

Let's Talk Money

March 10, 2019 | Pastor Barry Buzzza

Big Idea: Although we are not seduced by the Canaanite gods, Molech, Chemosh and Baal, we are in grave danger of being fooled by the subtle lies of the Babylonian god, Mammon, who whispers to us, *“more money will make me more happy”*

Scripture: *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and (Mammon) wealth.*

Matthew 6:24 NASB

The **Definition of Tithe** in the Old Testament is simply the first one-tenth of all of our income. The first instance of **tithing** is found in Genesis 14:18-20, with Abraham giving a tenth of his possessions to Melchizedek, the mysterious King of Salem. ... In giving the **tithe**, Abraham simply acknowledged that everything he had, belonged to God.

Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Deuteronomy 10:14 NASB ... for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains.

1 Corinthians 10:26 NASB

Our study of Joshua provides a telling illustration of the Principle of the tithe.

The first city that God gave to the children of Israel, after 40 years in the Wilderness, was Jericho. It was a walled city just inside the border of the land which God had promised

to Abraham and his family. The plan of attack that God gave to Joshua was as follows.

Now Jericho was shut up inside and outside because of the people of Israel. None went out, and none came in. And the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valour. You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus, shall you do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. And when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, when you hear the sound of the trumpet, then all the people shall shout with a great shout, and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people shall go up, everyone straight before him."

Joshua 6:1-5 ESV

There were several very important lessons to be learned from the Battle of Jericho; one of them was about our income. Normally, in ancient wars, the “booty” was to go to the warriors and their families as their pay, but in this first of ten battles, the “booty”, which was their tithe, was to be set apart wholly for God. All the valuables were “Devoted to destruction”. The Hebrew Word was “Cherem”- something banned; devoted to destruction. If they were to take it for themselves, it would bring ultimate destruction.

Taking the tithe from God sets us up for ultimate loss

*But you, keep yourselves from the things (Cherem) **devoted to destruction**, lest when you have devoted them, you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon*

it. But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.” Joshua 6:18-19 ESV

Sadly, a soldier named Achan, “Trouble”, didn’t believe God meant what he said, and after their attack on Jericho, he secretly stole some clothes, gold and silver, worth about four years’ income. No one knew what he had done, but he had taken what belonged to God.

The “trouble”, that followed, caused Achan and his family their lives. Israel was sorely defeated in their second battle with Ai and lost 37 men. Joshua was deeply grieved, and didn’t understand what had happened, but God explained to him that Achan had stolen from the tithe, which belonged solely to God.

God revealed who the thief was, and under pressure, Achan confessed.

*And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: **when I saw** among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, **then I coveted them** (that was the seduction of Mammon) **and I took them**. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”* Joshua 7:20-21 ESV

The blessings follow the tithe

After it was paid back, Ai was defeated, and the “booty” was given to the soldiers. The lesson was self-evident. As Malachi later explained, **when we take what rightfully belongs to God, we move out of his protection and promise of blessing; but**

when we return to God what is his, then we are protected from our enemies, and are promised by God both, to be blessed beyond what we give, and also to be a blessing to those around us.

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts.

But you say, 'How shall we return?'

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me.

But you say, 'How have we robbed you?'

In your tithes and contributions.

You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.

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. 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. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:7-11