

Come to Understanding

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

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Making the Ephah Small

The “children of Israel” were the descendents of Jacob, who was named “Israel” because he had power, not only with man, but with God (see Genesis 32:28). To escape the severe economic hardship of a famine, Israel and his family moved to Egypt. They eventually became slaves to the Egyptians and remained in Egypt until Yahweh brought them out 430 years later (see Exodus 12:40-41). As Yahweh led the “children of Israel” out of Egypt, He spoke to them by the commandments that He gave to Moses and Aaron:

50 Thus did all the children of Israel; as Yahweh commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. -Exodus 12

As Yahweh was preparing the “children of Israel” to enter into the Promised Land, He gave them a choice of receiving a blessing or a curse. That which they received would depend upon whether or not they obeyed His commandments:

26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 A blessing, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you this day:

28 And a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known. -Deuteronomy 11

Yahweh gave them many commandments, all of which were intended for His glory and for their benefit. One of them concerned honesty in commerce, whereby He commanded them to avoid deceptive practices in weighing and measuring the things that they sold:

13 You shall not have in your bag diverse weights, a great and a small.

14 You shall not have in your house diverse measures, a great and a small.

15 *But* you shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shall you have: that your days may be lengthened in the land which Yahweh your God gives you.

16 For all that do such things, *and* all that do unrighteously, *are* an abomination unto Yahweh your God. -Deuteronomy 25

The Hebrew word that is translated as “measure” is also translated elsewhere as “ephah,” which is a dry measure. A “bath” is a liquid measure. Both of which are 1/10 of a “homer” and are commanded by Yahweh to be just:

11 The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure, that the bath may contain the tenth part of a homer, and the ephah the tenth part of a homer: the measure thereof shall be after the homer. -Ezekiel 45

[A “homer” is “an ancient Hebrew unit of capacity equal to about 10 1/2 or later 11 1/2 bushels or 100 U.S. gallons (378 liters).” (see *Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus, Multimedia Edition*, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2011)]

Whether they are weights or whether they are measures, the use of deceptive practices are an abomination to Yahweh:

10 Diverse weights, *and* diverse measures, both of them *are* alike abomination to Yahweh. -Proverbs 20

The purpose is to deceive buyers by giving them the illusion that something is of greater value than they would have otherwise thought it to be. The widespread use of such practices were shown by Yahweh to be a symptom of a people that had rejected Him and His commandments. In other words, they had rejected truth.

This was the case with the kingdom of Israel before Yahweh judged them. Merchants were using such practices of charging more for less by deception, “making the ephah small, and the shekel great,” to “make the poor of the land to fail,” while maintaining the pretence of righteous obedience to the laws of Yahweh:

4 Hear this, O you that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail,

5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yes, and sell the refuse of the wheat? -Amos 8

Such a condition of making “the poor of the land to fail” is also revealed in the Book of Revelation. As the “Lamb” opened the third seal of the book containing the sealed end-time prophecies, He shows the deceitful balances which are held by the rider of the “black horse:”

**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**

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5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see you hurt not the oil and the wine. -Revelation 6

This “measure” is translated from the Greek word, χοινιξ (choenix), which is less than a quart and perhaps enough to feed one man for one day. The “penny” is translated from the Greek word δηναριον (denarion), which is about a day’s wages (see *Strong’s Concordance*). In other words, a man would work for an entire day to buy just enough wheat to feed himself, with nothing left over to feed his family! However, the luxuries of the wealthy, such as the “oil and the wine,” would remain untouched by the deceitful balances of the black horse rider.

The practice of using deceptive weights of measures was a symptom of the rejection of Yahweh and His word. Because they had rejected His word, Yahweh said He would send a famine in the land for His word so that it could not even be found by those that look for it:

11 Behold, the days come, says the Lord Yahweh, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Yahweh:

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Yahweh, and shall not find it. -Amos 8

When people no longer love the truth, they are no longer discerning. If people can be so easily deceived by false weights and measures, they can certainly be deceived by the fair sounding words of false teachers pretending to be teaching the true Word of God. Paul says that Yahweh will send “a spirit of delusion” upon such people, which will cause them to believe a lie, which would bring damnation upon them:

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

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12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. -2 Thessalonians 2

Those that are willing to reject the truth of God’s word in exchange for economic benefits can easily be brought into submissive bondage:

16 And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. -Revelation 13

They will, therefore, believe in the name of the end-time Satan-powered “beast” as their savior and accept the mark that identifies them as his servants. As such, they will join with him in his economic system that will exclude those that trust in Yahweh and His word and will “swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail.”

Even the people of Judah, after they had been freed from captivity by the Babylonians, rejected Yahweh’s commandments concerning borrowing and lending (see Exodus 22:25 Deuteronomy 23:19; 28:12). Consequently, their economic hardship led them into great bondage to other Jews:

1 And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.

2 For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live.

3 Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the famine.

4 There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king’s tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.

5 Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards. -Nehemiah 5

Yahweh said that He would remember those that reject His commandments concerning economic issues:

7 Yahweh has sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. -Amos 8

The day will come, Yahweh says, when He will judge those that have prospered through economic deceit:

10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. -Amos 8

As we see those that reject God’s commandments shrink what were once standard sized packages, whether they contain ice cream, orange juice, tuna fish, or anything else that they sell, and increase prices, hoping to go unnoticed by the undiscerning, we know this of Yahweh:

160 Your word is true from the beginning: and every one of your righteous judgments endures forever. -Psalms 119