

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXI

April 24, 2011

No. 17

## The Treasury of the Church

(Jerry Fite)

**T**he treasury of the church is created when the money given by individual members is collected. When money given by members of the church in Jerusalem was “*laid at the apostles’ feet*”, it combined the individual contributions into a treasury of the Lord’s money to be distributed to help needy Christians (*Acts 4:34-35*). When individual Christians came together on the first day of the week, they “*laid by in store*” to help needy saints in Jerusalem. The reason we know that laying by in store was not done at individual homes is that Paul wanted “*no collections*” to be made when he came to Corinth (*I Cor. 16:2*). It is necessarily inferred that the contributions were combined into a single source immediately available for Paul on his journey to Jerusalem. He would not have to collect it when he came. The treasury of the church created by the contributions on the first day of the week would be waiting for Paul when he arrived.

The collection of freely given offerings is clearly the source of the church’s treasury in

the New Testament. It was used in helping needy saints and providing wages for preachers in spreading the gospel of Christ (*Rom. 15:25-26, 2 Cor. 11:8*).

Do we have authority for putting the money collected on the first day of the week in the bank to be used according to God’s authorized purposes? What bank did the church in Corinth use to keep the money safe for Paul’s arrival? While we do not have specific authority for the use of a bank, it is a lawful expedient.

God teaches us to be wise in how we use money. Jesus said, “*if therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches*” (*Luke 16:11*). As stewards of what belongs to the Lord, we must use it without it becoming our God. “*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*” (*Luke 16:14*). But dealing with money is a necessary part of the Christian’s life (*I Timothy 6:17*). Likewise the elders overseeing the money in the church’s treasury must act wisely in keeping it safe for proper use. A bank

account is surely a wise expedient for overseeing the treasury of the church.

But what if the checking account earns interest? Some who believe the bank account is lawful say earning interest on that money in the bank is “*unholy*”. It makes us “*unequally yoked with unbelievers*” by receiving interest from a bank comprised of people of the world. Do these well meaning brethren believe the money they put into the bank account is the same “*pure*” money when they take it out? What if the government has to bail out the bank when it fails, will these brethren not accept the government’s money because it is “*unholy*” gain, and makes us “*unequally yoked*” with people of the world? Financial gain may come with insurance settlements or when property, due to inflation, is sold for more than the purchase price. The church’s treasury is to be used in God’s work, not to be set aside for investments. But protecting its purchasing power by earning interest while it waits to be used can be a wise expedient.