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Harsh Extreme Comment By A Fellow Christian, There Is A Big Difference Between Using Money And Serving Money, Building Bigger Barns, Trust God For Your Daily Needs And Seek First Kingdom Of God, Treasures Upon Earth Or Treasures In Heaven, Love Of Money Is The Root Of All Evil, Jesus And The Apostles Emphasized Sin Of Avarice And Not Actually Using Money As A Medium Of Exchange, Abraham Purchase Cave Of Machpelah From Ephron The Hittite, Parable Of The Widow's Mite, Parable Of The Talents, Jesus Commended Wise Servants, Jesus Paid Roman Tax, First Century Christians Used Money To Meet Their Daily Needs, Using Money Is A Necessity Of Modern Life, God Doesn't Usually Drop Money Or Other Needs From The Sky, God Decides How To Provide Our Needs, Robin Hood And Spoiling Egyptians, Secular Jobs And Government Benefits, We Must Be Practical And Pragmatic, Financial Hardships Due To COVID-19 Pandemic, Government Assistance Programs, Being Critical Of Christians Who Accept Financial Aid Is Not Helpful, Using Money Doesn't Mean We're Serving Money Or That Money Is Our God Or That We Have Sold Our Souls To Satan, Expense Of Running A Ministry, Is It Really A Sin To Expect Government Financial Assistance?

Yesterday afternoon while scrolling through my Facebook news feed, I came upon the following post which was made by one of my well-meaning Facebook friends. As you continue reading this series, I believe that you will come to understand why I felt compelled, and deemed it important to challenge this person regarding the contents of this meme. That is, if you don't immediately recognize what the problem is just from reading the following statement:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Stop looking for financial breaks and stimulus's from the government. Your God can't be money AND the Lord. Many will fall in line with the beast system because they serve money and not Almighty God. Look to your brethren in Christ. We are to help one another. Trust the Lord."

----- End Quote -----

Now, based on this person's apparent theological perspective regarding Bible prophecy -- I am given the impression they are a Futurist due to their mention of "the beast system" -- I can understand why they might be motivated to make such a strong statement. However, in my view, considering the hard times that so many people around the world are experiencing right now due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, I feel that their words are too harsh, and too much to the extreme. Allow me to clarify what I mean by this.

First of all, it should be obvious to anyone who reads the previous quote, that this person is basically saying that if you seek any kind of financial relief from the government due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, you have automatically made money your god, instead of the Lord. A bit extreme, right? It needs to be pointed out that there is a very big difference between USING money as a necessity in this current life, and truly SERVING money, striving to obtain as much of it as we possibly can by whatever means we can, and in effect making it our god. That appears to be the mistake that the foolish, materialistic man made in the Gospel of Luke. As you can see below, he was totally given over to acquiring more wealth; so much so, that he barely had room for it all, and thus he chose to build even bigger barns:

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."

Luke 12:16-23, KJV

In contrast to this rather selfish mode of living, the Lord then gave His listeners the following wise advice, in which

He not only admonished them to trust their Heavenly Father for their daily needs, but to also seek heavenly riches in their lives instead, by seeking first the Kingdom of God, as we see by these verses:

"Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Luke 12:24-34, KJV

In the Gospel of Matthew, as well as in the Gospels of Mark and John, the Lord likewise warns us of the foolishness and vanity of striving to increase our material wealth upon this Earth -- which will all eventually perish, or which we will lose once we die anyway -- while we neglect the true riches which are to be gained in Heaven. Consider the following set of verses:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also . . . No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 33, KJV

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Mark 8:36-37, KJV

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

John 6:27, KJV

Jesus was not alone in warning about the vanity of storing up treasures on this Earth. Other authors of the Scriptures shared the very same thought. Consider these verses as well:

"And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Job 1:21, KJV

"As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand."

Ecclesiastes 5:15, KJV

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:18, KJV

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Philippians 4:11, KJV

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Colossians 3:2, KJV

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Hebrews 13:5, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the

flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

1 John 2:15-17, KJV

Likewise, in his first Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle Paul writes "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." But what I also want to emphasize in the verses below is that Paul very pointedly says that it is actually the LOVE of money which is the root of all evil. Sadly, there are so many Christians who either misquote, or misinterpret -- some intentionally while others perhaps unknowingly -- what Paul wrote. In other words, they will say that "money is the root of all evil", when in fact, Paul said "the love of money is the root of all evil. There is a difference. When he talks about the love of money, Paul is obviously referring to the act of making acquiring vast wealth the primary purpose of one's existence, above and beyond everything else in our lives. Consider what he said:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 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 6:6-10, KJV

The previous verses are just a few examples which are found in the Holy Scriptures. You will find many more Scriptural examples in the Bible study references which I include at the end of this series. Clearly then, the sin which both Jesus and the Apostles repeatedly expose in the Gospels and in the Epistles is AVARICE -- that is, extreme greed for wealth or material gain -- and not necessarily the general use of money to conduct our daily lives, and to meet our basic needs. To reiterate, they condemned making a god out of money, wealth and materialism, and not the specific practice of using money as a convenient medium of exchange. I hope you can see that.

If you stop to think about it, there are so many examples in the Scriptures where we see money being used as a medium of exchange. One example which comes to mind is the Patriarch

Abraham. Did he not purchase a plot of land -- the cave of Machpelah -- from Ephron, the son of Zohar, to be used as his family's burial site? Consider the conversation that occurred between Abraham and the Hittites; that is, the sons of Heth:

"And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave

that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth."

Genesis 23:3-20, KJV

As some of you may know, even certain temple offerings were also made with money. Perhaps you will recall the Parable which Jesus told regarding the widow's mite, which you will find in the Gospel of Mark chapter twelve, and in the Gospel of Luke chapter twenty. Consider this group of verses:

"And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Mark 12:42-44, KJV

I am likewise reminded of the Parable of the Talents in which the Lord actually commended two of the servants who invested their talents wisely. Here it is for your consideration:

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man,

reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 25:14-30, KJV

Now, for those Christian extremists who claim to have such an aversion to using money, consider that in the Gospel of Matthew, we discover that if for no other reason than to not cause offense, the Lord did not hesitate to pay the required Roman tax, as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

Matthew 17:24-27, KJV

Moving on, we discover in the Book of the Acts that the First Century Apostles and Disciples likewise used money in order to meet their daily needs. How else could they survive in the Roman-ruled world? For example, in the following set of verses, we see how the new Disciples sold their lands and other possessions, and then brought the money from the sale of their lands and goods to the Apostles, which would then be dispersed according to the need:

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many

as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

Acts 4:34-37, KJV

The previous groups of verses are just a few examples of the many financial transactions which we find mentioned in both the Old and the New Testaments of the Holy Bible. No doubt you will think of many more. What these examples demonstrate is that money is not evil in and of itself. It is actually an unhealthy desire for extreme amounts of money which is evil in God's eyes. It is the sin of avarice.

Having now established that important point, the next point I want to make is that while we Christians are not OF this world -- as Jesus prayed in John chapter seventeen -- the fact remains that we are still IN this world. And because we live in and exist in the present world, by necessity, we are forced to use money as a medium in the exchange of goods and services, whether we like it or not. It's just that simple. There is no way around it. No matter who you are, or where you live, or what your social status is, in some way you have to interact with money, usually on a daily basis.

Let's be honest here. Unless one has tremendous, unswerving faith, God is not just going to drop food, clothing, rent money, utility money, medical expense money, etc., from the sky. Yes, He promises to provide all of our needs. But to my knowledge, unlike modern drone services, sky drops are not usually our Heavenly Father's method of delivery. Now, I am not saying that God cannot occasionally provide our needs by way of seemingly miraculous means. Perhaps other Christians, or family members, or even good neighbors or strangers see you are struggling financially, and decide to help you out. Or maybe an unexpected check suddenly arrives in the mail.

The point is, it is not for us to determine what methods God must use to provide our needs. He does as He pleases. Do any of us think that we know better than our Heavenly Father? If God could use the Egyptians to provide the needs of over one million Israelites before they fled out of Egypt; and if He could use three rich Magi from the land of the Chaldees to

provide for Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus, He can use anybody. So, yes, in my opinion, God can use the secular government of your nation to help you through the rough phases of your life, such as during the current coronavirus pandemic. Who knows what method He may use; but He will make certain that you are provided for, if you are seeking first His Kingdom.

While this may surprise some of my readers, it may interest you to know that when it comes to His children who He loves, God does not mind playing the role of Robin Hood. In short, He will take from the rich and give to the poor. He will rob Peter to pay Paul, if it suits His divine purposes. If you doubt that this is so, then consider the following verses:

"And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

Exodus 3:21-22, KJV

"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his childrens children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just."

Proverbs 13:22, KJV

As you can see, the Lord told the Israelites that they were going to "spoil the Egyptians". But exactly what does that mean? Personally, I think the verses are self-explanatory. But just to prove my point, that word "spoil" is translated from the Hebrew word "natsal". One of its meanings is to snatch away, strip away or to plunder; and that is exactly what the Israelites did. Thus, as King Solomon writes in the Book of Proverbs, "the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." Wow! Now what do you think of that? Are you still feeling guilty or condemned because you accept assistance of some kind from your government?

Now, as I said a moment ago, while God can indeed provide our needs in sometimes miraculous ways if He so chooses, in the majority of cases, having our daily needs met is usually in some way associated with money. For most Christians, this means spending a large part of our lives working at a job. Of course, if you happen to be an elderly person who is now retired, perhaps you have made some investments in the past

and are now surviving day-to-day from that. Others receive pensions, Social Security Disability, retirement benefits, or else they have other money streams. So while Christians do indeed need to be spiritual and Heaven-minded, precisely as Jesus and the Apostles taught, at the same time, as long as we are in this present life, we likewise need to be both practical and pragmatic as well.

As I said earlier, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the global economic downturn which has resulted in so many businesses either temporarily or even permanently shuttering their doors, and probably engaging in large-scale layoffs, many people around the world are now experiencing hardships which they have never experienced before. This situation is further complicated through social distancing and enforced quarantine, which has made everyone's life more difficult. This is particularly true in a financial sense. Yet despite how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting us all, we still have to do what we have to do. We still have to live, feed ourselves and our families, pay our utility bills, pay the rent, etc. We can't just ignore these things. So what are we supposed to do given these circumstances?

Contrary to what seems to be indicated by the aforementioned person, it is my opinion that if we are entitled to receive money -- or any other type of assistance -- from our national, provincial or state government, wouldn't it be rather foolish of us to just turn it down? Would any of us really choose to suffer, or to even cause other family members to suffer, due to our pride? I certainly hope not. The truth is that it can be humbling to have to go to a public government office and apply for some type of public assistance. Why? Because by so doing, we are admitting that we can't make ends meet and that we need help. Some people are so self-confident and so proud, that they do not like to do that. It is too embarrassing for them. But when your family is depending on you, what else can you do?

So taking into consideration the current situation in which many of us find ourselves, it is my opinion that coming down hard on people -- such as my Facebook friend appears to do in their post -- because they find themselves in a hard spot and need to accept financial aid from the government, really is not being helpful. In fact, the negative result of adopting such a harsh attitude may very well be that it will only make some of our Christian brethren feel condemned, and maybe even convince them that they have no faith in God, and that they

are not truly serving Him. By saying harsh, I am referring to the fact that this person stated "Many will fall in line with the beast system because they serve money and not Almighty God". No wonder some people commented that they did not agree with what this person had said. What a horrible way to make people feel, simply because they need help and are willing to accept assistance from the government!

So because a number of other people were also taken back by what the aforementioned person had stated, I am certain that I did not simply misinterpret their words. All of us felt as if that person was chiding us, simply because we see nothing wrong with people accepting financial assistance from the government so that they can make it through the difficult times many of us are currently facing due to the coronavirus pandemic. To be clear, accepting such money does not mean that we don't love God. Neither does it mean that we have made money our god. It most certainly does not mean that we have sold our souls to the Devil, or to "the beast system", as this person referred to it.

So I am sorry, but what they wrote just isn't right. As we have already seen from the Scriptures, just because we use money does NOT mean that we serve money. Neither does the fact that we use money in our daily lives mean that we are not serving God, or that we lack faith. So their statement is really off-base. One thing I know for certain is that ministries such as this one require literally thousands of dollars to keep them operating over the years. It takes a lot of money to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this fashion. Many people have been blessed, inspired, motivated and convicted by the Bill's Bible Basics ministry. Am I to now believe that I do not truly serve the Lord, that I only serve money, or that money is my true god, simply because I receive retirement benefits? Hardly, my friends.

Well, after reading the aforementioned post, I offered that person a response in which I shared with them some of the points I have included in this same series. As I mentioned previously, other people apparently agreed with what I had stated. Thus, they liked my comments. About six hours later, this person responded with the following remark:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Does my post say anything about using money or having it in general?"

----- End Quote -----

My friends, I'll let you be the judge. How do you understand "Stop looking for financial breaks and stimulus's from the government. Your God can't be money AND the Lord. Many will fall in line with the beast system because they serve money and not Almighty God."? Now doesn't that seem to imply that according to that person's way of thinking, we all have to make a choice between either accepting financial assistance from the government -- or "financial breaks and stimulus's" as they call it -- or else serving God? Do you see how black and white this person paints it? Even though I was sure that I understood what they meant, I again posted a response. Among other things, I asked them directly "Are you, or are you not, saying that we Christians should not accept money from the government?" Well, a short while later they posted a response in which they stated the following:

----- Begin Quote -----

"I did not say it was a sin or wrong to accept help if it is given. Rather, to expect and trust for the government to do so is."

----- End Quote -----

So with that comment, it seems to me that they are making it clear that they believe that it is wrong, and in fact a sin, for a Christian to expect or trust their government to offer them assistance. If you doubt that this is what they meant, then consider that in a later response to me, they also said that "expecting the government to give them financial help . . . is trusting in man and money and not in God." Stated another way, they seem to believe that doing this makes a god out of man, money and government; because according to them, we are trusting in such things, instead of in God. Obviously, this is the furthest thing from the truth. I really don't know how they came to that conclusion. But as I told them, it contradicts what we find in the Scriptures.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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COVID-19, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CHRISTIAN LOVE : PART 2

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National And Personal Obligation To Assist The Poor Elderly Sick Orphans And Widows, God Rebukes Greedy Selfish Rulers And Religious Hierarchy, Selfishness And Avarice Continued During New Testament Times Too, Apostles Warned And Rebuked Money-Minded Preachers, Economic Oppression In Modern Times

As I concluded in part one, my Facebook friend holds to the view that it is wrong, and in fact a sin, for any Christian to expect or trust their government to offer them any form of financial assistance. I assume that applies to any other form of assistance as well. In their mind, to do this is to place our trust in man, in money, and in the government, and not in God. They in fact seem to believe that by doing this, we turn money into our god. As I have already made clear, I disagree with their point of view, and I think that they are being both harsh, and extreme. As we discussed in part one, in my view, what they fail to recognize is that the Lord can provide our daily needs however He sees fit; even by using the government, if He so pleases. Who are we to question it, or Him, or His methods?

But there is even more to this issue than just that alone. As I explain in the series entitled "What About the Poor?", the Bible plainly states that it is the responsibility of a nation's leadership, and the people of that nation, to help the poor, the elderly, the sick, the orphans and the widows. This social mandate was in fact a part of the body of laws which God gave to the ancient Israelites. This point becomes very clear in the following group of sample verses:

"For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving

him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Deuteronomy 10:17-19, KJV

"At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest."

Deuteronomy 14:28-29, KJV

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day."

Deuteronomy 15:7-15, KJV

"When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the

work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow."

Deuteronomy 24:19-21, KJV

"And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God: And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them:"

Deuteronomy 26:10-13, KJV

Sadly, despite the Lord's clear commandments regarding the treatment of the poor, the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows, as given to and taught to the people by Moses, human greed eventually took its toll, and led to a rather oppressive situation developing in the land. In reading the Old Testament, we discover that when ancient Israel failed to meet her moral obligations to the poor, needy and those who were oppressed, God in fact rebuked them time and time again. Consider the following group of verses which support this particular point. Notice the difference between God's treatment of and concern for the people, and how the wicked rulers and religious hierarchy oppressed the people:

"Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend."

Job 6:27, KJV

"Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken."

Job 22:9, KJV

"Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days? Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof. They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge. They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together. Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children. They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked. They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter. They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry; Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst. Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them. They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death. He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards. Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned. The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree. He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow. He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life. Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways. They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn. And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?"

Job 24:1-25, KJV

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor

that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth."

Job 29:11-17, KJV

"If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied. The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller."

Job 31:16-32, KJV

"Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none. The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. LORD, thou hast heard the

desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress."

Psalm 10:12-18, KJV

"Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

Psalm 68:4-6, KJV

"LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it."

Psalm 94:3-7, KJV

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God: Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners: The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down."

Psalm 146:5-9, KJV

"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

Proverbs 22:7, KJV

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow . . . How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards:

they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them."

Isaiah 1:16-17, 21-23, KJV

"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?"

Isaiah 10:1-3, KJV

"Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee have they set light by father and mother: in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow . . . In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD. Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee."

Ezekiel 22:6-7, 12-13, KJV

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds

search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

Ezekiel 34:2-10, KJV

"For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Jeremiah 5:26-29, KJV

"For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever."

Jeremiah 7:5-7, KJV

"Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place."

Jeremiah 22:1-3, KJV

"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."

Zechariah 7:9-10, KJV

"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts."

Malachi 3:5, KJV

Sadly, this attitude of selfishness and avarice continued during the New Testament era as well. Many of you will no doubt recall how much the Lord rebuked the religious elders for the very same sin. Not only did they oppress the common people through their harsh application of the Mosaic Law, but they, and the temple hucksters, likewise oppressed them in a financial sense as well, as is made quite evident by the following group of verses:

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Matthew 21:12-13, KJV

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for YE DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."

Matthew 23:1-4, 14, KJV

"For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always."

Matthew 26:11, KJV

"And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that

any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Mark 11:15-17, KJV

"And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: WHICH DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."

Mark 12:38-40, KJV

"And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."

Luke 11:46, KJV

"Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; WHICH DEVOUR WIDOWS' HOUSES, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation. And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."

Luke 20:46-21:4, KJV

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

John 2:13-16, KJV

Tragically, as the following set of verses clearly reveals, not even the First Century Church was able to remain totally immune to the spirit of greed, selfishness and avarice that infected the world of that era. Thus, Apostles such as Peter, James and Paul were not only quick to expose the oppression

of the poor, but they also warned and rebuked those Church elders who endeavored to profit from preaching the Gospel. Does it sound familiar? Please notice how the Apostle Peter specifically uses the phrase "make merchandise of you". Also take note of the fact that in this set of verses, according to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, the phrase "filthy lucre" is derived from the Koine Greek word "aischrokerdes". This ancient word means "eager for base gain, greedy for money":

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous . . . Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;"

1 Timothy 3:3, 8, KJV

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel . . . If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

1 Timothy 5:8, 16, KJV

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre . . . Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

Titus 1:7, 11, KJV

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

1 Peter 5:2, KJV

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words MAKE MERCHANDISE OF YOU: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

2 Peter 2:1-3, KJV

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is

this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
James 1:27, KJV

"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"
James 2:5-8, KJV

Tragically, the same kind of situation continues to occur in our modern day as well in every corner of the globe, as the rich become richer, while the poor become poorer, as they are oppressed by the rich and the elite.

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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COVID-19, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CHRISTIAN LOVE : PART 3

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National And Personal Obligation To Assist The Poor Elderly Sick Orphans Widows And Other Disadvantaged People, Don't Be Ashamed to Ask Your Government For Help, It Is Not Wrong Or A Sin Or Denying God Or Making Money Our God By Asking For And Accepting Government Assistance, Government Agencies Are Created To Help People In Need, Trump Administration And The Stimulus Packages, Joseph In Egypt: A Government-Sponsored Public Assistance Program And Stimulus Package, God Mandated The Jubilee For The Israelites, Through Jesus We Receive Rest Have Our Debts Forgiven And Are Set At Liberty, Old Testament Rituals Were Foreshadows Of What Jesus Fulfilled Spiritually,

God Likes To Assist And Relieve Us And Give Us A Break, God Will Use Whoever He Pleases To Help Us Including A Government, My Page My Rules Your Page Your Rules, Rejection Comes With The Territory, Jesus Is The Rejected Cornerstone, Persecuted For Our Faith, My Friend Persists In Their Belief, All Money Is A Product Of The Government, Time Eventually Reveals All Things And Divides Truth From Error, Beware Of False Prophets

Continuing our discuss from part two, what are all of those previous verses telling us? Well, they are basically telling us three important things. First of all, they make it clear that national governments have an obligation, imposed upon them by God, to make sure that they are taking care of the needy in the nation. That is, the poor, the elderly, the sick and dying, the orphans, the widows, and other disadvantaged individuals. This same obligation applies to each of us as individuals when it is within our means and ability to do so. This is exactly what we read in the following verse that is found in the Book of Acts, in regards to the First Century Church:

"Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:"

Acts 11:29, KJV

The second thing that those verses tell us is that when we personally find ourselves in a place of need in our lives, we should NOT be ashamed to seek assistance from our government. Furthermore, contrary to the opinion that is embraced by my friend, not only should we not feel ashamed for requesting assistance from the government, but we should in fact EXPECT our government to offer us such a helping hand, because it is in fact their obligation to do so.

To reiterate this important point, based on my understanding of the Scriptures, it is NOT a sin to expect your government to assist you, or to accept their assistance. It's NOT wrong. It is NOT denying God. It is NOT making money into a god. It is NOT selling your soul to the Devil. It is in fact THEIR sin -- meaning the government -- when they fail to help you, as required by the Lord. Based on the plethora of verses I have shared in this series, I honestly do not know how this person arrived at such an erroneous conclusion. As far as I know, there is no Scriptural basis for making such a claim.

Therefore, I must conclude that they are wrong.

The fact of the matter is that those government assistance agencies were specifically created to help people in need. They realize that people sometimes fall on hard times and require a helping hand. How much more is this true at this current time as the entire world experiences the financial disruptions which are being caused by the coronavirus? We are quickly approaching a financial crisis, and everyone is aware of it. Many people are already finding themselves in a tight spot financially, and the problem is only getting worse by the day as the coronavirus pandemic continues to expand and drags on.

This is precisely why the Trump administration is now doing everything that it can to prop up the economy. As many of you will already know, this is the specific purpose of the various stimulus packages. As we have discussed, by helping the citizenry, they are in fact fulfilling their Christian obligation. Yet in the midst of all of this current economic upheaval, this person is actually contradicting God's Word, criticizing and condemning people, and making them feel as if they are big sinners because they expect to receive, and are even happy to receive such assistance from the government.

Wow! The Lord is so faithful! Something just came to me. For those of you who may be feeling discouraged or perhaps under condemnation because of the extreme things which have been stated by certain Christians, maybe the following will help you. We have been discussing government-sponsored assistance programs. Well, I was just reminded of the story of Joseph in Egypt. Do you realize that by His own design, God placed Joseph in charge of just such a program? I am sure you know exactly what I am talking about. So consider the following verses. They start with the beginning of the seven years of famine, or what these verses also refer to as a dearth:

"And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands. Now

when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth."

Genesis 41:54-42:6, KJV

Now think about that for a moment. Dear Joseph was placed in charge of Egypt's public assistance program. You might even refer to it as an economic stimulus package. After all, the the land of Egypt was certainly going to profit from the sale of all of that corn, because the whole world was begging to have some of it. But imagine if Joseph's brothers thought in the same fashion as the individual we have been discussing in this series. If they had, the outcome of this story would no doubt have been very different. In fact, Jacob and his sons would have all died from starvation in the land of Canaan. So imagine if instead of what actually happened, this is the way the conversation really went that day in Egypt:

"What? Joseph is in charge of this program? No, but wait! We cannot possibly purchase corn from him. After all, this our brother is a part of the Egyptian government. What will God think if we turn to the pagan Egyptian government for help during this crisis? Won't the Lord be really angry with us? Won't He think that we have actually betrayed Him and maybe even abandoned Him? Are we going to get struck down because of our lack of faith? Nope, nope. We better not do this. Yes, we really need the help, but perhaps it is just better for us to starve to death."

But they didn't do that, did they? Of course not. It would've been ridiculous and very foolish of them to say the least. So what they in fact did do was to humble themselves, and allow Joseph and the Egyptian government to save their hides! Wow! Now are you starting to get the point? Did it mean that they had lost their faith, abandoned God and sold their souls to the Devil? Of course not. Now, if God used a pagan government which worshipped their own leaders as gods to help His people,

what is so wrong about accepting financial assistance, or any other kind of assistance, from a government which has members who clearly share our same Christian faith in some fashion? Would you rather starve or fall into financial ruin? Well, it is your choice, my friends.

Let me remind you one more time what this individual said in their misguided post: "Stop looking for financial breaks and stimulus's from the government." Well, I will tell you what. Joseph's brothers and father certainly got a break. In fact, it was a break which saved their lives. I have no doubt that they were thankful that the government of Egypt was willing to sell them corn. All of that corn was most certainly a stimulus too, because it prolonged their existence on this Earth. Forgive my pun.

Taking this idea of breaks a step further, as I have shared with my readers before, in the Old Testament Scriptures, the Lord commanded the nation of Israel to observe a "jubile" -- or "jubilee" -- which occurred every seven years, and also every forty-nine years, meaning each fiftieth year. During this period, the land was left fallow. In other words, it was given a break -- or rest, or sabbath -- so that it could be revitalized. But that is not all that occurred during this special year. The Scriptures also inform us that the poor and strangers were given relief from their suffering, slaves and prisoners were freed, and debts were also forgiven. Consider the following sample verses, paying particular attention to the words I have placed in uppercase:

"And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But THE SEVENTH YEAR THOU SHALT LET IT REST AND LIE STILL; THAT THE POOR OF THY PEOPLE MAY EAT: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard."

Exodus 23:10-11, KJV

"And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in THE SEVENTH YEAR SHALL BE A SABBATH OF REST UNTO THE LAND, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt

not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, AND FOR THY HIRED SERVANT, AND FOR THY STRANGER THAT SOJOURNETH WITH THEE, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat. And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession."

Leviticus 25:1-13, KJV

And speaking of forgiving debts, giving rest and proclaiming liberty, Jesus was of course no stranger to these things. In fact, as I have mentioned a number of times before in some of my articles, all of these rituals which were performed in the Old Testament, and which were associated with the fifty-year sabbatical -- also known as the jubilee -- were in reality a foreshadow and archetype of things which Jesus would perform in a spiritual sense in the New Testament. Many of you will in fact be familiar with the following verses:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

Isaiah 61:1-3, KJV

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Matthew 6:12, KJV

"And he [Jesus] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Luke 4:16-21, KJV

As we all know, Jesus indeed came to give us rest from the burden of the Law; to pay the required debt for our sins; and to proclaim liberty from our certain death, through His own death on the Cross. I discuss all of these points in a number of other articles. Thus, I won't be going into detail in this current series. If there is one thing which I hope you can see here, it is that God believes in assisting His children. He believes in giving us relief from all of our suffering. He enjoys giving us a break from our burdens. Not only that, but He is willing to use anybody and anything in order to provide us with those things, including a secular government, if He so pleases.

Returning to the person who compelled me to write this series, no doubt you will find it interesting that after I had shared some of the same points from this series with my friend, they deleted their entire post, as well as the comment thread that was beneath it, which contained comments from other people in addition to myself. Why would they take such a drastic step? Well, we could argue that perhaps they did it simply because they did not agree with what I was telling them. They didn't like it, so they deleted it. As I have often said, when it comes to Facebook, it is "My page, my rules. Your page, your rules."

Of course, another possibility regarding why they chose to

take such action is that they realized that they were wrong, and they did not want their friends and readers to see the Scriptural truth that I was sharing with them. Whatever the case may be, I am not going to ask them. In fact I am quite done engaging with them, being as we appear to be on rather different roads insofar as our understanding of the Bible is concerned. Furthermore, they made it rather clear in their final response to me that they have no interest in hearing what I have to say anyway. So that was the end of it.

As I have mentioned in other commentaries, this is not the first time that someone has either deleted my FB comments, unfriended me, or blocked me, rather than humbly admit that they hold to an erroneous point of view. But, as they say, whatever floats your boat. I've grown a thick skin over the years, and I am not going to let it bother me. We just have to accept that not everyone -- including our own Christian brethren -- is always going to agree with us. In fact, some people will take offense at what we deem the truth, and they will indeed treat us poorly and sometimes reject us. But, as you may know, rejection comes with the territory. Just look at Jesus as an example and be encouraged. He endured more than any of us ever possibly could:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."
Isaiah 53:3, KJV

"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."
Psalm 118:22-23, KJV

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"
Matthew 21:42, KJV

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."
Mark 8:31, KJV

"And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the

builders rejected is become the head of the corner: This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

Mark 12:10-11, KJV

"Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

Luke 9:22, KJV

"But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

Luke 17:25, KJV

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

John 1:11, KJV

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

Acts 4:11, KJV

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed [that is disapproved, rejected, repudiated] indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

1 Peter 2:4-8, KJV

So if Jesus Himself was persecuted and rejected by His own generation for speaking the truth regarding the Kingdom of His Father, should we modern Christians really expect to be treated differently if we are likewise faithful to preach the full Gospel of the Kingdom? Our spiritual ancestors did not escape this fate. Consider the following sample verses which clearly demonstrate this point. You will find more in the Bible study resources that I include at the end of this same series:

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall

kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

Matthew 24:9-10, KJV

"But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

Luke 21:12-19, KJV

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

John 15:18-21, KJV

"They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

John 16:2, KJV

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:"

2 Timothy 2:12, KJV

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the

prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Hebrews 11:32-40, KJV

At any rate, after deleting their entire post and comment thread, I discovered a short while later that this person had written a new update on their timeline in which they again emphasized the very same point. That is, that they believe that Christians should not rely on money from the government for our survival. Any money from the government is simply a no-no in this person's eyes:

----- Begin Quote -----

You can't rely on money from the government in order to survive. The economy is not going to recover. I believe that. I am preparing myself to have a financial storm from which the country and the world will never be the same. Only God sustains.

---- End Quote ----

As you can see, despite everything I had shared with this person, they still clung to their misguided notion that to accept money from the government is both wrong, and a sin, as we saw in other quotes which I shared with you earlier. The strange thing is, they fail to recognize that every bill and every coin that they have in their pocket -- whether it is from an assistance program of some type, or from working at a regular job -- is in reality directly or indirectly a product of their government. After all, who is responsible

for printing and minting all of the money? So if this person is going to adopt such a narrow-minded, strict position, I hope that they are fully prepared to immediately trash every single bill and coin that they own. Otherwise, they are making themselves a hypocrite.

Concerning their financial prediction regarding the economy failing and not recovering, that remains to be seen. I have never claimed to be a Prophet. As such, I obviously cannot see the future. But if this person wants to put themselves out on a limb and predict something so definitive like that, I hope they don't end up embarrassing themselves. As I have often said, time reveals all things. It reveals those things which are true, and those things which are false. It divides truth from error, and true Prophet from false prophet. So we shall eventually see which one this person is. As the Lord said through the Prophet Moses:

"But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him."

Deuteronomy 18:20-22, KJV

The Lord likewise spoke quite a few heavy things through the Prophet Jeremiah in regards to the many false prophets which polluted the land of Israel prior to the Babylon invasions. Consider this interesting group of verses, and beware:

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Jeremiah 5:31, KJV

"Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed."

Jeremiah 14:14-15, KJV

"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 23:32, KJV

"For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 29:8-9, KJV

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

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COVID-19, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CHRISTIAN LOVE : PART 4

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God Is Our Provider And Sustainer, Don't Try To Limit How God Must Provide Your Needs, Elderly Christians Who Receive Social Security Or Retirement Benefits, Beware Of Christians Who Only Rely On YouTube Vids And Other Questionable Sources To Prove A Point, Conspiracy Theory Trap, Do You Search The Scriptures To Verify The Truth?, Point People To God's Word, Humility In Our Understanding, God's Eternal Word Is A More Sure Word Of Prophecy That Builds Faith And Leads To Christ, Wrestling The Scriptures To Their Own Destruction, Christians Should Help Each Other, Good Samaritan, Antioch Brethren Help The Jerusalem Brethren, Faith Without Works Is Dead, Amazing First Century Church Spirit Of Love Caring And Sharing, Our Self-Serving Cold Callous World, For Men Shall Be Lovers Of Their Own Selves, Christians Should Be Known By Our Love, The

Love Verses, Concluding Remarks, BBB Suggested Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part three, the one point I do agree with from the previous quote is where they say "Only God sustains." Yes, God is indeed both our Provider and our Sustainer. I have absolutely no problem with that whatsoever. The Lord has indeed provided well for me over the years since I first dedicated my life to serving Him so many years ago. He has kept the promises in His Word, such as the following wonderful verses regarding provision:

"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:"
Isaiah 59:1, KJV

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart . . . I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
Psalm 37:4, 25, KJV

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."
Malachi 3:10, KJV

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."
Matthew 6:33-34, KJV

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened . . . If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
Matthew 7:7-8, 11, KJV

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer,

believing, ye shall receive."

Matthew 21:22, KJV

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Luke 12:6-7, KJV

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Romans 8:32, KJV

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21, KJV

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19, KJV

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

1 John 5:14-15, KJV

So while we do have clear promises that God will provide our daily needs if we are seeking first His Kingdom in our lives, the question which still remains is this: What if the way the Lord chooses to provide for us is through the local, state or national government? Are we just supposed to reject it? As we saw earlier, Joseph's brothers most certainly didn't do this. Those boys were quite hungry, so it would have been foolish for them to do so. But you see, as we have already discussed, that is where this person falls short. In a sense, because they have such a strong distrust of governmental authorities -- don't we all? -- they are trying to dictate how God must provide. They are endeavoring to set limits on God. Anything but the government, seems to be their mantra. If the money is coming from the government, no thanks! It is wrong, and it is a sin! It is selling your soul to "the beast system". Well, at least so they say.

The funny thing is, in their final response to me before I cut off communication with them, they basically accused me of being naive and gullible, of being too afraid to even criticize the government, and sucking up to the government. Just by even saying those things, they clearly revealed how little of my body of work they have actually read. As any of my regular readers will know, in quite a few of my many articles, I do not hesitate to expose the many sins of my homeland. In fact, not only do I do this in my articles, but I do it in some of my poems, and in many of my graphics as well. So it is rather obvious that this person is clueless when it comes to what I actually think and believe.

You know, I really have to wonder what this person thinks of elderly Christians who survive from month to month on their Social Security check, or on Retirement Benefits, or perhaps on some other type of government-based assistance. If, as my friend states, we are not to expect or trust the government to provide us with financial assistance, and if doing so is wrong and a sin as they say, should we assume then that the persons I just mentioned are also committing a sin; that they have no faith; that they are not truly serving God; that they have made money and government their god; and that they are part of the wicked "beast system" as this person refers to it? I think you know my answer to such questions without me even saying it. Clearly then, this person's thinking is flawed.

Let me mention that what I also found interesting regarding this person's responses, is that neither in their original post, or in any of their responses to me, did they quote a single Scripture. Instead, they pointed me to YouTube videos and other questionable sources which, as we all know, are filled with rather "iffy" conspiracy theories and a lot of other strange nonsense. So can there be any doubt as to why this person is confused if they are constantly referring to that kind of doubtful information to prove their point?

Sadly, this seems to be the case with quite a number of my Christian brethren who fall into the conspiracy theory trap. In other words, in their endeavors to validate and build up their case, they will point people to this website, and to that website, or to this YouTube video, or to that video, or to this author's book, or to that author's book. In short, they direct their friends and readers to every place except to the right place; and that of course is to the Holy Bible. This point alone should alarm any Bible-believing Christian.

It should stand out as a red flag and warning, that what the person is saying or preaching may not be true, and perhaps should not be trusted. That is why I have often reminded my readers of the faithful Bereans who we are told in the Book of Acts, wisely searched the Scriptures in order to determine if what Paul and Silas were sharing with them regarding Jesus was true. Consider this set of verses:

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

Acts 17:10-12, KJV

If there is one thing that my longtime readers already know, it is that I make it a regular practice to always point them to the Scriptures, so that they can see why I believe as I do, and also so that their faith will be in God's Word, and not just in what I say. After all, I am only human, and I can be wrong about some things. I've never once claimed to have a perfect understanding of the Scriptures, and it would be most foolhardy of me to do so. We all need to have humility when it comes to our level of understanding of God's Word. We must not get the big head, or get puffed up, as the Bible calls it. I am reminded of verses such as the following:

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

1 Corinthians 8:1, KJV

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, HE KNOWETH NOTHING YET AS HE OUGHT TO KNOW."

1 Corinthians 8:2, KJV

"From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; UNDERSTANDING NEITHER WHAT THEY SAY, NOR WHEREOF THEY AFFIRM."

1 Timothy 1:6-7, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; HE IS PROUD,

KNOWING NOTHING, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

Not only that, but I am convinced that it is God's straight Word which builds up a person's faith. It is God's Word which is forever settled in Heaven. It is God's Word which is the "more sure word of prophecy." And it is only God's Word which leads a person to Jesus Christ. All of the odd, questionable conspiracy theories that some people -- including quite a few Christians -- like to promote and argue about for many hours, are nothing compared to the unadulterated Word of God. Such questionable things do NOT lead to Eternal Life. They are simply red herrings, time wasters and distractions from the truth. Allow me to share some additional verses with you regarding this subject:

". . . For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven . . . Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word . . . Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."

Psalms 119:89, 14, 160, KJV

"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

Psalms 138:2, KJV

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts . . . For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Peter 1:19, 21, KJV

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

Numbers 23:19, KJV

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things

that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"

Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."

Ezekiel 33:33, KJV

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

Ecclesiastes 3:14-15, KJV

"God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Romans 3:4, KJV

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

2 Timothy 3:16, KJV

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:2, KJV

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Romans 10:17, KJV

Sadly, even when some of these conspiracy theorists do quote a Bible verse occasionally, quite often, they will twist its meaning so that it conforms to what they want to believe, and to what they want others to believe. As you may already know, the Apostle Peter recognized this same problem occurring in the First Century Church as well. This point becomes evident in the following verse where he mentions how some brethren were wresting -- or twisting and perverting, from the Koine Greek word "strebloo" -- the meanings of some of the Apostle Paul's writings, as well as perverting other Scriptures:

"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also

the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2 Peter 3:16, KJV

Now, in regards to my friend's latter statement concerning looking to our Christian brethren for help, I am obviously in agreement with that point. As I mentioned in part three, we should help each other out, if it is within our power to do so, just as we see occurring in the Book of Acts, and even in the example of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, as we see in this group of verses:

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Luke 10:30-37, KJV

I am likewise reminded of verses such as the following ones where we are also admonished to engage in works of Christian charity with those people who are struggling, or sick, and in need of help in one form or another. In the first example, we see how the brethren at the Church in Antioch decided to take up a collection for the brethren in Jerusalem upon hearing of a coming famine, or dearth:

"And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Acts 11:27-30, KJV

"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

James 2:14-18, KJV

While life was no doubt harsh -- and oft times dangerous -- back then for our Christian brethren, at the same time, it must have been wonderful to see and learn from Jesus, and to be a member of the First Century Church. The spirit of love and caring and sharing must have been absolutely amazing. In contrast, sadly, and to our own shame, we need to recognize that we live in a very different world today. As many of us already know, the love of many has indeed grown cold, and many people have become greedy, selfish, callous of heart and lovers of their own selves. I am reminded of this set of verses:

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

Matthew 24:12, KJV

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

1 Corinthians 13:2, KJV

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

1 John 4:8, KJV

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. FOR MEN SHALL BE LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

2 Timothy 3:1-5, KJV

Obviously, there are still a certain number of churches and Christian organizations which do engage in charitable works. However, I have noticed that on occasion, their charity is extended only to members of their own church, while if it is shared with others, it is done so rather grudgingly. To add to this tragedy, many modern Christians haven't been able to resist the secular spirit. Many of them have likewise become worldly, materialistic and self-centered, and they possess little desire to help anyone, other than their own selves. As the coronavirus pandemic continues to spread its tentacles around the world, and as more and more people begin to feel the financial crunch in their lives, it would be great if we could see a revival of the same Spirit of Love for which our ancient Christian brethren were known. As Jesus said in the Gospel of John:

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

John 13:35, KJV

Let me conclude this series with the following group of verses which emphasize how important of a role Christian love played in the First Century Church:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Matthew 22:36-40, KJV

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:9-13, KJV

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not

covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Romans 13:8-10, KJV

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

1 Corinthians 8:1, KJV

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

1 Corinthians 13:13, KJV

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Galatians 5:14, KJV

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:"

James 2:8, KJV

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

1 Peter 4:8, KJV

With these inspiring verses, I will bring this series to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click or tap on the various corresponding links which are found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which contain topics which are related to this series. All of these resources are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics website:

BBB Articles:

Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!
Civil Disobedience and Christian Persecution
Coronavirus: Just the Facts, Ma'am

Going Down the Highway of Life
Have You Sold Your Soul for a Pound of Flesh?
Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word
Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon
Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God
Selfishness: A Prophesied Sign of Our Times?
Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?
The Cheerful Giver: Supporting God's Work
The Royal Law: Thou Shalt Love
What About the Poor?

BBB Blog Posts:

Coronavirus: Latest Statistics: Bill's Bible Basics Blog
Stop Joking About the Coronavirus
Coronavirus: God Will Silence the Fools
Coronavirus: Be Still and Know That I Am God
Is COVID-19 the New Normal? : Don't Freak Out! Trust the Lord!
Helpful Tips Regarding Using Face Masks and Respirators
Coronavirus: Why Do You Condemn Your Brethren?
Coronavirus: Are You Distracted?
Recording: COVID-19 Safety Tips From Doctor Negrín University Hospital, Gran Canaria, Canary Islands
Coronavirus: Wake Up, Already!
Coronavirus: 40 Bible Verse Lists Regarding God's Love, Patience, Wrath, Judgments and Repentance
Coronavirus: Where is Your Common Sense?
Coronavirus: More Useful Information

BBB KJV Bible Verse Lists:

Brotherly Christian Love
God Will Provide Our Needs
Jesus is the Rejected Cornerstone
Love Forgiveness and Mercy
Love the Unlovely
Love: The Greatest of These
Materialism
Perfect and Complete in God's Love
Persecuted for Our Faith
Persecution of the First Century Church
Sacrifice of Love
Snare of Riches
Worldliness

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