

"The God who Asks for Money?"

Exodus 25:1-9

March 26, 2017

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v.1 ... *"take for Me a contribution"*

Exodus 25 introduces some "significant firsts" ...God dwelling among His people ...God taking up an offering from His people

This Could Seem Peculiar Then—as Well as Now

...*Why Does the Great Yahweh (the God who Delivered them from Egypt) Need to Ask Finite, Limited Humans for "Stuff"???* ...This defies reason. It doesn't make sense that the God who creates from nothing and owns everything is taking up a contribution.

PECULIAR FEATURE #1 ...The "LORD" of Creation, who doesn't Need anything, takes up offerings from mortals!

- ***How many other "Lordship" and "Sovereign Creator" elements don't make sense to us?***
 - Prayer?! ...doesn't make sense when we mix it with our thoughts on a Sovereign God
 - Evangelism?! ...doesn't make sense, when we mix it with our thoughts on a Sovereign God

- We have a variety of reasons that tell us, "we don't need to do this or that"

...This is NOT a NEED thing for God!

- > God doesn't NEED to be worshiped or even loved—although He Commands Worship from Man and He Commands our Supreme Affection/Love
- > God doesn't NEED silver, gold, or fine fabrics—Nor is He Impressed by These!

- > **WE NEED God to Touch What WE Value!! ...WE need to worship God!
...WE need to Find God MORE VALUABLE than gold, silver, or precious
gems! ...*When we part with money or valuables, we are
communicating that we Value Something Else More!***

Psalms 50:10-15 For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

- Offerings and performing vows are about posturing us to LOOK TO GOD—in 'thanksgiving' for what He has been to us ...and in calling upon Him in our day of trouble—so that we have the hope of His deliverance in our lives!!
- > These Moments of "Contributions" allow us the opportunity to communicate (to our souls, to the world, to the heavenly host, to God) that We Value Him More!!—And WE Need That!!

One of the greatest motivations for not loving money or for trying to overcome our fears with money is found in Hebrews 13 v 5-6: 'Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."' 6 So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

*Notice that the writer to the Hebrews argues. That is, he gives reasons. He gives grounds for freedom from the love of money. Be free from the love of money and be content, he says, because God has promised something. So the power of the love of money is to be broken by God's promise to be something for us. What is that? "Be free ... because God has promised, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" In other words, if you enjoy the presence of God more than the presence of money, you will be freed by the promise of his presence. Liberty from the satisfaction of money's presence comes from the superior satisfaction of God's presence. " **John Piper**, Living in the Light: Money, Sex and Power (Kindle Loc 696-703)*

PECULIAR FEATURE #2 ... God Doesn't NEED their Money, but He Takes it from a People That DO!!

- Speaking of "Need" ...certainly, they would be thinking that THEY have need of the wealth they've plundered from Egypt! ...

- Frankly, the whole element of "human involvement in Divine Initiatives" is something that feels questionable. ...Here God is installing one of the most important and central elements in His Redemptive Plan—and He makes it 'dependent on donations' from people's hearts?

Theologically, we need to have a category of healthy awareness of God's use of MEANS to accomplish His Sovereign Ends!

What is this contribution... in the larger setting of the Bible?

- ***1st what it is NOT ...it is not the tithe.***

...The tithe is connected to everyday increase and provision

Gen 14:18-20 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) 19 And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Gen 28:20-22 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

Ex 22:29-30 "You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. 30 You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep: seven days it shall be with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.

Prov 3:5-10 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from

evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

... **The tithe is "recognition rent,"** it is our way of acknowledging and thanking God for being the source of all that is in our lives

... **The tithe is future hope protection** ...it keeps us from placing our hope in money rather than in the God who provides the money that just came into our lives

- **So, what is this 'contribution'?**

- It is a NOW MOMENT with God and it is limited to certain things that are associated with something God is doing at that moment.

- The offering for the poor in Jerusalem—2Cor 8-9

- It touches categories of "wealth" more than anything else. ...These are things that have been accumulated and stored up in their lives. ...This wealth originates in what they plundered from Egypt!

Interesting Reality - Their Givng Was the MEANS that God Used for Them to Experience His Presence in the Future!

- This passage is the doorway into the revelation of God Dwelling Among us—the Tabernacle! ...It is interesting that this doorknob on this door involves money, possessions, and our willingness to give from the heart.