

14 July 2013

“Money, Money, Money, must be funny, in the rich man’s world”
(Pt1 Money & riches)

This is a new study on the topic of money and riches, and will include an introduction and two points:- (1) the love of money is the root of all evil, and (2) there is uncertainty in riches.

Before we begin let us consider the meaning of *money*. In the Scriptures money is silver shekels used to purchase goods from merchants (see Gen.23: 16), or possessions from others like lands, where that which is being purchased has a value (see 1Kgs 21:2). There are five Greek words that are translated into *money* in the English text of the 1611 Authorised Bible. They include:- (i) *argurion* which is also translated silver pieces or pieces of silver, and (ii) *kerma* is only translated money, and (iii) *nomisma* is only translated money, and (iv) *chalkos* is also translated brass, and (v) *chrema* is also translated riches. The Oxford dictionary provides a meaning that includes; “(1) current coin, coin & promissory documents...coin as referenced to the purchasing power...(2) wealth.”

So in the Scriptures money includes precious metals (see Dan.11: 8) like silver and perhaps gold (2Kg.12: 13) that can be used to purchase possessions which amount to riches and wealth.

Having established a meaning let us consider in a little more detail our two points:-

1. The Love of Money is the root of *all* evil

1Tim 6:10 *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after; they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

The Greek word for ‘love of money’ is from the root *phileo* (one of the Greek words for love) and is the word *philarguria* which means ‘avarice’ or ‘fond of silver’, hence love of money. And the word avarice in the Oxford dictionary means “extreme greed for wealth or material gain.” And it is the *love of money*, not money itself, it is the lust of money, the extreme greed that is the root of ALL evil.

And believers are to *hate* evil - Ps.97: 10, *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil* (see also Amos 5: 15).

And believers are to *love* the Lord their God with all their heart, soul and might (see Deut.5: 4).

And no man can *love* both the Lord and money (see Mt 6:24 and Lk.16: 13).

Given that we are to love God with *all* our heart, our soul and might, it is likely that when a person loves money, has a fondness for it, they will do so with *all* their heart. Remember the verse that encourages us *not* to lay up treasures here on earth, but in heaven? It is Matt.6: 19 and the proceeding verses teach that where your treasure is, there is your heart also (see verse 21).

Do you lay up your treasure, wealth, your riches in heaven or on earth?

You will either love one or the other, earthly riches or heavenly riches, for you cannot serve both God and mammon!

You can tell where a man’s heart is, with what he does with his money!

Does he buy himself things, possessions? Does he buy houses, businesses to make more money? Or does he do what the Lord Jesus said to the rich man? *Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me* (see Matt.19: 21). What did the rich man do? He was sorrowful because he had *many* possessions. Hence why Jesus said it was so difficult for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of heaven (verse 23). You cannot serve God and mammon! And the love of mammon is the root of all evil!

How many murders are committed for gold bars or money? How many people spend their whole lives getting to the top of their careers to earn more and more and more money so they can have more and more possessions?

How many bosses do you know who put their *love of money* ahead of their staff (those who are supposed to be making their money)?

What happens after a rich relative dies, or any relative in the family? The worst in people comes out, they show their true colours, as those who love money, start jostling their way to the top of the cue, for what is going to be dished out. And when you love money and not God, you don’t mind whom you trample on. People who previously have been ‘good’ or ‘nice’ people in the world, can often turn into greedy little monsters when someone in their family dies. Why? Because of the *love of money*, because those that are left behind are under the impression that their family member just deceased has laid up their wealth in houses, land and boats, or as the Scriptures say, *the fool and brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue forever; and their dwelling places to all generations* (see Ps.49: 10, 11).

One biblical example of what evil men will do for money is in Lk.22: 5, where the chief priests covenanted with Judas to give him money to betray the Lord falsely. How could anyone covenant for money to betray the one who in Himself was no sin? Verse 3 points out that Satan (evil personified) entered into him, which you would expect to happen for someone to betray the Son of God. And what sealed the covenant? Money, which when loved is the root

of all evil! One biblical remedy for ensuring that our hearts do not thirst for money, lust after or love money, is to give away our riches. We previously mentioned the Lord Jesus required the rich man to sell his possessions and give them to the poor (see Matt.19: 21, and we also include Lk.18: 22 and Mk.10: 21). And in the early church they chose to sell all their possessions, and pool their money together (see Acts 4: 32-37). In the early church example we saw that Satan tempted some who sold their possessions to keep back part of the price for themselves (see 5: 1, 2). It appears that for the Biblical examples at least, whenever people are tempted to lust after or love money, Satan has tempted them in their hearts.

I know brethren that have been millionaires and lost it all overnight with not a thought for what they had and then lost. Such a believer can say, that they know what it means not to be controlled, manipulated by the love of money. In their situation, they proved that money had no hold on them. What have *you* done to prove to yourself that money has no hold on *you*?

Let us pray for each other that our hearts be *not* tempted to thirst after money, as we are encouraged to thirst after the Lord (see Ps.42: 2, 143: 6 & Jn.7: 37), and let us pray for our brethren, and ourselves that our hearts would *not* love money, as we are asked to love the Lord. For the *love of money is* the root of all evil.

2. There is uncertainty in riches

1Tim 6:17 *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*

A rich person has either inherited their millions, worked hard for their riches or stolen from the poor or wealthy. The Scriptures say that a man who oppresses the poor to become rich shall want (see Prov.13: 7). And the Scriptures also say it is harder for a rich man to get saved than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (see Matt.19: 24). Therefore, even if a man has not gotten his riches by oppressing the poor, or whether he has worked hard or he has inherited it, he will find it exceptionally hard to stop lusting after money, stop loving riches and turn and love the Lord Jesus Christ with his whole heart and soul, even though there is NO certainty in his riches (see also Ps.49: 6, 53: 7, 62: 10 and Prov.11: 28), as there *is* in *Christ* (see 2Cor.1: 9). The Scriptures not only teach the uncertainty of placing our hope in wealth and riches, but also that money *faileth* (see Gen 47:15, 16, 18). That's right, money has failed before and it in its current form of paper and coins will fail again.

How many people lost money in the stock exchange crash of 87?

How many people have lost their life savings by investing it in financial institutions who then go bankrupt?

What about those people who have their money in banks that fail like the 15 that have had Receivers appointed in the USA in 2013?

What do we say to the rich? What do we say to those who lust after, or love money? *Be not highminded and trust not in uncertain riches.* You think that land and buildings, or gold and silver (as precious stones), are more stable and reliable to hold their value than paper money being stored in the bank?

The scriptures do not make that distinction? But rather they say, "nor trust in uncertain riches." So there is day to day uncertainty over the reliability of money that we use to buy and sell, and based on the current economic climate in Greece and parts of Europe there is uncertainty in putting money in banks, which humanly speaking are supposed to be safe. Then you have the uncertainty with any other riches, like land and houses that we cannot take with us when we go, such that if people in this life-time buy 1 house a year for their retirement, so they feel safe and provided for in their retirement, can they trust in those possessions? What if the house market slumps or the country enters another great depression, or the unsaved man with his 15 houses gets hit by a truck and ends up in hell. Them trusting in their possessions, their riches has meant nothing, accept uncertainty!

My boss has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in developing a new LED street light fitting. The only reason he has done that is in the hope, in trusting that he will make a lot of money. One of my customers the other day, after seeing the fitting, said, this will make a lot of money for your company. I told my boss and his eyes lighted up and he said, "good"! That's all that matters to him, not the people in the company, nor the customers but the money he can make on the way.

But there is uncertainty in riches, just as there is in trying to grow your money in a bank. In this day and age we call it risk. There is a risk that the fitting may not sell, the economy dries up and councils have no money to spend, or any of half a dozen things could happen that are risks to his investment. But in the world, people accept that risk, in the hope of making a gain, increasing their riches. The Scriptures, as we have already seen, say that the love of riches, the desire to get more wealth is the root of evil and in this point we have identified the uncertainty in those riches, regardless of what they consist off.

One thing each of us can do is to buy a couple of hundred Chick tracts, titled "How to get rich (and keep it)" and hand them out to the lost. I have found that most people are willing to read something with such a title which says something about their inner desire to want more riches, whether they know they want them or not.

Let us pray for those who put their trust in uncertain riches and not in the Lord Jesus Christ, and also for our brethren who struggle with lusting after money, possessions and the accumulation of wealth. For there is only *uncertainty* in riches.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our first study on the topic of money, we have covered two points:- (1) the love of money is the root of all evil, and (2) there is uncertainty in riches.