

God's Promise | You!

God's people are to bring all that's useful to a place reserved for the benefit of the community - a Storehouse.

"Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

² "But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. ³ He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD. ⁴ Then once more the LORD will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past. ⁵ "At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

⁶ "I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. ⁷ Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

"But you ask, 'How can we return when we have never gone away?'

⁸ "Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!

"But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?'

“You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. ⁹ You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!”

Malachi 3:1-12 NLT ⁱ

Let’s start with a question: what do all seven offenses in verse five have in common?

They are all in violation of a promise/commitment made!

There was a promise

- to God,
- to a spouse,
- to a judge,
- to a laborer,
- to social etiquette, and
- to live by God’s standard.

God seems unhappy with the secular, self-centered lifestyles of His chosen people, i.e. “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”.

The only thing keeping the wrath of God at bay is **HIS promise** to them. ⁱⁱ

What He would *like* to do is “wipe [them] out”, but...

- He never goes back on His word (“I never change” - a reference to Noah’s day and the promise of the rainbow as a reminder He would never cover the earth with water again).
- He has come to warn them and speak of the inevitable judgment if they don’t clean up their act and stop the practice of violating commitments.

God's single GREATEST concern is THE STOREHOUSE!

Those seven violations (v.5) are despicable and are found described in other places in scripture as things God hates or detests.

In fact, the care of widows and orphans is referred to as “being at the heart of God’s agenda” (Ps. 10:14, 18), and as the “pure and undefiled religion of God” (James 1:27) and is mentioned over 35 times throughout the Bible.

Obviously, it is very important to Him.

To emphasize the problem of disobedience and disregard for Him and His guidelines, He condenses all the issues into one:

GOD’S PEOPLE ARE ROBBING HIM!

That’s the explanation for their food shortage/spoilage.

Everything will be full to overflowing if they would just stop robbing God.

How are they ROBBING Him?

They were under a curse because God didn’t come first!
Relative to the offerings and tithe (10%) issue

In fact, God said, “I’m giving you a mid-term exam and this is what you should bring to class: THE ENTIRE 10%!”

This is an agricultural curse turned into an illustration for the church of the Lord.

God made His point, and it was a faith issue.

When we’ve been beaten down, exhausted, hungry, alone, cast out, and left to die, are we supposed to get up, move on and be thankful?

Yes! Suffering is a preparation for the deeper purpose in our lives.

Romans 5:3-5 NLT

“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. ⁴ And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. ⁵ And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”

The Lord has said, “Test Me in this!”

- Bring your confident hope of salvation to the church – the modern-day storehouse of God
- Bring the offering of **your pain experiences** to the church.
- Bring the offering of **your special gifts and talents** to the storehouse.
- Bring your offering of **time and space** to the storehouse.
- Bring your **contributions** to the church so God can supply the needs of others whom we profess to love as Christ loves.

Psalm 112:9

“They share freely and give generously to those in need.”

2 Corinthians 9:13

“As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.”

The Big Idea:

This modern-day storehouse, the church, is to be processing each of these offerings and targeting places for their effective usefulness in the community we serve – so that there will be a supply for the needs around us.

Then we watch the bountiful blessings of God shower over our community – seen in restored lives, healed attitudes, renewed relationships and stronger families, just to mention a few.

God has stated that their problems are related to “faith-less-ness.” God has pointed out to the children of Israel that since they have abandoned respect and honor to Him, they have suffered the consequences.

It doesn’t have to remain this way.

There is a way to get back on track, spiritually and be utilized by the Lord.

I recall 2 Chronicles 7:14:

“... if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.”

God calls His people to do the following:

1. **Humble themselves** – get rid of the self-centered attitude,
2. **Pray** – spend time with the Lord,
3. **Seek His face** – confront His goodness and accept His discipline,
4. **Turn from their wicked ways** – repent,

Then God will forgive and heal their brokenness so that their blessings are replenished.

We are the STOREHOUSE OF GOD! And in this storehouse, we are taking collections of all that you have to give the Lord.

Enable His love through your gift!

The gift of time, space, experience, talent/gift, and, oh yes, even financial offerings are accepted.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

“7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. ‘For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.’ 8 And God

*will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have **everything** you need, and plenty left over to share with others."*

ⁱ All scripture will be from the New Living Translation – NLT™ unless otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱ *The Storehouse of God*, article by Pastor John Dunaway, [The Summit newsletter](#), Mt Pleasant Baptist Church, June 2007.