve the purposes of another. Indeed, that is one way to define slavery and other forms of servitude.

He hit the nail on the head. Such a system is contrary to the law of God. God's law demands work, and work teaches self-respect, which leads to individual satisfaction. One of the main reasons we have widespread dissatisfaction among welfare recipients is that they think they want more and deserve more; yet when you give them more, they are still never satisfied. The more they get, the more they want and the more they think they deserve. The welfare system in America is a violation of God's law and God's orderly way.

There are people on welfare in this country who have been on welfare their entire lives and have never worked. There are generations that have been raised on welfare in this manner. It is a commonly known fact that a man who has never worked before he is twenty-five will never work. He will be a parasite all of his life.

There is an old Hebrew adage: "He who will not teach his son the law and a trade"—that is, God's law and a trade, or occupation—"teaches him to be a crook and a thief." That is where we are in this country.

We have sired a generation of crooks and thieves who are immoral and wicked and think they deserve to have everything handed to them on a silver platter. Gleaning was the most basic form of charity, but it was work—hard work. It was not just money handed to someone; they had to work.

The Poor Tithe as an Essential Part of Charity

Thirdly, the poor tithe was and is an essential part of biblical charity. You will find that discussed in Deuteronomy chapter 14. The poor tithe taught us to be mindful of others. It was charity, an aspect of charity, but it was used for a specific purpose. It insisted upon and taught the unity of the people of God, whether rich or poor, as one people under God. That is why, when the poor tithe was used, you invited the poor, the fatherless, and the widows who were of the faith.

You ate with them, and they ate with you. It illustrated Proverbs 22:2: "The rich and poor meet together, the Lord is maker of them all." Let us suppose Doc is a multi-millionaire. He is not, but let us suppose he is. Here is Brother Ernie, who just barely ekes by. Both are saved by the grace of God. Which one is more saved than the other? Neither! There is an equality in standing before the Lord. That poor tithe, basically, did this.

It undergirded the unity of the faith. It was not based upon sentimentality or anarchism, but was designed on a biblical principle to strengthen and protect the people of God in their ties of faith. So, Doc, who could be a multi-millionaire, and Ernie, who could be a poor man, could fellowship together and worship the same God through biblical charity, strengthening the ties of that godly society.

Now, I showed you, first of all, that biblical charity is never promiscuous. It is always selective. Secondly, the most basic form of biblical charity was gleaning. It meant work. By the way, do you realize very few people who ask for money today are willing to work for it? I've had all kinds of people ask me for money, and I would say, "Well, you know, I have some wood that needs to be cut, and I'll be more than glad to pay you if you'll go out and cut my wood or do this or do that." All of a sudden, they're not interested. They don't want to do that. Most people just want you to give them money; they don't want to work. Gleaning was hard work. The poor tithe was there, but it was there for a reason: to undergird the ties in the society of faith.

Distinction Between Works of Mercy and Charity

Fourthly, listen, because here is a clear distinction: the work of mercy to man and beast differs in purpose from charity. The work of mercy is included under the work of charity, but in reality they are different. They have different purposes. Sometimes they might be intertwined just a little, but you must draw a distinction between biblical mercy and biblical charity. Let me take you to the Bible. Go to Deuteronomy 22 and Exodus 23. We'll read Deuteronomy 22 first, verse 1:

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his ass go astray, and hide thyself from them. Thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. If thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or thou know him not,

then thou shalt bring it into thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it unto him again. And like manner shalt thou do with his ass, so shalt thou do with his raiment. For all lost thing of thy brother, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise, thou mayest not hide thyself. Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them. Thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again."

God says that if you see your brother's ox, ass, horse, or anything going astray, you cannot hide yourself. You must help him get those animals back in. If you see an ox or horse in danger, you may not hide yourself.

I had a horse one time that I was riding. There was a beautiful creek of water, and the horse wanted some water. I gave him his head, and he stepped down to get water. When he stepped down, the ground gave way, and he sank up to his chest in mud and muck. There was sand on top, but muddy muck underneath. I was able to get the saddle off and get off myself. It took me an hour to get that horse out of there. Could I have used some help? You bet. Would I have appreciated some help? Yes.

God says that if you pass by and see someone in a situation like that, you cannot hide yourself or ignore it. You must help that man with his fallen animal.

You may say, "I'm willing to do that because the Bible says, 'Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox...' That's my brother, my Christian friend. Sure I would help him save his animal." But Exodus 23:4-5 says, "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hated thee lying under his burden and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help them."

That is no longer your brother; it is your enemy. God says that if you see your enemy's ass going astray, you have to help him get it back. If you see your enemy's ass lying under its burden—that is, delivering a foal and having difficulty—God says you cannot hide yourself; you must help. What in the world is God doing? He is demonstrating our responsibility to help save and preserve life.

Actually, it is an argument from the lesser to the greater. If you and I are obligated to help save the animals of our brother, how much more are we obligated to help save his life? If we are obligated to help save the animals of our enemy, how much more are we obligated to help save his life? In other words, it is an argument from the lesser to the greater.

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 10:25-37 (KJV)

This is known as a work of mercy. It differs from charity.

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And he said unto him, 'What is written in the law? How readest thou?' And he answering, said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy might, and thy neighbor as thyself.' And he said unto him, 'Thou hast answered right. This doing thou shalt live.' But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'

"And Jesus answering said, 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at that place, came and looked on him, and he passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, now watch, he had compassion on him, and he went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more when I come again, I will repay thee.' Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He that showed mercy on him.' Then said Jesus unto him, 'Go and do thou likewise.' But note, and he said, 'He that showed mercy upon him.'

> Charity is selective. Charity involves work on the part of the recipient, and it has as its purpose the strengthening and protection of a godly society. Its purpose is to unify people of a common faith and enable the poor of that faith to enjoy everything as well. However, a work of mercy differs. This man had gone down the road, been attacked, stripped, wounded, and left half dead.

We are assuming that the man was a Judahite. Where was he going? From Jerusalem to Jericho. He was probably someone in the tribe of Judah. A priest, the highest in the Levitical order, passed by. He looked over, saw him, and snuck past on the other side. Perhaps he was afraid the robbers were still there, or perhaps he simply did not want to get involved. I do not know. The next man was a Levite, who was to be a teacher of the law of God. He certainly knew what the law of mercy was about, and yet he passed by on the other side. Our Lord said the third man was a Samaritan.

You remember what the Judahites called the Samaritans: dogs. They called them that because they were half-breeds who had intermarried with the heathen. The Samaritans had their own religion and worshipped on Mount Gerizim rather than going to Jerusalem. Yet this Samaritan saw the Judahite lying on the road, went over, and cared for him. He poured oil and wine into his wounds, lifted him up, put him on his own ass, took him to an inn, and cared for him. The next day, when he had to leave, he gave two more days' worth of money for the care of a man he did not know and had never seen in his entire life. He told the innkeeper, "If you spend anything else, I'll be glad to give it to you when I come back by this way."

Let me point out the difference between an act of charity and an act of mercy. An act of charity is the undergirding and strengthening of the society of faith. An act of mercy is simply a humane act, helping someone in desperate need. The Samaritan was under no obligation to change this Judahite's religious views, to have any further dealings with him, to invite him into his own home, or to have him come live with him. Here was a man in need, and he helped.

Mercy is a humane act. It requires no further involvement than the act of mercy itself, whereas charity presupposes a fundamental identity with the recipient and is affirmed and furthered by the donor. Charity is supra-personal; it is religious. Works of mercy are personal and humane. If I see a wreck and a car is on fire, apt to explode at any moment, I do not run up to the car and say, "Now, are there any Christians in this vehicle?" No!

I open the door and snatch them out regardless of who they are. Am I rescuing them as an act of mercy? Suppose the car is loaded with Muslims. I am not under any obligation to become a Muslim simply because I snatched them out of a burning car. I do not identify with that faith merely because I saved four or five of them. No. It is simply an act of mercy: I snatched somebody out of a burning car.

It could be an atheist. That is simply an act of mercy. You rescue them regardless of their faith. If I rescue them, I am not subsidizing their alien faith, nor their lack of faith. All I am doing is saving their lives. Thus, I am responsible to save lives, even the lives of my enemies.

Here, then, is the distinction between charity and a work of mercy. In Acts chapter 11, beginning in verse 27, we read: “And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea, which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

There was a great dearth, that is, a great famine. What did the disciples determine to do? They determined to send relief to Jerusalem to help those brethren. Was that an act of charity? Yes. But what about some who were starving, who were not believers, who may have received some of that? That would have been an act of mercy.

I could give food to a starving child. If that child were an atheist, I could give that child food that might save his life. That would be a

work of mercy. However, if that were a Christian child, and I not only fed him but took him, trained him, and provided for him, that would be charity.

I'm undergirding the faith of the brethren and strengthening the society. Now, here is what you and I would call an example of biblical charity. Look, if you would please, at 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 3. Paul says, "Honor widows that are widows indeed, but if any widow have children or nephews, let them first learn to show piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is widow indeed and desolate trusteth in God, and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day." God says there are some widows that need to be supported.

Biblical Charity Illustrated: Widows in 1 Timothy 5

Those who are excluded are those who have families. It is the family's obligation to take care of their widows. Then there are other qualifications given in 1 Timothy 5. But look what he says in verse 16: "If any man or woman that believeth hath widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Now, suppose we have a widow woman who meets all the qualifications of a widow in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and has no family. You say, "Well, Brother Weaver, just giving that woman money to live on— that's not charity. That's just pure welfare." Oh, no. It is charity because charity requires work. What kind of work? Look what the Bible says in verse 5: "Now she that is a widow indeed and desolate trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." When the church supports a widow, that widow is obligated to maintain a spirit of prayer, fasting, and supplication on behalf of that church and all the members therein.

Moreover, remember what the Bible says that the elder women are to do in Titus chapter 2: "The aged women likewise that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."

What else is a widow to do besides pray? She teaches the younger women how to be a holy, godly woman, how to keep house, how to cook, how to sew, and how to clean. In other words, she is working. See, that's charity. That's when you're undergirding the faith of society, the society of believers, by providing sustenance for someone who could not sustain themselves, and yet at the same time they are working. There is self-respect and satisfaction involved.

I want you to understand that contrasted with biblical charity is false charity. False charity is theft, plain and simple. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 12. You could also find this in Mark 14, but we'll look in John 12. I want to show you where the average charitable institution is today. I can also show you where the average governmental charity is today. John chapter 12, beginning there with verse 1.

False Charity Is Theft

Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served; Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, anointed the feet of Jesus, wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of that ointment.

Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who should betray him, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?” Three hundred pence was three hundred days of sustenance. Why was this money not given to the poor? “This said he, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”

Then said Jesus, “Let her alone. Against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always you have with you, but me you have not always.”

When you give 100 bucks to a charity, find out how much of that 100 bucks actually goes to the people for whom it was intended.

False charity is theft, pure, plain, and simple. False charity would not permit any luxury at all while the poor exist. But our Lord said, “The poor you're going to have with you always.” False charity hates

joy, happiness, luxury, and abundance. It denies a person the right to use his own property in light of his own conscience. According to false charity, the rights of the poor to a man's property and wealth far exceed the rights of the man who owns the property and wealth. Success becomes a crime and can be atoned for only by a share-the-wealth program à la socialism, communism, or welfarism.

False charity is hypocritical, and it destroys society. The only way it can be maintained is by destroying the contrast between God and Satan, good and evil, truth and error, and right and wrong. False charity is anti-God and anti-Christ because it blurs the distinction that God Himself has made and strikes at the very nature of God. It involves confusion and makes no difference between right and wrong, good and evil.

False charity is theft. When God stated, “Thou shalt not steal,” that command applies to governments as well as individuals. Coercive charity is not charity; it is theft, no matter what form it takes or where it originates.

Conclusion: Stewardship and Refusal to Help the Ungodly

Years ago, Alice was working while I was in the university, and they were putting pressure on her to donate to UNICEF. “We want to have a 100%.” I told her, “We can’t give to UNICEF. That’s United Nations. That’s communist to the core.” So she told her boss, “I can’t give. And I won’t give.” He said, “Could we give something in your name? Just so we could have 100%.”

My wife said, “Of course not. You may not give in my name. You have to be satisfied with 99%.” What if she had buckled under and given? Would it have been charity? Of course not. Coercive charity is nothing but theft. We must understand that we have a moral and biblical obligation to be without pity, compassion, and charity towards some.

I want to give you one last verse in closing. In 2 Chronicles chapter 19, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. He had been up to Samaria, hobnobbing with the wicked king of Samaria and promising him help. “And Jehu the

son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, 'Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.'" What? "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?"

There is a difference between an act of mercy and an act of charity. You cannot subsidize the wicked. What really got me was when Jehoshaphat told Ahab, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." No, I am not as a wicked man, and God's people are not as a wicked nation. We must understand that there are some people whom God forbids us to pity or have compassion upon. Everything that we have, whatever we have, however much we have, is a stewardship. We must use what we have in light of God's directives and commands. God gave it to us, and God can take it from us.

1 Corinthians 4 says, "Moreover, it's required of a steward that a man be found faithful." So we must faithfully use what God has given us according as He's laid down in His word. Is there biblical charity? Yes. Is there an act of mercy? Yes. Are there unbiblical acts of charity? Yes. And God forbids us to engage in those.

Father, we ask you to help and teach us, make us holy and godly, and build us up in holy faith. Lord, thou art God, and God alone. We thank thee for what you've done and what you're going to do in Christ's name. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

The Implications of God's Taxation

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 26:1-8 (KJV)

Introduction and Reading of Deuteronomy 26

Well, let's open our Bible today to Deuteronomy 26, and we're going to be bringing the eighth and the final message in this short series on biblical wealth. Deuteronomy 26. And we're going to be reading the entire chapter, all 19 verses. Deuteronomy 26, beginning there with verse 1. Deuteronomy 26, verse 1. The message is entitled, "The Implications of God's Taxation." Implications of God's Taxation. Deuteronomy 26, verse 1: "It shall be when thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possesses it, and dwellest therein, then thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shall put it in a basket and shall go into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord

thy God that I am coming to the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God. And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few. And he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us and laid upon us hard bondage. And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm with great terribleness, with signs and with wonders."

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 26:1-19 (KJV)

"He hath brought us into this place, and given us this land, even the land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee, and in thine house thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing, all the tithes of thine increase, the third year, which is the year of tithing, hast given unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled, then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, unto the stranger, unto the fatherless, unto the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away aught thereof for any unclean use, nor given aught thereof for the dead. But I have hearkened unto the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation from heaven, and bless thy people Israel and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and with

> honey. This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: Thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments, and to make thee high above all the nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor, and that thou mayest be an holy people"

Tithing as a Recognition of God's Sovereignty

In Deuteronomy 26, the first eleven verses deal with the Law of the Firstfruits, and the remainder of the chapter deals with the Law of the Tithes—the Levitical, the Poor, and the Rejoicing Tithe. There is a distinction between the Law of Firstfruits, the Law of the Firstborn, and the Law of the Tithes. The offering of the firstborn and the offering of the firstfruits are closely connected with the tithes and constitute a symbolic offering of the whole, yet they are not synonymous. The tithes were in addition to the two offerings. However, all were taxes placed upon man's increase by God himself. It is not my intent today to delve into the law of the firstborn, nor into the law of the firstfruits, nor into the law of the tithe since I've already done that. What I want to emphasize today are the implications of God's taxation. Let me ask a question, and I want you to think about this because I'm going to answer this question for you. What are the real implications of the tithe? What are you actually confessing and acknowledging when you tithe? You could ask that a different way: what are you confessing and acknowledging when you do not tithe? I want you to see the plain implications that are taught in Deuteronomy chapter 26. First of all, tithing is indeed a recognition of the sovereignty of God. Look in the first four verses. He says, "It shall be when thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance and possesses it and dwellest therein that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and thou shalt put it in a basket, and thou shalt go unto the

place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there, and thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him..." Now watch what you say. "I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am coming to the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers to give us." Note, "I profess."

The word "profess" is exactly the same as "I confess." So when you brought the tithes and offerings, you were actually making a profession or a confession. What were you confessing? What were you acknowledging? You were acknowledging that God is sovereign. Sovereignty and taxation are inseparable because taxation is a claim to ownership. God's power to tax demonstrates that He is the true owner and the true controller of the world. The claim of ownership is the claim of sovereignty. That's why Psalm 24 says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all they that dwell therein." That's why Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus Christ is the Maker and the Upholder of all things. So when God claims the power to tax the world, He is at the same time claiming ownership and control of the world and saying that He is indeed the Sovereign.

Thus when we give to the Lord our tithes and offerings, we are confessing and professing that He is the true owner, the true controller, and the true sovereign of this world. By implication, when you fail to tithe, you're confessing that God is not the true sovereign, not the true owner, and not the true controller of the world.

Listen carefully, because I want you to see the implication of this truth. The issue that confronts every individual is the issue of sovereignty, or what you and I would call lordship. So the question is, is God the true sovereign? Is the federal government the true sovereign? Is the state the true sovereign? Is man the true sovereign? What in the world is a man confessing when he will render to Caesar the tax that Caesar demands, but he refuses to honor and to render unto God the taxes that God demands? Who is he confessing and acknowledging is the true sovereign and the true owner and the true controller? How in the world could a man in good conscience pay taxes to the federal government or pay taxes to the state government and not pay God's taxes? Because taxation and sovereignty are inseparable. All claims to sovereignty and all claims to the power to

tax are either legitimate and lawful or they are illegitimate and unlawful.

Since all authority rests upon God and His Law Word, all claims of sovereignty and the power to tax that are over, above, and beyond God's Law Word are unbiblical, illegitimate, and unlawful. If God is the sovereign, anyone or anything that goes over and above and beyond God has to be unbiblical, illegitimate, and unlawful. Usurped, unbiblical, and ungodly taxation is nothing less than thievery and robbery.

Psalm 50:18 says, "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentest with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers." When you see someone doing what is wrong, and you do not stop him, or you do not try to stop him, or you just remain silent, thus is your consenting with him—you are agreeing with him. If simply consenting to such makes one guilty, how much more guilt is added by framing and enforcing ungodly and unbiblical laws?

Rushdoony, in his Institutes of Biblical Law, states: "The issue of taxation rests squarely and absolutely upon the issue of sovereignty. Whoever is God is ruler, and whoever is the creature of God is his steward. Since man did not create himself, nor can he uphold the world by the word of his power, man is the created steward who is to serve the creator God of Scripture. God, not man, is the Lord. Therefore, any man, whether reprobate or Christian, who either supports taxation not authorized by Scripture, or who refuses to pay the taxes that are levied on man by Scripture, is a robber of God. He is a robber of God because he is either a partaker with thieves, Psalm 50 verse 18, who levy ungodly taxation, or he is a thief because he refuses to render to God that which is God's due."

By so doing, he denies that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein. He denies that Christ is Lord. He commits the sin of Adam, attempting to determine good and evil apart from God's revealed law word. Therefore, any man—reprobate or Christian—who supports taxation not authorized by Scripture, or who refuses to pay the taxes Scripture levies, is a robber of God. Sovereignty and taxation are inseparable. If God is sovereign, he has the right to tax; no one may go beyond God's law. When an individual pays state, county, or federal tax but refuses

God's tax, he implies that government is God and not God. Thus when you and I bring tithes and offerings, we say God is the true sovereign, the true ruler, the one in absolute control.

Tithing as a Realization of the Sovereignty of Grace

First, bringing tithes and offerings recognizes God's sovereignty. Second, it realizes the sovereignty of grace. Look at verse 5: "And thou shalt speak and say unto the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few and became there a nation great and mighty and populous. And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us and laid upon us hard bondage. And when we cried unto the Lord our God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with a great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And he brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land that floweth with milk and honey."

Now, tithing not only is an acknowledgment and recognition of God's sovereignty, it is also a realization of the sovereignty of grace. In other words, it is a realization that we are what we are only by the grace of God. I want you to go back to verse 5, because under this realization of the sovereignty of grace, I want you to note what he says in verse 5. He says, "And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father." Now, please remember, here were Hebrews, here were Israelites, bringing their offerings and their tithes, and when they presented them before the priest, they not only confessed that God was the sovereign, they are now realizing the sovereignty of grace in that they had no standing before God in and of themselves. They said, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father."

That is, they were not depending upon their ancestry. They were not depending upon their lineage, upon their deeds, upon their merits. You see, the truth of the matter is this. Our fathers were just as helplessly and hopelessly lost as we. Do you realize that the ancestors of the Hebrews were nomadic shepherds, either Syrians by birth as Abraham or as by long residence there as Jacob. Jacob lived

20 years in Paddan Aram, which is in Syria. In fact, it was Pliny and also Strabo, the historians, that said that Chaldea and Mesopotamia at one time were part of Syria, and although Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees along with Sarah, they said back at that time that country was part of Syria.

So when you're saying, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father," what are you saying? When God found Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, was Abraham upright, godly, holy, a worshipper of God? No! He was a pagan! He was a heathen! He was an unbeliever! He did not find God. God found him. And God saved him, and God said, "Get out of the land unto the land which I will show thee." Thus, even Abraham had no standing before God in and of himself. He was a heathen and an idolater. And what you're saying is this. When you're giving those tithes, you're saying, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father. I have no standing before you.

There's nothing in my lineage that can save me. Nothing in my genealogy that can save me. Nothing in my deeds and my merits. I have absolutely nothing in and of myself. What I am, I am only by Your sovereign grace. You came to me, and in mercy, You brought me out of my sins and brought me to Yourself." Notice secondly under this, they also realize that God alone is the Savior and the Redeemer.

What am I talking about? Look in verse 6. They said, "...the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage." Now watch verse 7. "And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, the Lord looked upon our affliction," verse 8, "and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders, and He hath brought us into this land." So it was the Lord who heard, looked, brought them out, and brought them in. What are you confessing? Everything is of God. Jonah 2:9 says, "Salvation is of the Lord."

Israel could not deliver herself. You could not save yourself or help save yourself. Deliverance is of the Lord. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 1:15, "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His grace." When was Paul

converted? When it pleased God to convert him. When were you converted? When it pleased God to convert you.

The Bible teaches monergism—that God alone works in salvation. It was God who smote Egypt and its false gods, brought the Israelites out, sustained them through the wilderness, and brought them into the land. Here they are bringing their tithes and offerings, and the first thing they do is recognize the sovereignty of God, and the second thing they do is realize the sovereignty of His grace. In other words, we are what we are only by the grace of God.

Tithing and offering our gifts demonstrates that we're acknowledging and confessing that simple truth. Or as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10, "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Why are you converted? Why do you have the knowledge that you have? Why are you associated with people who believe the truth? Because by the grace of God, you are what you are. It was God who saved you, gave you the gifts, the knowledge, and the understanding.

Neither our tithes nor our obedience saves us. It is Christ who saves us. Our obedience and tithing may be a manifestation, acknowledgment, and confession that we realize it is God who saves us, but our obedience does not save us, nor does it help save us. We are either redeemed by Christ, or we are left to destruction. Have you ever wondered whatever happened to those other people that God left in Ur of the Chaldees? It is only by the grace of God we are what we are. So when we give our offerings and tithe, we are acknowledging, first of all, that God is sovereign. Secondly, it is a realization of the sovereignty of grace—that it is God who heard us, God who saved us, God who brought us out, and God who brought us in.

Tithing as a Reality of the Sacredness of Worship

Thirdly, in giving our tithes and offerings, there is a reality of the sacredness of worship. Look in verses 10 and 11: "And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God and worship before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and in thine house thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you."

Tithing and offering gifts are intimately and vitally connected with, and are also an integral part of, worship. Some churches say, "Let us worship the Lord with our tithes and offerings." That is not just a saying; that is truth. In verse 10, he says, "and worship before the Lord thy God." Note that worship is unto the Lord. He is the object of worship, and we are obligated to worship and adore Him who is the living God. So our worship, first and foremost, is unto the Lord. Secondly, it is before the Lord. Look in verse 10 again: "I have brought the firstfruits of the land which, O Lord, Thou hast given Me, and Thou shalt set it before the Lord Thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God."

So worship is not only unto the Lord, it is before the Lord. That is, it is to be done in His presence with His approval. Now watch. Worship is not only unto the Lord and before the Lord. Worship also involves rejoicing in the Lord. Verse 11, "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee." Why? Because I'm going to show you that when we tithe, it's just a mere representation of every good thing which God has given unto us. So what we're doing, we are rejoicing in everything that God has given unto us. He said, "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and in thine house thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you." So worship, then, involves rejoicing before the Lord for all that He has done for us, for our family, and for our friends as well. You see, since God is the object of worship, He alone is the author of worship, and it must be accomplished upon the terms which God has ordained.

Now what does God say in John 4, verse 24? That "God is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Now, I'm going to skip a lot of verses because I could show you the reality of worship in a lot of ways. First of all, if you want to look them up later, you can look in Isaiah 1, verses 11-15. You can also look in Amos 5, verses 21-23, where God says, "I hate, I despise, I will not accept your worship." That is because the worship was not from the heart. But I want you to look in your Bibles to Malachi chapter 1 because I want you to see the offerings and the giving is intimately connected here with the worship of God. Now I want you to note what he says. The last book in the Old Testament, the book of

Malachi. Malachi chapter 1. And let's look at verses 6 and 8 first of all. 6 and 8. Watch carefully. Malachi 1, verse 6: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master." Now look at God's question. "If I be a father, where is mine honor? If I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of hosts, unto you, O priest, that despise my name?"

And you say, Wherein have we despised thy name? In other words, God, where have we mocked you, blasphemed you, despised your name? Here is how, verse 7: You offer polluted bread upon mine altar, and you say, Where did we pollute thee? In that you say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. And if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor. Will he be pleased with thee and accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts?

These people were giving God the lame, the sick, the worst. God said, Do you think I am going to take that at your hand? That is nothing more than a despising of me. I am not going to receive that. If you do not believe that, invite your governor over for a meal. Set before him a big piece of steak with a big green blob in the middle of it. See if he will eat it or appreciate the steak you provided. No, said God. You are not going to give me that stuff.

Skip down to verse 13. You said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! You have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts. You brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick. Thus you brought an offering. Should I accept this at your hands, saith the Lord? But cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing, for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen. God said, If you think you are going to run in fifteen minutes late with a quarter in one hand and a quarterly in the other hand and please me, you are mistaken.

When we offer our tithes and offerings, we understand the reality of worship, because Malachi has direct reference as to what we bring before the Lord. It is true: when one does not tithe and offer his gifts aright, he does not worship aright. And when one withholds God's taxes, he not only robs God, he mocks God.

"Wherein have we despised thy name?" Because you despised me in giving me that which is poor and second-rate. This really happened to a friend of mine, a missionary in a foreign country. He got a notice in his mailbox that he had a package with customs due. He went to the post office, did not recognize the name, and had to pay something like 20 or 30 bucks postage and customs to get the package. When he opened it, some sweet little lady in the States had sent him a box of used tea bags. He could have bought four or five boxes of good tea bags where he was for the money he spent on it. But what is the mentality of people? We're going to give the Lord that which is left over, that which is sick. No, said God, "I am a great king. And my name is dreadful among the heathen." God deserves the best, not the worst. He deserves the most, not the least. So, when we tithe and offer our offerings, it's not only a recognition of God's sovereignty, a realization of the sovereignty of grace—it's God who saved us—there is also thirdly a reality of worship.

Tithing as a Reasonable Test of Obedience

Fourthly, tithing is a reasonable test and testimony of our obedience. Look back in your Bibles, Deuteronomy 26, verses 13 and 14. "Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God." What are you going to say now? You've already been confessing some things. Here's something else you've got to say. "I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me. I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away aught thereof for any unclean use, nor given aught thereof for the dead. But I have hearkened unto the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me."

Do you realize that God has the absolute right to test us? We do not have the right to test God. We are His creatures, and He therefore may be pleased to give us a reasonable test of our obedience. Go back to the Garden of Eden. God created Adam and Eve and put them in the garden, and guess what God did? God graciously gave them every tree of the garden but one. God said, "You can have everything, just this one. This one is mine. Please do

not touch it. This is mine." Isn't that reasonable? God gave them everything, and He just reserved one thing to Himself. He said, "This is mine. Don't touch it." Folks, let me tell you something. God has the absolute right to say to us, "The tithes are mine. I reserve those to myself. Don't touch. You can do what you will with the rest of it. I've given it all to you. I just reserve this small amount for myself." It is a reasonable test of our obedience.

Now, what do they have to confess? "Lord, you told me to bring my hallowed things here. I've done it. Lord, You've told me not to eat anything in mourning or sorrow." Why? Because the law required joy and rejoicing. "Lord," He said, "I haven't done that. And Lord, You've told me not to give anything to the dead. Lord, I haven't done that. Lord, I have obeyed You." It is a reasonable test of obedience.

Now look at verse 13, the latter part. When he brings the tithes and the offerings, he says, "I have not transgressed thy commandments. Neither have I forgotten them." You know what a transgression is? It's sin. 1 John 3:4 says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." "Whosoever transgresseth the law committeth sin. Why? For sin is the transgression of the law." Here failure to tithe and failure to use those tithes the way God tells us is called a transgression, a sin. Why would failing to tithe be called a sin or transgression? Because of Leviticus 27:30, when God says, "The tithes are mine, saith the Lord." They don't belong to us. They don't belong to the church. They belong to God Himself.

We cannot use the tithes for an unclean use. He had to say, "Lord, I haven't given anything for the dead. I haven't given anything in mourning." Neither can we take God's tithes and give them to apostate religions or apostate churches where the Word of God is not preached and taught. It is an unclean use of the tithe. That's why in 1 Kings 4:42 and 44, which I've already covered, the man came from Baal-shalisha and brought his tithes to Elisha, the man of God. He was not going to use those tithes in an apostate Israel where the golden calves were set up in Dan and Bethel.

According to verses 13 and 14, we may use the tithes as a reasonable test and measure of our obedience. Why and how can that be? If a man is willing to be faithful and honest and honor God with his money, in all probability he's going to be faithful and honest

and honor God in other areas as well, because money is that which is closest to our hearts. But a man who will be dishonest and dishonorable with God and fail to give God that which is His will also be dishonest and dishonorable in other areas of his life. It seems to me our Lord said something like this in the New Testament: "He that is faithful in the few will be faithful in that which is the greatest. But he that is unfaithful in that which is the least is also going to be unfaithful in that which is the greatest."

Tithing and offering, then, is simply a reasonable test of our obedience. God says, "Look at everything I've given you. I'm just reserving this small little bit for myself. Don't touch it. Use it the way I tell you to use it." It is the same thing he told Adam: "You can have everything but this one tree." Fifthly, tithing and offering is a reliance upon God and His readiness to bless us. In verse 15, he says, "Look down from thy holy habitation from heaven and bless thy people Israel and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey." When we tithe and offer, we express reliance upon God and His readiness to bless us. Let me quote part of 1 Samuel 2:30: "He that honoreth me will I honor, saith the Lord. And he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed." God said, "If you honor me, I will honor you." Mark it down: God will be no man's debtor. You cannot outgive God. You cannot be more gracious than God. "Them that honor Me will I honor, saith the Lord. But if you despise Me, you will be lightly esteemed." Then in Psalm 101:6, God says, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land." God is going to give particular attention to those who are faithful.

Tithing as a Reliance on God's Blessing

Let me ask you a question. Suppose you have two sons. One was a drunkard, a dopehead, a whoremonger, sorry as the day is long, wouldn't work, not fit for anything. The other boy was loving, kind, obedient, a hard worker, honest, in every area tried to do what was right. If you were going to bless your sons, which one would you be more inclined to bless? Be honest with yourself. You know as well as I do, you're not going to give to the one that you know is a drunkard and whoremonger. It's going to turn around and throw it away. You'd be foolish to do so. What does God say? "I'm going to honor

those that honor me. Mine eye shall be upon the faithful of the land." You know what the Bible says in Proverbs 28:20? "A faithful man shall abound with blessings." Why shall a faithful man abound with blessings? Because God's eye are upon the faithful. And the fact is, if you honor God, God's going to honor you. Tithing is a reliance upon God. How can it be a reliance upon God?

When we tithe, we are saying, "Lord, you have blessed me in times past and in the present, and I am trusting you to bless me in the future. I am relying upon you." That is why Deuteronomy 28:2 says that if we obey Him, "all these blessings shall overtake us." The word means to chase down, to run down and overtake. God said, "If you obey me, you cannot outrun my blessings. They will chase you down and fall all over you." So when we faithfully tithe, we expect God's blessings—not because of our obedience or because we have earned or merited them, but because of God's promise. God has promised to honor those that honor Him in His grace and mercy. He has promised that His eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land and that "the faithful man shall abound with blessings." It is not based upon our obedience; it is based upon the promise of God.

Let me rehash what I have given you, because I have one more point, and to me it is one of the most important points in this message. In tithing, there is a recognition of God's sovereignty, a realization of God's sovereign grace, a reality of the sacredness of worship, and a seeking and trusting of God to bless us. We realize that He has blessed us in time past, so we are relying upon Him to bless us in the future.

Tithing as a Remembrance of the Covenantal Bond

Moreover, it is a reasonable test of our obedience. Watch this last point: in tithing, there is a remembrance of the covenantal bond that exists between God and His people.

Now look in your Bibles to verses 16-19. Deuteronomy 26 verse 16: "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do all these statutes and judgments. Thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart and with all thine soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to

hearken unto His voice. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments, and to make thee high above all nations, which He hath made in praise, and in name, and in honor, and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as He hath spoken."

Let's go to verse 16 first, because sixthly, in tithing, there is a remembrance of the covenantal bond that exists between God and His people. In verse 16, note that internal obedience is demanded as well as external obedience: "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments, and thou shalt therefore keep and do them," note, "with all thine heart and with all thy soul." Our obedience must be heartfelt. There cannot be any worship with an empty, meaningless ceremony or ritual. Whatever we do must embrace the totality of our being.

The Apostle Paul said, "for God loveth a cheerful giver." The word "cheerful" is hilaron, where we get "hilarious." God loves a hilarious giver. If we did pass an offering plate, which we don't do here, and you grudgingly threw in a $20 bill, does God accept that as a sacrifice, as a gift on your part? No. Because you did not give it with your heart, cheerfully, willingly. You gave grudgingly and hesitatingly. When God says whatever we do in worship—giving, singing, preaching—it is to be with the totality of our being.

Now here's the part I want to dwell on. Verse 17: "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in His ways and His statutes and His commandments and His judgments and to hearken unto His voice." I want to tithe for no other reason than this. This one is sufficient.

Now underline that word "avouched." It means to affirm positively, to affirm openly, to acknowledge, to substantiate, to guarantee. When we tithe unto the Lord, recognizing He is the sovereign God, recognizing what we are by His grace and mercy, recognizing the sacredness of worship as a reasonable test of our obedience, and recognizing the relation between God and His people, we are avouching. We are declaring positively and openly, substantiating the fact that we are God's people, and that we will not simply tithe in obedience to Him. We will obey Him in the totality of

His commands. Think what it means when a man will not tithe. But it doesn't end there. Verse 18: "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, that thou shouldest keep all His commandments." Now wait just a minute. I understand how in giving to God, in obedience to Him, I'm avouching, declaring that He's my God. But now, in verse 18, the Lord avouches. He declares positively, openly, and substantiates the fact that we're His people. How does God, receiving our tithes and offerings, declare that we're His people? Look at Deuteronomy 23, verses 17 and 18. Verse 17: "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow, for even both of these are an abomination of the Lord thy God."

All my life I have heard you're not supposed to sell dogs. The Bible doesn't forbid selling a four-legged dog; it's the two-legged kind the Bible condemns—that's what God calls sodomites. He says, "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore or the price of a dog into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow, for even both of these are abomination of the Lord thy God." God is saying, "I want no offerings from whores and sodomites."

Why would God say that? Because they are living under an alien law system, not obeying God's law. To receive their tithes and offerings would be to recognize their alien law system and ungodly lifestyle. God said, "I don't want it. I will not have it. I will not take it." So when we give God our tithes and offerings, and God receives them, what did He say? Look at Deuteronomy 26:18: "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." God said, "I am receiving them, because you are in my law system, and I know that you are going to obey me in the rest of the areas that I command you."

Nothing could be more beautiful than the closing section of this chapter. "Thou hast this day accepted Jehovah to be thy God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and hearken unto His voice. And Jehovah hath

accepted thee this day to be a people of possession to Him, as He hath told thee that thou shouldest keep all His commandments, so that God will exalt thee high above all the other people." When we tithe, we recognize He's our God and we're obligated to keep all of His law. When He receives our tithes, He's saying, "I'm acknowledging that you're My people and that you are going to obey Me."

Now, let me give you one closing thought. The Kingdom of God is not a beggar's agency or a goodwill industry receiving second-hand leftover and worn-out goods. It is the realm and the majesty of the Sovereign God of Heaven and Earth. If all of God's people in this nation faithfully tithed—not just this little group, which mostly does—can you even conceive of how much money there would be to overthrow the powers of the wicked and to establish that which is right and holy and just?

Conclusion and Prayer

Tithing forces us to remember that we're covenantly engaged with God, bound to honor Him, His kingdom, and keep His commandments. In doing so, we're confessing that we're His people. When God receives our tithes and offerings, He too is acknowledging that we're His own, and His eyes are going to be upon us. What did God say to the heathen? "He that toucheth thee, that is, toucheth any of God's people. He that toucheth thee, toucheth the apple of my eye." If you want to avouch, confess, openly substantiate that God is your God, one of the ways is by obedience and tithing, and then obedience in keeping all of His commandments.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You today for Jesus Christ, for the wonderful truth of Your Word. We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast indeed given us Thy Word. And Lord, we acknowledge that we are of Thy people. We are Thy handiwork. We are the sheep of Thy pasture. And we want to be faithful unto Thee, and avouch that Thou art our God, so that in Your grace and mercy, You may indeed avouch that we are Thy people. Forgive us of our sins, and help us to serve Thee with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Biblical Wealth - Part 1 of 8
JW01013 | SermonAudio

Chapter 2: Biblical Wealth - Part 2 of 8
JW01012 | SermonAudio

Chapter 3: Biblical Wealth - Part 3 of 8
JW01010 | SermonAudio

Chapter 4: Biblical Wealth - Part 4 of 8
JW01009 | SermonAudio

Chapter 5: Biblical Wealth - Part 5 of 8
JW01008 | SermonAudio

Chapter 6: Biblical Wealth - Part 6 of 8
JW01007 | SermonAudio

Chapter 7: Biblical Wealth - Part 7 of 8
JW01006 | SermonAudio

Chapter 8: The Implications of God's Taxation
JW01005 | SermonAudio

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

Abraham's Example of Tithing p. 76

Application and Conclusion p. 106

Applications and Conclusion p. 46

B

Biblical Charity Illustrated: Widows in 1 Timothy 5 p. 143

Biblical View of Matter and Dominion p. 16

Biblical Wealth - Part 1 of 8 p. 7

Biblical Wealth - Part 2 of 8 p. 27

Biblical Wealth - Part 3 of 8 p. 49

Biblical Wealth - Part 4 of 8 p. 71

Biblical Wealth - Part 5 of 8 p. 89

Biblical Wealth - Part 6 of 8 p. 109

Biblical Wealth - Part 7 of 8 p. 127

C

Charity Is Never Promiscuous but Always Selective p. 130

Conclusion and Prayer p. 163

Conclusion: Stewardship and Refusal to Help the Ungodly p. 145

Consequences of Not Rejoicing in God p. 125

Consequences of Rejecting God's Rule p. 79

Covenantal Obedience p. 40

D

Distinction Between Civil Tax and Tithes p. 78

Distinction Between Works of Mercy and Charity p. 138

F

False Charity Is Theft p. 144

G

God as the Sovereign Source of Wealth p. 19

God's Ownership and Man's Stewardship p. 21
God's Tithe vs. Man's Tithe p. 124

H

Historical Consequences: Renaissance, Reformation, and Asceticism p. 12
Historical Summary of the Tithes p. 82

I

Illustration of Political Corruption p. 84
Introduction and Reading of Deuteronomy 26 p. 147
Introduction and Review p. 71, p. 109
Introduction and Review of Series p. 89
Introduction and Scripture Reading p. 7, p. 49
Introduction: One Sacred Sphere p. 27
Introduction: The Need for Biblical Charity p. 128

J

Joy in the Old Testament p. 112

P

Principles of the Poor Tithe p. 102
Principles of the Tithe of Rejoicing p. 118
Proper Use and Decapitalization p. 121

R

Rejoicing as a Command p. 113
Restoration in Christ, the Last Adam p. 61
Review of Previous Teachings on Wealth p. 50

T

The Basic Form of Charity: Gleaning p. 134
The Covenant Promise and Its Fulfillment in Christ p. 51
The Doctrine of Charity p. 128
The Dominion Mandate in Genesis p. 54
The Fall and Its Effects on Culture p. 58
The Great Commission as the Expanded Dominion Mandate p. 66
The History of the Tithes p. 81
The Implications of God's Taxation p. 147

The Inescapability of Culture and the Role of Wealth p. 68
The Levites' Duties and Education Role p. 95
The Levites' Economic Status p. 97
The Levites' Obligation to Tithe p. 100
The Levitical Tithe: Support for the Levites p. 91
The Misinterpretation of Wealth in Scripture p. 9
The Nature and Scope of the Dominion Mandate p. 55
The Origin of the Idea that Wealth is Sinful p. 9
The Perplexity of the Righteous: Psalm 73 p. 36
The Poor Tithe as an Essential Part of Charity p. 137
The Poor Tithe: Care for the Needy p. 101
The Purpose of Wealth p. 50
The Purpose of Wealth: To Establish God's Covenant p. 51
The Theology of the Tithes p. 72
The Three Biblical Tithes and Applications p. 86
The Three Tithes p. 91
The Three Tithes and Their Purpose p. 91
The Tithe as God's Tax and Its Social Implications p. 82
The Tithe of Rejoicing p. 117
The Tithe of Rejoicing Introduced p. 110
The Tithes Belong to the Lord p. 73, p. 90
The Two Hinges of God's Blessing p. 40
Thomas Aquinas and the Sacred-Secular Divide p. 10
Tithing as a Reality of the Sacredness of Worship p. 154
Tithing as a Realization of the Sovereignty of Grace p. 152
Tithing as a Reasonable Test of Obedience p. 157
Tithing as a Recognition of God's Sovereignty p. 149
Tithing as a Reliance on God's Blessing p. 159
Tithing as a Remembrance of the Covenantal Bond p. 160

W

Wealth as a Curse to the Wicked p. 34
Wealth as a Sign of God's Favor: General Principle p. 32
Why We Are Commanded to Rejoice p. 114

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Genesis

Genesis 1 p. 54, p. 72

Genesis 1:26 p. 17, p. 56

Genesis 1:26-28 p. 17, p. 54, p. 65, p. 66

Genesis 1:28 p. 58

Genesis 1:29 p. 58

Genesis 2 p. 55

Genesis 2:18,23 p. 58

Genesis 3 p. 58

Genesis 3:17 p. 60

Genesis 9 p. 18

Genesis 9:1 p. 57

Genesis 9:1-2 p. 17

Genesis 13 p. 32

Genesis 13:2 p. 32

Genesis 14 p. 76

Genesis 14:12-24 p. 76

Genesis 14:13-23 p. 32

Genesis 24 p. 33

Exodus

Exodus 13:5 p. 53

Exodus 22:22 p. 104

Exodus 23 p. 138

Exodus 23:4-5 p. 139

Exodus 30 p. 82, p. 83

Exodus 34 p. 111, p. 112

Exodus 34:22 p. 110, p. 111

Leviticus

Leviticus 13 p. 97

Leviticus 19:9-10 p. 127, p. 134
Leviticus 23:22 p. 127, p. 134
Leviticus 25 p. 22
Leviticus 25:10 p. 80
Leviticus 26 p. 42, p. 43
Leviticus 27:30 p. 74, p. 90, p. 91, p. 158
Leviticus 27:30-33 p. 98

Numbers

Numbers 1:51 p. 93
Numbers 3:5 p. 92
Numbers 18 p. 99, p. 100
Numbers 18:2 p. 94
Numbers 18:22 p. 93
Numbers 35:2-5 p. 95

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 6:10 p. 53
Deuteronomy 7:1-10 p. 23
Deuteronomy 7:12 p. 53
Deuteronomy 7:9-15 p. 51
Deuteronomy 8 p. 29, p. 41, p. 43, p. 72, p. 110, p. 123
Deuteronomy 8:1-20 p. 7, p. 27
Deuteronomy 8:11-20 p. 49
Deuteronomy 8:18 p. 53, p. 72, p. 90
Deuteronomy 9:5 p. 53
Deuteronomy 10 p. 94
Deuteronomy 10:14 p. 20
Deuteronomy 12 p. 118, p. 119
Deuteronomy 13 p. 132
Deuteronomy 14 p. 106, p. 110
Deuteronomy 14:22-26 p. 111
Deuteronomy 14:26 p. 113
Deuteronomy 15 p. 82, p. 83
Deuteronomy 16 p. 111, p. 112, p. 113, p. 114

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 p. 111
Deuteronomy 17 p. 96
Deuteronomy 18:1-2 p. 94
Deuteronomy 22 p. 138
Deuteronomy 23 p. 161, p. 162
Deuteronomy 24 p. 127, p. 128
Deuteronomy 24:19-22 p. 127, p. 134
Deuteronomy 25 p. 133
Deuteronomy 26 p. 101, p. 102, p. 147, p. 148, p. 149, p. 150, p. 157, p. 160, p. 161
Deuteronomy 26:1-19 p. 148
Deuteronomy 26:1-8 p. 147
Deuteronomy 26:11 p. 114
Deuteronomy 26:18 p. 162
Deuteronomy 27:7 p. 114
Deuteronomy 28 p. 42, p. 43, p. 125
Deuteronomy 28:11 p. 53
Deuteronomy 28:2 p. 160
Deuteronomy 30:20 p. 53
Deuteronomy 31 p. 96
Deuteronomy 33:10 p. 96

1 Samuel

1 Samuel 2 p. 28, p. 29, p. 31, p. 32, p. 50, p. 72, p. 90
1 Samuel 2:30 p. 159
1 Samuel 2:7-8 p. 20

1 Kings

1 Kings 4:42 p. 158
1 Kings 21 p. 21, p. 22

2 Kings

2 Kings 4:42 p. 74

1 Chronicles

1 Chronicles 15:16-24 p. 97
1 Chronicles 23:4 p. 97

2 Chronicles

2 Chronicles 17:7-9 p. 96
2 Chronicles 36 p. 24

Nehemiah

Nehemiah 8:10 p. 112
Nehemiah 8:9 p. 96

Job

Job 12:6 p. 35

Psalm

Psalm 8 p. 18, p. 57
Psalm 24 p. 20, p. 21, p. 150
Psalm 24:1 p. 55
Psalm 50 p. 151
Psalm 50:18 p. 151
Psalm 62:10 p. 35
Psalm 68:5 p. 104
Psalm 69 p. 18, p. 19, p. 35
Psalm 69:4 p. 64
Psalm 73 p. 36, p. 39
Psalm 100 p. 114
Psalm 101:6 p. 159
Psalm 103 p. 114
Psalm 115 p. 20, p. 21
Psalm 121 p. 20, p. 21
Psalm 124 p. 20, p. 21
Psalm 134 p. 20, p. 21

Proverbs

Proverbs 3 p. 83
Proverbs 6 p. 44, p. 45
Proverbs 10:4-5 p. 45
Proverbs 11:28 p. 36
Proverbs 11:4 p. 35, p. 36

Proverbs 13 p. 39
Proverbs 16:19 p. 46
Proverbs 18:11 p. 36
Proverbs 19 p. 131
Proverbs 19:17 p. 131
Proverbs 21:4 p. 58, p. 59
Proverbs 22 p. 25
Proverbs 22:2 p. 138
Proverbs 23 p. 32
Proverbs 24:30 p. 45
Proverbs 27 p. 44
Proverbs 28 p. 39, p. 44
Proverbs 28:20 p. 159, p. 160

Isaiah

Isaiah 1 p. 155, p. 156

Jeremiah

Jeremiah 50 p. 24

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 5 p. 133

Amos

Amos 5 p. 155, p. 156

Jonah

Jonah 2:9 p. 153

Zechariah

Zechariah 11:6 p. 133

Malachi

Malachi 1 p. 155, p. 156
Malachi 3 p. 89
Malachi 3:8 p. 73, p. 74

Matthew

Matthew 5:45 p. 134

Matthew 6 p. 25
Matthew 6:33 p. 47
Matthew 20 p. 129
Matthew 23 p. 82
Matthew 28:18 p. 65

Mark

Mark 10 p. 9
Mark 14 p. 144

Luke

Luke 10:25-37 p. 140
Luke 22:20 p. 43

John

John 1:1-3 p. 64
John 4 p. 115, p. 155
John 8 p. 52
John 12 p. 144
John 15:25 p. 19, p. 64

Acts

Acts 3:22 p. 53
Acts 4:12 p. 63
Acts 5:30 p. 53

Romans

Romans 5:12 p. 62
Romans 6:4-5 p. 62, p. 63
Romans 9:5 p. 53
Romans 14:23 p. 59
Romans 15:8 p. 54

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1 p. 39
1 Corinthians 3 p. 39
1 Corinthians 4 p. 146
1 Corinthians 10 p. 19

1 Corinthians 10:31 p. 30
1 Corinthians 15 p. 61
1 Corinthians 15:10 p. 154
1 Corinthians 15:45 p. 63

2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 10:5 p. 30, p. 31

Galatians

Galatians 1:15 p. 153, p. 154
Galatians 3:16 p. 52
Galatians 3:29 p. 52

Ephesians

Ephesians 2:5-7 p. 63
Ephesians 4 p. 19, p. 124
Ephesians 4:21 p. 64, p. 65
Ephesians 4:24 p. 65

Colossians

Colossians 1:18 p. 63, p. 64
Colossians 3 p. 19, p. 30
Colossians 3:10 p. 64, p. 65
Colossians 3:23 p. 30

1 Thessalonians

1 Thessalonians 5 p. 31

2 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians 3 p. 103
2 Thessalonians 3:10 p. 136

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 5 p. 143

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 3:16 p. 64

Hebrews

Hebrews 1 p. 101

Hebrews 1:3 p. 150
Hebrews 4 p. 101
Hebrews 8 p. 43
Hebrews 13:20 p. 43

1 Peter

1 Peter 3 p. 19
1 Peter 3:18 p. 72, p. 73

1 John

1 John 3:4 p. 158

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

Your companion study guide

Biblical Wealth

Follow the Scripture references, reflect on each lesson, and use the written-response space to apply what you learn.

Scan to open the matching study guide

Downloadable PDF | 8.5 x 11 inches
No sign-in required

studyguides.weaverbiblecollege.com

If you cannot scan the code, visit the address above and search for this book by title.