

**Purchasing
White Linen
with True
Almsgiving**

by B. R. Hicks

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Purchasing White Linen With True Almsgiving

Jesus Christ taught His Disciples the Principle of True Almsgiving in His famous *Sermon on the Mount*.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But **when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly** (Matthew 6:1-4).

Unfortunately, the practice of true almsgiving has been so neglected in recent years that many Christians know little or nothing about how to obey Jesus' Command to give alms. What exactly does the Bible teach about this subject?

The word frequently translated as *alms*, in the New Testament, is called *righteousness* in the Old Testament. Both of these words have the meaning of true compassion as exercised toward the poor; they mean beneficence, a benefaction, tender mercy. The giving of true alms is part of the right acts or righteousness of the saints.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for **the fine linen is the righteousness of saints** (Revelation 19:8).

This Scripture refers to the Bride* of Jesus Christ who will wear Fine White Linen in Eternity. The Bride's almsgiving or righteousness pertains to the true *fruit of sharing* which grows in the hearts of those who have married their souls to Jesus Christ. The Husbandman/Bridegroom in the Song of Solomon inspected the Bride's spiritual garden and found that growing in her "garden of nuts" was her desire to share her life with Him.

The word *nuts* means to give, divide, share. The nuts of sharing begin with the sharing of our wills and our lives with Jesus Christ. First, we must share our lives with Jesus, or we never will be able to share willingly with others.

The Bride will have the nuts of sharing growing in her garden. For believers to have attained the status of Bride to the Husbandman, Jesus Christ, they will have gradually grown in His Spiritual Stature until they have reached maturity. Jesus' Spiritual Stature is presented in shadow and type in the Old Testament Tabernacle.**

By His sinless Life, by His sacrificial Death on the Cross, and by His resurrected, glorified Life, Jesus fulfilled the types and shadows that God put in the Old Testament Tabernacle.

After our spiritual foundation has been laid or after we have received, by gift, the experiences of Blood (Salvation), Fire (Holy Ghost Baptism), and Water (Water Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ), which are typed by the ministries the Priests performed at the Brazen Altar and the Laver in the Old Testament Tabernacle and which Jesus fulfilled in the New Testament, we must begin to labor in the Word and prayer to grow higher in Jesus' Spiritual Stature.

As we grow into higher realms in the Spiritual Stature of the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, we grow in greater depths and heights of prayer, depicted in the Old Testament Tabernacle by the Priests' ministry at the Golden Altar. Here, in prayer, the invisible Seeds of the spiritual Marriage Relationship are sown in our hearts as we intercede. Although these Seeds will be made *visible* only after we have reached maturity in the Headrealm of the Spiritual Stature of Jesus Christ, they live and grow in our hearts in the invisible realm, all the time as we continue in our walk with the LORD Jesus Christ. The Headship of Jesus Christ was depicted in the Mosaic Tabernacle by the Ark of the Covenant upon which the Mercy Seat rested.

Through our intercessory praying, we feed the invisible Seeds of almsgiving (mercy or sharing) that are pictured in the Song of Solomon as nuts in the garden of the Bride's heart.

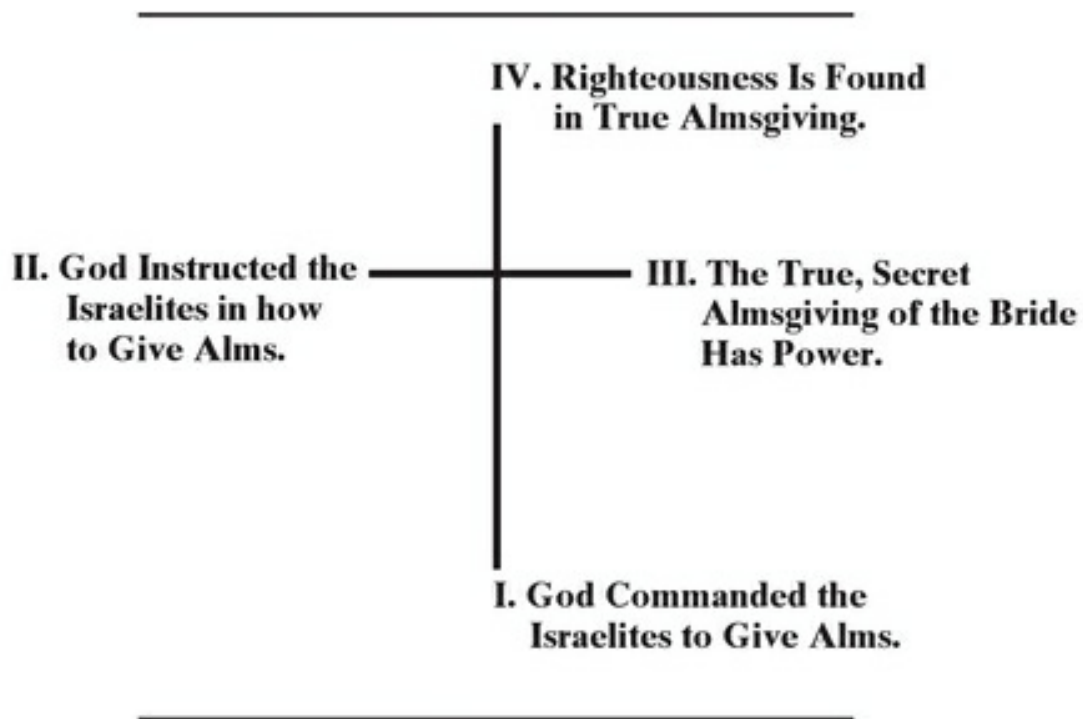
Few people would guess that inside the ugly "nut" of true almsgiving is hidden the Linen Glory of the Bride's Wedding Dress.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And **to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness [almsgiving] of saints** (Revelation 19:7,8).

Fasting* and prayer precede true almsgiving. The giving of alms is giving our lives for someone else in need. As we do without food (in fasting) and give what we have denied ourselves that would have been absorbed by our own bodies, we actually are giving a portion of our lives to the poor. Just as there is a natural fast, with its subsequent almsgiving, so also is there a spiritual fast that involves denying oneself in a spiritual way in order to give a spiritual offering or ministry to those who are poor spiritually.

Since almsgiving has its roots in the Old Testament, the Disciples understood clearly what Jesus meant when He spoke to them about the right way to give alms.

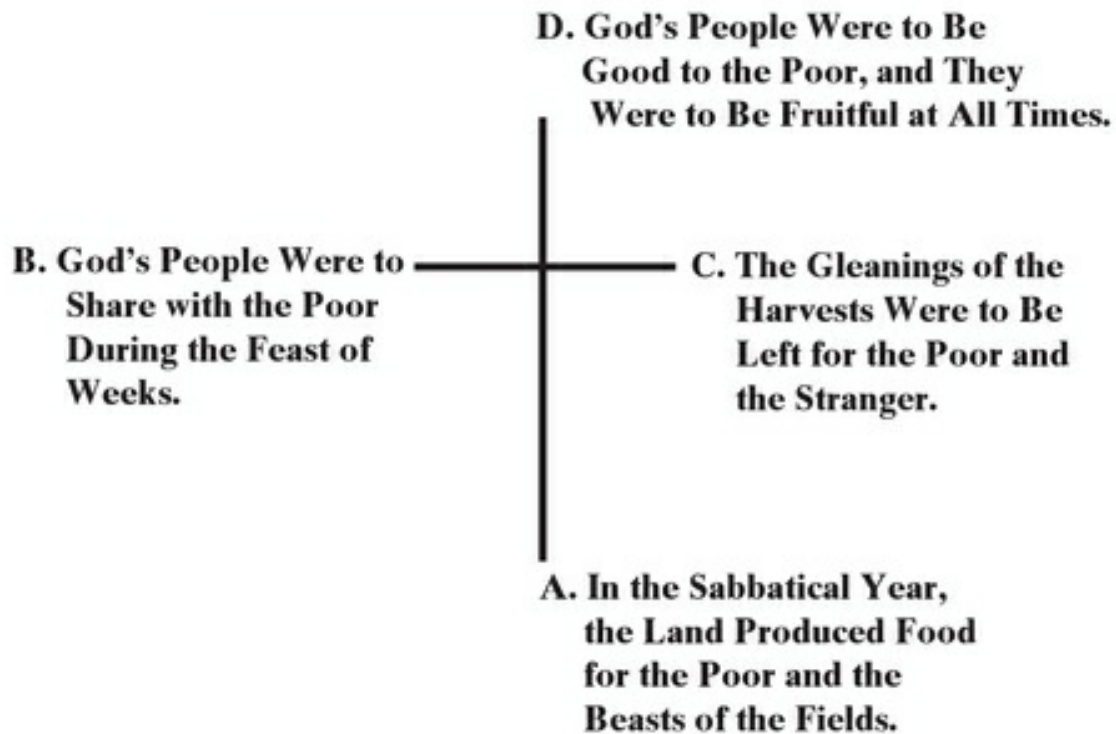
As we study, God's Word, we find that the Spirit presents Truth in the form of the Cross. This is true of the subject of almsgiving. Thus, the following Stature of Truth reveals the Spiritual Principle of True Almsgiving.



I. God Commanded the Israelites to Give Alms.

God's Principles never change; they are consistent from generation to generation. Before Israel crossed over into Canaan's Land or Married Land, while she was still in the Wilderness, God planted the invisible Seed of Sharing by commanding her to share her blessings with the poor. The LORD is interested in the poor, which means He is interested in us all because we all are poor in one way or another. Sharing alms of the blessing bestowed upon us by His Mercy is a visible demonstration of our gratitude for all that God has shared with us.

Under the first point of our Stature of Truth on Almsgiving is another Stature of Truth that tells us when God's people are commanded to give alms.



A. In the Sabbatical Year, the Land Produced Food for the Poor and the Beasts of the Fields.

And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: **But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat.** In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard (Exodus 23:10,11).

God designated that the fruit produced during the Sabbatical year or seventh year was to be given to the poor as an alms offering. Details in the Scriptures show that the Sabbatical offering was given both nationally and personally.

1. The Nation Was to Give Alms in the Sabbatical Year.

God permitted the Israelites to plant fields and to gather in the harvest for six years, but He intended for the seventh year be a form of national almsgiving to the poor. Then, the portion left by the poor was to be consumed by the beasts of the field. God is concerned about all His Creation. From the beginning, God's Mercy has made provision to feed every realm of life that He created.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, **and every tree,** in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; **to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth,** wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so (Genesis 1:29,30).

God did not allow the landowner to starve during the seventh year, while the poor and the beasts grew fat. The LORD's blessings on the fields in the sixth year caused them to produce enough to provide the owner with all he would need while the land rested the seventh year. Furthermore, there was enough left over not only to plant their fields with seed but to eat until the crops in the eighth year were harvested.

And if ye shall say, **What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year;** until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store (Leviticus 25:20-22).

God never asks His people to do anything that is impossible for them to do.

2. Individuals Were to Give Alms in the Sabbatical Year.

Carnal reasoning may say that, when the nation gave the harvest of one whole year to the poor, that was sufficient, but since God's blessings reached to the individual, the LORD also required personal alms to be given.

a. Old Debts Were to Be Released Every Seventh Year.

At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: **Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release** (Deuteronomy 15:1,2).

All old debts were to be released as a form of almsgiving in the seventh year. No longer were the Israelites to exact payment from their fellow Israelites who were poor and unable to pay.

It is easy for us to say, "This cannot apply to me because I have no money to loan to anyone." Perhaps this is true on the natural level, but all of us are rich in one way or another in the spiritual realm. We all have given love and compassion to people who have never seemed to return our kindnesses. This unpaid debt is a heavy burden to both parties; therefore, God said, in so many words, "Your brother is poor and may never have enough to pay his debt to you. Release him. Forgive him of his debt of love. Do not be forever trying to exact that which he may not have to give." We never will be called upon to forgive our brother for more than God already has forgiven us.

b. Foreigners Were to Be Released from Their Debts only During the Sabbatical Year.

Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; (Deuteronomy 15:3).

Even the foreigner, the Gentile, was to be released from making payments on his debt during the Sabbatical year. For one year, no mention was to be made of what he owed.

c. The Poor Were to be Helped According to Their Need, Even if the Year of Release Were Near.

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need,** in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee (Deuteronomy 15:7-9).

Knowing the selfishness of man's heart, God warned the Israelites against hardening their hearts toward the poor simply because the year of release was at hand. Their fear of never receiving payment showed how little they knew their God. If they had realized that God counted every gift to the poor as a personal loan to Him, they would not have looked to man for repayment. "*He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again*" (Proverbs 19:17).

d. Slaves Were to Be Released after Six Years of Service and Given Substance on which to Live.

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: **Thou shalt furnish him**

liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day (Deuteronomy 15:12-15).

Although literal slavery has been abolished in our country, we frequently continue to exact lip service, if not literal service, from others, long after God's appointed time of release. God never meant for us to make people slaves to us, personally, or to our ideas and opinions. He wants us to set others free to serve Him with every bit of Truth we have to give them. There will be some who, for love of the Truth that they find in our house, will become "love slaves", as it were. Yet even those who continue to serve for love are to be free to worship God in Spirit and Truth.

B. God's People Were to Share with the Poor During the Feast of Weeks.

In addition to giving national and personal alms every seventh year, the Israelites were to give at other times during the year. The first such time of sharing with the poor was during the Feast of Weeks.

Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And **thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand**, which thou shalt give unto the LORD thy God, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: **And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you**, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there (Deuteronomy 16:9-11).

Seven complete weeks after observing the Passover, which commemorated their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Weeks. This feast pictured the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Thus, God established, in type and shadow form, the Principle of Giving or Sharing While Receiving. If God commanded His natural Bride, Israel, to share with the poor, as she was being blessed and fed, so that the poor could join in the rejoicing during the Feast of Weeks, surely God requires His Spiritual Bride to practice this same class of sharing, now.

C. The Gleanings of the Harvest Were to Be Left for the Poor and the Stranger.

And **when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger:** I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 23:22).

Poverty is not the biggest test we must go through, but prosperity is! When prosperity comes, we are tempted to shut up our hands against the poor. As far as spiritual things, we forget how poor we were without Christ in our hearts; we forget what it was like when we were lost and undone without Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament story of Ruth, Boaz had learned some lessons in liberality, for he instructed his young men to let Ruth glean not just in the corners of his field but also among the sheaves. He even told them to drop some handful of grain purposely for her. Because of his obedience to the Law of Sharing, Boaz became one of the ancestors of the LORD Jesus Christ, according to His Humanity.

Surely, the LORD's reward is far greater than our gift!

D. God's People Were to Be Good to the Poor, and They Were to Be Fruitful at All Times.

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: **every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.** Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, **Exact no more than that which is appointed you.** And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, **Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages** (Luke 3:8-14).

God has never revoked His Moral Principles. John the Baptist came crying for the people to repent of their sins. When the people asked him why they needed to repent, he told them to share their coats and their meat. In dealing with the publicans (Israelites who collected taxes for the Roman Government), John told them to exact no more out of the people than what was appointed to them. He told the soldiers to do no violence to their fellowmen, not to accuse a person falsely, and to be content with their wages. In each case John touched the very spot in which the poor were being afflicted, either by selfishness, greed, or unmercifulness.

Paul instructed the Roman Christians to distribute to the needs of the saints and to be given to hospitality.

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality (Romans 12:13).

We should share the hospitality of our homes with the saints. The word *hospitality* is akin to the word *hospital*. Many times God permits people who are sick and wounded in their spirits and souls to come across our pathway. It is not enough for us to invite these people to our homes for a natural meal. It is possible to care for others' physical needs and still fail to open our heart and serve as a hospital to minister to people's emotional and spiritual needs. Remember, *physical* hunger and nakedness are easier to recognize than their *spiritual* counterparts. Jesus Christ pours oil on our wounded spirits and souls, and He binds up our sores. He ministers to all our needs; then, He gives us opportunities to share our blessings with others.

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth (Ephesians 4:28).

Work is a blessing that was instituted by God *before* man sinned. His intention was never that man become a living parasite, drawing his existence at the expense of another person's life. Instead, each person is to labor, not only for his own needs but also for substance to share with those who have nothing.

Paul told Timothy to teach others the importance of sharing the blessings they receive.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; (I Timothy 6:17,18).

If God has made us a steward of natural riches, it is so that we can become rich in good works of sharing. We must be willing to communicate with the poor. This, again, involves giving more than just natural good. In order to communicate, we must share a part of ourselves, our time, and our energy.

But to **do good and to communicate** forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Hebrews 13:16).

One way we can please God's Heart is by communicating or sharing with others. He recognizes this sacrifice and is well pleased.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (I John 3:17).

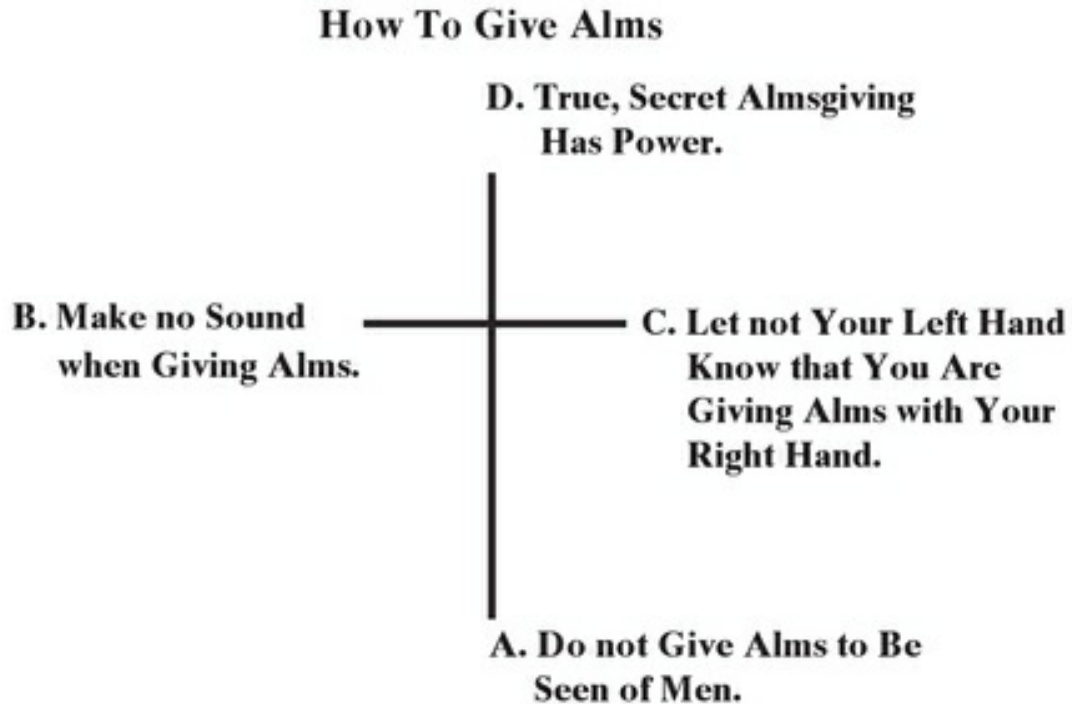
The meaning of this Scripture goes beyond the possession of natural good or the things of this world. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and addressed Him as "Good Master," Jesus knew that the young man had failed to recognize the Christ, the Living Word, Who was inside His Body, so He rebuked him, saying, "...there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18).

Since the Book of First John said *good* rather than *goods*, we realize that the *good* pertains to God's Life that is placed inside our hearts. We are not to shut up our bowels of compassion and refuse to share this God-Life that He has put within us. It is *His* Good Life, and we must be willing to share it, even with those who hate us. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18). Great is our obligation to share!

Since God has given so freely given to us, we, like the children of Israel, are required to give alms during our Sabbath year, our season of rest. We are to give during our Feast of Weeks, when God is pouring His Spirit into our souls. We are to give of the harvest gleanings of our personal prosperity. And we are to give alms of the natural *good* and the spiritual *good* with which we are blessed at all times.

II. God Instructed the Israelites in how to Give Alms.

Almsgiving is part of the Bride of Christ's deeds of Righteousness, through which she gains the White Linen that makes up her Wedding Dress. The Bride's almsgiving displays her fruit of sharing which, in the Song of Solomon, is compared to a nut because the main part of sharing is invisible. Since almsgiving is such a vital part of the Bride, if we want to be in Christ's Bride, it is very important to know the right way to give alms. God has commanded that we give alms, and He has been faithful to give clear instructions in His Word as to how to obey His Command. By following His instructions, we are able to gain the White Linen hidden inside our almsgiving.



A. Do not Give Alms no Be Seen of Men.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 6:1).

Since He knew that wrongly motivated almsgiving produces no Linen Righteousness inside, Jesus warned His Disciples against doing their alms to be seen of men. If we do things to be seen of other men, it is useless to expect God to hide true riches within that gift because the giving will be motivated by the desire for self-exaltation. Giving to be seen of men is dangerous because, in addition to glorifying the flesh, it puts the person receiving the gift under obligation. The receiver feels that he must do something to pay for the gift. When man pays us for our almsgiving, we receive no other reward.

On the other hand, if we give alms as unto the LORD, a true Seed of Sharing begins to grow in the invisible realm, and that true spiritual Seed will bring forth real Fruit of visible sharing. When we share with the poor and when man does not repay us, we can look forward to our Heavenly Father paying us with Linen Righteousness.

Some of our alms gifts come from fasting and praying before the LORD. Whenever we fast, we should take the money which we normally would spend for food and give it to the poor. In this way we are giving our lives for someone else because food and money represent a part of our lives.

When we fast and give because we desire to be like the LORD and because we want to obey this Principle, Jesus Christ gives us His Linen Life or Glory in exchange. What a bargain! Almsgiving is an eternal investment.

If we fast and do not give alms or if we give them in the wrong way, we rob ourselves of our Spiritual Linen, and we also rob the other person. We not only put him under bondage, but we rob him of looking to His Heavenly Father. The giving of secret alms, which are given to the church and dispensed by the church, makes it possible for the person receiving the gift to give all the Glory to God because he does not know who gave the alms. This puts him back in contact with the Heavenly Father.

B. Make No Sound when Giving Alms.

Therefore **when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee**, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward (Matthew 6:2).

The Pharisees actually blew trumpets when they gave alms so that others would be impressed with their piety. Many poor widows, unable to discern between outward piety and inward spirituality, were deceived into trusting these Pharisees with their finances. Then, the greedy Pharisees would cheat them out of the little they did possess.

This same spirit works in the world, today, through ministers who use psychology on people to get their tithes and offerings, and through us, personally, when we are nice to people, not because it is the right thing to do, but because we hope to receive something in return. We must remember that White Linen is not gained from this kind of giving.

C. Let not Your Left Hand Know that You Are Giving Alms with Your Right Hand.

But **when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth**: (Matthew 6:3).

The Golden Candlestick, with its sixty-six bowls, knops, and flowers, stood on the south side of the Old Testament Tabernacle, which was a beautiful picture of the divine Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge of God's Word. The Golden Table, with its twelve loaves of Shewbread, stood on the north side of the Tabernacle, portraying the Governmental Strength of God's Word.

In relation to the portrayal of the Spiritual Stature of the LORD Jesus Christ in the Tabernacle, the Candlestick is in His Right Hand and the Golden Table of Shewbread is in His Left Hand. Jesus was telling His Disciples, in so many words, "If God puts the Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge of a need in your right hand, do not wait for Him to put Governmental Bread, in the form of a Command, in your left hand before you give your alms."

Sometimes, when we are unwilling to humble ourselves and share, we make the excuse that our spiritual stature is still too small for us to obey God's Word. But we do not have to be spiritually mature before we start obeying God's Law of Sharing. So when God brings the poor across our pathway and shows us their need, He wants us to share what He has put in our hand to give.

Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving relate to the Holy Place in the Old Testament Tabernacle, which was divided into the Courtyard, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place contained the Golden Altar of Prayer and the Table of Shewbread.* God especially emphasized the secrecy of almsgiving because it relates to the White-Linen Righteousness of the Bride. The Bride's spiritual Linen is invisible now, but it will be made visible on Christ's Wedding Day. The Fine Linen is the righteousness of the saints, and righteousness goes back to almsgiving or sharing.

God has us to fast and to pray so that we will have something to share with others. Our *fasting* and *prayers* touch our *relationship with God* and our relationship with Jesus Christ, God's Sabbath Day of Rest. *Almsgiving* relates to our *relationship with man*. How good God is! He does not ask us to be in a right relationship with our brothers until we are related rightly to Him, for we are unable to share more with man than we receive from God. When we are out of fellowship with God and Jesus Christ on the points of fasting and prayer, then, naturally, our relationship with man also suffers.

D. True, Secret Almsgiving Has Power.

That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly (Matthew 6:4).

Our almsgiving must be done secretly, out of a pure motive. These secret alms have power to buy the White Linen of the Bride's Wedding Dress. Many people want the Power which comes along with the Linen Glory, but they are reluctant to pay the price for the Linen now.

Are we willing to live in secret, in the invisible, as far as other people are concerned, and wait for God's time to have our sharing made visible? Are we willing to wait for the Wedding Supper of the Bride and Bridegroom? Only after we have fasted, prayed, and given in the right way can we receive the Linen. We do not want to fast and, then, miss the eternal glory of the Linen that God has for us in each fast. The real purpose of fasting and praying is to get rid of our own clothes of self-righteousness and pride so that we will be prepared to wear the Linen we will receive from our almsgiving.

At the Second Coming of Christ, when the Bride returns with her Bridegroom, she will be dressed up in His Power and Glory. The Earth, the Heavens, and all men everywhere will quake and tremble in the presence of such Power.

The earth shall quake before them [the Bridegroom and His Bride]; **the heavens shall tremble:** the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: (Joel 2:10).

A mighty Fire will burn before the Bride as she goes forth.

A fire devoureth before them [those who make up the Bride of Christ]; **and behind them a flame burneth:** the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them (Joel 2:3).

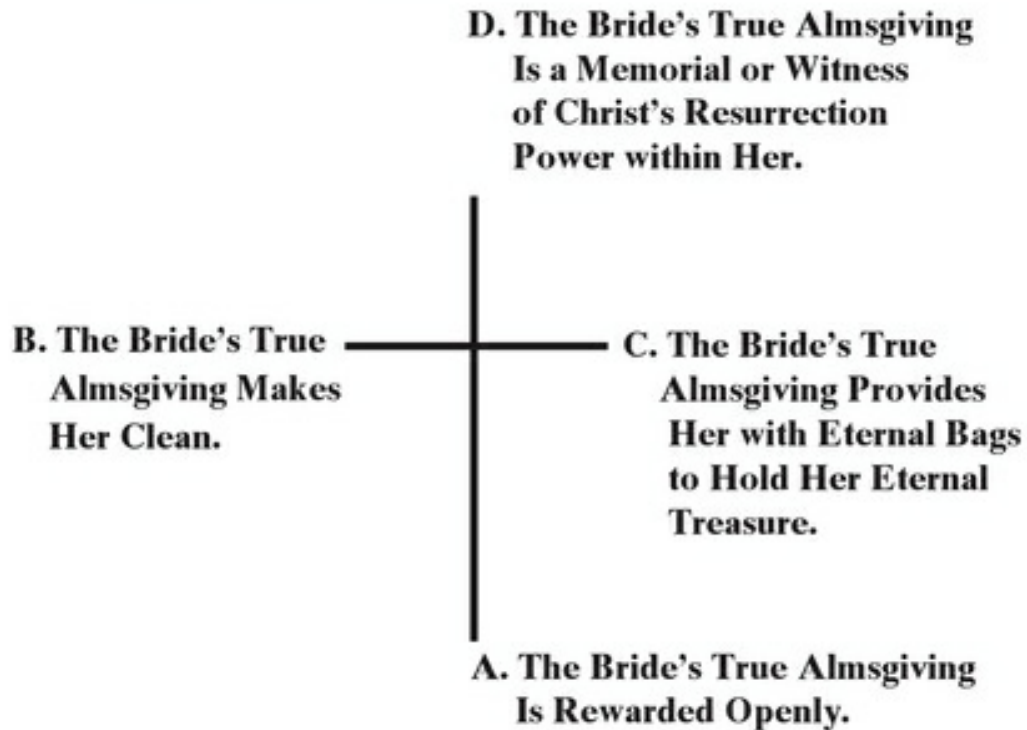
Before the Fire is made visible, the Bride will already have permitted the Fire of the Truth to become joined to her heart. She will have had an invisible union with the Word of God while she has walked through this life.

God's Power and Glory are precious to Him. If believers want to share His Linen Power at His Second Coming, they must learn to share their hearts with Him now.

As the Bride fellowships with Him, now, here on Earth, He rewards her with the Power and Shine which come from a personal relationship with the Father in the secret place. Then, at the LORD Jesus Christ's Second Coming, He will pull back the veil and allow the whole world to see the Work He has done in the Bride's heart during her sojourn in this life!

III. The True, Secret Almsgiving of the Bride Has Power.

We have learned that the Bride will be given Power. Now let us see how this Power works in her life.



A. The Bride's True Almsgiving Is Rewarded Openly.

That thine alms may be in secret: and **thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly** (Matthew 6:4).

Although the Bride must wait until her Wedding Day for Christ to open the “nut of sharing” that she has grown within her spiritual garden and reward her with her visible Linen Dress, the Glory and the Power that will be received at that time will make all the praise and glory of men seem as nothing in comparison. That which the Bride has done in secret, Christ will reward openly.

B. The Bride's True Almsgiving Makes Her Clean.

And the Lord said unto him, **Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter;** but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness (Luke 11:39).

The Pharisees did not let their almsgiving go beyond outward show and since their sharing did not touch their wills, it was not able to cleanse their hearts and purify their motives before God.

Secret alms that are done unto the LORD have Power to cleanse us of self-righteousness and pride. The Bride's Wedding Dress will be made up of her acts of Clean, White-Linen Righteousness.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints** (Revelation 19:7,8).

C. The Bride's True Almsgiving Provides Her with Eternal Bags to Hold Her Eternal Treasure.

Sell that ye have, and **give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,** where no thief

approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke 12:33,34).

The only way to save an earthly substance is to put it in eternal bags. We can save our natural life, in the form of our time and energy, by using our life for God and by sharing it with others.

D. The Bride's True Almsgiving Is a Memorial or Witness of Christ's Resurrection Power within Her.

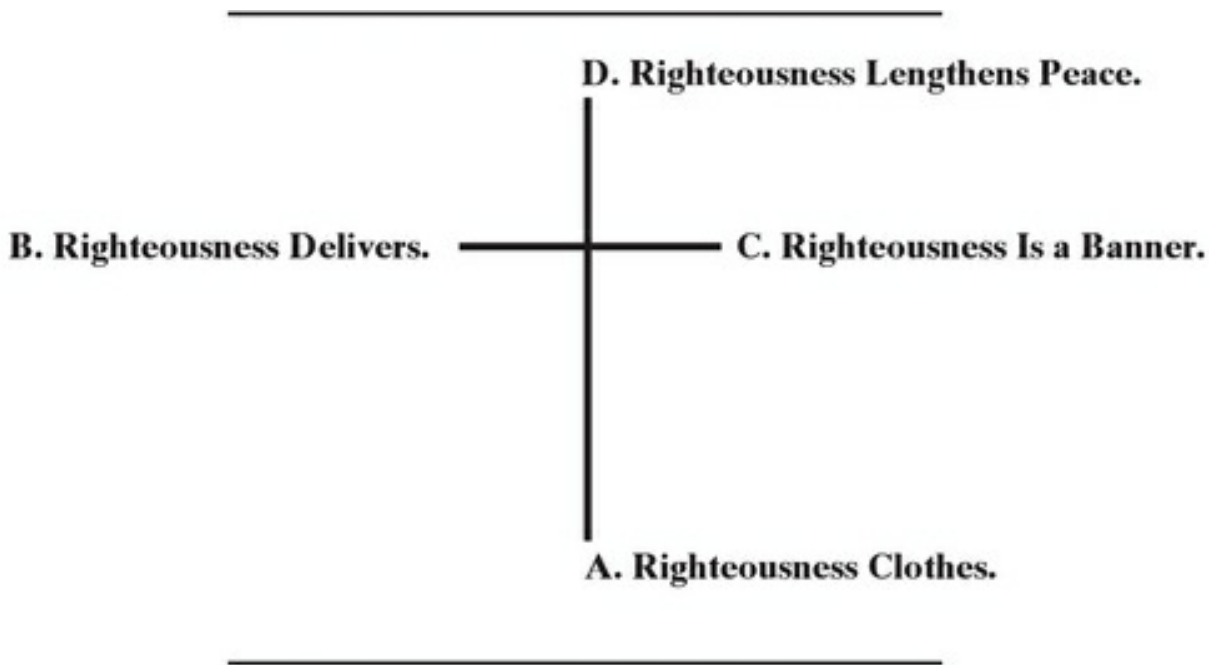
Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a **certain man lame** from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to **ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms** (Acts 3:1-3).

Peter and John had no silver or gold, but they did have some alms to give. The alms they shared with the lame man were a memorial or a witness of Jesus Christ's Death, Burial, and Resurrection Power that was within them.

We cannot share with another person what we have not yet received from the LORD. God is the greatest Almsgiver in Time and Eternity. We are able to share with others because He freely shares His Life and Blessings with us.

IV. Righteousness Is Found in True Almsgiving.

The word *righteousness* in the Old Testament has the same meaning as the word *alms* in the New Testament. God's Word teaches that some remissions come only through our acts of righteousness, our right thoughts, and our right deeds. The following Stature of Truth explains the righteousness found in true almsgiving.



A. Righteousness Clothes.

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem (Job 29:14).

Recognizing the needs of the poor is not enough; we must do something about meeting their needs. Job said that *he* was clothed by putting on righteousness. While his alms clothed the poor with visible garments, they also clothed the invisible parts of Job's own being.

Almsgiving strips us of our selfishness and greed, and it clothes us with the Linen Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

B. Righteousness Delivers.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but **righteousness delivereth from death** (Proverbs 10:2).

Selfishness and greed will kill the soul faster than anything else. Spiritual Death begins working in us when we complain and give grudgingly. However, when we share with gratitude in our hearts toward God, we feel His Life and Power flow through us. Almsgiving delivers us from Death in our spirits and souls.

C. Righteousness Is a Banner.

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: **and thy righteousness shall go before thee**; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward (Isaiah 58:8).

The writer of the Song of Solomon described the Bride as being terrible as an army with banners. The Hebrew word for *banner* means to flaunt, to raise a flag, to be conspicuous. The righteousness of our almsgiving will go before us as a *banner*.

When the enemy attacks, many of his darts are directed against the part of our flesh called *greed*. The Devil cannot tempt righteousness. Therefore, he must tempt unrighteousness, the part which is unlike Jesus Christ. Each time we give to the poor, we get a Linen Banner. When the Devil attacks us, we can wave our flags or banners to the world, the flesh, and the Devil as witnesses to the Work of Righteousness already wrought in our hearts.

D. Righteousness Lengthens Peace.

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and **break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity** (Daniel 4:27).

Sins of greed and unmercifulness grieve our Bridegroom's Heart, but when we break off or cease from such sins, our fellowship and union with Him are restored.

There is no greater peace than that which is known when we are One with Jesus Christ. Surely we are privileged beyond measure to have Him plant the precious Fruit of Sharing in our hearts. Let us treasure it and nourish it so that the "nut" of almsgiving may grow to maturity and bear fruit in our daily lives.

By studying of the Stature of Truth about almsgiving, we have learned that God commanded His people to give alms during the Sabbatical year (the seventh year); during the Feast of Weeks; during the time of their harvest gleanings; and also of their *good* all the rest of the time.

It is important to practice giving alms in the right way. We are not to give our alms before men. We are to make no sound to advertise that we are giving alms. We are not to let our left hand know that our right hand is giving alms. And we are to give secretly, out of a pure motive of desiring to please Jesus Christ.

Almsgiving has power to assure us an open reward; make us inwardly clean; preserve our lives in eternal bags; and it is a memorial or witness of Christ's Work in our hearts.

The righteousness of almsgiving clothes us; delivers us; is a banner before the world, the flesh, and the Devil; and it lengthens our peace.

Certainly, we have everything to gain by practicing the Principle of Almsgiving as Jesus Christ has commanded us to do!