



God's Economics

STUDY GUIDE

APPROACH COURSES
COLLECTION

God's ECONOMICS, E-BOOK

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SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

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All Biblical definitions in this book are from Strong's Hebrew and Greek Lexicon, Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, and Thayer's Greek Lexicon.

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God's Economics

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & INTRODUCTION: 8 UNITS

This course will give you Biblical revelation of God's sovereign ownership of all world resources. You will learn how to seek, believe, and receive from God everything you need for fulfilling His plan and purpose for your life and how to walk in His abundance.

PRAY FOR REVELATION:

Before taking this course, pray and ask the Lord to give you wisdom and revelation as you grow in your knowledge of Him. We are believing with you that the Lord will illuminate His word for you through this course and open your mind to understand the Scriptures and the truth of Jesus like never before.

MANIFEST APPROACH COURSES: FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The purpose of courses designated as "Approach Courses" is to express the beliefs and way of life God has given to us at Manifest International. As such, this course is an expanded Biblical explanation of our approach to finances.

Our Financial Strategy is: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33.) We aim to align ourselves with God's will in full expectation and trust that He will provide all that is needed for His purposes. We are fully dependent on God moving for our provision, whether in the hearts of His people to contribute to our work or through supernatural means. We do not make solicitations for finances or our needs, we do not charge money for ministry, and refuse to turn God's house into a marketplace.

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Unit One: Biblical Pictures of Provision

Part One: Eden to Goshen

The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

Proverbs 3:33

A. Eden: A Free Gift from God, Everything Multiplying After its Kind

1. God created everything to multiply after its kind & provided for it by a mist from the earth.
 - a. Genesis 1:11-12 - 11 And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees **bearing fruit in which is their seed**, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants **yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed**, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Consider: God is a multiplier. The average apple has 5 seeds. Each seed has the potential to become a tree. The average tree produces 500-1000 apples per season, including thousands of new seeds. A single seed can produce orchards.
 - i. God's preparation of creation for mankind included exorbitant provision of food. As much as humans could possibly hope to eat.
 - b. Genesis 2:5-10 - When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up--for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and **a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground**-- then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And **out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food**. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden**, and there it divided and became four rivers.
2. God created man to rule over creation, to work, and keep it, to manage the multiplication on the earth. Man also had to multiply, spread out, and enjoy all that God created.
 - a. Genesis 1:26-28 - 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And **let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth** and subdue it, and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- i. Mankind was going to have to multiply to keep up with eating all the abundant food God had prepared for them.
 - b. Genesis 1:29-31a - 29 And God said, "Behold, **I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.** 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was **very good.**
 - i. Mankind's food was every plant and tree bearing seeds within it. Humans were originally fruitarians.
 - ii. The birds and animals' food was the green plants.
- 3. God did all the work and gave it away as a free gift – and took great delight in it.
 - a. Proverbs 8:27-31 - 27 When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, 29 when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, 30 then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, 31 **rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.**

B. The Curse: Sweat & Toil, Thorns & Thistles

- 1. Mankind disobeyed due to the hope of greater prosperity.
 - a. Genesis 3:6 - 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Definition: Make wise. (Strong's H7919-Hebrew: *sakal*.) To be prudent, circumspect, wisely understand, prosper. Includes: to prosper or have success, to cause to prosper. Note: The same word is used in Deuteronomy 29:9 which exhorts obeying the commands of God so that you **prosper** in all you do.
- 2. Curse on the ground: Thorns & thistles, eating bread by sweat of your brow.
 - a. Genesis 3:17-19 - 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' **cursed is the ground** because of you; **in pain you shall eat** of it all the days of your life; 18 **thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;** and **you shall eat the plants of the field.** 19 By the **sweat of your face you shall eat bread**, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
 - i. God did not curse mankind. God cursed the ground because of man's sin.
 - ii. Therefore, man's life would feel/seem cursed because instead of easy pickings of God's abundance, food would be procured through hard labor.
 - iii. In His mercy, God enlarged mankind's food supply to include the plants of the field. Man was now eating the same food as animals.

3. The curse of Cain: The land will not yield to you.
 - a. Abel's offering was brought in faith with a true heart towards God. Cain's offering was not brought in faith or with a good heart towards God. His behavior exposed his heart.
 - b. Genesis 4:11-12 - 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 **When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength.** You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."
 - i. Cain knew immediately that his punishment would lead to great difficulty for him.
 - ii. If the ground would not yield to Cain, he was going to have to get food from people whom the ground would yield to.
 - iii. Cain would have to barter, steal, or kill for food. He was going to make enemies.
 - c. Cain was the first one to build a city. He named it after his son. (Genesis 4:17.)
 - i. The Garden of Eden had no walls.
 - ii. Cities have walls and warriors to defend resources. When food is procured through theft and violence, enemies come looking for their stuff.
 - iii. When resources are precious, hierarchies are established to maintain and enforce order so there is no question who is in charge.
 - d. Genesis 4:23-24 - Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."
 - i. Cain's descendants were the first to practice polygamy by having more than one wife. (Genesis 4:19.)
 - ii. Cain's descendants were the first to make weapons. (Genesis 4:22.)
 - iii. Violence and polygamy became a way of sustaining life and resources.
4. Cursed land drives all people to selfishness, violence, wickedness, and evil. Survival of the fittest.
 - a. This type of violence and bloodshed led to the judgment of the flood in the days of Noah.
 - i. Genesis 6:11-12 - 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and **the earth was filled with violence.** 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for **all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.**
5. After the flood, God gave Noah almost the same instruction He had given Adam and Eve.
 - a. Genesis 9:1-7 - 1 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.** 2 The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. 3 **Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.** 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6 "**Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.** 7 And you, **be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.**"
 - i. The ground had been cleansed and was going to produce bountifully, again. Beyond what eight people could possibly consume.
 - ii. The ground was still cursed because of Adam's sin. Mankind did not have authority to subdue the earth (as had been included in God's blessing to Adam.)

- iii. God mercifully enlarged mankind's food supply to include meat.
 - iv. To curb violence post-flood, God would require the lifeblood of anyone who killed their fellow man.
6. Mankind quickly moved into building the tower of Babel, led by Nimrod, a mighty warrior.
- a. Genesis 10:8-12 - 8 Cush fathered **Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD.** Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." 10 **The beginning of his kingdom was Babel**, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11 From that land he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and 12 Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.
 - i. Nimrod was known for wearing the skins of ferocious animals he had slain (i.e. leopard, bear, etc.) to intimidate his opponents by demonstrating his dominance.
 - 01. If he could kill the wild animal, he could kill you. ¹
 - ii. Nimrod built cities and controlled the resources through dominance and force.
 - iii. Nimrod gathered the people in the Babel project so that they could reach heaven's power without needing to rely on God.

C. Pilgrimage: Leaving the Curse for the Promise

- 1. Abram/Abraham: Leave your country for a land I will give you. I will be your God and will bless you and multiply you.
 - a. Genesis 12:1-3- 1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "**Go from your country** and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and **I will bless you** and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 **I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse**, and in you **all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" (Also Genesis 13:16; 15:1-7, 18; 17:4-8, etc.)
 - i. Abram was well-established in the land of Ur. It was uncommon for people to become nomadic when they owned property and identity.
 - ii. All human support and means of logical provision would be completely removed. Abram would have to trust God completely.
 - iii. God promised to bless Abram and to be Abram's protection.
 - iv. God was going to restore His blessing to all humanity through His blessing to Abram.
 - 01. Note: Abram's wife Sarai/Sarah was barren. There was no natural hope or probability of her conceiving a child to make Abram's descendants into a great nation. But Abram believed God's promise to make his descendants more numerous than the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky. (Genesis 13:16, 15:5, 22:17.)
 - b. Abram left Ur and took his possessions with him.
 - i. He was told to leave his father's house but took his nephew Lot with him.
 - c. When there was famine in the land of Canaan, Abram left the land God promised to give him and went to Egypt. (Perhaps it was because the famine was so severe and because Lot and his household were also with him and the land could not support both men and their flocks.) God did not give him direction to stay or to go. Either way, God protected Abram,

¹ The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop

- rebuked Pharaoh for Abram's deception, and blessed Abram with much livestock and many servants. (See Genesis 12-13.)
- i. When they came out of Egypt, the land could not support both Lot and Abram's flocks together so they parted ways.
 01. Lot chose the portion that looked good and bountiful to him but it turned out to be wicked and evil. Abram lived by faith and God blessed him.
 - ii. After Abram and Lot parted company, the Lord appeared to Abram again and reiterated His promise.
- d. After a great supernatural victory, Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek but refused to take heathen plunder.
- i. Genesis 14:18-20 - 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said, "**Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth**; 20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
 01. Abram knew that his victory was from God, not his own strength.
 02. He recognized Melchizedek as a priest of the Most High God and gave him honor.
 03. He now knew that the God who had chosen and blessed him was the Creator God who made heaven and earth, flooded the world, and had all sovereign power over creation.
 - ii. Genesis 14:22-24 - 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that **I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'** 24 I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share."
 01. Abram refused to take plunder from an evil king. No pagan king was going to receive glory that only God deserved.
- e. After twenty-five years of faithfully waiting for God to fulfill His promise, Abraham and Sarah miraculously had a son to carry the blessing.
- i. Abram tried to fulfill God's promise and provision of a son through his own flesh. Ishmael was born by Hagar, a slave from Egypt. (Genesis 16.)
 - ii. Isaac was born according to the promise of God through the miraculous opening of Sarah's barren, post-menstrual womb. (Genesis 21:1-7.)
 - iii. Ishmael persecuted Isaac and eventually had to be sent away. (Genesis 21:8-13.)
- f. Offering God's promised son as a sacrifice. (Genesis 22.)
- i. Every hope of the fulfillment of every promise of God was bound up in Isaac.
 - ii. God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (wholly sacrificed by fire.)
 - iii. Abraham was fully committed and ready to obey God.
 - iv. With the lifting of the knife, ready to plunge it into Isaac's heart, an angel of the Lord called out and stopped him.
 - v. Abraham looked and saw that God had provided a ram in the thicket to offer as a sacrifice instead of Isaac.
- g. Abraham called the name of the place Jehovahjireh (or Yahwehjireh.)
- i. Genesis 22:14 - 14 So Abraham called the name of that place, "**The LORD will provide**"; as it is said to this day, "**On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.**"

Jehovah Jireh. (Strong's H3068 & H7200.) A compound covenant name of God. These names of God use His covenantal name Jehovah (Yahweh, YHWH) which means "the self-existent One" and an aspect of His capacity and willingness to work on behalf of His people (i.e. peace, healing, etc.) Technically this name means "the Lord will see to it" though it is most often translated as "the Lord will provide."

- ii. Hebrews 11:17-19 - By faith **Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac**, and he who had received the promises was **in the act of offering up his only son**, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." **He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
 - iii. Jesus said, "**Abraham saw my day and rejoiced.**" (John 8:56.)
 - 01. Here, on the same mount where Jesus, the Son of God, would later be crucified, Abraham saw the vision of the Lord's provision for the sins and rebellion of mankind.
 - 02. He knew to the depths of his being that God would be faithful to fulfill every promise to him and all humanity.
 - 03. If sin was atoned for and death was conquered through God seeing to the provision of the sacrifice of His Son, Eden could be restored on earth.
 - 04. Romans 8:32 - 32 He who **did not spare his own Son** but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him **graciously give us all things?**
 - h. Abraham had other children through Keturah and gave gifts to them while he was still living. But the covenant of God and blessing of God passed only to Isaac.
2. Isaac: Stayed in the land.
- a. Abraham refused to allow Isaac to leave the land, even to find a wife for himself. He sent his servant instead and trusted God to provide a wife for Isaac. (Genesis 24:1-7.)
 - b. When there was famine in the land, God commanded Isaac to stay in the land.
 - i. Genesis 26:2-5, 12-13 - 2 And the LORD appeared to him and said, "**Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you**, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, 5 **because Abraham obeyed** my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."... 12 And **Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold**. The LORD blessed him, 13 and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.
 - ii. The rest of the world was in famine, but Isaac had plenty because the blessing of God was with him.
 - iii. Note: Isaac was blessed because of Abraham's obedience, not because of anything Isaac had done to deserve it.
3. Jacob: Chosen from the womb. Laborer in exile. Permission to return. Permission to go to Egypt.
- a. God chose Jacob to be blessed from the womb, not because of anything he had done to deserve it. Esau was the firstborn. In the natural, the birthright and blessing belonged to him. But God chose Jacob.

- i. Genesis 25:23 - 23 And the LORD said to her [Rebekah], "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, **the older shall serve the younger.**" (See also Romans 9:12.)
- b. Esau was short-sighted and sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils.
 - i. Genesis 25:29-34 - 29 Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) 31 Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." 32 Esau said, "**I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?**" 33 Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. **Thus Esau despised his birthright.**
- c. Isaac preferred Esau and was going to give Esau the blessing that God had ordained for Jacob. Therefore, God caused Isaac to go blind in his old age so that the blessing would pass to Jacob. Jacob tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing. Esau was not blessed.
 - i. Genesis 27:28-29 - 28 May God give you of the **dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine.** 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!"
 - 01. The blessing included abundant provision.
 - ii. Genesis 27:39-40 - 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him [Esau]: "Behold, **away from the fatness of the earth** shall your dwelling be, and **away from the dew of heaven on high.** 40 **By your sword you shall live,** and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck."
 - 01. Hebrews 12:16b-17 - unholy like Esau, who **sold his birthright for a single meal.** For you know that **afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected,** for he found no chance to repent, **though he sought it with tears.**
 - 02. The lack of blessing meant lack of provision and Esau would have to live by the sword.
- d. Jacob had to flee for his life from Esau. The Lord appeared to Jacob to assure him that He was with him and would fulfill the promise. Jacob committed to tithe of all he had.
 - i. Genesis 28:15, 20-22 - 15 Behold, **I am with you and will keep you wherever you go,** and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." ... Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will **give me bread to eat and clothing to wear,** 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of **all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.**"
- e. Jacob worked for Laban for 20 years. Laban deceived him, changed his wages many times, and generally took advantage of Jacob. But God's blessing was upon Jacob so Laban was blessed because God's hand was with Jacob.
 - i. As soon as Joseph was born to Rachel (Jacob's beloved wife,) Jacob wanted to return to the land of his fathers.
 - ii. Laban would not let him leave because he knew he was blessed because God's hand was with Jacob. (Genesis 30:27.)
 - iii. Eventually, God commanded Jacob to return to the land. (Genesis 31:3.) And he did.

- f. Esau and his descendants became warriors of the land of Edom. They lived by the violence of the sword, not by the blessing and provision of God.
 - i. Genesis 33:1 - 1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, **Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him.** So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants.
 - ii. Esau and his descendants appointed kings and chiefs to rule over people and their resources by the sword. (Genesis 36:1-43.) This is the way of the Cain and Nimrod.
 - g. When there was severe famine, Jacob stayed in the land. Jacob did not go down to Egypt without God's express permission.
 - i. Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to fetch and bring back provision.
 - ii. Genesis 46:2-4 - 2 And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." 3 Then he said, "I am God, the God of your father. **Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation.** 4 I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes."
4. Joseph: A messenger sent ahead for God's provision.
- a. Jacob considered Joseph the firstborn son because he was the firstborn of Rachel, the wife Jacob loved. Technically, Reuben was the firstborn by Leah. Joseph was favored by Jacob and therefore, his brothers were jealous. Then, Joseph had two dreams from God that his brothers and whole family would bow down to him.
 - i. Joseph's brothers hated him all the more after his dreams. So they plotted to kill him but instead threw him in a pit and sold him to slave traders.
 - b. God was with Joseph wherever he went because God was watching over His word for the sake of His people.
 - i. In the household where Joseph was a slave, he was promoted to head of household because it was evident that God was with him. (Genesis 39:1-3.)
 - ii. When Joseph was falsely accused and put in prison. But he became head steward in prison because it was evident that God was with him. (Genesis 39:21-23.)
 - iii. God enabled Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dreams and therefore, Pharaoh made Joseph his second in command over the whole land of Egypt because it was evident that God was with him. (Genesis 47.)
 - c. When famine was over the whole earth, Joseph oversaw the only country with grain to sell.
 - d. Jacob sent his sons (Joseph's brothers, who had sold him into slavery) to Egypt for grain. Joseph recognized them and understood the purpose of God to provide for His people. After testing them, he revealed himself to them as their long lost brother.
 - i. Genesis 45:4-11 - 4 So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 And **God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.** 8 **So it was not you who sent me here, but God.** He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. 9 Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. 10 You

shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. 11 There **I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.**'

- e. Pharaoh gave the tribes of Israel the land of Goshen. (Most likely the fertile crescent of Egypt at the Nile delta.) They received the best and most fertile of the land because they were relatives of Joseph.
 - i. Genesis 47:6, 27 - 6 The land of Egypt is before you. Settle your father and your brothers in **the best of the land**. Let them settle in the land of Goshen, and if you know any able men among them, put them in charge of my livestock."... 27 Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it and **were fruitful and multiplied greatly**.

- f. The famine was so severe that people from all over Egypt and Canaan spent all their money to buy grain from Joseph/Pharaoh. Then, the Egyptians exchanged all their livestock for food. Then, they exchanged all their lands for food. Lastly, they gave themselves as slave laborers to Pharaoh for food.
 - i. Genesis 47:13-21 - 13 Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished by reason of the famine. 14 And **Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, in exchange for the grain** that they bought. And Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15 And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "**Give us food**. Why should we die before your eyes? For our money is gone." 16 And Joseph answered, "**Give your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock**, if your money is gone." 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the herds, and the donkeys. He supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. 18 And when that year was ended, they came to him the following year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent. The herds of livestock are my lord's. **There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our land**. 19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? **Buy us and our land for food, and we with our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give us seed that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate.**" 20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for all the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe on them. **The land became Pharaoh's**. 21 As for the people, he made servants of them from one end of Egypt to the other.
 - ii. Joseph supplied seed to plant and required 20% tax to Pharaoh. (v.24-26)

- g. While all Egypt was selling themselves as slaves, the people of Israel acquired possessions and were fruitful and multiplied greatly. (Genesis 47:27.)
 - i. They lived in the best part of the land, they were freely given their provisions from Joseph's bounty, and they had no need to sell themselves into slavery.
 - ii. Their hope and faith were in God. God had faithfully provided for all of them in spite of severe famine.

Unit Two: Biblical Pictures of Provision

Part Two: Slavery to Kingdom

For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Psalm 84:10-11

A. Egypt/Slavery: Hard Labor, Building Cities for Another Man

1. Exodus 1:11-14 - 11 Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They **built for Pharaoh store cities**, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. 13 So they **ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves** 14 and **made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.**
 - a. They were ruled over by harsh task masters, bitter life, hard service.
 - b. They were building cities for someone else's empire, forced into a Nimrod-like existence.
 - c. There was no pay, no independence, and no life.
2. The blessing of God for multiplication was with them even during human oppression.
 - a. God had told Abraham that He would make him into a great nation and told him in advance that this oppression of his descendants would happen. (Genesis 15:13-14.)
 - b. God told Jacob to go to Egypt because He would make them into a nation in Egypt. (Genesis 46:2-4.)
 - c. During their time in Egypt, Israel went from being twelve tribal families (seventy people) to about six hundred thousand men, not including women and children. (Number 1:46.)
3. Slavery became the baseline for remembering God's deliverance from this world and its ways and the contrast for serving man vs. serving God.
 - a. Deuteronomy 5:15 - 15 You shall **remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt**, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
 - i. "Remember you were a slave in Egypt" is repeated again and again in the commands for Sabbath, feast days, and generosity to the poor.
 - b. Deuteronomy 4:20 - 20 But the LORD has taken you and brought you **out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt**, to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day.

B. Wilderness: Gathering, Obedience, & the Fear of the Lord

1. God led Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness where there is no natural water or food. They were led by the pillar of fire by night and pillar of cloud by day – the presence of the Lord.
 - a. They were not alone or abandoned. They followed the pillar of the Lord. They were not left to scavenge for their own provision. Where God was with them, there was provision.
 - b. Even in instances of great rebellion against God's commands, God did not withhold food and water. He punished specific offenders with plague, death, defeat, or exclusion from the Promised Land but He did not withhold provision of food and water from the community.
2. Miraculous water made clean. Learning obedience. Natural oasis.
 - a. Exodus 15:23-27 - 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter; therefore it was named Marah. 24 And the people grumbled against Moses, saying, **"What shall we drink?"** 25 **And he cried to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a log, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet.** There the LORD made for them a statute and a rule, and there he tested them, 26 saying, **"If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God,** and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer." 27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water.
 - i. God demonstrated His ability to miraculously provide in impossible circumstances.
 - ii. This is a picture of the purpose of the wilderness: training in understanding God's ability and willingness to provide all that is needed through whatever means necessary, as long as Israel obeys His commands.
 01. Note: The Law was never God's will for His people. Obedience to His voice was. (See Jeremiah 7:22-24.)
 - iii. Next, God brought them to a place with natural water, twelve springs.
 01. Note: God knows where the hidden pockets of provision are, even in a desert wasteland.
 - iv. After this, God moved them away from natural provision, deeper into the desert wilderness to train them for obedience without natural sources of provision.
3. Manna from Heaven. Learning to gather and consume daily provision. The test of obedience. The test of rest. The discipline of the Father for obedience to His voice.
 - a. Exodus 16:2-4 - 2 And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, 3 and the people of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, **I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not.**
 - i. They grumbled out of longing for the food of Egypt, forgetting that they had eaten that food as slaves.
 - ii. Instead, God was going to supply miraculous bread for them to gather.
 - b. Exodus 16:14-15 And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. 15 When the people of Israel saw it, they said

to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "**It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.**"

- i. God is able to supply bread out of nothing.
- c. Exodus 16:16-17, 19-21 - 16 This is what the LORD has commanded: '**Gather** of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.'" 17 And the people of Israel did so. **They gathered, some more, some less.** ... 19 And Moses said to them, "**Let no one leave any of it over till the morning.**" 20 But they did not listen to Moses. Some left part of it till the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them. 21 **Morning by morning they gathered it, each as much as he could eat;** but when the sun grew hot, it melted.
- i. Wilderness training is about learning to trust God for new manna every morning. Even in a cursed, dry and weary land, the people are not cursed, but blessed by God.
 - ii. Wilderness training is about gathering. There is no sweat and toil, and there are no thorns and thistles. There is no hard labor or oppression by other men.
 - iii. Everyone gathered as much as they could eat each day.
 - iv. It takes faith to consume today's manna, trusting that God will provide new manna tomorrow. Natural human instinct of survival would compel saving/hoarding for tomorrow and continued sustenance. Therefore, in wilderness training, what is not consumed of the daily provision goes rotten.
- d. Exodus 16:22-28 - 22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 he said to them, "This is what the LORD has commanded: '**Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.**'" 24 So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. 25 Moses said, "Eat it today, for **today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field.** 26 **Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none.**" 27 On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. 28 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws?"
- i. In a cursed existence there are no days of rest. Sweating and toiling and hunting and gathering and defending supplies is the way of life and survival.
 - ii. In slavery there are no days of rest, only hard labor and exhausted oppression.
 - iii. God was testing their hearts of faith as it would be demonstrated by their obedience.
 - iv. Wilderness training is about learning to rest as an act of faith that God is providing and will provide even if we do not sweat, toil, and slave for it.
- e. Exodus 16:35 - 35 **The people of Israel ate the manna forty years,** till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.
- i. The wilderness was considered "uninhabitable" but God provided for over one million people every day for forty years.
4. Learning to share among God's people.
- a. Exodus 16:16-18 - 16 This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take an omer, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.'" 17 And the people of Israel did so. **They gathered, some more, some less.** 18 But when they measured it with an omer, **whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack.** Each of them gathered as much as he could eat.

- i. No lack. Enough for everyone. As much as they can eat.
 - ii. Violence is the way of survival and provision for those outside of God's blessing who kill people for food and use dominance to control resources.
 - iii. Sharing should be the way among God's people because God will always provide enough for everyone.
5. Water from the Rock. Two instances. Testing the Lord. Revering the Lord as holy.
- a. Strike the rock: 1st year of the wilderness. (Exodus 17:3-7.)
The people had already witnessed many of God's miracles but they still grumbled against God, did not believe He was able to provide for them and most significantly, did not understand His His character, nature, and heart of love for them.
 - i. Exodus 17:3-7 - But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, **I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.**" And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and **because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"**
 - ii. They tested God through their unbelief. Their hearts were still hard.
 - iii. Wilderness training is about FAITH and believing God, no matter how impossible the situation may look.
 - b. Speak to the rock: 40th year in the wilderness. (Numbers 20:5-13)
A new generation of grumblers were short-sighted in their circumstances and still did not understand the nature of God and His power over all creation.
 - i. God had faithfully provided for His people and their livestock for forty years. But God wanted to demonstrate His faithfulness and power to the new generation.
 - ii. Numbers 20:8, 10-11 - 8 "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and **tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water.** So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." ... 10 Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, "**Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?**" 11 And **Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice**, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.
 - 01. Out of frustration with the people, Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it, as if he were the one providing the water.
 - 02. In spite of Moses' disobedience, God provided water for His thirty people.
 - 03. Moses was forbidden to enter the Promised Land because he did not honor God as holy in the sight of the people. (Numbers 20:12)
 - iii. Wilderness training is about obedience that honors God for all to see His mighty hand.
6. Quail from the Lord. Two instances. Demanding cravings.
- a. 1st year in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:2-3, 11-13.) The people grumbled, remembering the meat of Egypt and forgetting that they had been slaves.

- i. Exodus 16:12-13 - 12 "I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. **Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.**" 13 In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp.
 - ii. God willingly demonstrated His ability to supply miracle meat in the middle of nowhere.
 - iii. Often in the early days of the wilderness, God reveals Himself in mighty ways to demonstrate His sovereign ability to do the impossible.
- b. 2nd year in the wilderness. (Numbers 11:4-6, 18-23, 31-34) The people again grumbled for meat because they were tired of manna. They tested God by demanding the food they craved and continuing to doubt God's ability to provide for them. (Psalm 78:18-19.) God had already demonstrated His willingness and ability to provide as much as they needed but they demanded more to suit their own carnality. God gave them over to their own evil desire and provided an excess of quail. But their rebellion was costly. Plague broke out.
- i. Numbers 11:18-23 - 18 And say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for **you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt."** Therefore the **LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat.** 19 You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, 20 but a whole month, **until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you**, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, **saying, "Why did we come out of Egypt?"** But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!' 22 Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?" 23 And the LORD said to Moses, "**Is the LORD's hand shortened?** Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not."
 - ii. Wilderness training is about learning not to make selfish, flesh-indulging demands on God's ability and generosity. He is not our servant or slave to our cravings.
 - iii. Wilderness training is about growing in simplicity, gratitude, and contentment with God's provision while also submitting ourselves to His timing, provision, and purposes and not longing for the pleasures of this world.

7. Learning the Law of God. Learning the Fear of the Lord.

- a. The Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5.) God spoke the Ten Commandments to all of Israel directly at Mount Sinai.
 - i. Exodus 20:2-17 - 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, **out of the house of slavery.** 3 "You shall have **no other gods before me.** 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, **for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation** of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 "**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain**, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. 8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 **Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.** On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For **in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested**

on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. 12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. 13 "**You shall not murder.** 14 "You shall not commit adultery. 15 "**You shall not steal.** 16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 "**You shall not covet** your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or **anything that is your neighbor's."**

01. No other gods. God is the only God who created all things and redeemed out of slavery. He is worthy of all worship.
02. Sabbath rest on the seventh day is a sign of being the people of the God who created the world and everything in it. (Exodus 31:17.)
03. Murdering, stealing, and coveting are things people do out of need for provision or carnal desire for more than what God has given them.

b. Learning the fear of the Lord.

- i. Exodus 20:18-20 - 18 Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off 19 and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." 20 Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for **God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.**"

c. Laws for maintaining right relationship with God including laws for worship, sabbaths, the Tabernacle, offerings unto the Lord, and sacrifices for atonement for sins, new moons, feast days, etc. (Exodus 20-Leviticus 27.)

- i. Deuteronomy 6:5 - 5 You shall **love the LORD your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- ii. Leviticus 17:11 - 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to **make atonement for your souls**, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.
- iii. Wilderness training is about learning the ways of God.

d. Law for social order and justice. What is right in God's sight. (Exodus 20-Leviticus 27.)

- i. Leviticus 19:17-18 - 17 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall **love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the LORD.

e. Learning to submit to the authorities appointed by God.

- i. Israel had no human king. God was King. (Deuteronomy 33:5.) Moses was a Prophet and spokesperson of the Lord to communicate what He was saying to His people.
- ii. Miriam & Aaron's rebellion. (Numbers 12.) Leprosy.
- iii. Korah's rebellion. (Numbers 16.) Swallowed by the earth.
- iv. Aaron's staff budding. (Numbers 17.) God's appointed servant.

f. Learning to contribute to the House of the Lord and His laborers.

- i. Exodus 25:2-8 - 2 "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From **every man whose heart moves him** you shall receive the contribution for me. 3 And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, 4 blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, 5 tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, 6 oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for

the fragrant incense, 7 onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. 8 And let them **make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.** (Also, Exodus 35:4-29.)

- ii. Numbers 18:21-22 - 21 **"To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel** for an inheritance, **in return for their service that they do**, their service in the tent of meeting, 22 so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die.
 - 01. Priests & Levites have no inheritance in this world. They work for the Lord full time and are supported by the tithes and offerings of the people. (Numbers 18:8-32.) (More on tithing to be covered later.)
 - g. Learning that God's presence with them was the most important thing.
 - i. Exodus 33:15-16 - 15 And he said to him, **"If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.** 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? **Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"**
8. Remember the Wilderness
- a. Exodus 16:32-33 - 32 Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: **'Let an omer of it be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'**" 33 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations."
 - i. God wanted His people to always remember that He had faithfully and miraculously provided for them for forty years in the wilderness.
 - b. Deuteronomy 8:2-5 - 2 And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, **that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep his commandments or not. 3 And he **humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna**, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, **that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.** 4 Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. 5 Know then in your heart that, **as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.**
 - i. The purpose of the wilderness is to humble and test the hearts of God's people to train them to hear and believe God.
 - ii. Discipline is not a bad thing. God's discipline is chastisement, training, and pointing toward the right way of doing things. God's way.
 - iii. The wilderness is God's way of training up His children in the way they should go. This is by learning to obey His voice and commands so that it may go well with them.
 - c. Psalm 78 recounts the wilderness years of testing God through unbelief as an exhortation to coming generations not to cave into unbelief as they did.
 - d. The Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated every year by dwelling in tents for seven days to remember Israel's years of living in tents in the wilderness and to rejoice in the provision of God. (Leviticus 23:42-43.)
 - i. In the age to come, all nations will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles to remember how God provided for us while we lived in this world. (Zechariah 14:16-19.)

9. A note about the wilderness. God is always ready for the Promised Land. It is people who are not ready through unbelief. An eleven-day journey took forty years to complete.
 - a. God was ready after one year to bring Israel into the Promised Land. (Numbers 10:11.) But when the spies brought back a bad report, they caused unbelief and rebellion among the people. Therefore, there was a forty year delay until that generation perished and a new generation with no knowledge of good and evil could inherit the Promised Land by faith as a free gift from God. (Numbers 13:1-14:45; Deuteronomy 1:19-46.)

C. The Promised Land: Eden Restored, God's Righteousness & Abundance on Display

1. The purpose of the Promised Land is to put the glory of God on display to the whole world and to bless the whole world with God's abundance.
 - a. Deuteronomy 4:5-8 - 5 See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. 6 Keep them and do them, **for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples**, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' 7 For **what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?** 8 And **what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law** that I set before you today?
 - i. No other nation at the time had a code of Law that was clearly written out in advance. Kings made up their laws by successive decrees based on their own judgment. Not so with God. He made His laws known to His people so that they could do them and bring Him glory by demonstrating His righteousness, holiness, power, and goodness. (Deuteronomy 29:29.)
 - b. Note: The purpose is NOT for personal wealth, personal comfort, or luxurious living.
2. The Promised Land is a free gift from God. Not like the land of Egypt. Tending and keeping a land that God cares for.
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:10-12 - 10 "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, **to give you--with great and good cities that you did not build**, 11 and **houses full of all good things that you did not fill**, and **cisterns that you did not dig**, and **vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant**--and when **you eat and are full**, 12 then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
 - i. Slavery is building cities for other people.
 - ii. The Promised Land is living in cities that other people built.
 - iii. No sweat and toil for housing, goods, food and drink.
 - b. Deuteronomy 11:10-15 - 10 For the land that you are entering to take possession of it is **not like the land of Egypt**, from which you have come, where **you sowed your seed and irrigated** it, like a garden of vegetables. 11 But **the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven**, 12 **a land that the LORD your God cares for**. The eyes of the LORD your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. 13 "And **if you will indeed obey** my commandments that I

command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 **he will give the rain for your land in its season**, the early rain and the later rain, **that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil**. 15 And **he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full**.

- i. Note: In the Promised Land, there is no scheming or striving against the land to force the land to produce. There is no curse to strive against.
 - ii. God waters the Promised Land with dew and rain from heaven and springs and streams from the earth.
 - iii. People in the Promised Land simply tend and keep the land – the same as what Adam and Eve were commanded to do in Eden.
 - iv. People in the Promised Land simply gather in God's provision – the same as what they learned to do in the wilderness.
3. Provision, supply, and blessing determined by obedience or disobedience.
- a. The blessings for obedience & the curses for disobedience. (Leviticus 26 & Deuteronomy 28.)
 - i. Leviticus 26:3-5 - 3 **"If** you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, 4 then I will give you your **rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit**. 5 Your threshing shall last to the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last to the time for sowing. And you shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land securely.
 - ii. Isaiah 1:19-20 - 19 If you are **willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;** 20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
 - iii. Leviticus 26:18-20 - 18 And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, 19 and I will break the pride of your power, and **I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze**. 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain, for **your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit**.
 - b. Lack of provision is evidence of the curse due to disobedience.
 - i. Note: Sin is the issue. But instead of seeing things from God's perspective, mankind tries to outsmart and outmaneuver their situation by their own strength. All of this is to avoid seeking the Lord and repenting for the cause of the lack of rain.
 - ii. Examples: Rather than repenting and seeking the Lord when there is no rain, mankind invents a sprinkler or irrigation system to be the author of his own rain and soil, or forms alliances with other nations who have food, or goes to war to rob the resources of those who have provision.
 - iii. Lesson: If there is lack of provision in the Promised Land, REPENT and seek God.
 01. Example: There was famine in the days of David, so David sought the Lord. The Lord told David that the cause of the famine was sin which had been committed by Saul, Israel's prior king. David fixed the problem and the famine ended. (2 Samuel 21:1.)
4. Tithes & Offerings to the Lord. Recognizing God as the Provider. Demonstrating the fear of the Lord and thanking God for His blessing and abundant provision.
- a. Daily offerings unto the Lord. At the Tabernacle, the place where God meets with His people and speaks to them.
 - i. Exodus 29:38-43, 46 - 38 "Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: **two lambs a year old day by day regularly**. 39 One lamb you shall offer in the **morning**, and the other

lamb you shall offer **at twilight**. 40 And with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering. 41 The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD. 42 **It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.** 43 There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory.

- b. Tithes. Tithing is for continued training in the fear of the Lord. Giving God a tithe of everything demonstrates understanding that everything is from the hand of God.
 - i. Deuteronomy 14:22-23 - 22 "You shall **tithe all the yield** of your seed that comes from the field year by year. 23 And before the LORD your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, **that you may learn to fear the LORD your God** always.
 - ii. Leviticus 27:30 - 30 "**Every tithe of the land**, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, **is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD.**
- c. First Fruits. In addition to daily offerings and tithes.
 - i. Exodus 22:29a - 29a "You shall not delay to offer **from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses.**
 - 01. Harvest of the field, trees, and vines. The press of the grapes, olives, etc.
 - ii. Exodus 34:26a - 26a **The best of the firstfruits of your ground** you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God.
 - 01. The first fruit was the first bud that sprouted on a tree in any given season. Tradition says that when the first bud budded on a crop, a red string was tied around it to mark it for the Lord. When it grew and was harvested, it was offered unto the Lord as firstfruits.
 - iii. See also Leviticus 23:10, 14; Numbers 18:13; Deuteronomy 26:2.
- d. Firstborn. In addition to daily offerings and tithes. Because God spared Israel's firstborn in Egypt.
 - i. Exodus 13:12 - 12 you shall set apart to the LORD **all that first opens the womb**. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD's.
 - ii. Exodus 22:29b-30 - 29b The **firstborn of your sons** you shall give to me. 30 You shall do **the same with your oxen and with your sheep**: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.
 - iii. Exodus 34:19 - 19 **All that open the womb are mine**, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep.
 - iv. Numbers 8:1 - 17 For **all the firstborn among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast**. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself...
- e. Offerings for Sabbaths, New Moons, & Feast Days. In addition to daily offerings and tithes.
 - i. See Numbers Chapter 29.
- f. Offerings for sin, guilt, atonement, etc. In addition to daily offerings and tithes.
 - i. See Leviticus Chapters 1-7.

- g. Offerings for the Tabernacle/Temple. In addition to daily offerings and tithes. So that there is no plague among the people of God for numbering the people.
 - i. Exodus 30:11-16 - 11 The LORD said to Moses, 12 "When you take the census of the people of Israel, then **each shall give a ransom for his life** to the LORD when you number them, **that there be no plague among them** when you number them. 13 Each one who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the LORD. 14 Everyone who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the LORD's offering. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD's offering to make atonement for your lives. 16 **You shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the LORD, so as to make atonement for your lives.**"
 - ii. Example: When David took a census of the people, it was to number his own military strength. This was against God's warning in Deuteronomy 8:11-20. Plague was the punishment for David's census, even though God mercifully offered the alternatives of years of famine or months of enemy defeat. (1 Chronicles 21, 2 Samuel 24.)
 - iii. See also 2 Chronicles 24:6-10. In the days of King Joash, this tax was collected for the Temple to keep the God's dwelling place from falling into disrepair.

 - h. Freewill offerings out of love for the Lord. In addition to regular daily offerings and tithes.
 - i. See Leviticus Chapters 1 & 3.

 - i. Note: Giving to the Lord should be easy and joyous, not burdensome. God gave everything in the first place. Giving back to Him is a privilege. Giving to any other god is a total waste.
5. There should be no poor among you. Open-handed, freely given generosity. Lending without interest. Gleanings for the poor.
- a. Deuteronomy 15:4, 7-8, 10-11 - 4 But **there will be no poor among you;** for the LORD will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess-- ... 7 "If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, **you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother,** 8 but **you shall open your hand to him** and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. ... 10 You shall **give to him freely,** and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. 11 **For there will never cease to be poor in the land.** Therefore I command you, '**You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.**' (And many other Scriptures.)
 - i. The sharing learned in the wilderness is now displayed with open-handed generosity.
 - ii. This is a contrast to the violent live-by-the-sword life of those outside of God's blessing.

 - b. Lending to fellow Israelites without interest. No charge for food.
 - i. Exodus 22:25 - 25 "If you lend money to **any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him,** and you shall **not exact interest** from him.
 - ii. Leviticus 25:35-38 - 35 "If **your brother becomes poor** and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall **support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you.** 36 Take **no interest from him or profit,** but fear your God, that your brother may live beside you. 37 You **shall not lend him your money at interest, nor**

give him your food for profit. 38 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.

01. Give liberally to your poor brother because God brought you out of slavery to give you the free gift of the Promised Land.

- iii. Deuteronomy 23:19-20 - 19 "You shall **not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest.** 20 You may charge a foreigner interest, but **you may not charge your brother interest,** that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you undertake in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

01. Treatment of God's people is different than treatment of others.

c. Leaving gleanings for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the sojourner.

- i. Leviticus 19:9-10 - 9 "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. **You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner:** I am the LORD your God.

- ii. Leviticus 23:22 - 22 "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall **leave them for the poor and for the sojourner:** I am the LORD your God."

- iii. Deuteronomy 24:19-20 - 19 "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, **you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow,** that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive trees, **you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.**

D. Exile/Tribute: Tending Someone Else's Land

1. Israel and Judah disobeyed the commands of God and ignored the prophets God sent to try to bring them back to the ways of the Lord. Therefore, God's judgment came upon them. They were sent into exile in Assyria, Babylon, and scattered throughout all the nations of the world.

a. Not worldly alliances and trusts. They will fail. God would not bless or be with those who tried to escape exile by moving to Egypt. It would be their destruction.

- i. Isaiah 30:1-3, 7 - 1 "Ah, stubborn children," declares the LORD, "who carry out a plan, but not mine, and **who make an alliance, but not of my Spirit,** that they may add sin to sin; 2 **who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking for my direction, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh** and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt! 3 Therefore shall the protection of Pharaoh **turn to your shame,** and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt **to your humiliation...** 7 Egypt's help is worthless and empty; therefore I have called her "Rahab who sits still."

- ii. Jeremiah 42:14-17 - 14 and saying, 'No, we will go to the land of Egypt, where we shall not see war or hear the sound of the trumpet or be hungry for bread, and we will dwell there,' 15 then hear the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: If you set your faces to enter Egypt and go to live there, 16 then **the sword that you fear shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine of which you are afraid shall follow close after you to Egypt,** and there you shall die. 17 **All the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to live there shall**

die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. They shall have no remnant or survivor from the disaster that I will bring upon them.

2. Exile is being a minority and a foreigner in a strange land that is not your own among people who do not worship the Most High God.
 - a. Working for a living to pay taxes or tribute to human authorities.
 - i. Possibly slave-like conditions, depending on rulers in the land.
 - ii. Always the outsider, never securely settled.
 - iii. May not own anything of your own. May live in segregated or assigned housing.
3. Pray for the prosperity of the place of your exile – if they prosper, you prosper.
 - a. Jeremiah 29:4-7 - 4 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But **seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.**
 - i. Note: This is the concept behind Paul's instruction for prayer for the world:
 - ii. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 - 1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, **that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life,** godly and dignified in every way.
 - b. Not rebellion. God is not the author of rebellion, even against oppressors. Rebellion and violence are the way of the world. Exile was God's will and so to rebel against exile was to rebel against God.
 - c. Not compromise, blending in, losing holiness or heart's worship of the one true God. Not allowing false indoctrination. (See books of Daniel & Esther.)
 - i. Note: Out of thousands of exiles, Daniel and his three friends are the only ones noted who refused the food of Babylon, particularly the King's luxurious food.
 - ii. Note: Mordecai retained his identity as a man of God even in exile and would not let Esther forget her heritage.
4. Exiles returned but not fully restored: Paying tribute to world rulers to maintain peace.
 - a. Under Persia, Greece, Rome, etc. Longing for the Kingdom of God, freedom from oppressors.
 - b. Jewish history and the cycle of exile, blessing, persecution, atrocity:
 - i. Start out as foreigner and immigrant with fresh fear of the Lord → obedience to God and hard work → blessing of God and prosperity → forget God, blend with world, intermarry with pagans → God's blessing and protection removed → oppression and persecution escalating to exile to another new land → repeat.
5. Note: Exile is a picture of the Christian life. We are foreigners and exiles in this world, citizens of heaven, longing for the return of the Lord and the world to come.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:11 - 11 Beloved, I urge you **as sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

- b. Philippians 3:20 - 20 But **our citizenship is in heaven**, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

E. Kingdom: Jesus paid it ALL. Fellowship with God restored.

1. Sin forgiven. The cause of the curse and of all lack has been removed by the blood of Jesus. Right standing with God based on JESUS' obedience, not our own.
 - a. Romans 3:23-25a - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and **are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, whom God put forward as a **propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith**.
 - b. 1 John 1:6-7 - 6 If we say we have **fellowship with him** while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin**.
2. All things provided freely by the grace of God and for HIS glory. Like a supernaturally empowered Promised Land for the purpose of displaying the glory and goodness of God to the world, according to His Kingdom purposes for a life lived totally for Him.
 - a. Romans 8:32 - 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him **graciously give us all things**?
 - b. John 15:7-8 - 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, **ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you**. 8 **By this my Father is glorified**, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.
 - i. Not for our own selfish purposes but abundance from God for HIS purposes and glory.
 - c. Good news to the poor. The mercy of God. (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Luke 7:22.)
 - i. Not a handout. Not a hand up. A hand reaching out to God through faith in Jesus.
 - ii. God is their provider by grace through faith in Him. Sin forgiven, shame removed, the cause of lack addressed.
 - iii. Luke 6:20-21 - 20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "**Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God**. 21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
 - iv. James 2:5 - 5 Listen, my beloved brothers, **has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom**, which he has promised to those who love him?
 - v. James 1:9 NLT - 9 **Believers who are poor have something to boast about**, for God has honored them.
3. Jesus' example of trusting God's abundance for all His needs.
 - a. Jesus was born in a manger. Humble beginnings. Simple needs. Not luxurious.
 - i. Kings brought lavish gifts to Him as an act of worship. But Jesus did not demand or arrange opulent gifts or presentations for Himself.
 - b. Jesus lived humbly with His poor parents as a child and young man until age thirty. (Luke 2:51.)

- i. When Jesus was dedicated and named as a baby, His parents were too poor to bring a lamb as an offering for purification. They brought two turtledoves. (Luke 2:24; Leviticus 12:8.)
 - c. During His years of ministry, Jesus was totally dependent on God's provision.
 - i. He received the hospitality of hosts as He traveled with the twelve.
 - ii. He was supported by wealthy women out of their own means. (Luke 8:1-3.)
 - iii. He procured miraculous bread and fish for the masses.
 - iv. He procured miraculous Temple tax money from the fish's mouth.
 - v. He was the King without a quarter when challenged about paying taxes to Caesar.
 - vi. He sent His disciples out with no moneybag or extra provision to learn to be totally dependent upon God for all they needed.
 - vii. He sent His disciples out to give freely what they had received freely.
 - d. Jesus paid taxes to Caesar and instructed His followers to do the same. He never incited or authorized any rebellion against God's appointed authorities. (Mark 12:15-17.)
 - e. Jesus paid the Temple Tax and tithed. (Matthew 17:24-27.)
 - i. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law of God. Therefore, we know that He paid every tithe and offering required of Him by God's Law.
 - f. Jesus was generous in giving to the poor.
 - i. He lived a demonstration of Isaiah 58. (Covered more in Unit Seven.)
 - ii. When a woman poured out expensive ointment, His disciples expected that it should have gone to the poor. (Mark 14:4-7.)
- 4. Early believers SHARED ALL. Like supernaturally empowered fulfillment of the Law of God, there was no lack among them because no one considered anything their own.
 - a. Acts 4:32-37 - 32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and **no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own**, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 **There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold** 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, **and it was distributed to each as any had need.** 36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.
 - i. They brought it to the God appointed authorities for distribution as any had need.
 - ii. They organized local elders & deacons for fair and equitable distribution. (Acts 6:1-5.)
 - b. They took the teachings of Jesus literally and to heart. Nothing of this world mattered to them because Jesus was returning soon to judge the world and usher in the world to come.
 - i. The apostles dropped everything to follow Jesus, including their jobs, livelihoods, family businesses, etc. Nothing was more important to them than following Messiah.
 - ii. Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will wear. Your heavenly Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:25-33.)
 - iii. You cannot love/serve both God and money/mammon. (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13.)
 - iv. Story of the Rich Young Ruler. Parables of the Rich Fool, the Rich Man & Lazarus, etc. (Covered more in Unit Six.)

- c. Some stopped working and became idle while awaiting the day of the Lord. Paul rebuked the idle. Work in this world still has a purpose. (Covered more in Unit Three.)
 - i. Providing for your own household without burdening others or the church.
 - ii. Providing for God's laborers and the work of ministry.
 - iii. Providing for fellow believers so that there are no poor among God's people.
 - iv. Giving to the poor as a witness of God's love and mercy.
 - v. Being a witness for God within the workplace. (i.e. Daniel, Esther.)
 - vi. Note: God gives work for enjoyment, dignity, and to exhibit the likeness of God and share His blessings with the world.
 - 01. Even in Eden, God gave Adam & Eve a job to do. It was not cursed with sweat, thorns, and thistles until after they disobeyed.
 - 02. Tend, keep, gather, and share.

- 5. The purpose and motive of a Kingdom-minded heart is GENEROSITY. Jesus was generous to us by giving us a free gift that we do not deserve. Therefore, we give obediently, willingly, liberally, open-handedly, un-begrudgingly, expecting nothing but in faith that God is our provider and will never fail to provide for us according to His purposes.
 - a. Philippians 4:11-13, 19-20 AMP - 11 Not that I speak from [any personal] need, for I have learned to be **content [and self-sufficient through Christ, satisfied to the point where I am not disturbed or uneasy] regardless of my circumstances.** 12 **I know how to get along and live humbly [in difficult times], and I also know how to enjoy abundance and live in prosperity.** In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret [of facing life], **whether well-fed or going hungry, whether having an abundance or being in need.** 13 I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose—I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency; I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength and confident peace.]... 19 **And my God will liberally supply (fill until full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.** 20 To our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
 - b. Abundance is from the restored relationship with God, who owns all things, through faith in Jesus Christ and His atonement for our sins.

Unit Three: God Owns Everything & He is Generous

Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!

Psalm 31:19

A. God is the Creator & Owner of Everything. He is Sovereign Over All.

1. God owns everything.
 - a. Genesis 1:1 - 1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
 - b. Psalm 24:1 - 1 **The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof**, the world and those who dwell therein.
 - c. Deuteronomy 10:14 - 14 Behold, **to the LORD your God belong heaven** and the heaven of heavens, **the earth with all that is in it**.
2. God is sovereign over all of creation and all creatures look to Him for provision.
 - a. Job 38:4, 22-30, 39-41 - 4 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ... 22 Have you entered the **storehouses of the snow**, or have you seen the **storehouses of the hail**, 23 which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? 24 What is the way to the **place where the light is distributed**, or where the **east wind** is scattered upon the earth? 25 Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, 26 **to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man**, 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and **to make the ground sprout with grass**? 28 Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? 29 From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? 30 The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen... 39 **"Can you hunt the prey for the lion**, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, 40 when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? 41 **Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help**, and wander about for lack of food? (Continued through Job 38-41.)
 - b. Psalm 104:24, 27-29 - 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; **the earth is full of your creatures...** 27 **These all look to you, to give them their food in due season**. 28 When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
3. God is willing and well able to take care of those who look to Him for provision, seek His face, and acknowledge Him in all their ways by keeping His commands.
 - a. Matthew 6:26-33 - 26 **Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap** nor gather into barns, and yet **your heavenly Father feeds them**. Are you not of more value than they? 27

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? **Consider the lilies of the field**, how they grow: **they neither toil nor spin**, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and **your heavenly Father knows that you need them all**. 33 **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

4. God provides sun, rain, and everything needed for abundant provision. God provides food for millions of people in the world every day who are His enemies, do not acknowledge Him, reject and violate His ways, and deny His existence. He is also able to withhold it. His desire is for people to seek Him and find Him.
 - a. Matthew 5:44-45 - 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. **For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**
 - b. Amos 4:6-10 - 6 "I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and **lack of bread** in all your places, yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD. 7 "I also **withheld the rain** from you when there were yet three months to the harvest; I would **send rain on one city, and send no rain on another city; one field would have rain, and the field on which it did not rain would wither**; 8 so two or three cities would **wander to another city to drink water**, and would not be satisfied; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD. 9 "I struck you with **blight and mildew; your many gardens and your vineyards, your fig trees and your olive trees the locust devoured**; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD. 10 "I sent among you a **pestilence after the manner of Egypt**; I killed your young men with the sword, and carried away your horses, and I made the stench of your camp go up into your nostrils; yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD.

B. God is Sovereign Over All Nations and their Treasures.

1. God orchestrates world events and gives lands and nations as He sees fit, even to people who do not acknowledge Him. Therefore, God still sovereignly orders all the resources of the world.
 - a. Haggai 2:7-8 - 7 And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. 8 **The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.**
 - b. Acts 17:26 - 26 And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, **having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place**,
2. God remains sovereign over the resources and provision for all nations and the animals. If a nation is in rebellion against Him, He can supernaturally break its supply of bread or sovereignly inspire and allow enemy nations to plunder the disobedient nation.
 - a. Ezekiel 14:13-21 - 13 "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I **stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and**

cut off from it man and beast, 14 even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD. 15 **"If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate**, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts, 16 even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate. 17 Or **if I bring a sword** upon that land and say, Let a sword pass through the land, and I cut off from it man and beast, 18 though these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered. 19 **"Or if I send a pestilence** into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, 20 even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness. 21 **"For thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I send upon Jerusalem my four disastrous acts of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!**

- b. Jeremiah 18:7-10 - 7 If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, 8 **and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it.** 9 And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, 10 and **if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.**
 - c. Example: Israel in the cycle of the Book of Judges. When Israel was faithful to God, God was with them and for them. But when Israel abandoned God and rejected His ways, God sold them to their enemies for plunder. Then, they cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord had pity on them and raised up judges to save them from the hands of their enemies.
 - i. Judges 2:13-14 - 13 They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroath. 14 So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and **he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them.** And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.
3. God appoints ALL rulers and authorities in the world to suit His sovereign purposes.
- a. Romans 13:1-6 - 1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. **For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.** 2 Therefore **whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed,** and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. **For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.** 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For **because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.**
 - i. Authorities, both "good" and "bad," are appointed by God.
 - ii. We pay taxes because God has appointed the authorities in place.
 - b. Daniel 2:20-22 - 20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. 21 **He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings;** he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.
 - i. God is the one who appoints kings in the earth and removes them.

- c. Example: Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, was not a righteous man. He was a violent, greedy, ruthless heathen plunderer. But God used Nebuchadnezzar as a tool of discipline against His own people, Israel, because of Israel's disobedience.
- i. 2 Chronicles 36:15-18 - 15 The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. 17 **He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians**, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. **God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.** 18 **He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials.**
 - ii. Jeremiah 27:5-8 - 5 It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and **I give it to whomever it seems right to me.** 6 Now **I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon**, my servant, and **I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him.** 7 **All the nations shall serve him** and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes. **Then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave.** 8 But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand.
 - iii. Daniel 2:37-38 - 37 You, O king, the king of kings, **to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom**, the power, and the might, and the glory, 38 and **into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all**—you are the head of gold.
- d. Example: Cyrus, the King of Persia, was not a believer. He was even more merciless and less easy to bribe than Nebuchadnezzar. But God used Cyrus to bring destruction to Babylon after He was finished using Babylon to bring punishment to nations in rebellion against Him. He also used Cyrus to restore His people, Israel, back to their land.
- i. Isaiah 45:1-7, 12-13 - 1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, **to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:** 2 "I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, 3 **I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places**, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. 4 For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, **I name you, though you do not know me.** 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; **I equip you, though you do not know me,** 6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. 7 I form light and create darkness; **I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things....** 12 **I made the earth and created man on it; it was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded all their host.** 13 **I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level;** he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward," says the LORD of hosts.
- e. Many other examples. (Books of Judges, Kings, Chronicles, and the Prophets.)
- f. The point is that God is sovereign over all the nations and owns all the earth. He can give whatever lands and all of its resources to whomever He chooses. He is God.

C. Offerings Acknowledge God's Provision & Our Thankfulness.

1. David understood that everything comes from the Lord. It was his privilege to give everything he had back to the Lord for His house, the Temple.
 - a. 1 Chronicles 29:10-16 - 10 Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for **all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.** 12 **Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all.** In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. 13 And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. 14 **But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.** 15 For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. 16 O LORD our God, **all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.**
2. Solomon honored the Lord with sacrifices that could not be numbered.
 - a. At becoming King of Israel: 1,000 bulls as burnt offerings. (2 Chronicles 1:6.)
 - b. At the Dedication of the Temple: 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. (2 Chronicles 1:5.)
3. Faithful believers who were not under law or any obligation gave offerings willingly to the Lord.
 - a. Abel brought his offering to God with a heart of faith. (Genesis 4:3-7; Hebrews 11:4.)
 - b. Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all his spoils of war. (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1-10.)
 - c. Jacob promised a tenth to God for the blessing of His presence with him. (Genesis 28:22.)
 - d. The widow gave two mites, all she had to live on, to the Lord. (Mark 12:41-44.)
 - e. Early church believers sold what they had and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:34-37.)
4. Not giving right offerings to God is robbing Him, insulting Him, not acknowledging His provision of all things. Those who do not give right offerings to God are misguidedly attempting to lie to Him.
 - a. Cain did not bring his offering to the Lord with a right heart. If he had given with a right heart, God would have accepted his offering. (Genesis 4:3-7.)
 - b. Israel's returned exiles were bringing defective offerings and were failing to tithe.
 - i. Malachi 1:6-9 - 6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, '**How have we despised your name?**' 7 **By offering polluted food upon my altar.** But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised. 8 When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. 9 And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be

gracious to us. **With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you?** says the LORD of hosts.

- ii. Malachi 3:8-12 - 8 **Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me.** But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' **In your tithes and contributions.** 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. 10 **Bring the full tithe into the storehouse,** that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. 12 Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.
- c. Hypocrites give to be seen and acknowledged by men. They will have no reward from God.
 - i. Matthew 6:1-2 - 1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 "Thus, **when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do** in the synagogues and in the streets, **that they may be praised by others.** Truly, I say to you, **they have received their reward.**
- d. Ananias & Sapphira sold their property and gave the proceeds to the apostles but kept back a portion for themselves. They pretended to give the whole amount even though they withheld some for themselves. They were free to give whatever they wanted. The sin is not in the withholding but in the lying and trying to look more generous than they actually were.
 - i. Acts 5:3-5 - 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has **Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? **You have not lied to man but to God.**" 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. (Followed by his wife's death.)

D. God Does Not Need Anything from Anyone. He Is Looking at the Heart.

1. God does not need anyone to give Him anything.
 - a. Psalm 50:10-15 - 10 For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. 12 **If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine.** 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.
 - b. Job 41:11 - 11 **Who has first given to me, that I should repay him?** Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:7 - 7 For who sees anything different in you? **What do you have that you did not receive?** If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?
2. God is not after offerings or sacrifices. He is looking for a heart of obedience and righteousness. Remember Cain & Abel.

- a. Isaiah 1:11-17 - 11 **"What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?** says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 12 "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? 13 Bring **no more vain offerings**; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations-- **I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly**. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. 16 **Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil**, 17 **learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause**.
3. God does not want offerings that are not from the heart, or that are given out of religious or legalistic obligation. It should be a joy in our heart to give to God.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 9:7- 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, **not reluctantly or under compulsion**, for God loves a cheerful giver.

E. God is Generous.

1. Eden reveals the generosity of God. God did all the work of creating the whole world and everything in it to multiply and be well sustained. And then, He gave it away as a free gift.
 - a. Genesis 2:8-12 - 8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up **every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food**. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 **A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden**, and there it divided and became four rivers. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 **And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there**.
2. The Promised Land reveals the generosity of God. Blessings from God come upon and overtake those who are obedient to Him and faithful to His covenant.
 - a. Deuteronomy 8:7-10 - 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, 9 a land in which you will **eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper**. 10 And **you shall eat and be full**, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.
 - b. Deuteronomy 28:2 - 2 And **all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you**, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.
 - c. Psalm 23:1, 6 - 1 **The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want**. ... 6 **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life**, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.
 - d. Proverbs 10:22 - 22 The **blessing of the LORD makes rich**, and he adds no sorrow with it.

3. The New Covenant reveals the generosity of God. His lavish mercy and forgiveness of our sins and consequently, the removal of the cause of all lack. He reunited us with Him, the one and only Creator and owner of earth and everything in it.
 - a. Ephesians 1:3, 7-10 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.** ... 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, **according to the riches of his grace,** 8 **which he lavished upon us,** in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
4. The World to Come, the New Jerusalem for the righteous to dwell with God forever. Walls of precious stones and every kind of jewel, streets paved with gold.
 - a. Revelation 21:18-21 - 18 The wall was built of jasper, while **the city was pure gold,** like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with **every kind of jewel.** The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, **each of the gates made of a single pearl,** and **the street of the city was pure gold,** like transparent glass.

F. Godliness with Contentment is Great Gain.

1. If the God who created everything is with us and for us, we have nothing to fear.
 - a. 1 Timothy 6:6-8 - 6 But **godliness with contentment is great gain,** 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have **food and clothing,** with these we will **be content.**
 - b. Hebrews 13:5-6 - 5 **Keep your life free from love of money,** and **be content with what you have,** for he has said, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**" 6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

G. God Gives Labor for Our Enjoyment.

1. Even in Eden, Adam and Eve had work to do to work and keep the land of God.
 - a. Genesis 2:15 - 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to work it and keep it.**
2. In this world, work is a gift from God for our enjoyment.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 - 12 I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; 13 also that everyone should eat and drink and take **pleasure in all his toil--this is God's gift to man.**

- b. Ecclesiastes 5:18-19 - 18 Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to **eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun** the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. 19 Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to **accept his lot and rejoice in his toil--this is the gift of God.**
3. No laziness, no idleness.
- a. 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12 - 11 For we hear that **some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work**, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to **do their work quietly and to earn their own living.**
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:8 - 8 But if **anyone does not provide for his relatives**, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and **is worse than an unbeliever.**
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 - 11 and to **aspire to live quietly**, and to **mind your own affairs**, and to **work with your hands**, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may walk properly before outsiders and **be dependent on no one.**
4. Work with your hands so that you have something to give to anyone in need, share with fellow believers in need, or to support laborers in God's work.
- a. Ephesians 4:28 - 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather **let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.**
 - b. Believers in Antioch sent relief to the believers in Judea because famine predicted by prophecy. (Acts 11:28-29)
 - c. Poor believers in Macedonia/Philippi sent Paul offerings for his work in Corinth. (2 Corinthians 11:7-9; Acts 18:5.)
 - d. Priscilla & Aquila were tentmakers who supported the apostle Paul and others. (Acts 18:1-3.)
 - e. Most of the apostles (including Peter) and their families were supported by the offerings of the church. (1 Corinthians 9:5.)
 - f. Supporting laborers for God's work causes us to share in their work for the Lord. (3 John 1:5-8.)
5. If you are wealthy, be rich in sharing and in good works. Lay up treasures in heaven. (To be covered in Unit Six.)
- a. 1 Timothy 6:18-19 - 18 They are to do good, to **be rich in good works**, to **be generous and ready to share**, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.
 - b. Phoebe was a wealthy patron to many laborers, including the apostle Paul. (Romans 16:1-2)
6. For those called to full time ministry, ministry is work for the Lord. (To be covered in Unit Eight.)
- a. Peter, Andrew, James, & John dropped their fishing nets to follow Jesus and become fishers of men. (Matthew 4:18-22.)

- b. Matthew/Levi left his tax booth to follow Jesus. (Matthew 9:9.)
7. In the world to come, there will be work.
- a. Luke 19:16-17 - 16 The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, **you shall have authority over ten cities.**'
 - b. Based on what we have done in this life in this world, we will be given authority to rule over cities in the world to come.

Unit Four: Babylon's Treasure or Jesus' Reward

Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain.

Psalm 119:36

A. Babylon & the World System: Living by the Sword, Trade, & Survival of the Fittest.

1. The world's systems of alliances, trade, and merchandising are mankind's attempts to deny their dependence on God and avoid repenting of sin. It is evidence of mankind's stubborn refusal to do things God's way and willful self-reliance and scheming for independence from God.
2. Example: The Tower of Babel. Mankind had recently invented the brick and set out to build a tower to the heavens. The name of the site of the Tower of Babel in the ancient language was "Gate of God." Its purpose was to access the power of heaven by human design in order to make a name for themselves rather than give glory to God.
 - a. Genesis 11:3-4 - 3 And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us **build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves**, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."
3. Example: The Kingdom and Prince of Tyre. Tyre was a wealthy nation of merchants and trade. But the nation became proud, thinking themselves to be invincible.
 - a. Ezekiel 27 explains the exorbitant wealth and global influence of Tyre's business dealings.
 - i. The ships of Tyre were made of the world's finest materials. They were the best.
 - ii. The cargoes of Tyre were carried to all nations, trading in all kinds of goods, wares, horses, metals, jewels, fabrics, spices, and human beings.
 - iii. Rulers of nations were Tyre's servants because of its resources and trading power.
 - iv. All nations sought to do business with Tyre because of her merchandising and trade.
 - b. Ezekiel 28:2-5 - 2 "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your heart is proud, and **you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,'** yet you are but a man, and no god, though **you make your heart like the heart of a god**-- 3 you are indeed wiser than Daniel; no secret is hidden from you; 4 by your wisdom and your understanding **you have made wealth for yourself**, and have gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; 5 **by your great wisdom in your trade you have increased your wealth, and your heart has become proud in your wealth** –
 - i. The prince/ruler of Tyre began to think of himself as a god or God because of his great global influence and prosperity.
 - ii. The prince/ruler had wisdom and intelligence to conduct trade and amass wealth.
 - iii. But his heart became proud, arrogant, self-sufficient rather than glorifying God. (i.e. Nimrod/Babel - we don't need God - make a name for ourselves)

- c. Ezekiel 28: 6-10 - 6 ...**therefore** thus says the Lord GOD: **Because you make your heart like the heart of a god, 7 therefore,** behold, I will bring foreigners upon you, the most ruthless of the nations; and they shall **draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor.** 8 They shall thrust you down into the pit, and you shall die the death of the slain in the heart of the seas. 9 **Will you still say, 'I am a god,'** in the presence of those who kill you, though you are but a man, and no god, in the hands of those who slay you? 10 You shall die the **death of the uncircumcised** by the hand of foreigners; for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD."
- i. The Lord would show Himself mighty and sovereign.
 - ii. The prince of Tyre would prove frail. God would attack the points he most prided himself in. His wisdom would be proven foolish. His splendor would be defiled.
 - iii. The death of the uncircumcised represents those with no relationship with God. It is eternal separation from God, in the torments of hell.
- d. Ezekiel 28:11-14 - 11 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me: 12 "Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord GOD: "You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 **You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings.** On the day that you were created they were prepared. 14 You were an **anointed guardian cherub.** I placed you; you were **on the holy mountain of God;** in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.
- i. This language distinctly refers back to the Garden of Eden, the holy mountain of God, before the fall of man due to falling for the serpent's deception.
 - ii. The Garden of Eden had every kind of precious stone. (See Unit Three.)
 - iii. The literal prince of Tyre in Ezekiel's day (the times around the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC) was not literally in the Garden of Eden and was not literally a guardian cherub.
 - iv. The spiritual force of arrogance, luxury leading to pride and a self-sufficient mindset originated in the Garden of Eden.
- e. Ezekiel 28:15-19 - 15 **You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.** 16 **In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned;** so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 **Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.** I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. 18 **By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries;** so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. 19 All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; **you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever."**
- i. You were blameless - until unrighteousness was found in you.
 - ii. The abundance of your trade led to violence and sin. Trade became unrighteous, selfish, dishonest, and corrupt.
 - iii. The pure wisdom of God was corrupted to preserve the splendor of the prideful one.
 - iv. What was supposed to be dedicated to God (like a sanctuary) became defiled and unacceptable to Him.
 - v. God cast it out and brought it to an end.
4. Example: Babylon. Babylon was at one time the wealthiest, most luxurious nation in the world. Like its origins at the Tower of Babel, it became the symbol of mankind's selfish ambition and rebellious attempts to usurp God's sovereign rule.

- a. Isaiah 14:13-17 - 13 You [king of Babylon] said in your heart, **'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'** 15 But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit. 16 Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, 17 who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?'
- i. This is the same intent of the tower of Babel, just a different generation.
 - ii. Babylon had at one time ruled the whole world, but God overthrew them in a moment's time.
- b. Isaiah 47:7-12 - 7 **You said, "I shall be mistress forever,"** so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. 8 Now therefore hear this, **you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children":** 9 These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, **in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments. 10 You felt secure in your wickedness; you said, "No one sees me"; your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me."** 11 But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone; and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing. 12 Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries, with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed; perhaps you may inspire terror.
- i. Babylon was self-deceived by wealth, luxury, and indulging in pleasures into thinking that disaster could never come upon them.
 - ii. But God would bring disaster that Babylon could not buy themselves out of.
 - iii. Babylon's "gods" were powerless to save them. None of their sorceries, alternative spiritualities, methods for healing and prosperity would be able to deliver them from the judgment of God.
- c. Revelation 18:7-19 - 7 As she **glorified herself and lived in luxury**, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, **'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.'** 8 For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her." 9 And the **kings of the earth**, who committed sexual immorality and **lived in luxury with her**, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. 10 They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." 11 **And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, 12 cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, 13 cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.** 14 "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!" 15 The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, 16 **"Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! 17 For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste."** And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off 18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" 19 And they threw dust on their

heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea **grew rich by her wealth!** For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

- i. This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Isaiah passage (and other prophetic scriptures about Babylon.)
 - ii. Babylon developed into a Biblical symbol for the whole world, the united one world order, all nations united together in rebellion against God, trying to produce their own wealth, prosperity, and life apart from God.
 - iii. Babylon glorified self by living in luxury rather than glorifying God with thankfulness and acknowledging all things come from Him.
 - iv. All nations grew rich by their association and trade with Babylon. Therefore, Babylon's fall brought down all world merchants and their trade.
5. Example: The Church at Laodicea. The Church at Laodicea was wealthy and complacent. Their wealth caused them to be self-deceived into thinking that they were secure when in reality their eternal salvation was in jeopardy.
- a. Revelation 3:15-22 - 15 "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 **For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.** 18 **I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.** 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so **be zealous and repent.** 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. 21 The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
 - i. Because of their prosperity, they thought they did not need anything.
 - ii. God saw them as poor and pitiable, yet instructed them to buy things from Him.
 - iii. They needed eternal things that only God could supply and money could not buy.
 01. Gold: Character and faith that has been tried, tested, and proved to be pleasing to God. (See Job 23:20; 1 Peter 1:7; Proverbs 17:3.)
 02. White garments: The Bride of Christ is clothed with white linen. Without white garments, no one will be admitted to the Wedding Feast. (See Matthew 22:11-14 - many are called, few are chosen.)
 03. Salve for the eyes: They were blind like Pharisees who loved money and could not see Jesus. Their perspective was skewed by the things of this world rather than clear focus on eternal things.
 - iv. They needed to repent and let Jesus into their hearts to transform their lives to one that would be pleasing to God.
 - v. Note: God does not threaten or despise their material wealth but their lukewarmness towards eternal things.
6. God does not hate money, wealth, or expensive things. If He did, He would have to hate Himself because He is the wealthiest of all.
- a. God originally designed the world with beautiful things abounding for all mankind to enjoy.
 - b. In the world to come, God gives freely to His people the very same abundance, jewels, goods, and earthly splendors that Tyre and Babylon are condemned for trading unjustly and that blinded the Laodiceans of their sin.

- i. The approach of this world is to accumulate wealth for personal advantage, security, dominance, and glory. (See Revelation 18, the Fall of Babylon.)
 - ii. The approach of God's people is to receive freely from God for His purpose and give Him all the glory. (See Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem.) (The list of resources in the New Jerusalem were listed in Unit Three.)
 - c. God loves to bless and multiply His people. He deserves acknowledgement that all blessing and wealth comes from Him. If we forget this, we have become like Babylon.
 - i. Deuteronomy 8:11-14, 17-20 - 11 "Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, 12 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, 13 and **when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied**, 14 then **your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ... 17 **Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'** 18 You shall remember the LORD your God, for **it is he who gives you power to get wealth**, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 19 And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. 20 Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.
7. God look at the heart and intent. How wealth and possessions are obtained matters to God.
- a. Those who are greedy for gain will lose their life and access to God for eternity.
 - i. Proverbs 1:10-19 - 10 My son, **if sinners entice you, do not consent**. 11 If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason; 12 like Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; 13 **we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; 14 throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse**"-- 15 my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, 16 for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. 17 For in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird, 18 but these men lie in wait for their own blood; they set an ambush for their own lives. 19 **Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain**; it takes away the life of its possessors.
 - b. Plundering or oppressing the innocent/vulnerable is detestable in God's sight.
 - i. Proverbs 28:8 - 8 Whoever **multiplies his wealth by interest and profit** gathers it for him who is generous to the poor.
 - ii. Proverbs 28:6 - 6 Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than **a rich man who is crooked in his ways**.
 - c. Get rich quick schemes reveal a misdirected heart focused on money, not on God.
 - i. Proverbs 13:11 - 11 **Wealth gained hastily** will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.
 - ii. Proverbs 28:20 - 20 A faithful man will abound with blessings, but whoever **hastens to be rich** will not go unpunished.
 - iii. Proverbs 13:22 - 22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the **sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous**.
 - 01. This is NOT a valid prayer to receive a sinner's money when you should be praying for their soul to be saved.

B. Chasing Wealth is Vanity. Money Has No Power to Save and Will Not Profit in the Day of Calamity. The Love of Money Makes us God's Enemy.

1. The vanity of toiling for wealth.
 - a. Psalm 127:1-2 - 1 Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it **labor in vain**. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman **stays awake in vain**. 2 **It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil**; for he gives to his beloved sleep.
 - b. Psalm 39:6 NIV - 6 "Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom; **in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth** without knowing whose it will finally be.
 - c. Ecclesiastes 2:4-11 - 4 I made great works. **I built houses and planted vineyards for myself**. 5 I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. 6 I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. 7 I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. **I had also great possessions of herds and flocks**, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. 8 **I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces**. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man. 9 So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And **whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them**. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and **this was my reward for all my toil**. 11 Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, **all was vanity and a striving after wind**, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.
 - d. Proverbs 30:7-9 - 7 Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: 8 Remove far from me falsehood and lying; **give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me**, 9 lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.
2. No man can pay the price for his soul or bargain his way out of the judgment of God.
 - a. Proverbs 11:4 - 4 **Riches do not profit in the day of wrath**, but righteousness delivers from death.
 - b. Psalm 49:5-20 - 5 Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me, 6 **those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches?** 7 **Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life**, 8 for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, 9 that he should live on forever and never see the pit. 10 For he sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others. 11 Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they called lands by their own names. 12 Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish. 13 This is **the path of those who have foolish confidence**; yet after them people approve of their boasts. Selah 14 Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell. 15 But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. 16 **Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases**. 17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him. 18 For though, **while he lives, he counts himself blessed --and though you get praise when you do well for yourself--** 19 his soul will go to the generation of his fathers, who will never again see light. 20 **Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish**.

3. The love of money, covetousness, selfish ambition, selfish desires, friendship with the world is enmity with God.
 - a. 1 Timothy 6:9-10 - 9 But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation**, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils**. It is **through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith** and pierced themselves with many pangs.
 - b. 1 John 2:15-17 - 15 **Do not love the world or the things in the world**. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For **all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world**. 17 And **the world is passing away along with its desires**, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
 - c. James 4:1-4 - 1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 **You desire and do not have**, so you murder. **You covet and cannot obtain**, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 **You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions**. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore **whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God**.
4. The love of money is equivalent to idolatry or worshipping the sun, moon, and stars.
 - a. Job 31:24-28 - 24 "**If I have made gold my trust or called fine gold my confidence**, 25 **if I have rejoiced because my wealth was abundant or because my hand had found much**, 26 if I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon moving in splendor, 27 and my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand, 28 **this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges, for I would have been false to God above**.

C. The Lord is Our Portion and Reward.

1. Example: Abraham, the friend of God, was called out of Babel.
 - a. Genesis 15:1 NKJV - 1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. **I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.**"
 - i. Abram left the riches of Babel/Ur to pursue the promise of the Lord.
 - b. Hebrews 11:8-10 - 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, **living in tents** with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For **he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God**.
 - i. Abraham lived in tents and owned nothing in the land promised to him by God except the grave he bought for his wife. Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Rebekah, and Leah are all buried there.
 - c. Hebrews 11:13-16 - 13 These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For people who speak **thus make it clear that they are**

seeking a homeland. 15 **If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.** 16 But as it is, **they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.** Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

- i. They had opportunity to return to Babel and the life they had known previously. But they knew that God was a greater reward than anything this world had to offer. The city of God was worth living for even if they would not see it in their lifetime.
2. Other Examples:
- a. Priest & Levites had no inheritance on earth. The Lord is their portion.
 - i. Numbers 18:20 - 20 And the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. **I am your portion and your inheritance** among the people of Israel.
 - ii. Deuteronomy 10:8-9 - 8 At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD to stand before the LORD to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day. 9 Therefore **Levi has no portion or inheritance** with his brothers. The LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD your God said to him.
 - b. David's chosen portion.
 - i. Psalm 16:5 - 5 **The LORD is my chosen portion** and my cup; you hold my lot.
 - ii. Psalm 142:5 - 5 I cry to you, O LORD; I say, "**You are my refuge, my portion** in the land of the living."
 - c. Asaph's eternal comfort.
 - i. Psalm 73:2-3, 16-17, 25-28 - 2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. 3 For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ... 16 But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task, 17 until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. ... 25 **Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.** 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but **God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.** 27 For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. 28 But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.
 - d. Note: Lot chose the valley of Sodom because it looked like Eden. He chose what pleased his eyes and seemed good to him rather than faith in God's provision. (Genesis 13:10-11.)
3. We are called to come out of the Babylonian system of this world. We are called to be a royal priesthood and holy nation as New Covenant people, redeemed by Jesus. We are foreigners and exiles in this world, living by faith in God, who is our portion and reward.
- a. Revelation 18:2-5 - 2 And he called out with a mighty voice, "**Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!** She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. 3 For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "**Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;** 5 for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

- b. 1 Peter 2:9, 11 - 9 But you are a chosen race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ... 11 Beloved, I urge you **as sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.
 - c. Hebrews 11:6 - 6 And **without faith it is impossible to please him**, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that **he rewards those who seek him**.
4. Relying on money vs. relying on and receiving from the Lord.
- a. Proverbs 18:10-11 - 10 The **name of the LORD is a strong tower**; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. 11 **A rich man's wealth is his strong city**, and like a high wall in his imagination.
 - b. Proverbs 11:28 - 28 **Whoever trusts in his riches will fall**, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.
 - c. 1 Timothy 6:17 - 17 As for the rich in this present age, **charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God**, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.
 - d. Isaiah 55:1-2 - 1 "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and **he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.** 2 **Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?** Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.
 - e. John 6:27 - 27 **Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.** For on him God the Father has set his seal.
 - f. Revelation 21:6 - 6 And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. **To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.**

D. Commands for Kings vs. Worldly Alliances.

1. Kings were commanded to remain humble by meditating on God's Law and not acquiring too much wealth for themselves.
 - a. Deuteronomy 17:16-20 - 16 Only **he must not acquire many horses for himself** or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' 17 And **he shall not acquire many wives for himself**, lest his heart turn away, **nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.** 18 "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, **he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law**, approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, **that he may learn to fear the LORD his God** by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, 20 **that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers**, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

2. Certain Kings of Judah made alliances with enemy nations, using methods of this world rather than relying on God in faith. Their alliances turned out to their shame. If they had humbled themselves, remained faithful to God's word, kept His ways, and relied upon God, He would have given them victory.
 - a. King Solomon acquired much wealth and many wives, including an alliance with Egypt and other nations through marriage.
 - i. In spite of his wisdom, his heart turned away from God.
 - ii. Therefore, the Kingdom of God's people would be divided and ten tribes would be given to his servant, Jeroboam.
 - iii. See 1 Kings 11:1-8.
 - b. King Asa used all the treasures in the house of the Lord to pay his way into an alliance with the King of Assyria. It was a bribe for Assyria to break their alliance with Israel to enter into alliance with Judah instead.
 - i. This was after God had previously protected him from a massive Ethiopian attack when Asa had an army of 580,000 soldiers against one million Ethiopian soldiers.
 - ii. He was rebuked by a prophet for being foolish and not believing God. The prophet said Asa would have wars from then on.
 - iii. He put the prophet in prison.
 - iv. See 2 Chronicles 16:1-10.
 - c. King Jehoshaphat allied with Israel's evil king Ahab (and his wife Jezebel) through marriage and engaged in battle on Israel's behalf.
 - i. He was rebuked by a prophet for aligning the kingdom with people whose actions display their hatred of the Lord.
 - ii. When Jehoshaphat humbled himself in prayer for God to help him in battle against his enemies, God miraculously delivered him.
 - iii. Yet after this, he allied himself with Israel's wicked king Ahaziah to make merchant ships to go to Tarshish. (Tarshish was a major world trading center, and the place Jonah tried to flee to away from God.) The ships were broken before they sailed.
 - iv. His sons after him were corrupted by the influence of Jezebel.
 - v. See 2 Chronicles 18-20.
 - d. King Amaziah hired/paid Israel's soldiers to fight in battle against his enemies, the Edomites.
 - i. He was rebuked by a prophet for not trusting God.
 - ii. He obeyed the prophet's warning and sent the hired soldiers home at a financial loss to himself. He trusted that God would provide victory and repay his losses.
 - iii. See 2 Chronicles 25:5-13.
 - e. King Hezekiah became very rich but did not respond to God's kindness with generosity. He did not give back according to the measure with which God had blessed him.
 - i. God gave him great victory over Assyria when he had humbled himself.
 - ii. He entertained envoys from Babylon and showed them all he owned in hopes of an alliance with them.
 - iii. The prophet Isaiah rebuked him and prophesied that all the goods he showed to the Babylonian envoys would one day be taken away to Babylon.
 - iv. Though he had once been so passionate about restoring God's Temple and worship, his heart had become so hardened that he thought "at least it is not in my day."
 - v. See 2 Chronicles 32:25-32; Isaiah 39:1-8.

E. If We Have JESUS We Have EVERYTHING. Jesus Is the Treasure.

1. Jesus has reconciled us with God, the all-powerful creator of Heaven and earth, and given us right standing with Him as if we had never sinned. Therefore, we can be confident that God will provide all we need according to His purposes for us.
2. Jesus is the treasure, the pearl of great value, worth giving and leaving everything for.
 - a. Matthew 13:44-46 - 44 "The kingdom of heaven is like **treasure hidden in a field**, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and **sells all that he has and buys that field**.
 - b. Matthew 13:45 - 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on **finding one pearl of great value**, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
3. Jesus is the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:24.) In Jesus are all treasures in heaven and earth.
 - a. Proverbs 8:18-21 - 18 **Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth** and righteousness. 19 **My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver**. 20 I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, 21 **granting an inheritance** to those who love me, and **filling their treasuries**.
 - b. Colossians 2:2-4 - 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach **all the riches of full assurance** of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, **which is Christ**, 3 **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge**. 4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

F. When Babylon (the world system) Has Been Humiliated and Destroyed, We Will Stand Before JESUS.

1. We will give account to Him for what we spent our lives and our resources on. Whether we have had much or little, we will give account for what we have done with what we have.
 - a. Matthew 25:20-25 - 20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, '**Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.**' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, '**Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.**' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' 24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, 25 so **I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground**. Here, you have what is yours.'
 - i. Note: The servant invested his talent in earthly things and produced nothing of value for the Kingdom of God.
2. Not everyone claiming to be a Christian in this world will enter the Kingdom of God. If we are complacent in wealth or use our money in ways that are no different than the world, we have missed the purpose of God and will be spit out like the Laodicean church.

- a. Matthew 7:21 - 21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, **but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.**
- b. Romans 12:1-2 - 1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 **Do not be conformed to this world,** but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, **that by testing you may discern what is the will of God,** what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- c. Revelation 3:16-19 - 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 **For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.** 18 I counsel you to **buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich,** and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

Unit Five: Seek First the Kingdom of God

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33

A. Seek

Seek. (Strong's G2212.) 1. To seek in order to find. To seek in order to find out by thinking, meditating, reasoning, enquiring. To aim at or strive after. 2. To crave or demand more.

1. Seek God for His wisdom and direction. It is more valuable than anything else on earth.
 - a. Proverbs 8:10-11 - 10 **Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold**, 11 for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.
 - b. Psalm 119:98-100 - 98 Your commandment makes me **wiser than my enemies**, for it is ever with me. 99 I have **more understanding than all my teachers**, for your testimonies are my meditation. 100 I **understand more than the aged**, for I keep your precepts.
 - c. James 1:5 - 5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God**, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.
2. Seek God by calling upon His name in prayer.
 - a. Proverbs 2:3-5 - 3 yes, if you **call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding**, 4 if you **seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures**, 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.
 - b. Psalm 50:15 - 15 and **call upon me in the day of trouble**; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.
 - c. Philippians 4:6 - 6 do not be anxious about anything, but **in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God**.
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - 17 **pray without ceasing**.
3. Ask, Seek, Knock. Be persistent.
 - a. Matthew 7:7-11 - 7 **"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.** 8 For **everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds**, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will **your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!**

- b. James 4:2b-3 - 2b You do not have, **because you do not ask**. 3 **You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly**, to spend it on your passions.
 - i. Let God purify your requests as you continue to ask and seek Him.
4. Meditate on God's word day and night.
- a. Joshua 1:8 - 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.
 - b. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 - 6 And these words that I command you today shall **be on your heart**. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them **when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise**. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - 16 All **Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness**, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
 - d. Romans 15:4 - 4 For whatever was written in former days was **written for our instruction**, that **through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures** we might have hope.

B. First

First. (Strong's G4413.) 1. First in time or place in any succession of things or persons. 2. First in rank, influence, honor, chief. 3. At the beginning or before the beginning.

- 1. No other gods before the Lord. Jesus is the only way to the true God and to His salvation.
 - a. Exodus 20:3 - 3 You shall have **no other gods before me**.
 - b. John 14:6 - 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me**."
 - c. Acts 4:11-12 - 11 This **Jesus** is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And **there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**"
 - d. John 6:45 - 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—**
 - i. This disqualifies every other religion, teacher, and form of spirituality which rejects the deity and Lordship of Jesus.
- 2. Highest priority, above all other endeavors, priorities, pursuits.
 - a. Psalm 16:8 - 8 I have **set the LORD always before me**; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

- b. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - 14 For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and **he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.**
 - i. You cannot worship God and yourself.
 - ii. You cannot worship God and money; your spouse, family, children, or friends; your work, ministry, or any other person or pursuit.
- c. Luke 10:41-42 - 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but **one thing is necessary.** Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

C. God's Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven

Kingdom. (Strong's G932.) 1. Royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. The royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah. 2. A territory subject to the rule and reign of a King.

1. Where the God of Creation and the Lamb that was slain is worshipped night and day as the only one worthy to open the scroll.
 - a. Revelation 4:11 - 11 "**Worthy are you, our Lord and God,** to receive glory and honor and power, **for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.**"
 - b. Revelation 5:2-14 - 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "**Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?**" 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,** has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." 6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw **a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain,** with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the **four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb,** each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, "**Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,** 10 **and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.**" 11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of **many angels, numbering myriads of myriads** and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!**" 13 And I heard **every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth** and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "**To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!**" 14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.
 - i. The conquering Lion IS the Lamb that was slain. Through His perfect sinless life and willing sacrificial death, Jesus did what no one else could ever do. Therefore, heaven and all of creation worships Him forever and ever.
2. Where God dwells and everything is holy. Where there is no sin, sickness, mourning, death, or pain.

- a. Revelation 21:3-4, 8 - 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will **wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.**"... 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."
3. Where the cloud of witnesses testify to the goodness, faithfulness, and power of God.
- a. Hebrews 12:1 - 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by **so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us
 - i. The cloud of witnesses includes the people listed in Hebrews 11 and other righteous people throughout history.
 - ii. As witnesses, they all testify that God is faithful and true and worthy of our worship, praise, submission, obedience, forsaking everything of this world, and even our very lives. This is our encouragement to persevere with Christ in the race set before us.

D. His Righteousness

Righteousness. (Strong's G1343.) 1. The condition of being acceptable to God. 2. Integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting. 3. Justice or virtue.

Righteousness. (Strong's H6666.) 1. Rectitude. Justice. Righteousness. Justification.

- 1. Righteousness of God through faith in Christ.
 - a. Romans 1:16-17 - 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For **in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith**, as it is written, "**The righteous shall live by faith.**"
 - b. Romans 4:3 - 3 For what does the Scripture say? "**Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.**" (Quoting Genesis 15:6.)
 - c. Romans 5:1 - 1 Therefore, since **we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - d. Ephesians 2:8-9 - 8 For **by grace you have been saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- 2. Righteous conduct in life. Holiness, purity, chastity, love.
 - a. Romans 3:5-8 - 5 But **if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God**, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 **By no means!** For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 **And why not do evil that good may come?**--as some people slanderously charge us with saying. **Their condemnation is just.**

- b. 1 John 2:4-6 - 4 **Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar,** and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 **whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.**
- c. 1 John 2:9 - 9 **Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.**
- d. 1 John 3:4-10 - 4 Everyone who **makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness;** sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 **No one who abides in him keeps on sinning;** no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. **Whoever practices righteousness is righteous,** as he is righteous. 8 **Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil,** for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 **No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.** 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: **whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.**

E. Do Not Worry About Your Life. Humble Yourself Before the Lord. Cast Your Cares Upon the Lord, Wait for the Lord, and Keep His Way.

1. Believe that God cares for you. Humble yourself before Him as your God and Provider.
 - a. Matthew 6:25 - 25 "Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life,** what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"
 - b. 1 Peter 5:6-7 - 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 **casting all your anxieties on him,** because he cares for you.
2. Believe that God hears you and knows what you need. Do not pray like an unbeliever.
 - a. Matthew 6:7-8 - 7 "And when you pray, **do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do,** for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for **your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**
3. Believe that God will never forsake His holy ones. Wait for the Lord.
 - a. Psalm 37:7, 25, 34 - 7 **Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;** fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! **Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.** ... 25 I have been young, and now am old, yet **I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.** ... 34 **Wait for the LORD and keep his way,** and he will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off.
 - b. Psalm 25:1-3 - 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, **none who wait for you shall be put to shame;** they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

F. Everything of This World is Dung Compared to Knowing Christ.

1. Philippians 3:7-11 - 7 But **whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.** 8 Indeed, I **count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.** For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain **Christ** 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-- 10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 **that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.**

G. Blessings of the Righteous and Promises to Zion.

1. Learn what God promises to His people. Meditate on Scripture and apply your faith.

www.manifestinternational.com/free

- a. Psalm 36:7-9 NIV - How **priceless** is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They **feast on the abundance of your house**; you give them **drink from your river of delights.** For **with you is the fountain of life**; in your light we see light.

BLESSINGS OF THE RIGHTEOUS	
<p>Psalm 36:7-9</p> <p>How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.</p>	<p>Psalm 36:1-6</p> <p>The integrity of the righteous is like a strong tower. He will flee to it and be safe. He will be like a rock in a storm, a refuge in times of trouble. He will be like a fortress, a stronghold, an impregnable tower. He will be like a city, a fortress, a stronghold, an impregnable tower. He will be like a city, a fortress, a stronghold, an impregnable tower. He will be like a city, a fortress, a stronghold, an impregnable tower.</p>

PROMISES TO ZION	
<p>Psalm 136</p> <p>Give thanks to the Lord, O Jerusalem, for he has redeemed Zion. He has scattered the nations, he has gathered the people of Israel. He has chosen Zion for his dwelling place. He has chosen Jerusalem for his habitation. He has chosen David for his servant. He has chosen Jerusalem for his habitation. He has chosen David for his servant. He has chosen Jerusalem for his habitation. He has chosen David for his servant.</p>	<p>Psalm 135</p> <p>Give thanks to the Lord, O Jerusalem, for he has redeemed Zion. He has scattered the nations, he has gathered the people of Israel. He has chosen Zion for his dwelling place. He has chosen Jerusalem for his habitation. He has chosen David for his servant. He has chosen Jerusalem for his habitation. He has chosen David for his servant. He has chosen Jerusalem for his habitation. He has chosen David for his servant.</p>

H. NO DEBT. Pay Taxes. NO Dependence on Government.

1. Live within the provision of God, wait for the Lord.
 - a. There is no Biblical example of God ever putting anyone into debt. Only humans doing that to themselves.
 - b. Remember the Kings who made faulty alliances. They became servants/slaves to their debtors. God could have provided for them if they had humbled themselves and waited upon the Lord in faith.
 - c. If God wants you to have something, He will be faithful to provide it for you. If God does not want you to have something, you are functioning in your flesh to suit your own desires. Let God renew your mind and desires until you function in the will of God. Crucify lusts for the pleasures of this world and selfish ambition which are the ways of the Babylonian system.
2. Owe nothing to anyone. Pay your taxes.
 - a. Matthew 22:17-21 - 17 Tell us, then, what you think. **Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?** 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore **render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**"

- b. Romans 13:7-8 - 7 **Pay to all what is owed to them:** taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. 8 **Owe no one anything**, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.
3. If you borrow, you become a slave to your lender.
- a. Owing anything to anyone puts you in their service. At any time, they could come to call and collect which could prohibit, hinder, or distract you from fulfilling the will of God for your life.
 - b. Proverbs 22:7 - 7 The rich rules over the poor, and **the borrower is the slave of the lender.**
 - c. In the banking industry, when they check your credit and income they are determining if you can "service your debt." Borrowing puts you in service to the lender. You cannot serve both your lender and God.
 - i. There is no such thing as "good debt" not even a mortgage.
4. Dependence on the government is a snare and a trap. It will not end well for you. It is Babylon.
- a. Revelation 13:16-18 - 16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 **so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.** 18 This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666.
 - i. Submit to authorities appointed by God, but do not depend on them for your provision, or you will find yourself taking the mark of the beast.
 - b. Revelation 18:23 - 23 and the light of a lamp will shine in you [Babylon] no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for **your merchants were the great ones of the earth**, and **all nations were deceived by your sorcery.**
 - i. The word translated here as sorcery is *pharmakeia*. In another reference those administering it are called sorcerers - *pharmakeus*. (See Revelation 21:8.)

Pharmakeia. (Strong's G5331.) 1. The use or administration of drugs. 2. Poisoning. 3. Sorcery, magical arts, connected with or fostered by idolatry. 4. The deceptions and seductions of idolatry.

Pharmakeus: (Strong's G5332.) 1. A drug, i.e. giving a potion. 2. One who prepares or uses magical remedies. 3. A sorcerer. 4. A druggist or pharmacist. 5. A poisoner.
 - ii. Revelation 21:8 - But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, **sorcerers**, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."
 - iii. Being dependent on the government for any kind of provision, including for health care, is a snare and a trap of deception.

Unit Six: Jesus' Parables About Money

For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Matthew 13:12-13

A. The Parable of the Sower: 2nd and 3rd Soil

(Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-25; Luke 8:4-18.)

1. Parable: A sower sows seed into various kinds of soils: along the path, rocky soil, among the thorns, and good soil.
 - a. Matthew 13:5-6 - 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they **did not have much soil**, and immediately they sprang up, since they had **no depth of soil**, 6 but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they **had no root**, they withered away.
 - b. Matthew 13:7 - 7 Other **seed fell among thorns**, which grew up and choked the plants.
2. The seed is the word of God, the word of God's Kingdom.
 - a. Luke 8:11 - 11 Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God**. (See also Matthew 13:19.)
3. Parable Explanation, 2nd soil, seed on rocky ground:
 - a. Matthew 13:20-21 - 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately **receives it with joy**, 21 yet he **has no root in himself**, but endures for a while, and **when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away**.
 - b. Luke 8:13 - 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, **receive it with joy**. But these **have no root**; they **believe for a while**, and **in time of testing fall away**.
 - c. Summary 2nd Soil: Without a firm rooting in and focus on the word of God and His Kingdom, the pressures of testing, persecution, and tribulation will uproot our faith.
4. Parable Explanation, 3rd soil, seed among the thorns:
 - a. Matthew 13:22 - 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the **cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches** choke the word, and it **proves unfruitful**.
 - b. Mark 4:18-19 - 18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but the **cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things** enter in and choke the word, and it **proves unfruitful**.

- c. Luke 8:14 - 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the **cares and riches and pleasures of life**, and their **fruit does not mature**.
- d. Summary 3rd Soil: Worries of life and this world, deceitfulness of riches, desires for other things and pleasures are distractions that choke the word of God from being fruitful in our lives.
 - i. Those focused on the things of this world will not be capable of producing true and mature fruit for the Kingdom of God.

B. The Parable of the Rich Fool

(Luke 12:13-21.)

1. Context:

- a. Luke 12:13-15 NIV - 13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" 15 Then he said to them, "**Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.**"
 - i. Jesus did not arbitrate the conflict between brothers. Instead, He pointed straight to the matter of the heart. Arguments about earthly things is not the point of life.

2. Luke 12:16-21 - 16 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' 18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" 20 **But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.**"

- a. The foolish man accumulated wealth. Instead of sharing his abundance with the needy, he only considered himself and his own provision, enjoyment, and retirement.
- b. Laying up treasure on earth for yourself and your own family is selfish and worldly. It fails to demonstrate thankfulness to God for His provision and blessing.
- c. Generosity to God includes caring about the things and people God cares about.

3. Post-context: Treasures in heaven.

- a. Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will wear. Seek first God's Kingdom. (Luke 12:22-34 is essentially the same as Matthew 6:25-33.) (See Unit Five.)
- b. Luke 12:33-34 - 33 **Sell your possessions, and give to the needy**. Provide yourselves with money-bags that do not grow old, with a **treasure in the heavens** that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For **where your treasure is, there will your heart be also**.
- c. Matthew 6:19-24 - 19 "**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**,

where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For **where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. So, **if your eye is healthy [single],** your whole body will be full of light, 23 **but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.** If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 **"No one can serve two masters,** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.**

- i. The word for a healthy eye in the King James version is translated as single. It means singly focused on the purposes of God with no self-serving motive or agenda.

Definition: Single. (Strong's G573-Greek: *haplous*.) Simple. Single. Whole. In which there is nothing complicated or confused.

- d. Jesus is coming soon. When He returns will you boast to Him of your earthly treasure when you have not heeded His commands?

C. The Parable of the Ten Minas/Talents

(Luke 19:11-27; similar to Matthew 25:14-30.)

1. Context:
 - a. Book of Matthew: Jesus sharing with His disciples about His return.
 - b. Book of Luke: Zacchaeus the Tax Collector received Jesus into his home for a meal. He promises to give to the poor and return funds to those he has defrauded. Jesus rejoices at the heart reflecting the truth of God's generous salvation.
 - i. Luke 19:8-10 - 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the **half of my goods I give to the poor.** And **if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.**" 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."
 - c. Luke 19:11 - 11 As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and **because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.**
 - i. They thought the Kingdom of God was going to come immediately to bring judgment on all sinners and all Gentile nations.
 - ii. Instead, Jesus was going to put His disciples to work.
2. Luke 19:12-27 - 12 He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13 **Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas,** and said to them, **'Engage in business until I come.'** 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' 15 When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. 16 The first came before him, saying, **'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.'** 17 And he said to him, **'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'** 18 And the second came, saying, **'Lord, your mina has made five minas.'** 19 And he said to him, **'And you are to be over five cities.'** 20 Then another came, saying, **'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'** 22 He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not

deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' 25 And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' 26 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"

- a. In this version, the King gave a total of ten minas to ten servants. One mina each. In the Matthew version some had more and others had less.
 - i. A mina was equal to approximately three months wages.
 - ii. In the Matthew version, talents are worth several years wages.
- b. The King supplied what was needed for the work to be done.
 - i. Note: There is nothing we have, either in skill, ability, capacity, possessions, or wealth that God did not give us.
- c. Engage in business: Doing the work of the Master, God.

Engage in Business. (Strong's G4231.) 1. To be occupied in anything. 2. To carry on a business. 3. To carry on the business of a banker or trader. 4. To busy oneself with, i.e. to trade or occupy.

- d. Rule over cities: Our productivity for God's Kingdom and purposes on earth in this life will determine our level of responsibility and reward in the world to come. We will give account to the Lord for what we have done with what He has given us.
 - i. Revelation 2:26-27 - 26 The one who conquers and **who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations**, 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father.

3. Post-Context:

- a. Book of Matthew: Separation of the sheep and the goats based on those who have cared for the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned.
- b. Book of Luke: Jesus' triumphal entry, weeping over Jerusalem for missing the time of their visitation because they failed to recognize the mercy of God out of their expectation and desire for God's judgment upon their enemies and all unrighteousness.

D. The Parable of the Good Samaritan

(Luke 10:25-37.)

1. Context: A lawyer challenged Jesus to know the way to eternal life. Jesus challenged him in return for his understanding of the Law. The lawyer gave the correct answer, the two great commandments: love God and love your neighbor. Jesus affirmed his answer, saying "Do this and you will live." Then, the lawyer asked: And who is my neighbor?
 - a. Luke 10:29 - 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "**And who is my neighbor?**"

2. Luke 10:30-37 - 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he **fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.** 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and **when he saw him, he had compassion.** 34 He went to him and **bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.** 35 And the next day he **took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'** 36 Which of these three, do you think, **proved to be a neighbor** to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "**The one who showed him mercy.**" And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."
 - a. The priest and Levite did not stop for the injured man but avoided him by crossing to the other side of the street.
 - b. The Samaritan attended to him, used his own animal to transport him, brought him to an inn and spent his own money, guaranteeing payment of anything more than that, to see that the man was nursed back to health.
 - i. A denarius was one day's wages.
 - c. Jesus' command is: Go and do likewise. This is the work of God: MERCY, compassion, and spending ourselves, our time, and our treasure for the poor and broken.
3. Post Context:
 - a. Martha and Mary: Martha is busy serving while Mary sits at Jesus' feet. God does not want us distracted by serving or substituting pure devotion with busyness. True service pours out from a heart of devotion and understanding of the teachings of Jesus.

E. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

(Luke 16:1-14.)

1. Context: Jesus told the parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son after being ridiculed for eating with sinners and tax collectors.
2. Luke 16:1-9 - 1 He also said to the disciples, "**There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.** 2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' 3 And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do, **so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.**' 5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, **'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'** 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, **'Take your bill, and write eighty.'** 8 The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. **For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.** 9 And I tell you, **make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.**

- a. This is NOT about good money management in the Babylonian system. This is about managing resources for the purposes of God – to make friends for Him for eternity.
 - b. In the context of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost Son, the emphasis is on the worth of a human life – more than that of a sheep or expensive coin. So much so that a loving Father is willing to forgive horrid offenses against him and against the Law of God in order to have his son restored to him.
 - c. The manager was wasting the rich man's possessions by keeping them all to himself rather than building relationships with the rich man's customers. He thought the rich man's priority was the possessions rather than the people.
 - d. The manager was commended for prioritizing the relationships by forgiving debts. He did it so that people would receive him into their houses.
 - e. God wants to be received into people's lives. Jesus IS the manager who went around forgiving debts and offenses against the Father to make friends for Himself for eternity. Rather than charging people for their offenses against the Law and keeping heaven all to Himself,
 - f. Sons of this world are more shrewd: business people developing a business spend lots of money networking, entertaining prospective customers and clients for the sake of building a relationship with them.
 - g. God wants us to use our money to make friends for Him – to network for His Kingdom. Money will eventually fail but these will be our friends in Heaven.
3. Post Context: Jesus continued the lesson.
- a. Luke 16:10-13 - 10 "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. 11 **If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?** 12 And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 **No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.**"
 - i. If we do not use earthly money for God's purposes in this world, how can we expect to run cities for God in the world to come or be trusted with an eternal inheritance?
 - ii. The goal cannot be money and God. Either we will hoard money like the dishonest manager, which God called a waste of His resources, or we will spend it for God and His purposes. We cannot serve for both reasons. They are in conflict with one another.

F. The Law & the Kingdom, Divorce and Remarriage

(Luke 16:15-18.)

- 1. Context: After the parable of the Shrewd Manager, the Pharisees scoffed at Jesus.
 - a. Luke 16:14 - 14 The Pharisees, **who were lovers of money**, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.

2. Luke 16:15-18 - 15 And he said to them, "You are those who **justify yourselves before men**, but God knows your hearts. For **what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God**. 16 The **Law and the Prophets** were until John; since then the **good news of the kingdom of God is preached**, and everyone forces his way into it. 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void. 18 **Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.**
 - a. The Pharisees loved money and position and status before men. Their hearts had gone the way of Babylon.
 - b. Law & Prophets vs. Kingdom: The Law required full payment for sins. In the Kingdom of God (and the New Covenant) God does not hold sins against us but forgives all our sins and remembers them no more. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.)
 - c. Jesus did not negate or abolish the Law by showing mercy.
 - d. It is spiritual adultery to be in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant at the same time. It does not work. Jesus did not abolish the Old Covenant. But in order to enter into the New Covenant, we must be completely dead to it and its requirements.
 - e. Romans 7:1-6 - 1 Or do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to those who know the law--that **the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives**? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. 4 **Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God**. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 **But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.**

G. The Parable of the Rich Man & Lazarus

(Luke 16:19-31.)

1. Context: Immediately following the rebuke of the Pharisees.
2. Luke 16:19-28, 30-31 - 19 "There was a **rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day**. 20 And at his gate was laid **a poor man named Lazarus**, covered with sores, 21 who **desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table**. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able,

and none may cross from there to us.' 27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to **send him to my father's house-- 28 for I have five brothers--so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.**' 29 But Abraham said, '**They have Moses and the Prophets**; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but **if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.**' 31 He said to him, '**If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.**'"

- a. The Rich Man (who has no name) had the finest clothes, and abundant food.
- b. In context of the Shrewd Manager "wasting" the goods of the owner, the Rich Man's wealth was wasted on him and his luxuries. His funds could have been used to care for Lazarus, the poor man at his gate who had no food, may not have had clothing, and had sores that needed treatment to stop the dogs licking them.
- c. The Rich Man was under the Law, calling Abraham his father. But in his wealth, he forgot God and did not obey the Law by extending mercy to Lazarus. Neglecting or disregarding the poor is disobedience to the Law of God.
- d. The Rich Man was regarded as disobedient to the Law and was sent to the place of torment. Lazarus received mercy from the Lord.
- e. If the Rich Man had understood the Law of Moses, he would have recognized the mercy of God as the true heart of the Lord towards His people, the poor, and all people. The Rich Man's brothers should also have understanding of God's mercy through the Law & Prophets. But they did not. Their hearts were hardened. They would not be convinced, even by resurrection.

H. The Rich Young Ruler

(Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:1-22; Luke 18:18-23.)

1. Context & Narrative: Immediately following Jesus saying that we must become like children to enter the Kingdom of God, a rich ruler came to Jesus to ask Him the way to eternal life.
 - a. Mark 10:17-22 - 17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "**Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?**" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" 20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 21 And **Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."** 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.
 - i. The young man was sincere and knelt before Jesus for instruction.
 - ii. Jesus would not allow anyone to call Him good. Yet, the Rich Ruler was "a good person" in his own sight because he claimed to have kept the commands of God.
 - iii. Jesus loved him.
 - iv. The requirements of following Jesus were more of a cost than he was willing to pay. Therefore, he went away sad.

2. Context continued:

- a. Mark 10:23-27 - 23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "**How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!**" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "**Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.**" 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."
- i. The disciples were amazed at his words because the kingdom of God is the opposite of what the man and the world consider valuable. It is also the opposite of what the Pharisees taught and demonstrated through their love of money and position.
 - ii. Camel through the eye of the needle is a figure of speech with possible meanings.
 01. A literal camel and a sewing needle. This is an impossible scenario.
 02. The Eye of the Needle was a very low and narrow city gate designed for keeping out invaders. Though possible, it would be very challenging for a tall and wide camel (and its rider) to pass through such a gate.
 03. "Camel" may have been misinterpreted in the original text because the word for "camel" and the word for "rope" are very similar. It is possible for a rope to pass through the eye of a sewing needle, but only if it is first unraveled to its threads.

3. Narrative continued:

- a. Mark 10:28-31 - 28 Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." 29 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,** 30 **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 eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."
- i. Jesus and the Gospel are worth giving everything for. Even leaving behind or giving away your entire earthly inheritance.
 - ii. You cannot outgive God.
 - iii. Receiving your return will be on God's time and in God's order.

Unit Seven: God's Way: Total Dependence & Outpoured Generosity

Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.

Luke 18:17

A. God's Way = Giving in Faith

1. Give in faith that God will provide for you. No fear of lack. No fear of zero.
 - a. Proverbs 3:9-10 - 9 **Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits** of all your produce; **10 then your barns will be filled with plenty**, and your vats will be bursting with wine.
2. Give in obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Always be listening, always be attentive to the slightest whisper, and always be willing to give whatever God tells you to give to whomever He tells you to give it to.
3. Lay up treasures in heaven for eternity, not on earth. Look for a city built by God.
 - a. If you give to receive any kind of pay, remuneration, recognition, or reward in this world, you have been paid on earth and you have been paid in full.
 - i. Carefully consider this if you are a pastor on salary or employed by a ministry. A laborer deserves their wages but you have been compensated for that work.
 - ii. We will receive a reward in heaven for labors we have not received remuneration for here on earth.
 - b. Kingdom living now. Faithfulness to God and His ways.
 - i. If we are faithful with a little, we will be faithful with much. If we are not faithful with earthly money, how can God trust us with eternal resources? (See Luke 16:10-11.)
 - ii. Heaven is run God's way and the world to come will be run by God's ways.
 - iii. If you are not living by God's way now, how can you expect to run a city in the world to come?
4. Give with childlike faith and dependence upon God for provision of your needs.
 - a. Luke 18:16-17 - 16 But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, **for to such belongs the kingdom of God.** 17 Truly, I say to you, **whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.**"
5. What you DO shows what you believe.
 - a. James 2:14-18 - 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 **If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,** 16 **and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?** 17 So also faith by itself, if it

does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**

- b. 1 John 3:16-18 - 16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But **if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?** 18 Little children, **let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**
- c. Common self-deceptions:
 - i. #1: "I have faith" spoken by people whose life, priorities, actions, and choices are conformed to the pattern of this world rather than the commands of Jesus.
 - ii. #2: "I am generous" spoken by people who are not even tithing, who do not give to the poor, who use a tip-chart, who calculate their "generosity," or expect repayment of some kind for everything they give or do in service. (Their repayment might come in the form of goods, services, favors, recognition, appreciation, etc.)
 - iii. #3: "I will work hard to make a lot of money so I can support Kingdom causes." It sounds good and seems right to a man but in the end, very FEW actually succeed in this endeavor. It is often a self-deceiving justification for selfish ambition. Most people who convince themselves of this are enticed by the ways of this world and obtaining luxuries for themselves along the way. See Soil #3.

B. God's Way = Give/Share ALL

1. True Godliness = God-likeness & Christlikeness.

- a. God's generosity is to do all the work and give it away for free. Consider Eden.
 - i. Note: He gave it away to people He knew in advance would abuse and misuse it.
- b. God's generosity is to pay the full cost for the total forgiveness of all of humanity's sins by giving the most precious thing to Him: His Son, Jesus. (John 3:16; Romans 8:32.)
 - i. Note: He gave it all, knowing that people would trample His grace and use it as a license for sin and lawlessness.
- c. Jesus' generosity was to lay down His life for people He came to save but who instead, killed and crucified Him.

2. Lower Laws of Giving.

- a. Tithing is for Training. Tithing is for Testing.
 - i. Giving 10% to God is the bare minimum of acknowledging that God is Creator of all and Provider of our life. To not tithe is to rob God. (See Malachi 3:8.)
 - ii. Technically, we are not under the Law and are not required to tithe. However, Jesus tithed. Plus, the apostle Paul said even though we are not under the Law, we do not nullify the Law but uphold it. (Romans 3:21.)
 - iii. Reminder: Centuries before the Law was given, Abraham and Jacob tithed out of gratitude and acknowledgement of God's provision for their lives.
 - iv. God invites testing Him through the tithe because He will prove His ability to provide abundantly.

- b. "Sowing & Reaping" is a lower spiritual law.
 - i. Sowing and Reaping is true and it does work. But the New Covenant is a higher Law: we reap where we have not sown because we receive it as a free gift by grace through faith because of the righteousness of Christ.
 - ii. "Seed-time and harvest" teaching is a twisting of Scripture for monetary gain.
 - 01. In its proper context the Scripture is about the earth yielding food for humans to eat. (Genesis 8:22.)
 - 02. Note: The seed Jesus sows is the Word of God, not money. (Luke 8:11.)
 - iii. Jesus tells us to give without expecting anything in return and to give in secret without a show or demanding recognition.
 - 01. Luke 6:35 - 35 But love your enemies, and **do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great**, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.
 - 02. Matthew 6:3-4 - 3 But when you **give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing**, 4 **so that your giving may be in secret**. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
3. Early church believers gave ALL and shared ALL with one another. They did not do it to get something back but because the nature of God and His abounding generosity had taken over their hearts. They laid up treasures in heaven as they awaited the return of Jesus to usher in the world to come where they would receive their eternal reward.
- a. The apostles left all and gave all to follow Jesus. They dropped their nets, left their businesses, and followed the One with eternal life.
 - b. There were no needy persons among God's people in the church of Acts. People sold what they had and gave to the apostles for distribution as any of them had need. It was Holy Spirit empowered fulfillment of the Law of God. (Acts 4:34-37.)
4. Giving confirms the genuineness of our faith, love, and obedience to the teachings of Jesus who said, "give to everyone who asks of you." (Matthew 5:42.) By this, we demonstrate our gratitude for His generosity towards us and God's likeness of generosity as His children.
- a. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 7-9 - 1 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, 2 for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and **their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity** on their part. 3 For **they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord**, 4 **begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints**-- 5 and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. ... 7 But as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you--**see that you excel in this act of grace also**. 8 I say this not as a command, but **to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine**. 9 For you know **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich**.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:12-14 - 12 For the ministry of this service [giving] is not only **supplying the needs of the saints** but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. 13 By their approval of this service, they will glorify God **because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution** for them and for all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you.

5. To quarrel with other believers about worldly possessions is a defeat for the Body of Christ and the purpose of God. It is also disobedient and contrary to the teachings of Jesus.
 - a. Matthew 5:40 - 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, **let him have your cloak as well.**
 - i. Giving your cloak to someone who took your tunic is the command of Jesus.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:7 - 7 To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. **Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?**
 - i. No lawsuits. Lawsuits are the way of this world.
 - ii. Letting yourself be wronged to demonstrate the kindness and mercy of God the way Jesus allowed Himself to be wronged for our benefit is the way of Christ.
 - iii. Note: We follow a crucified King. Take up your cross, follow Him, and FORGIVE at your own expense. Trust God to restore your losses to you.

6. We cannot outgive God. The more we give to God's purposes, the more God will enrich us and multiply us.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 9:6, 8-11 - 6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever **sows bountifully will also reap bountifully...** 8 And **God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.** 9 As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 **He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.** 11 **You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way,** which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.
 - b. Luke 6:37-38 - 37 "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 **give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."**
 - c. Proverbs 11:24-25 - 24 **One gives freely, yet grows all the richer;** another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. 25 **Whoever brings blessing will be enriched,** and one who waters will himself be watered.

C. Loose the Bonds for the Least of These.

1. God gives to everyone who asks of Him. ("Everyone who asks, receives." Matthew 7:8.) He commands us to do the same.
 - a. Luke 6:30-36 - 30 **Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.** 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. 32 If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And **if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.** 35 But love your enemies, and **do good, and lend, expecting nothing in**

return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, **for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.** 36 **Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.**

2. God cares for the lost and vulnerable and desires for us to do the same.
 - a. Isaiah 58:6-10 - 6 "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to **share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?** 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 **if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted**, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.
 - b. Matthew 25:34-46 - 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For **I was hungry** and you gave me food, **I was thirsty** and you gave me drink, **I was a stranger** and you welcomed me, 36 **I was naked** and you clothed me, **I was sick** and you visited me, **I was in prison** and you came to me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, **as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.**' 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For **I was hungry** and you gave me no food, **I was thirsty** and you gave me no drink, 43 **I was a stranger** and you did not welcome me, **naked** and you did not clothe me, **sick and in prison** and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' 45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, **as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.**' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."
3. Pay the full price for them to receive benefits they do not deserve, like Jesus paid for you to receive benefits that you do not deserve.
 - a. Luke 14:12-14 - 12 He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, **do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors**, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, **invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind**, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."
 - b. Proverbs 19:17 - 17 **Whoever is generous to the poor** lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.
 - c. Proverbs 29:7 NKJV - 7 **The righteous considers the cause of the poor**, But the wicked does not understand such knowledge.
 - d. Psalm 41:1-3 – 1 **Blessed is the one who considers the poor!** In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him; 2 the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;

you do not give him up to the will of his enemies. 3 The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health.

- e. Parable of the Good Samaritan: The Samaritan covered all of the injured man's expenses for as long as it took for him to recover.
4. Break your own bonds of hard-hearted stinginess and excuses. God gave you good things that you do not deserve. Even if you earned money, God gave you the ability to earn it.
- a. Proverbs 3:27-28 - 27 **Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due**, when it is in your power to do it. 28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"-when you have it with you.
 - b. Proverbs 18:23 - 23 The poor use entreaties, but **the rich answer roughly**.
 - c. Proverbs 19:6-7 - 6 **Many seek the favor of a generous man**, and everyone is a friend to a man who gives gifts. 7 **All a poor man's brothers hate him**; how much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues them with words, but does not have them.
 - d. Common Excuses:
 - i. #1: "I can't afford it."
 - 01. Truth: You can't afford not to give to what God prioritizes. Consider the Rich Man & Lazarus and where they ended.
 - ii. #2: "They are going to spend it on drugs"
 - 01. Truth: You are not responsible for what they do with it but you will give account to God for whether you gave it or not.
 - 02. Truth: There are many ways to give that do not involve cash. If you are willing and ask God, He will show you.
 - iii. #3: "They should get a job."
 - 01. Truth: There is often a lot more to the story than what meets the eye.

D. Support the Work of the Lord – Share in the Works of the Lord

- 1. Local Church/Congregation: those who care for the local body of Christ with the goal of having no poor among the local body of believers.
 - a. Acts 4:34-35 - 34 **There was not a needy person among them**, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and **it was distributed to each as any had need**.
 - b. Pay the salary of the pastor so that they can give their full attention to caring for the flock and those in need.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 9:13-14 - 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that **those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel**.
- 2. Ministries, Bible Teachers, Mentors: those who teach you the word of God or are serving the Lord in the nations to spread the Gospel.

- a. Materially support those who teach you the word of God and mentor you in the faith.
 - i. Galatians 6:6 - 6 Let the one who is taught the word **share all good things with the one who teaches.**
 - ii. It costs money to live, eat, and function, even if their ministry to you does not cost them anything.
 - iii. Amply supply your teachers and mentors so that they can freely focus on the spiritual work of the Word and prayer and not be distracted by money issues.

- b. Missionaries and God's workers/laborers with Christ-centered missions, as long as they are proclaiming Jesus Christ and a pure Gospel.
 - i. 3 John 1:5-8 - 5 Beloved, **it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers,** strangers as they are, 6 who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to **send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God.** 7 **For they have gone out for the sake of the name,** accepting nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore **we ought to support people like these,** that we may be fellow workers for the truth.
 - ii. This does not apply to social justice causes, Christ-less philanthropy, or politics.
 - 01. Jesus did not proclaim social justice, He proclaimed the Kingdom of God.
 - 02. The apostles did not proclaim social justice, they proclaimed Jesus as the Savior for sinners through repentance from sin.
 - iii. Do not share with false teachers/prophets who do not proclaim a pure Gospel or the real Jesus. If you do, you share in their work.
 - 01. 2 John 1:10-11 - 10 If anyone comes to you and **does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting,** 11 for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

- c. Giving to God's laborers is not a substitute for serving and fulfilling your own work for the Lord.
 - i. The story of David and his men sharing alike is not the same as financially supporting a ministry and being on the mission field with them.
 - ii. 200 of David's men were too exhausted to continue in battle, so only 400 went with him to defeat the Amalekites. When they brought back the spoil, the 400 did not want to share the plunder with those who had not fought but David ordered that everyone share the same. (1 Samuel 30.)
 - iii. This is only a valid explanation if you are exhausted from your own labors for God's Kingdom. But if you are called to the mission field and do not go in person yourself, your financial contributions will not be sufficient when you stand before Jesus to give account for whether you fulfilled your calling or not.

- 3. Be wise in examining how ministries and laborers handle money and live their lives.
 - a. Are they always taking offerings or asking for money? **Did Jesus do that?**
 - i. Are they always soliciting for funds?
 - ii. Are they always in need of money?
 - iii. Do they complain about lack of funds?

 - b. Are they playing on your emotions or faith to get money for themselves? **Did Jesus do that?**
 - i. By using graphic images or the poor, persecuted, or orphaned to stir up an emotional response or guilt in order to provoke you to give?
 - 01. If so, you are being manipulated.
 - ii. By using testimonies of healing, financial blessing, or supernatural works of God to prompt you to give in hope of the same result.
 - 01. If so, you are being manipulated.

- iii. By claiming or promising that your offerings to them will generate blessings for you. (i.e. "If you give... then God will...for you.")
 - 01. If so, you are being manipulated.
 - iv. Do they use a lot of hype and buzz words to stir you up to action?
 - 01. If so, you are being manipulated. The Holy Spirit does not hype.
- c. Do they charge money for spiritual services, training, mentoring, etc.? Is that good news to the poor? Did Jesus do that?
 - i. Teaching, training, conferences, mentoring services, etc.
 - 01. Though it is right to financially support teachers and mentors in the faith, their services should be given free of charge.
 - 02. Jesus said, "Freely you received, freely give."
 - ii. Ministry, healing, deliverance, prophecy, etc.
 - 01. These services must be given free of charge. To charge for them is evil.
 - 02. It is acceptable to give to a minister out of gratitude for these services. However, voluntary support should not resemble payment for services in any way. It is better to support their ministry at another time out of freewill and thankfulness.
 - 03. Example: Elisha refused payment for healing Naaman's leprosy. But Elisha's servant Gehazi followed Naaman to receive the payment. The leprosy then transferred to Gehazi for life. (See 2 Kings 5:15-27.)
 - 04. Example: Balaam was a prophet for profit, using the techniques of divination. (See Numbers 22-24; 2 Peter 2:15; Revelation 2:14.)
 - iii. Do people who pay more get more? Are there membership levels or access levels based on how much money is given? Are there VIP's based on money given?
 - 01. If Jesus chose disciples this way, He would never have chosen the twelve.
 - 02. The VIP's around Jesus were the poor, sinners, and prostitutes - the ones most grateful for their redemption. It was Pharisees who surrounded themselves with the rich and influential.
 - 03. This is not the way of God. This is a worldly approach to making a profit and surrounding themselves with wealthier and more influential people.
- d. Some acceptable charges for ministry materials or services which incur actual expenses.
 - i. Services and/or materials such as books for trainings, food, housing, etc.
 - 01. It is acceptable for a ministry to charge participants for these things.
 - 02. It is better for a ministry to give these things freely and trust God to support their labors and generosity.
 - ii. Non-mandatory, non-spiritual business services in which there is a fair exchange of goods and services for pay. (i.e. Coffee shop, bookshop, publishing, etc.)
 - 01. It is acceptable for a ministry to charge participants for these things because there are real costs, and these things are optional. They are not vital to a person's spiritual development.
 - 02. It is good for a poor believer who desires these things to exercise faith and watch God provide for them.
- e. Do they receive money from unbelievers or demand pay for the preaching of the Gospel? (See Unit Eight.)
 - i. Peter and most of the other apostles received support from the churches who were primarily of Jewish descent and were familiar with tithing, offerings, and supporting God's laborers.

- ii. Paul refused to receive support from unbelievers and new believers in new churches. He did not want matters of money to be confused with the Gospel. But he gladly received support from churches he had already established in support of his labors.
 - iii. How can anyone expect an unbeliever to believe their proclamation of the sufficiency of God if they are soliciting the unbeliever for money?
- f. Is money the primary topic/focus of conversation, preaching, or teaching?
 - i. Do they present money as evidence of the blessing of God?
 - ii. Do they present money or worldly wealth as the goal of the Christian life?
 - iii. Is the motivation of their teaching for you to be rich and have the things you want or for you to become like Jesus and live the life God wants for you?
 - iv. Do they exalt the things of Babylon or the teachings of Jesus who was born in a manger and had no place to lay His head? (Luke 9:58.)
 - v. Do they speak of sacrificial living for Jesus, or do they only speak of sacrificial giving when it comes to you giving to their ministry?
- g. Does the ministry pay large salaries?
 - i. Do their leaders live humbly or in luxury?
- h. Does the ministry provide for the poor among their own?
 - i. A mega-church with a famous pastor but mini benevolence department has missed the purpose of the gathering of believers.
- i. Does the ministry provide for the spread of the Gospel?
 - i. A mega-church with a famous pastor and no missions or missionaries has missed the call of Jesus.

Unit Eight: Ministry & Money

For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop.

1 Corinthians 9:9-10

A. Reminder: Jesus' Example

1. Unit 2, Point E.3: Jesus' Example of Trusting God's Abundance for All His Needs.

B. The Twelve

1. The twelve apostles left everything to follow Jesus, travel with Him, and be His disciples.
 - a. Matthew 4:18-22 - 18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 **Immediately they left their nets and followed him.** 21 And going on from there 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. 22 **Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.**
 - b. Matthew 9:9 - 9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." **And he rose and followed him.**
2. The twelve were sent out by Jesus with nothing. Later, they were permitted to bring their things.
 - a. Matthew 10:9-10 - 9 **Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff,** for the laborer deserves his food.
 - i. This was the time for them to learn to rely on God and trust in His sufficiency.
 - ii. This forced them to receive hospitality and stay in places where they would proclaim the Kingdom of God rather than hide in a hotel room that they paid for.
 - b. Luke 22:35-36 - 35 And he said to them, "**When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?**" They said, "**Nothing.**" 36 He said to them, "**But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack.** And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one."
 - i. This allowed them to be generous as they went out and to stay away for longer periods of time - whatever God might require of them for the preaching of the Gospel.

C. Example: Paul & Barnabas. Provided for Their Own Needs through Labor and Support from Other Believers.

1. To the Ephesian elders.
 - a. Acts 20:33-35 NIV - 33 **I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.** 34 You yourselves know that **these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.** 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
2. To the Thessalonians.
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 2:5-9 - 5 For **we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed**--God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, **like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.** 8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, **we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves,** because you had become very dear to us. 9 For you remember, brothers, **our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,** while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.
3. At Corinth, Paul made tents in order to provide for his ministry and not mix the message of the Gospel with solicitation for money. It is part of how he distinguished himself from false teachers.
 - a. Acts 18:1-5 NIV - 1 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and **because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.** 4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5 **When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching,** testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - i. Paul always preached to the Jews first in every city. When the Jews rejected the Gospel message, he moved on to proclaim the Kingdom to Gentiles.
 - ii. As soon as he received offerings from other churches, he stopped making tents in order to give his full attention to preaching the Gospel.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:7-15 - 7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because **I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?** 8 I robbed **other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.** 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for **the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need.** So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! 12 **And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do.** 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.
 - i. He preached the Gospel free of charge. He supplied and supported his own needs and was not a burden to anyone.

- ii. He refused to budge in this in order to create a distinguished contrast between his approach and the ways of the false teachers who proclaimed the gospel for gain.
- 4. Like Jesus, Paul's ministry was supported by wealthy individuals who gave freewill offerings to support his work.
 - a. Lydia in Philippi.
 - i. Acts 16:14-15 - 14 One who heard us was **a woman named Lydia**, from the city of Thyatira, **a seller of purple goods**, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, **come to my house and stay.**" And she prevailed upon us.
 - 01. Purple goods were very expensive and indicate that she must have been a wealthy woman.
 - b. Phoebe.
 - i. Romans 16:1-2 - 1 I commend to you **our sister Phoebe**, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for **she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.**
 - 01. Pheobe financially supported many different workers doing God's work.
 - c. Prominent members of society from Thessalonica and Berea.
 - i. Acts 17:4, 12 - 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks **and not a few of the leading women.** ... 12 Many of them therefore believed, with **not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.**

D. Example: Peter & the Other Apostles. Provided for Out of Tithes and Offerings.

- 1. Peter, James, Jude, and the other apostles were provided for by the offerings of the church. Paul explains this by stating that he could do the same to the Corinthians but refused to for their sake while he was ministering to them.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 9:4-18 - 4 Do we not have the right to eat and drink? 5 Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, **as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?** 6 Or is it **only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living?** 7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? 8 Do I say these things on human authority? **Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain."** Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. 11 **If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?** 12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? **Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.** 13 Do you not know that **those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?** 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that **those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.** 15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing

these things to secure any such provision. For **I would rather die than have anyone deprive me of my ground for boasting.** 16 For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 **For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship.** 18 What then is my reward? That in my preaching **I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.**

- i. The other apostles ministered primarily to Jewish converts who already knew the Law of Moses and were familiar with tithing, offerings, and giving to the work of the Lord. This would not cause confusion for them in matters of the Gospel and money.
- ii. Paul could have made use of these rights but refused to do so because he was focused on his eternal reward – treasures in heaven – by serving for free.

E. Show No Favoritism to the Rich or to the Poor.

1. Jesus dined with the poor, and with sinners. He also dined with the wealthy, with Pharisees, and with Tax Collectors. Jesus showed no partiality in whom He ministered to.
2. Showing preference to the rich or to the poor is a sin. Accepting bribes is evil.
 - a. James 2:1-9 - 1 My brothers, **show no partiality** as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and **if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?** 5 Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? 8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But **if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.**
 - b. Leviticus 19:15 - 15 "You shall do no injustice in court. **You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great,** but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.
 - c. Deuteronomy 1:17a - 17 **You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone,** for the judgment is God's.
 - d. Deuteronomy 16:19 - 19 You shall not pervert justice. **You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous.**

F. NOT Turning God's House into a Marketplace. NOT Worldly Methods of Fundraising.

1. Background information about the purpose of God's Temple.

- a. The Temple in Jerusalem was the place where God dwelt among His people, Israel. God's presence was there, and it was the only place on earth that He received proper offerings according to the Law of Moses. This was supposed to be a light and a witness to the rest of the world, drawing the nations to worship the God of Israel.
 - b. When Solomon dedicated the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, the only place on earth where He chose for sacrifices to be offered to Him, Solomon prayed and asked God to answer any request of any Gentiles who came to the Temple to seek the God of Israel so that they could come to know the true God, Maker of Heaven and Earth.
 - i. 1 Kings 8:41-43 - 41 "Likewise, **when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake** 42 (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), **when he comes and prays toward this house,** 43 **hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you,** as do your people Israel, and **that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name.**
 - ii. Isaiah 56:6-7 NIV - 6 **And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD** to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant-- 7 **these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer.** Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; **for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."**
 - c. In the centuries before the arrival of Jesus, the Sadducees had majority control of the Sanhedrin (the high ruling council of the Jews) and the Temple. Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, only believed the writings of Moses as Scripture, and did not believe in the supernatural (or angels.) Therefore, their focus was on the things of this world, prospering in this world, and making the best life possible in this world because they had lost their focus on eternal life.
 - i. Note: Pharisees believed in eternal life, the resurrection, the supernatural, and in maintaining strict codes of holiness in order to be worthy to attain the resurrection and the eternal life.
 - d. The Sanhedrin (ruled by Sadducees) considered that they were missing out on revenue opportunities by keeping Jerusalem so holy and not making it appealing for Gentile trade routes to pass through the city. Therefore, they compromised with Hellenization of Jerusalem, allowing Greek culture to permeate the city, including a nude gymnasium and other Greek cultural attractions for traders going passing through the Mediterranean region.
2. Jesus was zealously NOT in agreement with the choices to make the Temple more worldly. The place purposed by God to draw the nations into true worship of the true God was instead lowered to a tourist attraction. His name was degraded to something that could be bought and paid for, just like offerings to all the pagan gods.
 - a. John 2:13-16 - 13 The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making **a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple,** with the sheep and oxen. And **he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables.** 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "**Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.**"

- b. Mark 11:15-17 - 15 And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and **began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.** 16 And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 And he was teaching them and saying to them, "**Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers.**"
 - i. Jesus is quoting/referencing the book of Jeremiah from a passage about how the Jews at that time were trusting in the Temple as their security, even though they had defiled it with worldliness and abominations. The Temple in that day was destroyed shortly after Jeremiah's prophecy.
 - ii. Jeremiah 7:11 - 11 **Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers** in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD.
3. Compromising with the culture to be more appealing to unbelievers is a slippery slope. It quickly leads ministries and churches away from the Lord and the holiness and devotion He deserves.
 - a. Jesus did not come as a motivational speaker but as a Savior for sinners who need to repent.
 4. Moreover, using fundraising methods or techniques of this world is not Biblical, its Babylon.
 - a. Business strategies, unless specifically led by the Lord, are the ways of this world. If it was not initiated by God, it will not be sustained by God. It may prosper in the short term as it is sustained by man but in the end, it will fall and be judged.
 - b. Newsletter solicitations, tantalizing with testimonies, pulling on emotions, promising blessings, etc. is of this world and of the devil.

G. False Teachers Prey Upon the Vulnerable as an Opportunity for Greed.

1. Reminder: the serpent in the Garden of Eden. His tactics have not changed much.
 - a. God had already provided everything they could ever possibly need, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was desirable to make one prosperous. (See Unit 1.)
 - b. God had already made Adam & Eve like Himself, but the serpent told them that eating the tree would make them like God.
 - c. God has already given us everything we could ever possibly need through faith in Jesus Christ, but false teachers try to convince us to use alternative doctrine and/or techniques to attain blessing from God.
2. False teachers prey on the vulnerable and think proclaiming the Gospel is a means of gain.
 - a. 2 Peter 2:12-19 - 12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, 13 suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. **They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed.** Accursed children! 15

Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. **They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing**, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. 17 These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. 18 For, speaking loud boasts of folly, **they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error**. 19 **They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption**. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

- i. They target new or worldly/carnal believers who have not yet crucified their soulish desires for worldly things. They promise them the fulfillment of their lusts through the hope of gain or wealth as their freedom.
- b. 1 Timothy 6:3-8 - 3 If anyone **teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness**, 4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, **imagining that godliness is a means of gain**. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have **food and clothing, with these we will be content**.
 - i. Teaching doctrine contrary to the life and teachings of Jesus is an indication that something is off about the motives and insights of the teacher. Though they may boast in great knowledge or "new revelation," they are ignorant and foolish.
 - ii. If they are using God to make money for themselves, they are depraved.
 - iii. A minister of God should be humble and content with what they have, even if it is very little. They should demonstrate faith and faithfulness in little things and big things.
- c. Titus 1:11 - 11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by **teaching for shameful gain** what they ought not to teach.
 - i. If they pervert the teaching of God, it is to gain a following for themselves, not a following for Jesus. (See Galatians 4:17.)

3. True and False Prophets in the Didache.

- a. In the early church, there was a book called the Didache² which written in the first century and was a record of the teachings of the apostles in that day.
- b. *Didache - Section 11: 1 Whosoever then comes and teaches you all these things aforesaid, receive him. 2. But if the teacher himself be perverted and teach another doctrine to destroy these things, do not listen to him, but if his teaching be for the increase of righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. 3. And concerning the Apostles and Prophets, act thus according to the ordinance of the Gospel. 4. Let every Apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord, 5. **But let him not stay more than one day, or if need be a second as well; but if he stay three days, he is a false prophet**. 6. And when an Apostle goes forth **let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night's lodging; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet**. 7. Do not test or examine any prophet who is speaking in a spirit, "for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven." 8. **But not everyone who speaks in a spirit is a prophet, except he have the behaviour of the Lord. From his behaviour, then, the false prophet and the true prophet shall be known**. 9. And no*

² Didache passages are italicized so as not to be confused with Scripture.

prophet who orders a meal in a spirit shall eat of it: otherwise he is a false prophet. 10. And **every prophet who teaches truth, if he do not what he teaches, is a false prophet.** 11. But no prophet who has been tried and is genuine, though he enact a worldly mystery of the Church, if he teach not others to do what he does himself, shall be judged by you: for he has his judgment with God, for so also did the prophets of old. 12. But **whosoever shall say in a spirit "Give me money, or something else," you shall not listen to him; but if he tell you to give on behalf of others in want, let none judge him.**

- c. Didache - Section 12: 1. Let everyone who "comes in the Name of the Lord" be received; but when you have tested him you shall know him, for you shall have understanding of true and false. 2. If he who comes is a traveller, help him as much as you can, but he shall not remain with you more than two days, or, if need be, three. 3. And if he wishes to settle among you and has a craft, let him work for his bread. 4. **But if he has no craft provide for him according to your understanding, so that no man shall live among you in idleness because he is a Christian.** 5. **But if he will not do so, he is making traffic of Christ; beware of such.**
 - d. Didache - Section 13: 1. But **every true prophet who wishes to settle among you is "worthy of his food."** 2. Likewise **a true teacher is himself worthy, like the workman, of his food.** 3. Therefore thou shalt take the firstfruit of the produce of the winepress and of the threshing floor and of oxen and sheep, and shalt give them as the firstfruits to the prophets, for they are your high priests. 4. **But if you have not a prophet, give to the poor.** 5. If thou makest bread, take the firstfruits, and give it according to the commandment. 6. Likewise when thou openest **a jar of wine or oil, give the firstfruits to the prophets.** 7. **Of money also and clothes, and of all your possessions, take the firstfruits, as it seem best to you, and give according to the commandment.**
4. Old Testament examples of teachers, priests, and prophets greedy for gain.
- a. Jeremiah 6:13-14 - 13 "For from the least to the greatest of them, **everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.** 14 They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.
 - i. They proclaimed a soothing and popular message to keep funds rolling.
 - b. Ezekiel 34:2-4 - 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, **shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? 3 You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep.** 4 The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them.
 - i. They used the flock to care for themselves rather than using/spending themselves to care for the flock.
 - c. Micah 3:9-11 - 9 Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who detest justice and make crooked all that is straight, 10 who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. 11 Its heads **give judgment for a bribe; its priests teach for a price; its prophets practice divination for money;** yet they lean on the LORD and say, "Is not the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us."
 - i. They built themselves up through error and injustice. They perverted the word of the Lord for a profit, using His name, and claiming to speak for God.

5. Self-promotion is of the devil. It is the way of Babylon. God's promotion comes to those who submit themselves to Him and His ways.
 - a. Isaiah 14:13-14 - 13 You said in your heart, '**I will ascend** to heaven; above the stars of God **I will set my throne** on high; **I will sit on the mount** of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 **I will ascend** above the heights of the clouds; **I will make myself** like the Most High.'
 - b. Philippians 2:3-11 - 3 **Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit**, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others**. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, **though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped**, 7 **but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he **humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross**. 9 **Therefore God has highly exalted him** and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
6. Nevertheless, whether proclaimed out of selfish ambition or genuine motive, rejoice that the Gospel is proclaimed.
 - a. Philippians 1:15-18 - 15 **Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry**, but others from good will. 16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former **proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely** but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. 18 What then? Only that **in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice**. Yes, and I will rejoice...



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