

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Vital Biblical Topics

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Stewards in the Royal Household

The Oxford Dictionary definition of a **steward** is:

1. A person employed to **manage** another's property, especially a great house or estate.
2. One whose job is to arrange for the supply of **food** to a college or club.
3. A passenger's **attendant** and waiter on a ship or aircraft.
4. One of the **officials** managing a race-meeting or show.

Pause awhile and consider how accurately those words define a true believer's responsibilities in the service of the **King of Kings**. For are we not **managers** in the Royal Household, working on an estate which spans the mighty universe? Are we not supplying **spiritual food** to fellow passengers on a craft (our planet) which is hurtling through space? And are we not **officials** in the greatest race of all - the one for eternal life?

To be sure we are all these things and infinitely more, and that is why the Saviour refers to his followers as '**stewards**' when he says:

Luke 12: 42: ***"And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?***
43: ***Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.***
44: ***Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."***

This lesson has been designed to briefly explain a major duty in **stewardship**; just what you as a steward are required to do in the Royal Household of **Yahweh the Holy One of Israel**. It will show how you are, in fact, a **co-labourer** with the Most High and how that even the poorest believer - by worldly standards - can be a "**faithful and wise steward**" in the royal household of faith. The lesson will outline Yahweh's appointed arrangements for the financing of His work and the personal responsibility of each **steward**. It is the final lesson of the Course and contains a sobering challenge to every Christian committed to spreading the truth in his/her area. You may be sure that if you put this lesson into practice, the **Everlasting Gospel** will reach a thousand people in your country where now it is reaching only one.

1. The Present Scene

Consider for a moment how the various Church groups and Charitable organisations raise money to finance their work. The methods used include:

- Buying and selling shares on the Stock Market
- Renting real estate to the public
- Sales of Work, Jumble Sales

- Raffles, lotteries, sweepstakes, whist drives, football pools
- Sponsored walks, marathons and race meetings
- House to house and street collections
- Coffee mornings, concerts, plays and displays
- And the buying and selling of articles (books, records, candles, holy water, cards and souvenirs of various kinds).

The list is long to say the least and no doubt one could add to it without any trouble; and tell of how sincere believers all over the world strive to raise funds for the charity of their choice.

Please do not think that we are decrying their efforts or doubting their motives - because we are not. But here are some solemn questions for consideration. Are you sure that the Almighty wants the **Everlasting Gospel** financed by these methods? Do you honestly think that He who designed the great **Plan of Salvation** and paid for man's redemption with His own life blood had such methods in mind when He founded His Church and through His Son gave this staggering commission:

Matthew 28: 18: *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

19:Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20: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.”

For our part we must confess that praise-worthy though a few of those money-raising methods are, and most of us have taken part in them - **not one of them bears the stamp of divine authority**. Yes it is an unequivocal fact, that nowhere in the Holy Scriptures will you find Yahweh instructing His people to raise money for the Gospel Work by **any** of the above mentioned methods. They may be perfectly suitable for other causes; they may be the main channels of revenue for scores of charities in Britain and abroad; they may be fine as far as worthwhile secular projects go; but in the final analysis we must admit - **they are not the divinely authorised method for financing the Everlasting Gospel!**

Could it be that herein lies the cause of the Church's financial problems; that somehow - perhaps even inadvertently - the church has allowed itself to become **commercialised** and wandered away from the truth? And could it be that by ignoring the Almighty's **appointed way** and resorting to **human alternatives** to raise funds, many groups have paved the way to economic ruin and in some cases are almost bankrupt?

We think that this may well be the case; that in this very important matter of '**church finance**', many sincere groups have not understood the divine plan and have failed to tell individual believers of their responsibilities in the work of the Most High. For, make no mistake about it, **Yahweh has a plan for financing His work**, a plan which includes every member of His Church - no matter how insignificant or poor they may reckon themselves to be.

Without much ado, let us open to you the financial secrets of a vibrant Gospel work. Let us show you Yahweh's plan for taking the Truth to the whole world; and, more importantly, where **you** as a **steward** in the Royal Household fit into the picture. Here is the divine method encapsulated in a single command.

2. The Almighty's Appointed Way

“Bring ye 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.”

(Malachi 3: 10)

Yes, believe it or not, the paying of '**tithes**' is the Almighty's appointed way for meeting the financial needs of His Church; for providing spiritual and physical food for the starving masses of humanity. The tithe is to be used:

- To publish the truth, which is likened to **spiritual food**
- To help the widow, the orphan and the needy with physical food

- And to support the ministry.

(Deuteronomy 14:22-29, Nehemiah 10:35-39, 2 Chronicles 31:5-6, Numbers 18:23-32)

3. What is the Tithe?

On the agricultural level the tithe is **one tenth** of the literal harvest, a tenth of the crop, a tenth of the oxen and sheep born each year in the fold and a tenth of the wine and oil harvest. On the industrial level the tithe consists of **a tenth of one's earnings**. For example if a man earns £10 a week, the tithe on that amount would be £1. And if he earned £100 per week the tithe would be £10. Every believer in the Almighty is commanded to bring in the tithe just as they did in ancient days.

4. Who does the Tithe belong to?

The tithe is Yahweh's, it belongs to Him. When we return the tithe to God, we are not really 'paying' Him anything; because, strictly speaking, the tithe is His in the first place. We are simply returning to the Almighty His **share** of the harvest.

We use the word **share** because when a person becomes a true believer in the Almighty he/she immediately becomes a co-worker and **shareholder** with God in the Vineyard of Salvation. And every 'shareholder' in this divine company has, amongst other things, this solemn responsibility:

To return to the Almighty His share of the harvest - the tithe!

For His part Yahweh provides us with life, health, inherent ability, opportunities, the earth with its abundant supply of raw materials and, last but not least, the immeasurable blessings afforded by **His very presence**.

For our part we provide the willingness, perseverance and the physical or mental effort required to produce meaningful results. At harvest time, nine tenths of the harvest is our share and one tenth - the **tithe** - goes to the Almighty. That is the divinely appointed share-out.

Pause awhile and consider this generous arrangement? Have you ever come across a better employer? Do you personally know of any business, any enterprise, any company, any organisation where that kind of a deal is given to the workers? We are absolutely certain that you have not, because there just isn't another. Oh how generous is the Almighty, how benevolent His dealings, how far-reaching His plans.

5. What does The Almighty do with His Share?

When a believer returns to Yahweh His tithe, do you suppose that He keeps it for Himself? Do you think He desperately **needs** our money in the first place? You may be sure that He doesn't. The Almighty God of Israel is a Being of limitless resources and He doesn't need our money or our food to keep Him going. Indeed the cattle on a thousand hills and all the gold in the world's banks belong to Him anyway. (Psalm 50:10-13, Haggai 2:8) "Then why," you may well ask, "does He command us to give Him a tenth of our meagre earnings?" The answer is: because we believers are **stewards** in the Royal Household of Faith and **each of us has a responsibility towards our fellow human beings**. We all have a position to fill, a commission to carry out and a job to do in the Royal Household; and we will never spiritually mature until we shoulder those responsibilities and meet our obligations. And so to each one of us Yahweh says this:

***“Bring the tithe into the storehouse,
that there may be food (spiritual and physical) in my household.”***

Yes, the Most High has commanded every believer to set aside the divine portion - **His Tithe** - for the proclamation of His Truth and the sustenance of fellow believers. And that is where all true believers come into the picture, for **we are all stewards in the Royal Household of Faith**.

The Most High could, of course, easily bypass the above method of tithing and provide spiritual and physical food for humanity some other way. But He has chosen not to do so. If He had, we believers would never really appreciate the valuable lessons of **stewardship, responsibility** and a job **well done**. If Yahweh had excluded His servants from all responsibility and bore the cost of every enterprise alone, we would be no better than cattle in a stall - totally oblivious of the meaning of **duty** and eternally unaware of how we could have in a small way - sacrificed for the benefit of others. Instead, the Most High has lifted us high above the level of brute beasts and allowed us the privilege, **through sacrifice**, of becoming responsible co-workers with Him in the **Vineyard of Salvation**. And when we shoulder our responsibilities and return to Yahweh His tithe we become 'active shareholders' in the divine company, 'co-labourers' with Him in the greatest project this universe has ever witnessed.

6. Prove Yahweh, put Him to the Test

Consider for a moment this amazing challenge:

Malachi 3: 10: *“Bring ye 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.**
11: **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.”***

“**Prove me**” (put me to the test, give me a try) says the Creator to **you!** Oh what astonishing humility is here displayed, that the Almighty God of Israel must needs speak to His people in this way in order that we will bring His share (the tithe) to Him. Listen to His solitary reason for requesting it:

*“**That there may be food in mine house**”*

Yes that is why the Almighty is asking for His share of the harvest, **“that there may be food in His house:”** food for his servants, His flock to eat and be satisfied. Pause awhile dear reader and try to appreciate the astonishing worth of that single reason. Is it not proof of Yahweh's amazing love for His creatures, for the poor, the hungry and the lost? It is the same love that prompted His Son to say to the Apostle Peter:

*“**feed my lambs**” and “**feed my sheep.**” (John 21: 15-17)*

You may be sure that if every believer brought in the tithe, which is an unmistakable sign of where the heart is (Luke 12: 34) there would be absolutely **no shortages of any kind in the world today**. The Most High would, as promised, **“open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing”** on His people and the world, the like of which the sons and daughters of men would hardly contain. Yes, it is virtually impossible to imagine the effect on this world if the whole Christian Church carried out that single command.

7. Suppose a believer refuses to tithe, is he/she sinning?

We take no pleasure in publishing this fact, but the answer is **yes**. The commandment to tithe is still on the statute books of heaven and it is a sin to ignore it. In fact it is **theft** from the Almighty God and is followed by a curse:

Malachi 3: 8: *“Will a man **rob** God? Yet ye have **robbed** me.
But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?
In tithes and offerings.
9: **Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, Even this whole nation.”***

There are, of course, other spiritual issues far more important than paying tithes; issues like **justice, mercy** and **faith**.

The Saviour referred to these ‘**weightier matters of the Law**’ when he said in Matthew 23: 23:

Matthew 23: 23: *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and*

*cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, **judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.***"

Notice how the Messiah instructed us to practice the **weightier matters of the law**, but not to **neglect** the matter of tithing.

8. Where does one send Yahweh's tithe?

In ancient days the tithe was collected by the **Aaronic priesthood** which was the physical counterpart of the **Melchizedek Priesthood**. The Melchizedek Priesthood is the highest Order of Priests in the universe and it is **still in existence**. All true believers in Yahweh are subject to its jurisdiction. Some are even priests in that eternal Priesthood.

1 Peter 2: 9: *"But you are a chosen race, a **Royal Priesthood**, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God for His own, to proclaim the triumphs of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."*

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) is the High Priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood. (Psalm 110: 1-4, Hebrews 6: 20, 7: 14-21) Therefore, to be in line with the Almighty's instructions the tithe should go to Yeshua, the High Priest of that Royal Order. The Melchizedek Priesthood like its Aaronic counterpart is:

Hebrews 7: 5: *"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:***"

How, then, do we give Jesus Christ the tithe? Obviously we cannot send it to heaven where he is. So what do we do with it; which group should we send it to? Where are the other priests of the Melchizedek Priesthood? Our advice to you is as follows:

- Carefully examine the **teachings** of the various groups in the light of the Scriptures and hold fast to that which is **true**.
- Then list the groups **who are feeding the flock with Truth**.
- Always be on your guard against the spirit of **commercialism** in the church and of leaders who have a **tendency for luxurious living**.
- Also watch closely the **personal lives of the leaders**; for you may be certain that if they blatantly break Yahweh's law they have no place in the **Priesthood of Melchizedek**.

And when you have thoroughly examined each one of these points, then send Yahweh's tithe to the work you think comes closest to those standards: one that feeds the flock of God rather than spends its resources on well-meaning but spiritually barren projects. Remember that you have a responsibility to ensure that Yahweh's tithe is no wasted.

9. The Rewards

Never imagine that the service of the Almighty is all sacrifice and no gain. Yahweh and His Son, as we have already pointed out, are Beings of unimaginable love and generosity. And they have scheduled themselves to repay a hundredfold every sacrifice believers may make in the cause of duty. Consider this beautiful promise:

Matthew 10: 42: *"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, **he shall in no wise lose his reward.**"*

Matthew 19: 29: *"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, **shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.**"*

10. Stewardship

“Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?”

Luke 12: 42: ***“And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?
43: Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”***

And there you have it, perhaps one of the greatest challenges you have ever come across, **to be a faithful and wise Steward in the Household of the King of Kings**. It is a highly responsible post we will admit, and one that will call for **sacrifice**; but the rewards are great - greater by far than anything you can imagine.

Are you willing to take up your duties?

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.
Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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