

The Storehouse – Who Equips You for Worship & For War

There is a common teaching regarding the tithe today in the body of Christ based on Malachi 3:10. The teaching says we are to bring all the tithes and offerings into the storehouse. That's true! The challenge is so many teach that the storehouse is the local church. There is just one challenge. There is no scripture in the bible that says the "local church" is the storehouse. Secondly, the emphasis seems to always be on the tithe and the believer's responsibility to bring the tithe in. There is an element of truth in that, but it has seemed to me that there has been one part missing. It centers on this question; what constitutes a storehouse and how does that fit into God's overall plan? What is the pattern in God's word and how would that be manifested today?

Personally, I believe and I want every local church to be a biblical storehouse. But unfortunately I think we've missed it. Otherwise, we would see more of the covenant blessing manifested as God opens the windows of heaven and pours out for you such blessing so much so that we are not able to contain it.

I would like to share with you what I see and attempt to answer these questions.

1. What constitutes a biblical storehouse?
2. What is the purpose of the storehouse?
3. How do we identify a storehouse today?

Once we answer these questions I believe:

- We will have a better understanding of how to distribute our tithes and offerings. It will be based upon a personal relationship with our heavenly Father. He tells us to take the tithes and offerings to the places where He chooses to make His name abide. Secondly the storehouse was used to equip people for worship and for war. The question we need to ask the Lord is, "where Lord do you want me to place our tithes and offerings and who equips me for worship and who equips me for war?"
- Every reformation followed King David's pattern. The storehouse was an integral part of David's pattern in building the kingdom and it was the place where the tithes and offerings were distributed from. The King and his leaders determined that they desperately needed God's presence in their city and the first order of business was to establish 24/7/365 prayer, praise and worship.
- The tithes and offerings were FIRST used to empower the Levites to do just that. Biblically the Levites also had other assignments. It involved teaching, healthcare, and judging. But their first assignment was in establishing and maintaining 24/7/365 prayer, praise and worship. I believe this is key to inviting God's presence to dwell in a city and opening the windows of heaven.

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I believe once we are done with this study you will agree that the storehouse are actually people that specifically represent all of the five fold gifts God has given. Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 teach us that we are called to be kings and priests unto our Lord. These fivefold gifts God has given us are to help equip us for our service unto our Lord as a priest and to war as a king. It is critical to your destiny, the purpose of the Church and for our Lord's glory.

Storehouse – Treasury – Armory

Malachi 3:10 says "Bring all the tithes into **the storehouse**, That there may be food in My house, And try 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 such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. NKJV

The word translated storehouse is the Hebrew word owstar. It means depository, armory, cellar, garner, store (-house), or treasure (-house). The Strongs reference number is 214. Listed below are some examples of how this word is used.

First mentioned

Deuteronomy 28:12 is the first place this word was used. It says, "The Lord shall open unto thee **his good treasure**, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow."KJV

The treasury or storehouse belongs to God and there is power that proceeds from that place to bless God's people. The scripture teaches us that we are to pray kingdom come and will be done, "on earth," as it is in heaven. There is a heavenly storehouse and therefore, God wants earthly ones too.

Free Will Offering Example

In 1st Chronicles 29 we see David preparing to set his son up to finish the work and build the house of the Lord. He brought a huge freewill offering. It says in verse 3, "moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver:" This was King David's offering in the midst of the nations offerings and in verse 8 they were given to "the **treasure** house of the Lord."

Every reformation in scripture looked to King David and the pattern he established. King David gathered the leaders of the kingdom together and THEY decided that they wanted, no, they needed God's presence in their city and nation. Therefore they initiated the action to bring back God's presence on MT Zion in the Tabernacle of David. This was critical to their success in the kingdom and they assigned the Levites the responsibility to steward 24/7/prayer, praise and worship for them. The storehouse was an integral part of the system of distribution that empowered them to accomplish their assignment.

First Fruit, Offerings & Tithe Example

Nehemiah was one of the reformations that followed King David's pattern. We get another glimpse into David's pattern in Nehemiah 10:37-39. It says, "And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the **treasure** house. For the children of Israel and the children

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of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: **and we will not forsake the house of our God.** “ KJV

Tithes, first fruits and offerings were all brought into the treasury so God’s house would not be forsaken. The focus was FIRST on ministering to the Lord. Ministering to the people was second.

I have many friends that have a real passion for 24/7 prayer, praise and worship. Praise and worship is often combined together and whenever they say worship, they think of bowing down or lying prostrate in God’s presence. These are important forms of worship. But, there is an element I think we are missing.

The primary role of first fruits, tithes and offerings IS NOT to pay the Levite or the preacher or pay for the building. First fruits, tithes and offerings belong to God. The overwhelming volume of scripture in the bible illustrates how that these things were an important part of the relationship, communication and expression of covenant between God and His people. Tithes, offerings and first fruits belong to God and He chose how He wanted it distributed.

The sons of Aaron were the only ones who could enter into God’s presence. Through Jesus every believer today has the privilege of going right into God’s presence. In Aaron’s day God gave the Levites as a “gift” (Numbers 18:6) to help them with the work of ministry. In the New Testament we see a similar expression in Ephesians 4:7-11 as Jesus gives five “gifts” to equip them to do the work of ministry. This five fold ministry is a type of Levitical priesthood today.

In Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 we see that every believer is called to be a king and a priest. What is the role of a priest? The priests in the Old Testament worshiped the Lord with their first fruits, tithes and offerings. They prayed, sang, and worshiped the Lord with music and dance. Today, every believer has the privilege to worship and praise the Lord through first fruits, tithes, offerings, song, prayer, intercessions, worship and dance.

The Levites were also responsible for teaching, judging cases and also healthcare. Their first role was to assist the sons of Aaron in their ministry in God’s presence. The Levites belonged to God just like the first fruits and tithe belong to God. It is His and it is His to choose to do what He wants with it. In Numbers 18:26 God chooses to give the tithe to the Levites. Today, the tithe is for the five fold ministry who was given to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Storehouse Used to Equip Others for Worship/Ministry to the Lord

*Nehemiah 13:11-13 Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto **the treasuries**. And I made treasurers over the **treasuries**, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and **their office was to distribute unto their brethren.** KJV*

Now we see another part of the pattern emerging. The house of the Lord was forsaken because Nehemiah found that the Levites had gone back to work in the fields because the tithe was not brought in. They needed to feed their families. The emphasis here is that God was not being ministered to and it was His house that was neglected. They were following David’s pattern and his pattern was 24/7 prayer, praise and worship. As the tithe was brought in there were faithful brethren assigned oversee the distribution to all who did the work of the ministry.

Nowhere in scripture do we see the tithe used for buildings or stuff. It was always used for people (tithe - Levites, third year tithe – Levites, widows, orphans and the stranger).

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Storehouse Used to Equip Others for War

The Hebrew word translated storehouse and treasury is also translated armory. Money and wealth is power. In 2 Chronicles 16:2-3 King Asa dips into the storehouse to get wealth to buy an ally. He wanted a way to strengthen his army against an enemy. Weapons also have value and we find that they were found in the storehouse as well. 2 Chronicles 23:8-10 says that “Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of God. Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. NKJV

Finally, in Jeremiah 50:25 it says that “the Lord hath opened **his armoury**, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. KJV The word armoury is the same Hebrew word translated storehouse or treasury.

So the storehouse, treasury and armory were used for two primary things. It equipped people for worship and it equipped people for war.

4 Types of Giving

As a minister, I like to know what people are giving (tithe, alms, offering or firstfruits). It is because there is a covenant promise associated with each type. I encourage them to put a demand through the use of the scripture combined with their faith in action and expectation. If I know what kind of offering it is, then I can agree with them and remind our Father to remember His son or daughter, their offering and what His word says. We put a demand upon covenant.

The tithe and first fruits are required by God.

- Mal 3:10 – tithe – covenant for war Gen 14 - given to Levites Numbers 18:21-24)
- Prov. 3:9-10 – first fruits (Ex – Lev – firstfruits – in Numbers 18:12 God gives firstfruits to priests)

Offerings and alms are freewill offerings.

- Prov. 19:17 – alms – yours
- 2 Cor 9:6-11 – seed – yours starts at 11% after the tithe - give to good soil – chance for greatest increase
- Mark Gorman’s book on “God’s Plan for Prosperity” provides one of the best teachings I’ve found on this topic. <http://www.amazon.com/Prosperity-Balanced-Perspective-Financial-Wealth/dp/0976142805>
- John P Kelly is the apostolic gift who mentors me and to whom I am accountable along with others on my apostolic council. He has written a book called Vision Provision <http://www.leadtoachieve.com/store/index.php?act=viewProd&productId=57> and I highly recommend it especially for those called to launch a congregation, ministry or network.

Criteria We Use to Help Us Determine Where the Tithe Goes

1st Criteria - Relationship with our Heavenly Father

Deuteronomy 12:10-14 then there will be the place where the Lord **your God chooses to make His name abide**. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt **offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings** of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the Lord. 12

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And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; 14 **but in the place which the Lord chooses**, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you. NKJV

Personally, I ask the Lord, Lord where do you want me to give and what do you want me to give?

2nd Criteria - Relationship with People

We have learned that the tithes, firstfruits and offerings were to be brought to the storehouse/treasury. The storehouse provision was used for only two things; to equip people for worship and to equip people for war. **So the second question I ask is, Lord, who is equipping me for worship and who is equipping me for war?**

The answer to these two questions helps my wife and I determine where our tithes and firstfruits go. Alms is something we give out of mercy and offerings is anything over and above 10% that is sown in faith.

Sowing into Covenant

The tithe was instituted in the context of war at the same time that Melchizedek and the concept of kings and priests were introduced (Genesis 14:14-22, Revelation 1:6, 5:10). The tithe is a form of covenant that among other things communicates that your enemies are my enemies and my enemies are yours. An attack on one is the same as an attack on the other.

Our tithe goes to those ministry gifts, people that equip us for worship and who equip us for war. It goes to those whom when we encounter trouble we expect them to be with us and walk through that trouble with us. It is based upon love, vision and covenant. We expect them to stand and fight with and for us through thick and thin.

Criteria to Help Determine Where to Sow Offerings

First and foremost, we give out of relationship with our heavenly Father. That means we include Him in the conversation asking Him, where it would please Him for us to sow.

The second criterion is vision. We have a vision and several missions for our life and ministry. We sow into other people and ministries based upon vision and finally we look at the purity of the altar. Is there any sort of habitual sin or manipulation that is evident? Purifying the Altar by Al Houghton is an excellent book on this subject.

To be continued

The topics I'll address in the future include:

- The tithe and offerings of a corporation (for profit/non-profit)
- The storehouse and 24/7/365
- Funding an apostolic team
- The new wineskin and the economy of the kingdom