

# Yehovah or Mammon

*...Ye cannot serve God **and** mammon. (Mt 6:24)*

## **— the scriptural warning regarding riches —**

The article covers a series of headings which open up the significance of riches from a New Covenant perspective.

[All scripture quotes are from the ASV or, occasionally the NASB, when it gives a more understandable reading. The occasional verse is modified to reflect exactly what the Greek says.]

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## Introduction:

There is a strong influence of the material prosperity preachers in current Western Christianity. These people see a need for wealthy churches because they see no other way to progress the Kingdom except by having sufficient funds to do what they see as necessary. I seriously contend this is not the right way and that there is another way based solely on the ability (the power) of The Almighty God.

Jesus did not have an organisation of wealthy people behind Him financing His endeavours. If He had such an organisation, we would have read about it as an example for us to follow. Instead, the exact opposite is found. Jesus simply had the power of His God inside Him, received from His Father at His water baptism when it tells us *God's Spirit*<sup>1</sup> came upon Him. He needed NOTHING else but He did need God's Spirit and He only received this when He was about 30 years of age. Prior to that He did not have God's Spirit and therefore He did no miracles, but subsequent to His water baptism everything changed. He didn't even go to a home in the evenings as **John 7:53-8:1** illustrates: *...Everyone went to his home. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives....* AND **Mat 8:20** with **Lk 9:58**, *...The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head...*

The ability (power) of Almighty God is lacking in the church today except in isolated instances. This ability, this power, this enabling, (whatever we want to call it) was what drove the fledgling church. The question therefore has to be asked: why do we not have this ability/power today? Perhaps the following article, which looks at riches in the New Testament and their apparent deceptiveness, answers this question by posing the possibility that real progress in declaring the Kingdom of God will not be made until we realise the need to rely solely on the Father's ability to provide for ALL our needs, just as Jesus did.

Without any doubt, Western Christendom today is so far away from the sort of consequences spoken about in the following two verses that we must ask, why? Read **Acts 17:6** *...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;...* AND **Acts 13:44** *...The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord....* We have a long way to go, if we think we are doing alright.

## New Covenant Changes to OT Law

Before we delve into riches, let us first notice some significant differences between the Old and the New Covenant law, noting the higher expectations laid upon us under the New Covenant. Let's start with Matthew 5. Apart from the beatitudes which everyone knows about and has heard preached many times over, few have thought about, nor pastors preached much about the remaining two-thirds of this chapter which records six statements in which Jesus uses these words, *"...You have heard that it was said, ... but I say to you..."* These six statements (or logoses, if there were such an English word) of Jesus are of supreme importance because Jesus takes Old Covenant law and CHANGES it. Yes, the Law is changed. More specifically, He upgrades it. In each case, He

<sup>1</sup> Only five times in the New Testament is the phrase, God's Spirit used. The texts which follow are the very literal translation of the passages with word order the same as the Greek and hence a little difficult to follow. **Matt. 3:16** *...Having-been-baptized but the Jesus immediately came-up from the water and look! were-opened-up the heavens and he-saw spirit of-God descending as-if a dove coming upon him.* **Matt. 12:28** *...If but in spirit of-God I am-throwing-out the demons really came-early upon YOU the kingdom of-the God.* **Rom. 8:9** *...You but not YOU-are in flesh but in spirit if-even spirit of-God is-dwelling in YOU If but anyone spirit of-Christ not is-having this-(one) not is of-him.* **1Cor. 7:40** *...happier but she-is if-ever thus she-should-remain according-to the my opinion, I-am-thinking for also I spirit of-God to-be-having.* **1Cor. 12:3** *...Through which I-am-making-known to-YOU that no-one in spirit of-God speaking he-is-saying Anathema Jesus and no-one is-able to-say Lord Jesus if not in spirit holy. The Romans verse here is worth some serious contemplation.*

makes the new requirement much more difficult than it ever was under "the law", in fact, seemingly impossible to the natural man. These six logoses deal with 'murder', 'adultery', 'divorce', 'perjury', 'revenge' and finally 'hate/love'. Consider as a good example just one, **Matt. 5:27-28** which says: ... *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart...* No longer is it a matter of not physically doing it, but now, if I do it in my heart, I am guilty before the law. How many men do you know who have not lusted after a woman in their heart? This and the other changes mentioned in Matt. 5, begin to demonstrate the essence of the purpose of the New Covenant, namely, the abolition all together of sin from the conscience of man as we see expressed in **Heb. 9:9** ...*Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience...* AND **Heb. 9:14** ...*how much more will the blood of Christ, ... cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Without doubt, we need to be changed in the very depths of our being. The reader can suss out for himself the other 5 times Jesus changes the Old Testament law in **Mat 5**. They all show the upgrading of the law to a spiritual level which we, by ourselves, are not able to achieve until we become significantly changed in some particular way.

These six statements in Matthew are not the only Old Covenant laws which were upgraded by Jesus. They are simply some found together in close proximity, probably to draw our attention to the fact that Old Covenant law points forward to a much higher and more beneficial New Covenant Law. It should not surprise us then to find other Old Covenant law that is also upgraded to a higher level. Take for example, **Col 2:11** ...*and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ...* AND **Rom. 2:29** ...*but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in spirit not in letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God....* Here we realise that Old Testament circumcision was a picture of a much grander thing, the exposing of the heart by the cutting away of the body of the flesh, a picture also spoken of in **Rom 7** and culminating in **Rom 8**.

Such differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament are further highlighted by the words used by Jesus when we appreciate from an earlier verse in Matt. 5 that Jesus is not doing away with the law, but He is fulfilling or more explicitly, filling-full the law, as He says in **Mt 5:17**. Filling-full is the idea behind the Greek verb *πληρωω* translated fulfill in **Mt 5:17**, but it has the implied thought of something already partially filled. This idea of the law needing to be filled-full is also clearly seen in the use of the Greek word, *λογιον*, (logion), in **Rom 3.2** which says: ...*Much in every way: first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles (logion) of God...* AND in **Heb. 5:12** ...*For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles (logion) of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food...* In these verses, the Spirit through Paul's hand in the Greek calls the Old Covenant law, logion (*λογιον*). This Greek word is the diminutive form<sup>2</sup> i.e. the young or immature form, of the Greek word, logos (*λογος*), and as such means the young or immature logos, that which is not yet grown up to maturity, and therefore, that which needs to be filled-full. Logion (*λογιον*) is milk and not yet solid food. These "oracles", as the ASV translates *λογιον* in **Heb 5.12**, which were entrusted to the Hebrews, are immature by comparison with the logos now revealed to us through Jesus whose words to us are "THE Logos" itself, simply because the Messiah IS "THE logos of the God" (**John 1:1 with Rev 19:13**). Thus to summarise, we can now understand that Jesus, in **Mat. 5**, was filling-full the already revealed immature logion (Old

<sup>2</sup> See *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Thayer.

Covenant law) and so gave us the mature logos for the New Covenant. The importance of this new fully matured logos, which comes to us in the words spoken by the Christ, is emphasised for us by the Father Himself, for three times (**Mt 17:5, Mk 9:7, Lk 9:35**) it is recorded, that the Father says to us of Jesus, "**hear ye him**". And if this were not enough, **Heb 1:1-2** signifies the importance and urgency of the words of Jesus, for it says the God (Yehovah) "...*hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son*". What could be more important?

The writings of the Old Covenant are unquestionably important but the Logos, the reckonings of the Father, given us through His own Son, filling-full previously spoken logion are, in these last days, of utmost importance. We might venture to say that the change from logion to logos, signified the beginning of a new age, for Jesus Himself exemplifies this important change when in **Luke 16:16** He says: *...The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached...* The law and the prophets were the immature logion but now, the Logos of the Father's Kingdom is preached.

~~Add here the changes to allowable food in the New Covenant.~~

One further example is found in **Heb 7:12** *...For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*

Other changes/upgradings in the law are found scattered throughout the gospels and epistles and are left to the reader to search out for himself.

However, the one upgrade which stands out in the New Testament because it receives so much discussion and was the initial reason for writing this article, is tithing and its natural association with riches.

### **How is Tithing now different?**

It should not surprise us then that tithing is also upgraded. No where under the New Covenant do we find the requirement to give a tithe, a tenth of our income. The fact that nearly every Christian denomination throughout the world requires it of their members, does not make it correct. If tithing, the giving a tenth, were so important, it is reasonable to think God's Spirit would have said something specific about it in the New Testament. Some have tried to argue from Hebrews 7, that tithing is applicable to New Covenant times but the argument has no validity. In **Heb 7:1-10**, the Spirit by the writer is simply recounting the Old Covenant law to establish the importance of Melchizedek after whom Jesus is likened. No where in the epistles of Paul is it indicated that giving a tenth, is a pattern for giving under the New Covenant. We do however, see Paul writing by the Spirit about taking collections for the poor among the holy-ones but he never ever mentions a requirement to give a tenth. We should notice too that the money collected was not held and used by the apostles to defray "church" expenses but was distributed among the people according to need, especially the "holy ones".

Under the New Covenant, the standard of the Old Covenant tithing law, like other Old Testament law, is raised considerably higher as will be seen soon in the words of Jesus. As with other Old Covenant law, He 'raises the bar' beyond the reach of our own resources so that the goal to be achieved can never be of our own doing. No longer are we required to give just a tenth. We are called to give far more, in accord with the way Jesus has upgraded so much of the Old Testament law. What then are we required to give? The answer is simple. We are required to give all as the scriptures in the rest of this article will soon show. By giving all to the poor (not to the church), we place ourselves in the hands of our Father so that He might become our provider.

In essence, the great realisation and change of attitude we are required to come to, is that

the Almighty God is **the OWNER of everything, every single atom** and that we are indeed only users of HIS possessions. Listen to these scriptures: **Psalm 50:7-12** *...Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testify against you: I am God, your God, I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are ever before me. I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it... AND Haggai 2:8* *...The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts... AND Romans 11:35* *...Who has ever given to Him, that He should repay him...*

We are reminded of the change of attitude which took place among the first converts in **Acts 2:44-45** *...And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need, AND Acts 4:32* *... And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. 36 ¶ And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, 37 having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

These examples of extraordinary change which took place among the converts showed that whatever Barnabas may have used the field for before, he now considered it of no use to him in the light of what was now before him. A whole different perspective had come upon him, in fact upon all of them, when they received The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Father.

Far more importantly, we need to come to the realisation that the Almighty God loves us and wants to be a Father to us, if we will only let Him just as He was Father to His Son. Are we willing to become a child of the Father? The cost will be more than we think.

## Following Christ – the Full Cost

The cost of following Christ is something we seldom ponder, in fact we are seldom taught that there is a cost. The rich young ruler was not told that the one thing he lacked was to **just** sell his possessions, but rather, that He must **then** follow Christ. Following Christ is an immediate full-on commitment as these two verses portray.

Luke 9:59 *...To another he said, "Follow me... But he said, "**Lord, let me first go and bury my father...** 60 *...But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God... 61 Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; **but let me first say farewell to those at my home...** 62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God...**

Matt. 8:21 makes a similar statement: *...Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, **let me first go and bury my father...** 22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead...*

In the following Luke verses, we see this commitment fleshed out for us. Notice in these verses that Jesus three times uses the phrase, "**is not able to be my disciple**". Be mindful in these verses that a disciple is a learner not a "graduate".

**Lk 14:25-27, 33** ...Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 " If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life (soul), **he is not able to be My disciple.** 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me **is not able to be My disciple.** ... 33 ...So then, **none of you is able to be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.**

In **Mt 10:37-39**, we see reiterated these same requirements to love Jesus more than family: ...He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his soul shall lose it; and he that loseth his soul for my sake shall find it...

All of these conditions especially those outlined in Luke are difficult to accept without knowing the ability of the Holy Spirit, even by those who would call themselves Christian, yet we will see denial of self spoken of so often by Christ. We must be prepared to put our businesses, our homes, our families and OUR OWN SOUL on the line for Him. Yes, we must love Him more than our own soul!

#### **Family Division – a possible consequence of following Christ:**

No one knows family division better than a Muslim who turns to Christ. Hear the words of our Lord in **Mt 10:21** ...And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death.... AND **Mk 13:12-13** ... And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.... AND **Matt. 10:34-38** ...Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his soul will lose it, and he who loses his soul for my sake will find it.... AND **Lk 12:51-53** ...Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother in law against her daughter in law, and daughter in law against her mother in law.

What is our attitude? What would we do? Does a parent back away from Christ when a rift develops between parent and child because of Christ or do we hold to Christ at the risk of losing the child or the parent? Again, Muslims who have accepted Christ know this only too well.

#### **Following Christ means Denial of self:**

The following lists just some of those scriptures which speak of denial of self. More can be found. It is to be noted in the first four verses that each require us to take up our cross and follow Christ. The implication being that following Christ is the means by which we die to ourselves on our own cross.

**Mk 8:34** ...And having called the crowd with his disciples, he said to them, Whoever desires to

come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross and follow me...

**Lk 9:23** ...And he said to [them] all, If any one will come after me, let him **deny himself** and take up his cross daily and follow me;"

**Matt. 16:24-26** ...Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him **deny himself** and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his soul will lose it, and whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

**Gal. 6:14** ...But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which **the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

**Col. 3:5** ...**Put to death** therefore **what is earthly in you**: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

**Eph. 5:5** ...Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is **covetous (that is, an idolater)**, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

**2Tim. 2:20-21** ...In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and earthenware, and some for noble use, some for ignoble. **If any one purifies himself from what is ignoble**, then he will be a vessel for noble use, consecrated and useful to the master of the house, ready for any good work.

There are more scriptures which show the necessity of denying oneself, but the real question is: how does one deny oneself and at the same time satisfy one's own "needs/wants". It can't be done. A dramatic change has to take place to begin the process. We have to be willing to take up our own cross upon which we will eventually die. It all begins with being 'born from above'.

Are we prepared to give all for Jesus? Are we prepared to put our homes, our families and our own lives on the line for Him?

## Denial of Self Giving

Let's look briefly at the way that Jesus sees giving. In **Lk 21:1-4** it says ...And he looked up, and saw the rich men that were casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, **This poor widow cast in more than they all**: for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she of her want did cast in all the livelihood that she had... This is also spoken of in **Mk 12:41-44** ...And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. <sup>42</sup> And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. <sup>43</sup> And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, **This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury:** <sup>44</sup> for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

The quality of the offering to Almighty God is not dependent on the size or amount of the gift but rather the extent of the cost to us, the denial of ourselves, at least that is how we would see it initially, but ultimately, it is actually a measure of our trust in His ability to provide for us as a Father. No suggestion of putting in a tenth in these words of Jesus. Rather, we will see further on in this article, that the overwhelming evidence is to give all for Him that we might place ourselves completely in His care.

Jesus finishes the truths of **Luke 12** with "...<sup>32</sup> Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> **Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.** <sup>34</sup> "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.



Dare we trust Him? Dare we take Him at His word? How does all this work? Or is it that we do not yet know the power and love of Yehovah, the Father Deity?

When the realisation that the Almighty God is **the owner of everything** becomes a deep down reality in our lives, there will be no more hoarding of riches for one's own desires or pleasures. Is this possible? Yes it is, but only by the power of God's Spirit. Consider seriously the astounding response of the new converts in **Acts 2:43-45**, *...And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together, **and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need...*** AND **Acts 4:32** *...And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and **not one of them said that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.** And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. For neither was there among them any that lacked: **for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need...*** This response was the work of God's Spirit. Something had changed dramatically in these new converts. The accumulation of personal riches was now furtherest from their minds. This human desire had been supplanted by a much higher and far more real, spiritual desire. Near death experiencers who have gone into the Light have experienced this dramatic change.

That others also thought to give all, can be seen in these following examples of certain ones in the early church times.

1. Firstly, consider Jesus Himself. We know that He left the security of His home (His mother, His earthly dad, Joseph, 4 brothers and at least 2 sisters) and the security of Joseph's carpentry business or perhaps it was his own business now if Joseph was already dead, and went to do His real Father's work. And what did He take with Him? No more than the clothes He stood up in. This is in harmony with His directive to His disciples when He sent them out, telling them in **Mt 10:9-10** *...Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet (food pouch) for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food...* AND **Lk 10:4** *...Carry no purse, no wallet (food pouch), no shoes; and salute no man on the way...* AND **Lk 22:35** *...When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet (food pouch), and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing...* AND **Jn 6:27** *...Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto age-lasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, the God, hath sealed.*

Finally, as already mentioned previously, we have a small glimpse of how Jesus lived in **John 7:53-8:1**: *"...And every man went unto his own house. But Jesus went unto the mount of Olives...* [Remember, chapter separations are not part of the original text.]

2. Secondly, the apostles too gave up all and this was not corrected by Jesus as inappropriate. Consider **Mt 4:18-22** *.....And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him. And going on from thence he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway **left the boat and their father**, and followed him...* AND **Lk 5:10-11** *...and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their boats to land, **they left all**, and followed him...* AND **Lk 5:28** *...And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the*

place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And **he forsook all**, and rose up and followed him... To add further to the force of these verses, it says in **Matt. 19:27-30**, *...Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, **we have left everything** and followed You; what then will there be for us... 28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 "And **everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake**, will receive many times as much, and will inherit age-lasting life. 30 " But many who are first will be last; and the last, first..." AND **Mk 10:28-31** *...Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have **left everything** and followed you... Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has **left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel**, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come age-lasting life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first.. AND **Lk 18:28-30** *...And Peter said, "Lo, we have **left our homes** and followed you... And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no man who has **left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God**, who will not receive manifold more in this time, and in the age to come age-lasting life...***

At no time does Jesus chide the apostles for leaving all. They left all that they owned, their family and businesses and followed Jesus. What would we think of such an action today? We would no doubt advise against such an "inconsiderate" move, probably in the same way we would have advised Abraham that he was hearing from Satan when he was told to sacrifice his son! Oh, how little we know of the heart of Yehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To cap all this off, Jesus makes it very clear to His disciples what is required to be His disciple in **Luke 14:33** *...So then, **none of you is able to be My disciple** who does not give up all his own possessions.* Are any of us truly His disciples?

3. Thirdly, the apostle Paul, though called by the Lord to a special task, is given to us as an example. He makes very significant for us this statement to Timothy by the Spirit in **2Tim 2:4**, *"... No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier..."*. If we are in military service, we are not pursuing ANY of our own agendas. In fact, we have NO agendas of our own at all. We are under orders from above. We have to ask ourselves: Are WE good soldiers of Jesus Christ? In fact, are any of us even soldiers of Jesus Christ or are we still entangled in the affairs of this life? Jesus tells us the same thing in another way in **Lk 16:13-14** *"...No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon**. And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him..."* (See also the parallel verse in **Mt 6:24** *...No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*). Jesus tells us outright that we can not serve both God AND Mammon. We are told it is either one OR the other, not a bit of both. We can't have one foot in one camp and one in the other. Is it any wonder we don't find these scriptures preached by the prosperity preachers!

4. Fourthly, we have already quoted (above) the reaction of the new converts in **Acts 2:43-45** and **Acts 4:32**. These weren't "mature" Christians who had seriously discussed the ramifications of their new belief, they were babes who had just believed and received The Holy Spirit. If this were to happen in this day and age, all would undoubtedly be castigated even by the vast majority of pastors for their reckless disregard for their own families.

## Putting my Treasure and Heart in Heaven:

Jesus actually commands us NOT to build treasures here on earth and He is recorded five times in the gospels talking about having treasure in heaven. Let's hear what Matthew, Mark and Luke all have to say.

**Mt 6:19-20** ...speaks generally, "*Lay **not** up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*"

In these next four verses Jesus tells us that the way to have treasure in heaven is to sell all that we have AND follow Him.

**Mt 19:21** ...Jesus said unto him, *If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have **treasure in heaven**: and come, follow me...*

**Mk 10:21** ...And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, *One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have **treasure in heaven**: and come, follow me...*

**Lk 18:22** ...And when Jesus heard it, he said unto him, *One thing thou lackest yet: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have **treasure in heaven**: and come, follow me...*

**Lk 12:33** ...*Sell that which ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a **treasure in the heavens** that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth...*

Some argue that the "rich young ruler" scriptures apply only to those "who have a problem with riches" thus excusing themselves, but they conveniently forget what the rest of the New Testament has to say and discussed above.

A thorough scan of the New Testament shows no other way stated by which we may have this "treasure in heaven". All these accounts indicate that selling earthly possessions gives us this treasure in heaven. We may ask, why would Jesus say we have treasure in heaven by selling all that we own AND following Him? Does Jesus see some sort of problem associated with riches which we can't see? Or is He really trying to show us that we CAN trust our heavenly Father to provide ALL our needs. How illogical this seems to human thinking but not so when considered with the rest of the Father's "upside-down logic... e.g. love your enemies, do good etc.....

Finally, we learn that where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. This is an important concept to grasp. **Mt 6.21** says, *...for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also....*" AND **Lk 12:34** says, *...For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also...* Both tell us that our heart follows our treasure. Where's your treasure? How simple it is to put our heart in heaven and yet how hard to do.

## Riches/Wealth

### The Deceitfulness of Riches:

We note to begin with, that Jesus had some rich followers. In **Mt 27:57** it tells us, *...And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:...* AND in **Lk 19:2** *...And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich.* The fact that He had these rich followers does not in any way detract from the words Jesus utters about riches. They apply to these two followers as well.

Having read these verses, it might therefore surprise some that Jesus says there is

deceitfulness associated with riches. The following scriptures will tell us plainly. We might wonder what that deceit is. Certainly the more money one has, the more one spends on oneself, but we do see in the world today that much big business is done with bribes, of one sort or another, passing back and forth. Perhaps this is part of the deceit of which Jesus is speaking. Personally, I think it is much more. I think it is the allure of physical riches which makes people self-sufficient and thus takes them away from the very real riches which our Father wants to give us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control, otherwise known as the fruit of the Spirit. Any near death experiencer who came into the Light, can vouch for the life changing effects of experiencing these spiritual riches.

Listen to Jesus' warning concerning the deceitfulness of riches.

Mt 13:22 *...And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and **the deceitfulness of riches**, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful...*

Mk 4:19 *...and the cares of the world, and **the deceitfulness of riches**, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful...*

Lk 8:14 *...And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with **cares and riches and pleasures of this life**, and bring no fruit to perfection...*

Plainly, the deceit of riches chokes the logos of Jesus. Paul tells us in **1Tim. 6:10** (ASV) that, *...the love of money is a root of all the evils:...* and we think that so long as we don't LOVE money we will be alright, but the order of words in the Greek for this verse tells a more succinct story, *...for a root of all the malicious things is the fondness of money*. Is it any wonder that Jesus tells us to sell our possessions if we want to be His disciples?

We also read in **James 2:5-6** *...Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are **poor to the world** to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him? But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats...* We see this plain statement that God chose the poor to the world to be rich in faith. This clearly implies that there is a negative correlation between faith and riches. Perhaps our God knows something about riches that we don't yet know. Could it be that riches entice us away from putting our trust in Him, for surely the God has something far greater and more satisfying than physical riches which He wants to give to us.

### **Riches and Entry into the Kingdom of God**

Before addressing the issues under this and following headings, I need to quickly talk about the Greek of the words in our English which are translated 'rich'. There are two Greek words which are translated rich or riches:

1. *πλουτος*, (ploutos), and
2. *χρημα* (chrema).

The KJV almost universally applies the English word 'rich' or 'riches' to ploutos while it varies in its translation of chrema, sometimes using 'riches' and other times 'money'. In this article, ploutos will remain translated as 'rich/riches', while chrema will be uniformly translated as 'money'. More could be said about these two words but there is no point here as it impacts little on the import of this article since it is apparent that riches are the things that money can buy.

The word 'rich' can apply to physical riches as well as spiritual riches according to the context. For example **Luke 12:21** *...says: So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not **rich** toward God...* AND **1Tim 6:17-19** *says ...nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of **riches**, but on God,*

who giveth us **richly** all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be **rich** in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed... AND finally **Rev 3:17-18** says ...Because thou sayest, I am **rich**, and have gotten **riches**, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become **rich**; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.

In another article called *The Two? Kingdoms*, <http://the-logos.net/resources/PDF's/TheTwoKingdoms.pdf>, one can read about riches in regard to the differences between the *Kingdom of Heaven* and the *Kingdom of God*. Mention is made of a place in Matthew's gospel where these two Kingdom terms are used in close association. (Remember, Matthew is the only writer who uses the term *Kingdom of Heaven*.) The verses occur in **Mt 19:23-30** where it says in part ...And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a **rich** man to enter into the **kingdom of heaven**. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a **rich** man to enter into the **kingdom of God**. These verses seem to be saying that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven but that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. I use the word "impossible" because that is what Christ clearly implies by His analogy though there is many a prosperity preacher who has performed semantic gymnastics trying to find a way around this difficult-to-accept passage. Such an "extreme view" is however, the only way to account firstly, for the reaction of the disciples to this statement and secondly, for Christ's response to their reaction. The disciples reaction is recorded as being "exceedingly astonished". Christ's words had to be very demanding to elicit such a recorded response from the disciples. Finally, listen to Christ's own words in response to the disciples reaction in vs 26, ...With men this is **impossible**; but with God all things are possible... Such words from Christ amplify the impossibility of achieving this exacting requirement with our own resources.

These statements of Jesus in **Mt 19:23-30** clearly identify a difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God and that riches has something to do with it. That there IS a clear distinction in these two terms is fully documented in the article: *The Two? Kingdoms*, found at <http://the-logos.net/resources/PDF's/TheTwoKingdoms.pdf>.

The two following parallel passages in **Mark 10** and **Luke 18** also speak of the same difficulty that riches give us in entering the Kingdom of God:–

**Mark 10:21-27** ...And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. 22 But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, **How hardly shall they that have monies** (χρημα) **enter into the kingdom of God!** 24 And the disciples were **amazed** at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, **how hard is it to enter into the kingdom of God!** 25 It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich (πλουτος) man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were **astonished exceedingly**, saying unto him, Then who can be saved? 27 Jesus looking upon them saith, **With men it is impossible**, but not with God: for all things are possible with God... AND **Luke 18:22** ...And when Jesus heard it, he said unto him, One thing thou lackest yet: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and

come, follow me. 23 But when he heard these things, he became exceeding sorrowful; for he was very rich. 24 And Jesus seeing him said, **How hardly shall they that have monies** (χρημα) **enter into the kingdom of God!** 25 For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich (πλουτος) man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard it said, Then who can be saved? 27 But he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

Both passages also speak of the difficulty that the rich have entering the Kingdom of God. That there is a difficulty, is reinforced by Jesus own words in **Mark 10:24** above ...*Children, How hard it is to enter into the kingdom of the God* and we see the same sentiment again in **Acts 14:22** "...that through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God..." AND **Luke 18:17** ... *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.* Entry into the Kingdom of the God is nowhere said to be as easy as some preachers today would have us believe and it certainly doesn't happen when we are "born again", for **John 3:5** tells us we have to be "born of water and spirit" AFTER being "born from above", before we can enter the kingdom of God. Why, if Christ tells us there is a **yoke** and a **load** to bear, would we think entry to the Kingdom of God is only a quick "sinners-prayer" away. Such flippant statements completely deny the requirement to obey the Logos of Jesus and the admonition of Paul to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. This required obedience has no point if entry is a simple prayer.

The comment from Christ which precipitated these "difficult" camel passages occurs in **Mt 19:21, Mk 10:21 & Lk 18:22** and they all indicate that the one thing the young man "lackest" which would lead him to being "complete" was to "...sell all that thou hast..." and "...you shall have treasure in heaven..." (this important idea of treasure in heaven has already been touched on in this article) and "...come follow me...". The man already had "age-lasting life" for he was not chastised for not keeping the commandments, yet there was something more, if he wished to be complete. The words of Christ imply that there is more to be had than some day attaining "age-lasting life". This perfection or completion was a real possibility, but there was a price to be paid for its attainment. We see this idea of attaining something more than "just... age-lasting life in Jesus' words to Martha when we compare **John 11.26** with the previous verse: "25 ...he who **believes** in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who **lives and believes** in Me will never die... The translation of the last part of verse 26 is not correct, nevertheless the idea that **believing** brings age-lasting life BUT **living** AND **believing** brings something more, is clearly seen.

In all this, what is Christ saying to us? To me it seems fairly strongly presented that those having riches will NOT enter the Kingdom of the God. Of course, we are all quick to point out that God looks upon the heart. This, without doubt, is true but surely the question then for each of US must be: How do I determine what is in my own heart? How do I know what is in my OWN heart? Consider this. Even though Peter walked physically with Jesus for 3+ years, let us not forget his lack of real self knowledge in declaring he would die with the Lord rather than deny Him (**Mt 26:35**). In fact, all the disciples said the same. Would we be like Peter and the disciples or must we needs be like Abraham who had to walk all the way to the top of a distant mountain, build an altar, bind his son and get as far as raising the knife **before** the angel of Yehovah stopped him and said, "...NOW I know that thou fearest God..." (Gen 22:12)? How far would each of us have to go, before He would stop us and say, "NOW I know ..."?

These seem indeed to be "extreme" thoughts but they are not alone in scripture.

## The Poor

### Admonishment of the Rich

Many verses speak of the rich but listen to the overall tone of what is being said. Those not already mentioned above are listed here.

**Lk 1:53** ...*The hungry he hath filled with good things; And the **rich** he hath sent away empty...*

**Lk 6:24** ...*But woe unto you that are **rich**! for ye have received your consolation...*

**Lk 16:19-21** ...*Now there was a certain **rich** man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the **rich** man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the **rich** man also died, and was buried...*

**Lk 12:16-21** ...*And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain **rich** man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up **treasure for himself**, and is not **rich** toward God...*

**1Tim 6:9-11** ...*But those who want to get **rich** fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*

**1Tim 6:17-19** ...*Charge them that are **rich** in this present world (lit. in the present age), that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the **uncertainty of riches**, but on God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, **that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed.***

**James 1:10-11** ...*and the **rich**, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass: and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the **rich** man fade away in his goings.*

**James 2:6** ...*But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the **rich** who oppress you and personally drag you into court?*

**James 5:1-3** ...*Come now, ye **rich**, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your **riches** are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and **their rust shall be for a testimony against you**, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days.*

**Rev 3:17-18** ...*Because thou sayest, I am **rich**, and have gotten **riches**, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become **rich**; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made*

*manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.*

**Rev. 6:15** *...Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the **rich** and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;*

**Rev 18:15-17** *...The merchants of these things, who were made **rich** by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! for in an hour so great **riches** is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any wither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off..*

**Rev 18:19** *...And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made **rich** by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.*

While the following verse is not an admonishment regarding riches, it does have a clear say on the importance of money. In **Mk 12:15-17** Jesus says: *...But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius, that I may see it. 16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.* Since all money bears the imprint of the state or country which mints it, we have no choice but to conclude, from what Jesus has said, that all money is not among the things that are God's.

A few Old Testament scriptures are also worth thinking upon.

**Eccl 4:4** *...Then I saw all labor and every skilful work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind...*

**Eccl. 4:8** *...There is one that is alone, and he hath not a second; yea, he hath neither son nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labor, neither are his eyes satisfied with **riches**. For whom then, saith he, do I labor, and deprive my soul of good? This also is vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.*

**Eccl 5:10** *...He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase: this also is vanity...*

**Ezek. 28:5** *...by thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thy heart is lifted up because of thy **riches**; —*

**Mic. 6:12** *...For the **rich** men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.*

**Prov. 28:11** *...The rich man is wise in his own conceit; But the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.*

None of these are comforting words for those who are rich. Of course, we can say, what do we mean by rich? How rich does one have to be, to be rich? Questions that only the individual can answer for himself but not before a thorough study of God's words to us.

### **Encouragement for The poor**

**2Cor 9:9** *"...as it is written, He hath scattered abroad, **he hath given to the poor**; His righteousness abideth for ever..."*

**2Cor 6:10** *"...as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; **as poor**, yet making many rich; **as having nothing**, and yet possessing all things..."*



**Gal 2:10** "...only they would that **we should remember the poor**; which very thing I was also zealous to do..."

**Phil 3:7-8** "...Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I **count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ,...**"

**Heb 10:34** "...For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and **took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions**, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one..."

**Phil. 4:18** ...But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. This last verse seems to have no place here but it does when it is correctly translated. The words translated "I have all" are not correct. The verb used here "I have" should be "I distance". The Greek is ἀπεχω which is a compound verb combining the preposition, ἀπο which means **away**, with εχω which simply means **I-have** or **I-hold**. Combined they mean **I-hold-away** and so **I distance**. The text should then read: *I distance all, and abound*. Now we see the beauty of God's supply for Paul and how this fits in with the words of Jesus and these other verses relating to poor. You can read more about ἀπεχω at: <https://www.the-logos.net/resources/PDF's/echo-versus-apecho.pdf>

#### **Miraculous Provision for Food and Taxes:**

Miraculous provision pervades the whole New Testament. In the following two verses we even see Jesus expecting the apostles to feed the people. Hear what He says.

**Matt. 14:15-16, 20** ...When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves... 16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!" ... 20 and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, **twelve full baskets**.

**Luke 9:12-13, 17** ...Now the day was ending, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place... 13 But He said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people... ... 17 And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, **twelve baskets full**.

The disciples could have fed the people. That was Jesus expectation in commanding them, but they did not realise that the power, present IN Jesus was delegated to them when He sent them out, was able to provide even food when needed. And not only was there food enough for the day but we see there was plenty leftover.

So in these two verses there was a clear expectation from Jesus for the disciples to feed the people but interestingly, the next time there was a miraculous feeding, Jesus did not tell the disciples to feed the people. He simply did it Himself. Here are the two other recordings.

**Mt 15:32-39** ...And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat: and I would not send them away fasting, lest haply they faint on the way. And the disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus said unto

them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves and the fishes; and he gave thanks and brake, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they all ate, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, **seven baskets** full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children. And he sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan. AND

**Mk 8:1-9** ...In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way; and some of them are come from far. And his disciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place? And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commandeth the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them. And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, **seven baskets**. And they were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

It is interesting that there were baskets full of broken pieces left over. The word for basket in each of these two separate feeding times is different. The 12 baskets were small-baskets, *κοφίνοι*, sometimes translated as panniers, while the 7 baskets, *σπυριδας*, were large-baskets. The basket that Paul was let down the outside wall is the *σπυριδας*. It was large enough to carry a human. Could it be that there were 12 small-baskets left over, one for each apostle and 7 large baskets left over, one for each day of the week? Currently, I do not know how we understand these baskets numbers but no doubt the Lord will show us as we continue in obedience to His logos.

A little later, Jesus is perplexed by the disciples discussion about having no bread and He chastises them for their lack of faith at **Mt 16:8-10** ...And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? They still did not realise that the power to produce food was in Jesus and was delegated to them from Jesus.

The next example of provision is for the tax. Everyone was required to pay the tribute tax and so once again the Spirit provided.

**Mt 17:24-27** ...And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received the half-shekel came to Peter, and said, Doth not your teacher pay the half-shekel? He saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Yes, the Father can provide even taxes when needed.

To end this section, let's consider an Old Testament example of provision.

I could begin with the provision of manna, meat and water to the tribes of Israel for the 40

year wanderings after they came out of Egypt, but it is all too obvious and we are all very familiar with this story of provision. Rather, let's consider Elijah's experience in **1Kings 17:8-16** ...*And the word of Jehovah came unto him (Elijah), saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah.*

While we may conjecture that this Old Testament provision was for a special circumstance, the New Testament examples are clearly indicated as expected for those who would leave all and follow Christ. This is seen even more clearly under the next heading.

### **The Poor have the Gospel Preached to Them**

It is interesting that three times in the New Testament we are told that **the poor have the gospel preached to them**. Why the poor? Read these verses:

**Matt. 11:5** ...*the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.*

**Luke 4:18** ... *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised,*

**Luke 7:22** ...*And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them.*

Could there be a reason why Jesus says "...he (Yehovah) anointed me **to preach good tidings to the poor**..... I think so. Jesus was well aware of the deceitfulness of riches that make a person self-sufficient and therefore having no interest in what He had to teach them. Of course sickness quickly puts things in a different perspective, as one realises that money can't buy health.

As previously mentioned, it seems fairly clear that it will be difficult for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of the God. The poor however, can't trust in riches and therefore have to learn to trust God much quicker than those who have riches because they are already predisposed to trusting something outside themselves.

Though the content of this article appears to be extreme, may be it is that we have not yet grasped the fullness of what the Father Deity is wanting, namely, to be a Dad to us. We must learn to trust Him for all our needs as His children. Currently, we feel we have need of all of our possessions and we feel we must do our bit to provide them.

### The Poor to the World

**Mt 5:3-12** and **Lk 6:20-27** are often thought of as parallel passages, but are they? Matthew refers to the Kingdom of the Heavens while Luke refers to the Kingdom of the God. Indeed, when we look closely we find they are not parallel passages. For a thorough analysis of these passages read *The Two Kingdoms*, <http://the-logos.net/resources/PDF's/TheTwoKingdoms.pdf>.

For the purposes of this article, however, I will compare just the first of the "Blessed" statements of Jesus in **Mt 5:3** and **Lk 6:20**.

**Mt 5:3** speaks of "...*the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of the Heavens...*" while **Lk 6:20** says "...*Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of the God...*".

While these passages are often quoted as "parallel" passages due to their similar wording, when we look closely, we find that they are not and that there are some very significant differences.

Firstly, the description of "*poor in spirit*" in **Mt 5:3** and just "*poor*" in **Lk 6:20** is most significant. In Matthew, Jesus is talking about poor in spirit while in Luke, "poor" unquestionably refers to lack of riches since Christ illustrates the opposite thought with His first woe four verses down in **Lk 6:24** *...But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.* [Note there is a corresponding woe for everyone of the "Blessed" statements of Christ in **Lk 6:20-23**.] Thus Luke is talking about material poorness while Matthew is talking about spiritual poorness. Taken as written, it indicates that "poor in spirit" is a requirement for the Kingdom of the Heavens but that being materially "poor" is a requirement for the Kingdom of the God. This ties in with what the rest of New Testament scripture is saying as already highlighted in this article.

Secondly, notice in **Mt 5.3** the word "*theirs*" which speaks about those NOT actually listening to Him (grammatically, it is in the third person), while in Luke, Jesus uses the word "*yours*" (grammatically, the second person) and so is speaking directly to those who ARE actually listening to Him, i.e. to His disciples. This third person/second person grammatical distinction in these two verses is very important to fully appreciate to whom Christ is speaking and so noticing the difference in things spoken to these two groups: 1. those for whom is the Kingdom of Heaven and 2. those for whom is the Kingdom of God. One has only to be poor in spirit to enter the kingdom of Heaven but one actually has to be poor to enter the kingdom of God.

It might be argued that Christ in **Mt 5** was speaking generally when using the word "theirs" and this would be a valid point were it not for the attention drawn to this word by its difference with the word, "yours", in Luke, and so nullify such argument and beg that we search deeper. Jesus did and could indeed call his companions "poor" because they had left all and followed Him. Could this also explain why many of the holy-ones (usually badly translated "saints") in the early days of the church were poor and in need of special ministry as indicated in the following verses?

**Rom. 12:13** *...contributing to the needs of the **holy-ones**, practicing hospitality.*

**Rom. 15:26** *...For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the **holy-ones** in Jerusalem.*

**1Cor. 16:1** *...Now concerning the collection for the **holy-ones**, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also.*

**2Cor. 8:4** *...begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the **holy-ones**,*

**2Cor. 9:12** *...For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the **holy-ones**,*

**1Cor. 16:15** *...and that they have devoted themselves for ministry to the **holy-ones**,*

**2Cor. 9:1-2** *...For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the **holy-***

**ones;**

We might ask, why were these holy-ones poor? Could it be because they were already following Christ according as He spoke about possessions? As a side thought, a thorough study of the word for Holy Ones, *αγιων*, sheds much light on what it means to be holy.

### **Love not the World**

We are warned in a number of scriptures that this present age is evil. Is it any wonder we are admonished to love not the world? There are a few scriptures which talk around this generalised heading.

**1John 2:15-16** ...**Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.** *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world...*

**James 4:4** ...**You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?** Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God...**

**Titus 2:11-12** ...*For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and **worldly lusts**, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world (literally, age);*

**2Pet. 1:4** also tells us "...having escaped the **corruption that is in the world by lust...**

**2Tim 3:1-5** ...*But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, **lovers of money**, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power therefore. From these also turn away.*

**James 1:27** ...*Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself **unspotted from the world...***

**Gal 6:14** ...*But far be it from me to glory, save in **the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world...***

**Col 3:5** ...**Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth:** *fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry;*" [Notice that covetousness is idolatry. This same thought is also seen in **Eph 5:5** ...*For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God...*]

**Heb 11:26** ...**accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt:** *for he looked unto the recompense of reward.*

**Heb 13:5-6** ...**Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have:** *for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?*

**2Cor 8:2** ...*how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and **their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.***

**Rev 2:9** ...*I know thy tribulation, **and thy poverty but thou art rich**, and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they art not, but are a synagogue of Satan.*

From these verses we glean a few things about the value of poverty. Obviously, loving this world and the things in it, distances us from our God. We need to come out of the world. As **John 15:19** says: ...*If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the*

world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you, AND **John 17:6** ...I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word. Coming out of the world is necessary if we are to appropriate the full benefits of servitude to our great and gracious God.

## Provision – God’s desire

### A Directive to Carry No Provision of ones own:

These following scriptures are direct commands from Jesus to His disciples to take nothing with them when He sent them out.

**Mt 10:9-11** ...Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food. And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth....” AND **Mk 6:8-10** ...and he charged them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse; but to go shod with sandals: and, said he, put not on two coats. And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence....” AND **Lk 9:3-4** ...And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats. And into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart....” AND **Lk 10:3-7** ...Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; and salute no man on the way. And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again. And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house...

Then later in Luke, Jesus reminds his disciples what He had said to them.

**Luke 22:35-38** ...And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything... They said, "Nothing... He said to them, "But now, let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one. For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was reckoned with transgressors'; for what is written about me has its fulfilment... And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords... And he said to them, "It is enough...

**Lk 22** plainly tells us that the disciples had something protecting them and providing for them but that this protection and provision was about to go away when Jesus was *reckoned with transgressors*. What was actually protecting them and providing for them is discussed in depth in another article called: *Something Extraordinary Happened in Gethsemane*, <http://the-logos.net/resources/PDF's/Something-Extraordinary-Happened-in-Gethsemane.pdf>

Obviously the Father wants to provide for us.

### Basic Provision – the Father’s desire:

In the next few verses it appears that the very basics (food, drink and clothing) for which we do now labour, are the very things that the Father Deity wishes to provide for us. As well, we have the very specific command from Jesus not to work for the food that perishes in **Jn 6:27** ...Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto age-lasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, the God, hath sealed. This seems to contradict the admonishment of Paul in **2Th. 3:10** ...For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat. There is no contradiction here just a correct understanding of

who Paul is talking about.

Next we have Jesus castigating us in the next two passages for our lack of faith for not trusting for our basic provision. Can we, dare we, take Him at His word.

**Matt. 6:25-34** ...Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? 26 Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? 28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

**Luke 12:22-32** ...And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. 23 For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. 24 Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life? 26 If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

It appears that the Father Deity wishes to provide us all our basic needs, food and clothing. Of course, most of us want more than the basics but Paul in **1Tim 6:6-8** says, "... If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content..

There is the idea presented in scripture that we can get our living (food and clothing) from those whom we teach, for it was a right as these following scriptures show, though Paul never used that right.

**1Cor 9:11-18** ...If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live out of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: ... What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as

*not to use to the full my right in the gospel...*

**2Thess 3:7-10** *...For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us...*

**1Tim 5:17-18** *...Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire...*

**Gal 6:6** *...The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him...*

In summation, whatever be the Father's method of provision, it is clear He wants us to trust Him for that provision. Dare we trust Him who owns it all and take Him at His word!

## **A Serious Thought to Contemplate from Joseph Herrin**

Joseph Herrin ([https://www.heart4god.ws/index\\_htm\\_files/Another%20Gospel.pdf](https://www.heart4god.ws/index_htm_files/Another%20Gospel.pdf)) once wrote: "...the church seeks to widen its embrace to include many false brethren and many who desire the things of the world and all that is in it, forgetting that love of the world is enmity with the Father. Yahshua cautioned all those who would follow Him to count the cost before they committed. Today the church avoids all talk of a cost being associated with following Christ. There is a great cost, however, and many who would like to be called followers of Christ really don't have the desire to "give up all they possess", and to hate their own life. They are salt without savour. The church is seeking out these bland, tasteless followers, for although they may not please God, they provide all that the church desires, pews that are filled, offering plates that have lots of money, and participants for its activities...