

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

October 14, 2009

Volume 8 Number 20

Mammon, the other god

There are few among us that do not pray for prosperity for those whom we love. In his third epistle, John offers a greeting with a wish for prosperity:

- 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.
-3 John 1

However, John clearly put the prosperity of the body, including its health, second to the prosperity of the soul.

When King Solomon put Yahweh first, asking Him for wisdom and knowledge, rather than for riches, wealth, and honor, Yahweh gave him all of it:

- 11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of your enemies, neither yet have asked long life; but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge my people, over whom I have made you king:
12 Wisdom and knowledge *is* granted unto you; and I will give you riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before you, neither shall there any after you have the like. -2 Chronicles 2

However, when Solomon began to worship other gods and goddesses, Yahweh took his kingdom away from him (see 1 Kings 11:9-11).

While Yahweh has all power, riches, wealth, and honor, He has allowed Satan to use them as tempting tools to deceive us into worshipping him instead of Yahweh. Satan demonstrated his ability to tempt with worldly riches during his temptation of Yahshua (Jesus):

- 5 And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.
6 And the devil said to him, All this power will I give you, and the glory of them: for that is delivered to me; and to whomever I will I give it.
7 If you therefore will worship me, all shall be yours.
-Luke 4

Using these material temptations, Satan operates as the god of this world to blind us from the truth of the gospel:

- 4 In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glori-

ous gospel of the Messiah, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. -2 Corinthians 4

Yahshua also called him the prince of this world:

- 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me. -John 14

While Satan is presented in the Bible in masculine terms, he can appear in any form, even as an “angel of light:”

- 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. -2 Corinthians 11

The Jews who had fled to Egypt after Judah was destroyed by Babylon were deceived by Satan into believing that the goddess, known as the “Queen of Heaven,” was the source of their prosperity:

- 17 But we will certainly do whatever thing goes forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for *then* had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.
18 But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all *things*, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. -Jeremiah 44

Throughout history, the goddess, under many different names, has been thought to be the source of prosperity. The Romans worshipped her as Juno, who was said to be the sister and wife of Jupiter, the “King of the Gods.” Therefore, Juno was called the “Queen of the Gods.” She was also the goddess of childbirth and marriage. Consequently, the month of June (which was also a month for marriage among her Roman worshippers) bears her name. [see Alexander Adams, *Roman Antiquities, or; An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Romans*, P. Wilson Revision, New York: C. Wiley & Co., et. al., 1819, p. 268, 317.]

A further honor was given to the goddess Juno when she was given the name Juno Moneta. A Roman temple was erected for her in 342 B. C., which was dedicated on June 1st. It was in her temple where Roman coins were minted. [see S. Russell Forbes, *Rambles in Rome: an Archaeological and Historical Guide to the Museums*, 11th ed., London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1911, p. 197.] The words “money,” “monetary,” and “mint” are all derived from the name of Moneta! Therefore, she was believed to be the source of money!

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

Come to Understanding

The English word, “money,” which is derived from Moneta, is very similar to the Hebrew word for money, which is מָנֶה (maneh):

12 And the shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your **maneh**. -Ezekiel 45

Yahshua used a related word, “mammon,” warning that it is an alternative to God as our “master” (lord) and object of love:

13 No servant 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. You cannot serve God and mammon. -Luke 16

The word “mammon” is written in the Greek text as μαμωνά (mamona) and in the Latin text as “mamonae,” which sounds very much like “ma money.” A widely accepted definition of mammon is:

3126. μαμμωνας mammonas *mam-mo-nas*; of Aramaic origin (confidence, i.e. wealth, personified); mammonas, i.e. avarice (deified):— mammon. -*Strong's Concordance*

This definition shows that mammon is more than just money. It is avarice (greed), which is deified (made into an object of worship).

Satan and his demons, which are also called unclean spirits and devils, have the ability to enter into people and also into material objects. Even God’s elect apostles, Peter and Judas, were not exempted from Satan:

23 But he turned, and said to Peter, Get you behind me, Satan: you are an offense to me: for you savor not the things that are of God, but those that are of men. -Matthew 16

3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. -Luke 22

People in places of worship, and even children, are not exempted from Satan’s demons:

23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, -Mark 1

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: -Mark 7

When inanimate objects, known as idols, are worshipped, it is Satan’s demons that come to receive that worship:

19 What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything?

20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. -1 Corinthians 10

While worshippers may think they are worshipping God by offering sacrifices to the images of newly invented “strange gods,” they are really given to Satan’s demons:

16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. - Deuteronomy 32

It appears that when our love is given to something besides Yahweh, Satan and/or his demons enter therein in order to receive it. Money is no different. Paul, for example, warns Timothy about the dangers of loving money:

9 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.

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

When money, which bears images not unlike that of the goddess Juno Moneta, is loved more than Yahweh, Satan’s spirits are attracted to it. They are thereby given a footing, which is a root from which all other evil grows. It becomes mammon.

The choice between serving Yahweh and mammon is the same kind of choice that Joshua offered the Israelites concerning Yahweh or the gods on the other side of the Euphrates River:

15 And if it seems evil to you to serve Yahweh, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh. -Joshua 24

Whenever we worship anything made with hands, we know that we are not worshipping Yahweh. Therefore, we are worshipping devils, such as mammon:

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: -Revelation 9

As soon as our love for earthly riches, wealth, and honor competes with our love for Yahweh, Satan’s unclean spirits enter into those things. They are thereby deified as the gods of Mammon, whom we will both serve and love. Having gained control over our lives, Mammon leads us from our faith and down a path of deceptive sorrows. Whom shall we serve, Yahweh or Mammon?

Come to Understanding is sent out twice per month free of charge. To add someone to our list of readers, please contact us at:

Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies
P.O. Box 12, 114 East Main Street
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.
biblical@ibiblical.org

You may view this and past editions online at: www.ibiblical.org
Scriptures are from the:
Proper Name Version of the King James Bible.



©2009 Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies. All rights reserved.
You may freely copy this publication, provided you acknowledge its source and inform us of your use.