



# Managing GOD's Money

## Theme for August: Choices

*Life is about choices. Often unconsciously we choose between important matters such as working rather than loafing, eating instead of starving, sleeping rather than staying awake. Nobody tells us which to choose because these responses either are inherent or come by experience. Not so with other choices where ignorance and cowardice often hold us back.*

*This month we will look at some choices that result from inaction:*



*Heaven or Hell: Doing nothing is a powerful decision*

*Truth or Tolerance: The high ground or the easy way out*

*Success or Failure: How high must I reach*

*Christianity or Religion: The Person or the rules*

## Topic for July 15-21: Rich Man Poor Man - Who Will Inherit The Kingdom



### Matthew 19:23-24

And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

**B**efore concluding Jesus is against rich people, let's review the setting for His remarks. A rich man comes to Jesus and asks, *Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?* First, Jesus tells Him only God is good. Then He present the impossible word picture.

Don't miss Jesus' first comment. Often people speak about those who are *good*. Notice when someone in a quiet neighborhood does something bad, usually neighbors express disbelief because they thought the offending person was *good*.

But Jesus debunks this view and tells us clearly only God is good; not one other person is good—believer or unbeliever. Hard to accept, but it's what the Word says.

Continuing, Jesus told this rich man to obey the commandments:

"Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and

'love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 19:18-19).

The rich man said he had kept all these, and asked what he was lacking. Jesus answered:

"If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth (Matthew 19:21-22).

Jesus' first remarks excluded commandments dealing with a relationship with God (Exodus 20:1-12), such as *the first or greatest commandment* to, Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your

strength (**Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:38**).

In early Judaism, people believed wealth indicated God's favor; therefore, it would be easier for a rich person to enter the Kingdom than a poor person. That's why Jesus' emphatic statement *greatly astonished* the disciples (**Matthew 19:25**).

Only a relationship with God will get us to heaven, neither wealth, poverty, nor good works will do. The rich man had to choose between such a relationship and his love of money and possessions. Knowing possessions were his stumbling block, Jesus challenged him to give them up to follow Him; but the man couldn't, because wealth had become his god.

If we are not ready to give up everything to follow Jesus, certainly it will be easier for a *camel to go through the eye of a needle* (literally, or figuratively a city gate's entrance) than for us to go to heaven. This is consistent with Jesus' teachings in **Luke 16:13** — we cannot serve God and wealth.

Most of us will deny wealth attracts us, but our actions speak louder than our words. Let's understand that God does not want us to give everything to the poor to follow Him. No, he wants us



### **Memory Verse**

#### **Proverbs 28:6**

Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.

to depend on Him alone for *our daily bread*.

In **Luke 14:27**, Jesus tells each follower to take up her cross daily—meaning be willing to give up everything. Further, in **Matthew 6:24-33**, He tells us not worry about feeding and clothing ourselves, but to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and He will provide these needs.

Jesus expects us to surrender everything to Him and follow Him: Rights, money, time, talents, and all else (**Luke 9:23**). Only then will our service be unencumbered so we can use wealth and belongings with detachment.

Some followers of Jesus are materially wealthy, while others are materially poor. However, the essence of a *surrendered life* is dependence on Him; not on material items. And all who surrender their lives to Him,

whether materially wealthy or materially poor, will be spiritually wealthy and have eternal life (**John 3:16**).

We might need funds to further God's Kingdom; but we must realize He knows the needs and will provide everything to do His work. Those whom He allows to manage these funds should know everything belongs to God (**Colossians 1:16**) who has first claim on how we spend. We are trustee owners of material wealth He provides us; it's all His.

We need to adopt Abraham's attitude and present everything we hold to Jesus, then we will use His funds to further His Kingdom (**Genesis 22:9-13**).

So, can a rich man be Jesus' disciple? Certainly. On the evening of His death on the cross, it was a rich man, who had become a disciple, who got permission to bury Jesus. Let's read **Matthew 27:57-60**:

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock;

and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.

Besides, God blessed David, Solomon, and others with material wealth. Solomon could not handle his wealth and power; it consumed him and contributed to His waywardness.

What about the materially poor? In the Beatitudes, in **Luke 6:20**, Looking at his disciples, He [Jesus] said: *Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.* Reference to poverty here goes beyond material poverty. Being materially poor is not a condition for someone to go to heaven; it is not a spiritual blessing in itself. Some accept this condition and depend on Jesus to show them the way forward; others rebel, curse their condition, curse Jesus, and stagnate.

Rich or poor, only by surrendering our lives to Messiah Jesus will we gain eternal life with Him. God calls the materially rich to share with the poor showing His love and grace as they do this (**1 Timothy 6:18**).

Let us continue to feed, clothe, and share with the poor but let's not expect our human efforts to wipe out poverty. The Scriptures remind us we will have the poor with us always (**John 12:8**; **Deuteronomy 15:11**). As we

share His wealth, share the gospel by our attitude and behavior.

### Application



#### 1 Peter 4:1-5

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ...But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

**M**aterial wealth is not a factor in our salvation.

Rich and poor will inherit the Kingdom of God, provided the rich or poor person surrenders his or her life to Messiah Jesus. Scripture tells us the LORD sends poverty

and wealth; he humbles and he exalts (**1 Samuel 2:7**). Beloved, it's our heart condition that's relevant; not wealth, poverty, or stuff.

In **Proverbs 30:8-9** we read:

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Where are you today? What do you want from life? Are you preoccupied with your mortgage, car payments, investments and financial concerns? A surrendered heart will help you make all lifestyle decisions according to His will, and it will keep you debt free.

Followers of Messiah, trust Him to supply your needs; He will. This week, ask Him to search you; to tell you if material wealth is a stumbling block in your life. If you consider yourself materially poor, remember He knows your condition and loves you so much He died for you. Just seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and He will do the rest.

During this week, meditate particularly on **2 Thessalonians 2:15-17**.



# Daily Reflections



**July 15:**  
Matthew  
19:18-24;  
Exodus 20:1-12;  
1 Samuel 2:7

**July 16:**  
Luke 16:13;  
Matthew  
6:24-33:30

**July 17:**  
Luke 9:23;  
Genesis 22:9-13

**July 18:**  
Matthew  
27:57-60;  
2 Thessalonians  
2:15-17

**July 19:**  
Luke 6:20;  
Colossians 1:16

**July 20:**  
1 Timothy 6:18;  
Proverbs 30:8-9;  
28:6

**July 7:**  
John 12:8;  
Deuteronomy  
15:11

**C**onsidering the month's theme, and the period's topic, daily reflect on verses on the left. These questions might help your reflections:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start today?

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