

Prosperity Through Tithing



Walking Through the Land of God's Promises (Part 12)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today as we continue to explore together the limitless inheritance which God has provided for us in the promises of His Word.

Yesterday we looked at the absolutely general and all-inclusive promise of prosperity given to us in Psalm 1:1-3. Today I'm going to look at some other promises of blessing and prosperity which have one particular scriptural condition attached to them.

The first passage of Scripture that we'll look at today is in Malachi 3:7-12. We need to understand briefly the background of the book of Malachi. Malachi is the last prophet of the Old Testament. Approximately 1,200 years earlier, God through Moses had brought His people into the promised land and given them a way of life and promised them that if they would keep that way of life and obey His commandments, they would be blessed and would prosper as no other nation ever had known blessing and prosperity. He also warned them that if they did not keep His conditions and His commandments, then they would suffer the opposite; they would suffer loss and harm and defeat and poverty.

Now, in the book of Malachi God sort of sums up 1,200 years of the history of Israel and, unfortunately, on the whole it's rather discouraging as a summary because he points out that, for the most part, they've failed to meet His conditions and therefore to enjoy the blessings of the provision that He wanted to make available to them. In the verses that we're going to read now, He points out one particular way in which they failed to meet His condition. We're going to read now Malachi 3:7-12:

> "'From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes, and have not kept them. [You see, this is an overview of Israel's history.] Return to Me, and I will return to you,' says the Lord of hosts. But you say, `How shall we return?' [That's a specific questions that's put in the mouth of Israel, 'What do you ask of us, God, to return to You?' God is very specific in His answer.] Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' [And the

> answer is clear!] In tithes and contributions." (NAS)

So, not to give God His due out of our finances is to rob Him. And, in specific terms, Israel had been robbing God by withholding their tithes and their contributions. The result: instead of a blessing was a curse. And I want to point out to you that in most cases it's one or the other. It's either blessing or curse, there isn't much in between. Obedience brings blessing, disobedience brings curse. So God says:

> "'You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! [Now God gives them the remedy:]
>
> 'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,' says the Lord…' [And God appoints a way in which He requires Israel to test Him. He says, 'If you'll do what I'm requiring, then you will see what I will do.'] '…test Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need.'" (NAS)

Every need is to be met. When God speaks about opening the windows of heaven, it's clear, I think, that the windows of heaven are under God's sole control. We don't have any way to reach up to heaven and open the windows, so that's something only God can do. And unless God does it, it won't happen. But God says, "If you'll do the simple thing on earth that I require of you, if you'll bring all the tithes into the storehouse, then I'll do the thing in heaven that you can't do, I'll open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing until there is no more need." Verse 11:

> "'Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,' says the Lord of hosts. 'And all the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightsome land,' says the Lord of hosts." (NAS)

So God takes stock, He reviews Israel's history, and He points out to them that they've failed to meet His conditions and so to enjoy His blessings. And He reminds them of one of the great basic conditions which He had laid down which was that they would bring their tithes and their contributions to Him.

Let's look at what the blessings are that God promises on this basis. First of all, He says, "I will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing." I've pointed out already that only God can open the windows of heaven. Secondly, "I will rebuke the devourer." Everything that's eating up your prosperity and your health and your well-being, every devouring influence and force, I'll deal with. It won't be able to devour any longer. Thirdly, "all the nations will call you blessed." God's people will be a testimony to all other peoples of God's faithfulness.

Compare what God says in Haggai 1 to Israel there. Again, essentially He's rebuking them for the same thing, for not putting Him first in their finances. This is what He says:

> "Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Consider your ways! You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes.'"

Have you ever felt that about your money, that all the money you put into your purse somehow slips out through a hole and you didn't get the benefit of it? God says that to Israel and He says this:

> …"Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified…"

God says, "Do what I require of you and I'll take care of that devourer that's making holes in your purses and eating away your livelihood and your income." Verse 9:

> "You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away."

Isn't that happening to many in these contemporary days, especially in these days of inflation? We look for much but it somehow turns to little and when we get it home, we just can't make it go around. God says there's a reason: You're not putting Me first and as a result, I've:

> "…called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle and on all the labor of your hands." (NAS)

What was the big error that Israel was making, both in the days of Haggai and in the days of Malachi? In essence, it was they were not putting God first in their finances. They were trying to do their own thing. They were "looking after number

one," as we say, and neglecting God. And as a result, though they worked hard and seemed to be earning sufficient money, they had never enough to go around. Does that sound familiar? Do you meet people like that today? Are you perhaps, one of those people?

Well, here's God's remedy in this: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse and test Me now in this."

Perhaps I need to explain exactly what a tithe is. It's an Old English word for a tenth. A tithe means that we give to God the first tenth of everything that we receive in income. And it's important that it's the first. We set it aside before we do anything else with the rest of our money. God says, "Bring Me the whole tithe, don't cheat about your tithe, and I'll see to your financial and material needs."

I'd like to say this: Tithing is simple, it's scriptural, it's specific; it's not complicated. Almost anybody can divide by ten. In any monetary system that's a decimal system, it just means moving the decimal point one place to the left. If you earn $320.00, your tithe is $32.00. If you've earned $514.00, your tithe is $51.40. It's not difficult. It's simple, it's scriptural, it's specific. I want to tell you on the basis of many years of experience, it works.

You see, the principle is that we honor God in everything. We put God first and that includes our finances and our wealth. Proverbs 3:9-10 says:

> "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine." (NIV)

Notice we honor the Lord when we put Him first in our finances. Tithing was not instituted under the law of Moses. Many people think it was. Tithing began with Abraham. Here's where it's first mentioned in the Bible, in Genesis 14:18-20, when Abraham had a significant meeting with a man named Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and priest of God. This is what it says:

> "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abra[ha]m, saying, 'Blessed be Abra[ha]m by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 'And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.'" (NIV)

That's the blessing that Melchizedek, as God's priest, pronounced on God's servant Abraham. Now, notice how Abraham responded to the blessing of his priest, Melchizedek:

> "Then Abra[ha]m gave him a tenth of everything." (NIV)

So, tithing is two things: It's a way to respond to God's blessing, and it's a way to honor God's priest. That's how Abraham first practiced it, and remember that Abraham is the father of all who believe. He's our spiritual father, if we're believers, and we're required to walk in the steps of his faith. One of the main steps of his faith was tithing.

Hebrews 7 shows that Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, is our high priest after the order of Melchizedek. And it also emphasizes that Melchizedek collected a tenth from Abraham as a priest. Hebrews 7:6 says of Melchizedek:

> "But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them [that's from the Levitical priests] collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises." (NAS)

So, that tithing is our response to God's blessing. It's the way we honor God. And bear in mind the tithe is to be brought into the storehouse. What is the storehouse? I think the answer is simple: it's the place from which you obtain your seed, both to eat and to sow. It's the way you acknowledge the source of your supply. And let me put this to you in a little proverb: "If you eat in the Holiday Inn, don't pay your bill at Howard Johnson." Acknowledge the source of your spiritual supply with your tithe.

All right. May the Lord bless you and help you to do that.

Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with this theme of prosperity. I'll be explaining another special and specific way to prosper.

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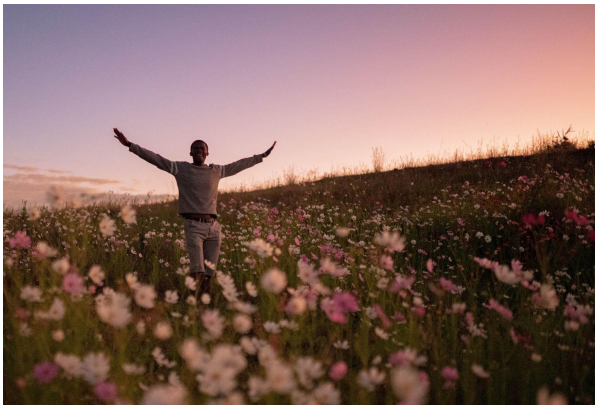

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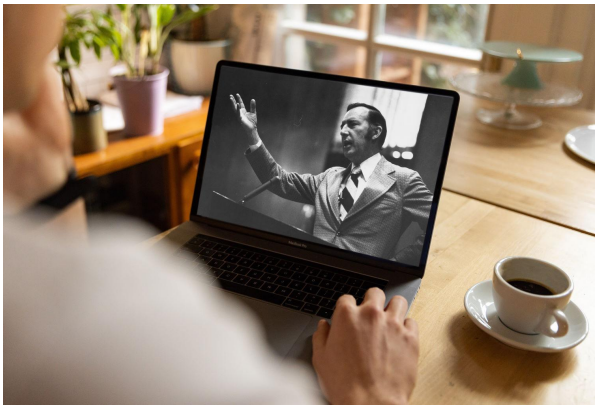

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