



by Evangelist Van Billingsley

*“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:”
— Proverbs 3:9*

We often emphasize the tithe that belongs to the Lord, and many times we feel we’ve sufficiently honoured God when we tithe. Those are the firstfruits of our increase referred to in this passage, but before that phrase, this verse commands us to “Honour the LORD with thy substance.” This includes all that God has allowed us to possess! In this so-called “economic crisis” we should realize as Christians the importance of honouring God with all we have. In this article we’ll look at the Biblical perspective of money and how this relates to the present economy.

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It seems the prominent issue in the minds of Americans, and no doubt around the world, over the past several months has been the economy. I probably would never write about the economy except were it for the Biblical relevance. Our English Bible uses the word “money” 125 times, and other passages dealing with financial issues are virtually countless.

We can only discuss a few of these passages in this text. The first passage, I Kings 5:26, is the first occurrence listed in the concordance of my Scofield Bible. In this passage Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, seeks to gain profit after Naaman is healed of leprosy. When Elisha confronted Gehazi with his deeds, he said, “Went not mine heart with thee, when the

man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money?" The answer to this question is obvious when Gehazi is judged with the leprosy of Naaman for the rest of his days.

Gehazi's sin involved his attempt to obtain money, but the attempt to use money for power can be an evil as well. We see an example of this in Acts chapter eight when a sorcerer named Simon had professed salvation and began to follow the apostles. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:18-20). Simon, who shows all the signs of one seeking religion without repentance, thought his money could give him undue power.

The final verse in scripture using the word "money" gives a summation of these Biblical

truths as it says "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" (1 Timothy 6:10). The context of this passage is instruction and guidelines to the man of God. Five other passages command that the man of God not serve for the sake of "filthy lucre." We must be careful in the ministry that we follow the will of God and not just seek a "position" with a salary package to climb the "ministry ladder." It brought great peace when God gave me understanding that sometimes His will for one may be solid financial standing in their ministry while another wonders from whence God will meet their next need. Often the one with the solid financial situation may face other difficulties unknown to the other. The importance is that we each follow God and honour His Word in all things.

I have very little understanding of economics, but there are a few things I know to be true. The situation with the world economy

is the direct result of a world operating contrary to the Word of God. At the climax of the US election process, when the "economic meltdown" became the center focus, one scenario played out over and over. One party would blame the other party and the blame would be thrown back leading to someone saying, "There's plenty of blame to go around." The media and especially the opposition of the outgoing administration blames it all on the failed economic policies of that administration. We should not forget that just one year earlier, almost to the date, the stock market hit the all time record high and kept climbing into uncharted territory.

I believe there is one factor that was the one cause for the collapse. Yes, there were loans that should not have been made, and there were government socialist programs that fueled that situation. There were issues of regulation, whether too much or too little. There was a lot going on, so much that the most exalted economists can come to no consensus as to what went wrong. The fact is, I believe many unpaid loans were

given to people who believed they could pay them, and so did the banks who issued the loans. Most all of these cases were those trying to live above their means, and many would have failed, but never all at one time so everyone thought! What was the "straw that broke the camel's back?" To rephrase a quote from another past president, "It's the oil, stupid!" I remember about two years ago repeatedly saying, "If something is not done about oil and gas prices, the US and even the world economy was eventually going to collapse!" Masses of working people began putting money budgeted for loan payments into their fuel tanks to get to work and back. Then prices began rising on necessary products because the price to ship everything soared. Then masses began cutting expenses causing a decline in sales across the board. This meant even less money and more layoffs or closings for more businesses and people who were spending more to drive and heat homes, and the cycle goes on. Nothing else could possibly happen but a financial meltdown, and why?

-- "Money" by Evangelist Van Billingsley --

Because a lot of people who do not like us at all said they would limit the oil supplies and raise their profit to their countries, and they did so with the cooperation of a lot of greedy Americans!

The underlying problem with all this goes back to the Word of God. "The love of money is the root of all evil." This is greed. It applies to those who had to have homes above their means and to those who had to get more for their oil. Our entire society from the socialist liberals and secular humanists to many in the gospel ministry are far from Biblical principles about material things. Something is wrong when the wealthiest citizens are those in the

entertainment industry, whether that be music, movies, sports or electronics. We think we have to have more and more and that we deserve better and better. This is greed, this is the love of money, and this is evil! This evil has not only led to this economic melt-down, but may very well lead to complete Socialism in our own country.

We should also remember that the great tribulation will be ushered in by economic doom. This could very well be what is in play. For the child of God, this means rapture and resurrection to eternal life in glory, but it also means a final deadline to winning the lost and our loved ones.

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