



Revelation Speaks Peace
**UNLOCKING
THE SIGNS**

THE FALL OF BABYLON

The Bible clearly predicts the fall of earthly systems—religious, political and financial. All those who placed their hopes in Babylon will have occasion to mourn her passing (see **REVELATION 18:1-19**). Those who fear economic collapse are right—but not in the way they might think!

The Bible, however, does not condemn wealth. In fact, many of Jesus' stories involved money, and God has laid out a plan for using it wisely while we wait for the Second Coming. Many people have a completely distorted view of our Creator. They seem to think that He is a poor beggar, holding out His hand for an offering from His people. God is not poor. He owns everything in this world.

God says in **PSALM 50:10-12** that everything belongs to Him. He makes a simple statement, saying, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof."

Why does everything belong to God? Even you and I belong to Him for three reasons. In the first place, He created us. In the second place, He purchased us through the death of Christ on Calvary's hill. In the third place, He sustains us. We could not take a single breath without His sustaining power.

MALACHI 3:8-11 provides a simple blueprint for God's people. If followed, this plan will enable them to become partners with Him—both providing for the finishing of God's work and arranging for the financial stability for God's people. The plan is known as *tithing*. Those who cooperate with God are given the promise that He will open the windows of heaven and pour out such abundant blessings upon them that it will exceed their capacity to receive these copious blessings. Jesus asserts in **MATTHEW 23:23** that He still expected the practice to be in place in His day.

God's plan is fair and reasonable. A person who earns a great deal of money returns a larger amount to the One who sustains him and provides him with prosperity. A person who earns little returns little. A person who earns nothing returns nothing, as 10 percent of nothing is nothing.

In **1 CORINTHIANS 9:13, 14**, Paul refers to the priesthood of the Old Testament, asserting that the offerings in the temple sustained them financially. He is referring to a principle stated in **NUMBERS 18:21**. If everyone followed God's plan, inopportune scandals that occur in Christian churches could be avoided.

Many churches spend more energy raising money than they do saving souls. Their activities include bingo games, social events, suppers and even lotteries. The kitchen in some church buildings has become more important than the pulpit. There is fire in the kitchen stove when all too often there is no fire in the pulpit!

In the book of Malachi, God offers a challenge. He says, "Prove me now." He promises that He will be liberal with those who are liberal with Him. **LUKE 6:38** states that those who give will receive in "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over." He promises that with the same measure that we give, it will be measured to us again.

Many people can assert with confidence that those who are faithful to God will have their financial needs taken care of. Experience has proven this to be the case without exception. Throughout history, countless records tell of people who have been faithful to God and have been blessed in miraculous ways. This was true in Bible times and it is still true today.

In **PSALM 37:25**, the Psalmist describes his life experience, affirming that he has never seen God's people forsaken or financially stricken. It has been proven true that nine dollars with God's blessings has more purchasing power than ten dollars without those blessings. When we return our tithe, we are not giving what is ours. We are simply returning the portion that already belongs to God. God's way of accounting is quite different from ours. An event in the life of Jesus illustrates this principle:

LUKE 21:1-4 tells of the widow's mites. The disciples witnessed the rich donating generously to the coffers of the temple. Then a poor widow was seen timidly giving two small coins. Jesus told them that the widow had given more than all of the others. How could two practically worthless coins be counted as more than the large quantities donated by the wealthy? Christ's explanation was that, in contrast to the other givers, she had given all she had. In heaven's eyes, it is not the amount that counts, but rather the motive.

1 CORINTHIANS 4:2 presents God's requirement for His followers. In a time of materialism, when people place a tremendous value on selfish gain-seeking, God is looking for those who are so committed to Him that even their pocketbooks are converted. He requires faithfulness on the part of His stewards.