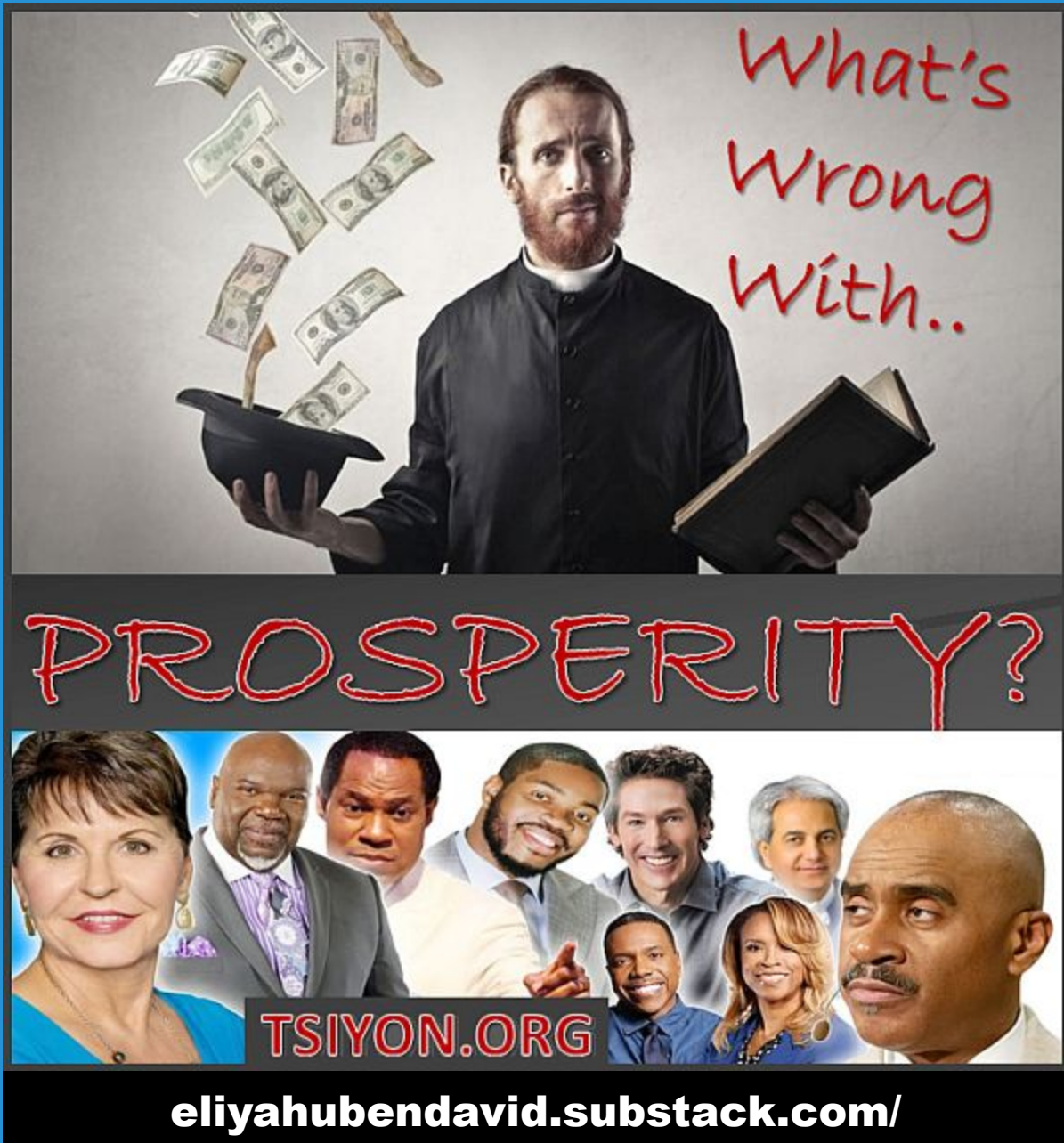


# TSIYON NEWS

Tsiyon Messianic Radio Newsletter - Vol 21.08 - 12/07/6025 TAM - 02/24/2026 AD

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What's  
Wrong  
With..

PROSPERITY?

TSIYON.ORG

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From Eliyahu

I have wanted for some time to write to you about a teaching that has become very influential in modern Christianity, especially through television, conferences, books, and now social media. It is commonly called the **prosperity gospel** - sometimes "health and wealth" teaching, or a form of "word of faith" theology. Many sincere believers have encountered it. Some say they have found in it an

encouragement to pray with expectation. Others, however, have been deeply confused or wounded by it. For that reason, I want to address it plainly but kindly: what it is, how it developed, and why it is not true to Scripture.

At first hearing, prosperity teaching can sound appealing because it often begins with truths we all rightly affirm. God is generous. God hears prayer. God can heal. Faith matters. God cares about our needs. The problem is not that prosperity teaching says any of these things. The problem is that it rearranges them and shifts the center of the gospel away from Messiah and onto visible outcomes.

In practice, the focus moves from the good news of Messiah crucified and risen - to the promise of health, money, success, and breakthrough. Faith is treated less as trust in the living God and more as a method for getting results. Giving can be presented less as worship and generosity and more as a transaction. Prayer can begin to sound less like humble dependence and more like a means of controlling God. Once that shift happens, the gospel itself has been distorted.

This teaching did not appear overnight in its present form. Like many errors, it developed over time by exaggerating certain truths and ignoring others.

Scripture certainly speaks of blessing. God blessed Abraham. Israel was given covenant blessings and covenant curses under the Mosaic covenant. Wisdom literature often teaches that diligence tends toward stability and folly tends toward ruin. But over time, some teachers began treating these truths as if they were universal, immediate guarantees for all believers in every circumstance. The Bible's rich and varied teaching on blessing was flattened into a formula: if your faith is strong enough, you can force God to give you what you want.

Alongside that came a change in how faith itself was described. In some circles, faith came to be spoken of almost as a force that could be activated, directed, and released through verbal confession. Words were treated not simply as important, but as instruments that could secure desired outcomes if used correctly. There is a grain of truth here - our words matter, and unbelief is real - but the larger claim goes beyond Scripture. The Bible does not teach that human beings, by verbal formulas, can command reality into submission. God speaks worlds into existence. We do not.

Mass media then amplified these ideas dramatically. Televangelism, radio, and later digital media created platforms where large personalities could spread promises of healing, financial increase, and miracle outcomes to millions of people at once. Testimony-driven messaging is powerful. It is emotional, memorable, and easy to share. It can also become selective and manipulative.

In many settings, prosperity teaching was presented not as one perspective among many, but as the evidence of true faith itself. If you prospered, your faith was working. If you suffered, perhaps your faith was weak. If you remained sick, perhaps you had confessed wrongly. If you remained poor, perhaps you had not “sown a seed” properly. Those conclusions have brought real pain to many.

We should also recognize why this teaching spreads so easily. It speaks to genuine human fears. In poorer regions, it offers hope to those living under crushing economic pressure. In wealthier societies, it offers security to anxious people who may have more possessions but still live with fear, loneliness, debt, and uncertainty. In other words, the prosperity gospel does not appeal only to greed. It often appeals to pain. That is one reason we should address it with both clarity and compassion.

Why, then, is it wrong? Not because God never blesses materially, and not because God never heals, but because it misrepresents both the heart of the gospel and the pattern of Biblical discipleship. The gospel is the good news that the Messiah died for our sins, rose from the dead, and reconciles all who repent and believe. Its central promises are forgiveness, reconciliation, new birth, the indwelling Spirit, adoption, sanctification, resurrection, and eternal life. These are not side benefits. They are the treasure. The prosperity message may still use biblical language, but it often pushes those realities to the edges and puts material well-being at the center. That is not a small imbalance; it is a serious corruption.

It also fails to reckon honestly with the place of suffering in the life of the true disciple. Messiah did not call His disciples to a life of guaranteed outward success. He called us to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow Him. The New Covenant does not promise believers a life free of hardship. It repeatedly prepares believers for tribulation, persecution, weakness, and endurance. The apostles did not treat suffering as proof that faith had failed. They often treated it as part of faithful witness. A teaching that leaves disciples unprepared for suffering is not merely incomplete; it is dangerous. It may produce excitement for a season, but it leaves people spiritually disoriented when real trials come.

Another major problem is the way prosperity teaching can blur the line between trust in God and control over God. Biblical faith says, “God is able.” Biblical faith also says, “Not my will, but yours be done.” Prosperity teaching is more like, “My faith can force God to do my will.”

Prosperity teaching often encourages believers to expect certainty where Scripture teaches dependence. It can make people feel that if they say the right words, maintain the right intensity, or give the right amount, God is obligated to produce a particular outcome. But the Lord is not bound by our formulas.



**Witches control spirits with magic. False teachers do it with the Bible.**

Consider the apostle Paul. He had faith. He prayed. He served with devotion. Yet he also suffered hunger, hardship, imprisonment, and repeated affliction. He learned contentment in abundance and in want. He did not interpret every hardship as a failure of confession or a defect in faith.

This error is frequently sustained by poor handling of Scripture. Verses are lifted out of context and treated as universal promises of financial increase. Passages given to Israel in a particular covenant setting are applied directly to modern believers' bank accounts. Proverbs, which describes general patterns of wisdom, are turned into guaranteed outcomes. Narratives of miracles are treated as formulas rather than testimonies to God's sovereign power. This is not how Scripture should be read. We must read the Bible in context, in covenant context, in literary context, and in the full witness of God's revelation, with Messiah at the center.

Prosperity teaching also distorts the meaning of giving. Scripture calls believers to generosity, and often speaks beautifully about sowing and reaping. But generosity in Scripture is rooted in worship, love, care for others, and trust in God - not in a promise that every gift will return as personal financial multiplication. When giving is presented as a mechanism for wealth transfer from heaven to the giver, covetousness can disguise itself as faith. The act may look spiritual while the heart is being trained in the wrong direction.

Perhaps the most grievous damage appears in what this teaching does to those who suffer. A believer battling illness, loss, poverty, or grief may already be carrying a heavy burden. Prosperity teaching often adds another burden: shame. "If I had more faith, this would not be happening." "If I had spoken better, perhaps this would have changed." "If I had given more, maybe God would have answered."

This is not how Messiah dealt with the suffering. He was full of compassion. He healed many, yes, but He also comforted, wept, and taught His disciples how to endure. Believers must never increase the pain of the afflicted by tying their worth or faithfulness to outcomes God has not promised in their lives.

At this point, some may worry that rejecting the prosperity gospel means embracing pessimism or unbelief. It does not. God still heals. God still provides. God still answers prayer in remarkable ways. We should pray boldly for daily bread, for healing, for deliverance, for open doors, for favor, and for help. We should thank Him for every gift. But we must do so as disciples, not as spiritual consumers.

The biblical posture is confidence in God's goodness combined with submission to His wisdom. He may grant abundance, and we rejoice. He may allow lack, and we trust Him. He may heal now, and we praise Him. He may sustain us through weakness, and He is no less faithful.

This brings us to an important point: Scripture does teach prosperity, but not in the way this movement often defines it. The truest prosperity is first to know God, to be reconciled to Him through His Son, to walk in holiness, to grow in likeness of the Son, and to inherit the kingdom that cannot be shaken. Material provision has its place, and we should be grateful for it, but it is not the measure of God's favor. God's love is not proved by our comfort, and His faithfulness is not canceled by our trials.

What, then, do all believers need? We need the true gospel proclaimed clearly. We need Messiah at the center. We need Scripture handled carefully, prayer offered boldly but humbly, generosity practiced without manipulation, and compassion shown to those in pain. We need to recover the language of repentance, holiness, endurance, contentment, and hope. We need assemblies that can rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, without forcing every story into a success formula.

And we need to say something clearly to wounded believers: if you trusted God and still suffered, that does not mean God has abandoned you. If you prayed and the answer was not what you hoped, that does not mean your faith was fake. If you are walking through long affliction, you are not disqualified from the love of Messiah. The Lord is with His people in the valley, not only on the mountaintop. He is faithful in weakness as well as in strength.

I am writing this because truth matters, especially where suffering people are concerned. Errors that flatter us are often the hardest to confront. But anything that moves Messiah from the center, or places false guilt on the afflicted, must be named and resisted. Let us ask God for His blessings without apology, but let us never confuse His

gifts with the gospel itself. Let us seek His hand, yes - but above all, let us seek His face.

All of this brings up an important related issue. We call it *The Wealth Trap*. Our live stream discussion tonight will be a lively discussion on what Scripture really says about wealth. That will be at 8:00 Central on Tsiyon.Net and other video platforms. This is an important topic for us all, so we are excited to share this with you.

In His Name, Eliyahu

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**Join us tonight at Tsiyon.Net for this Panel Discussion!**



Audio:



Video:



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