

**The Law of Money—
Part 1: Usury**

Since We're Talking *Kingdom*, We're Talking *Law*

Because we're talking about a coming *Kingdom*, and because that coming *Kingdom* is that of our LORD, SAVIOR, HIGH PRIEST, KING and GOD, namely YHVH, THE EVER-LIVING, YAHSHUA HA' MESHIAH, it makes good sense to inaugurate this column, THE SILENT PULPIT, with a discussion on Money. Why? Because "man's" "law" and "money" are as inextricably related as His Law and Money.

Usury

Our HIGH PRIEST-KING speaks plainly. No commentary is presented in this one. In addition to noting the Law, generally, note the contexts in which usury, in particular, is mentioned.

Nehemiah Calls a Public Meeting.

But I was very furious when I heard these complaints, and these statements, yet I reflected in my mind, and reproved the Officers and Subalterns, and said to them; "It seems you all exact usury from your countrymen." I consequently appointed a Great Meeting about them when I said:

Nehemiah's Condemnation of Slavery.

"We have redeemed our Judean brothers who had been sold to the heathen, as far as we could,—but you

even sell your own brothers, who should be sold to us!"

And they were silent, and could not find a word.—So I continued;—

"The thing that you do is not right—should you not walk in the fear of our GOD, because of the contempt of the heathen, our enemies? And even if I, my brothers, and attendants have lent them money and corn on interest!—we will now abandon that interest.—I beg of you to return to them to-day their farms and vineyards, their oliveyards and their houses, and also the one per cent¹ on the money, and of the corn, and wine, and of the oil that you lend to them."

And they replied, "We will restore, and will no more demand it from them. Thus we shall do as you say."

Then I called the Priests, and swore them to do according to that declaration.

I afterwards shook out my lap and exclaimed, "May GOD shake out like that every person from His House and property who does not adhere to this declaration!—May he be shaken out like that and dissipated!"

And all the Meeting said "So be it," and thanked the LORD. And the People acted in accordance with the declaration.

Nehemiah 5:6-13.

¹ Note.—Ch. 5, v. 11. "One per cent. on the money." This no doubt means one percent. per month, which down to our day is the legal rate of interest in Syria and India for loans from the village bankers.—F. F.

Laws of Morality.

“And if a man seduces a girl who has not been betrothed to him, and lies with her so that she conceives, she shall be his wife. But if her father is unwilling to give her to him, he shall pay money as a dowry for the girl. She shall not live as a slave.

“Whoever lies with a beast shall be put to death.

“No sacrifice shall be burnt to gods, except to the EVER-LIVING only.

“You shall not persecute or oppress foreigners; for you were foreigners in the land of the Mitzeraim.

“You shall not annoy any widow or orphan. If you wrong them, so that they cry to me, I shall hear their cry, and My anger will burn, and I will slay you by the sword, and your own wives shall be widows, and your own children orphans.

“If you lend money to My People, My poor among you; you shall not be to them like a userer. You shall not put upon them usury. If your neighbour deposits with you as a pledge a garment, at the setting of the sun you shall return it to him; for it is his only covering with which he clothes his body, in which he lies down; and it may be he will cry to Me, when I will hear, for I am merciful. Exodus 22:15-26.

The Prophet’s Cry of Despair.

Alas, for me, my mother! You have borne me a man of strife, and a man of doom to all the land! I have not borrowed, nor have I lent on usury;— yet all curse me!
Jeremiah 15:10

Domestic Laws. ...

You shall not deliver up a slave who has taken refuge with you from his master to his master. Let him reside amongst you in the place he chooses, in one of your villages, to benefit himself. You shall not drive him out. [*Cf.* the so-called “Fugitive Slave ‘Law.’ ”]

You shall not make a prostitute of a daughter of Israel.

There shall not be a sodomite among the sons of Israel.

You shall not bring the wages of a harlot, or the hire of ruffians to the house of your EVER-LIVING GOD for any vow; for your EVER-LIVING GOD loathes both of them.

You shall not take interest from your brothers;—interest upon money; interest upon food; interest upon anything which can be lent at interest. You may charge interest to foreigners;—but from your countrymen you shall not take interest, so that your EVER-LIVING GOD may bless you in every endeavour of your hand in the country which you are going to possess.

When you vow a vow to your EVER-LIVING GOD, you shall not delay to pay it, for the EVER-LIVING your GOD will demand it from you;— and that would be a sin to you. But if you do not vow, it will be no sin. You must carefully perform the utterance of your lips; whatever you vow to your EVER-LIVING GOD, you must give whatever you have promised with your mouth. Deuteronomy 23:16-24.

The Law of Insolvency.

“But if your brother becomes poor, and his hand fails among you, you must help him like a foreigner and settler, and let him live with you. Take no usury or increase from him, but fear your GOD, and let your brother live with you. You shall not lend your money to him at usury, and you shall not lend him food at increase; for I am your EVER-LIVING GOD Who brought you from the land of the Mitzeraim to give you the land of Canan, to be for you from the EVER-LIVING.

“Therefore when your brother becomes poor with you, and sells himself to you, you shall not work him as slaves work. He shall be with you as a hired man, until the year of JUBILEE, to serve you. Then he shall go from you, he and his children with him, and return to his family, and to the inheritance of his fathers; for you were slaves in the land of the Mitzeraim when I brought you out. You shall not purchase him as you purchase a slave. You shall not reduce him to slavery, but shall fear your GOD. Leviticus 25:35-43.

Psalm 15. By David.

LORD, who in Your Halls shall dwell?
 Who live on Your Holy Hill?
 He walking straight, and doing right,
 And who speaks truth from his heart,
 From whose tongue no slander comes,
 Who does not his neighbour wrong,
 Who carries no hate in his breast,
 Whose eye will despise what is base,
 And respects those who reverence the
 LORD;
 Who swears to his loss, nor complains,
 Who lends not his money to cheat;

Who take not a bribe against right;—
 Who does this, is unshaken for ever.
 Psalm 15:1-5.

On Good and Bad Conduct.

Forsakers of law, praise the bad:
 But who keep the law, reprove them.

Bad men understand not justice;
 But who seek the LORD understand.

More happy the poor honest man,
 Than one of bad habits, though rich.

A prudent son will regard the law,
 But the friend of the vicious degrades
 his father.

Who gets rich by extortion and fraud,
 Collects for the kind to the poor.

Who turns his ear from hearing the
 law,
 His prayer itself is an offence.

Who leads the honest to evil paths,
 Will fall to that pit himself;
 But the upright inherit success.

In his own eyes the right is wise,
 But the sensible poor expose him.

When the good are crowned, there is
 cheering
 When the bad succeed, men will hide.

Who conceals his sin, does not
 prosper;
 Who confesses and leaves it, has mercy.

The man who fears is safe,
 But the rash falls into danger.

<p>A roaring lion, and hungry bear, A bad ruler is to the poor. An oppressive prince is senseless; But who hates to tax, prolongs his days.</p> <p>A man who is guilty of murder, Flies to a pit that cannot hide.</p> <p>Who acts honestly is safe; But crooked ways soon fail.</p> <p>He has plenty of bread who tills his land, But is poor indeed who follows delusions.</p> <p>A faithful man has many blessings; But who hastes to be rich, will suffer.</p> <p>False pretences are not good, Nor to sin for a mouthful of bread.</p> <p>A greedy man runs after wealth, Nor reflects that want may come.</p> <p>Who corrects men, like me, finds favour, Far more than a flattering tongue.</p> <p>Who thinks to rob father and mother not wrong, Has joined with the men of Destruction.</p> <p>A greedy mind incites to contend, But who trusts on the LORD will prosper.</p> <p>Who relies on his heart is a fool, But who walks by experience is safe.</p> <p>He who gives to the poor will not want, Who averts his eyes will be cursed.</p>	<p>When the bad succeed, men hide; But the good increase, when they perish.</p> <p>A man when reprov'd, who stiffens his neck, When broken will find no help. Proverbs 28:4-29:1.</p> <p>The Proverb of Sour Grapes.</p> <p>The command of the EVER-LIVING again came to me to ask:— “What do you mean quoting this proverb in the land of Israel, which says, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?’ By My life,” says the MIGHTY LORD, “you need never again quote that proverb in Israel.”</p> <p>“Look! all persons are Mine! both the person of the father and the person of the son, are mine:—therefore the sinning person shall die! So the man who may be good, and who practise[s] justice and goodness,—who does not sacrifice on the hills, and does not lift up his eyes to the idols of the House of Israel, and does not corrupt the wife of his neighbour, and has not approached a woman under a vow,—who has not oppressed anyone by extortion,—has returned the debtor his pledge,—has not robbed,—has given the hungry his bread,—and clothed the naked,—who has not lent on usury, and has not exacted exorbitant interest,—who has turned his hand from evil,—and has practised justly and truly between man and man,—who has followed My institutions and kept My decrees,—and done truly and rightly,—he shall possess life,” says the MIGHTY LORD.</p> <p>“But should a man beget a son, who is a bloodshedder, or does exactly</p>
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contrary to the above, or does not practise any of them,—but who sacrifices on the hills,—and who corrupts the wife of his neighbor,—who oppresses the poor and wretched,—steals as a thief,—does not restore the pledge to his debtor,—and lifts up his eyes to idols to practise depravity,—who lends on usury, and exacts exorbitant interest,—he, then, shall not live;—having practiced the whole of those villainies, he shall die,—his blood shall be upon him.

“But should he beget a son, who sees all the sins that his father has practised, and reflects and does not do like them,—who does not sacrifice on the hills,—does not raise up his eyes to the idols of the House of Israel,—does not corrupt his neighbour’s wife,—who oppresses no one,—has not withheld a pledge,—has not stolen like thieves,—has given his bread to the hungry,—and covered the naked with clothes, and turned his hand to the poor,—who has not taken usury or exorbitant interest,—who has practised justice,—who has followed My Institutions,—he shall not die for the fault of his father,—he shall live.

“His father,—because he defrauded and robbed,—as above, and produced no benefit amongst his people,—be sure will die for his own faults.

“But you may ask, why should not the son bear the faults of his father?

When the son does justly and rightly, and regards all My Institutions, and practises them,—he shall live. The sinning person himself shall die;—the son shall not bear the faults of the father,—and the father shall not bear the faults of the son. The goodness of the good shall be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked be upon

himself. But when the wicked turns from his sin that he has done, and regards all My Institutions, and practises justice and right,—he shall live,—not die. All the wickedness he has done will not be remembered against him, because of the goodness that he then practises.

“Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked?” the MIGHTY LORD asks,—“I would rather he should turn from his wicked course and live.

“But if a good man abandons his goodness, and does wrong in the manner that all the wicked are used to deprave themselves, all the righteousness which he was accustomed to, will not be remembered, because of his vices that he commits, and the sins he sins,—he will die by them.

“But, you may say, ‘The course of the ALMIGHTY is not straight.’

“Listen, however, House of Israel! If My course is not straight, are not your courses crooked?

“When the good man turns from his right-doing, and practises wickedness, and dies in it,—he dies wicked. And when the wicked turns from his wickedness that he was used to, and does justly and rightly, that person lives by it;—for he reflected and abandoned all his wickedness that he was accustomed to in his life. He will not die!

“Yet the House of Israel say, ‘The course of the Almighty is not straight!

“House of Israel! are not your courses crooked?

“Consequently I will judge you, everyone according to his ways, House of Israel,” the MIGHTY LORD declares. “Change and turn yourselves from all your sins, and do not let your passions

be an impediment to you! Fling all your wickedness in which you sinned from you, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit,—for why should you die? House of Israel? For I do not delight in the death of the dying,” says the MIGHTY LORD; “therefore turn, and live!”

Ezekiel 18.

The Crimes of Jerusalem.

The command of the EVER-LIVING came again to me to ask:—

“Will you now, son of Adam, judge the bloody city, and teach her all her depravities? And will you say,— Thus says the MIGHTY LORD, ‘City! You shed blood in your breast, to hasten on your destiny! And you make yourselves idols, to defile yourself! You shall perish in the blood that you have shed;—and be defiled by the idols you have made! For you have contracted your days, and brought years upon yourself,—therefore I will make you a scorn to the heathen, and a derision in all countries! You shall be named “Many Revolutioned!” both the near and the distant shall deride you! Look at your nobles, Israel! Each sheds blood as far as his power goes! In you they despise both father and mother. They oppress the stranger in you. In you they wrong the fatherless and the widow! You have degraded My Sanctuary,—and profaned My Sabbaths! In you men accuse falsely to shed blood, and in you they eat sacrifices to the hills. In you they plan treachery! In you a father’s shame is disclosed. In you they corrupt women bound by a vow; and each commits depravity with his neighbour’s wife; and everyone devises to defile his daughter-in-law; and every

one has debauched his sister, his father’s daughter in you. In you bribes are taken to shed blood. You take usury and exorbitant interest; and plunder your neighbour by extortion; and have forgotten Me,’ ” says the MIGHTY LORD.

“Therefore see! I have struck My hands against the plundering you have done; and at the bloodshed which exists amongst you!—How can your heart stand, or your hands be strong, at the time when I shall deal with you? I, the EVER-LIVING, have said, and will do it, that I would scatter you amongst the heathen, and disperse you in the countries, and eradicate your corruptions from you, and make you vile to yourself in the sight of the heathen;— then you will learn that I am the EVER-LIVING.”

Ezekiel 22:1-16.

Trustworthiness: Parable of the Talents.

As the people were attentive, He proceeded to relate a parable, because He neared Jerusalem, and they supposed that the Kingdom of God would immediately commence. He therefore said: “Once a nobleman went to a distant country, to procure for himself a kingdom, and then to return. So, calling ten of his own servants, he handed to them ten minahs,² and said to them, ‘Carry on your business until I return.’ His countrymen, however, hated him, and sent an embassy to follow him, saying, ‘We will not have this fellow to reign over us.’

²Equivalent to about £70 [circa 1900].

“But, on his return, after having received the kingdom, he summoned before him those servants to whom he had entrusted the money, in order that he might ascertain what each had earned by trading. The first appeared saying, ‘Sir, your minah has earned ten minah’s additional.’

“ ‘Well done, good servant,’ was the reply, ‘because you have been faithful with a very little, you shall have the governorship of then towns.’

“The second came, saying, ‘Sir, your minah has gained five minahs.’ And to him also he said, ‘You can be the governor of five towns.’

“And another came, saying, ‘Here, sir, is your minah which I have kept wrapped up in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a hard master; you exact what you did not give, and reap what you did not sow.’

“He said to him: ‘Out of your own mouth will I condemn you, you worthless servant. Let it be that I am a hard master, exacting what I did not give, and reaping what I did not sow; why then did you not place my money in a bank, so that upon my return I might have received it with interest? Take that minah from him,’ he said to his attendants, ‘and give it to the one who has the ten minahs.’

“ ‘Why, he has ten minahs, sir,’ was their reply.

“ ‘I tell you, replied he, ‘that to all who possess shall be given; but from the one who possesses nothing, even what he holds shall be taken from him. Then, as to those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and execute them in my presence.’ ”
Luke 19:11-27.

The Story of the Talents.

“For it [the Kingdom of Heaven] is like a man leaving his home, who called together his confidential servants, and entrusted them with his effects. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each in proportion to his abilities, and took his departure. Then the man who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and increased them into five talents more. And the receiver of the two likewise increased his into two more. But the man who had been entrusted with one when and dug a hole in the ground, and there hid his master’s money.

“Now after a long time the master of those servants returned, and went through their accounts. And the one who had the five talents came bringing five talents beside, saying, ‘Sir, you entrusted me with five talents; but look, I have increased them to five talents more!’

“ ‘Well done, you good and faithful servant!’ exclaimed the master in reply; ‘you have been faithful over a little, so I will entrust you with much: share in your master’s success!’

“Then the one who had accepted the two talents said, ‘Sir, you deposited two talents with me; but see, I have gained with them two talents more.’

“ ‘Very good, you useful and trusty servant!’ said his master in reply; ‘you have been faithful with a few; I will place you over many; share in your master’s success!’

“Then the man who had accepted the single talent said, ‘Knowing you, sir, to be an avaricious man, reaping where you had not sown, and raking up where you had not scattered; being afraid, I

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<p>went and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is your own!</p> <p>“ ‘You ungrateful idler!’ said his master in reply to him. ‘Granted that you knew I reaped where I had not sown, and raked up where I had not scattered: you ought, then, to have paid my money into the bankers; and on my return I could have got my own with interest. Now take from him that talent, and give it to the man who has</p>	<p>the ten talents. For to the man who possesses much shall be given, and he shall have superabundance; but from him who possesses not, even what he has shall be taken from him.’ And he flung the good-for-nothing fellow into the darkness without, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth!</p> <p>Matthew 25:14-30.</p> <p>Blessed be the reading of His word. ■</p>
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THE SILENT PULPIT is a column written for To Face West Ministries by Harmon L. Taylor with the purpose of addressing topics that are addressed seldom, if at all, in the popular “Christian” activity of our day.

For there is no distinction between [Judean] and Greek; for He Himself is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon Him; for WHOEVER CALLS ON THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.

But how can they call upon [W]hom they have not believed? And how can they believe about what they have not heard? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

HOW BEAUTIFUL THE FEET WHO PROCLAIM PEACE,
WHO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS.

Yet all will not believe the good news. For Isaiah says:

LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?

Therefore, the faith comes from a report: but the report through the arrangement of God.

Romans 10:12-17 (Ferrar Fenton).

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