

THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS



STUDIES IN THE HEALING WORD
AND WILL OF GOD SERIES

BIBLE BYTE COMMUNICATIONS

The Mammon of Unrighteousness

Studies in the Healing Word and Will of God

Written by Larry M. Jaynes

All materials copyright © 2005

Bible Byte Communications/biblebyte.org

PO Box 814

Wiscasset, Maine 04578

All rights reserved, including the rights of reproduction in whole or in part in any form, and may not be published, posted, sold, or rewritten without the expressed written permission of the author.



Why this eBooklet is free:

We are so glad that you chose to download this eBooklet as our gift to you. Jesus taught us in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and we aspire to follow our Lord's teaching. The Apostle Paul also understood this concept, "What is my reward then {for preaching and giving the gospel away freely}? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge" (I Corinthians 9:18). Paul came to realize that to serve the Word *without charge* was both a blessing to those who received the Word and to himself personally because he understood that God Himself is the reward, "I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1, and see Hebrews 11:6). When you have God in your life as your *exceeding great reward*, then being *with God* you will have everything you need to begin enjoying the more than abundant life. Our prayer for you is that you come to know experientially that "with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

Enjoy, and God Bless You!

Introduction:

What do you suppose the words, The Mammon of Unrighteousness, means in the Bible? Is it bread from heaven? Is it a beast? Is it sin? Is this Mammon real or unreal, spiritual or physical? Jesus talked about being a friend to the Mammon and it would receive one into everlasting habitations. Yet does not this Mammon of Unrighteousness sound a little ominous and even a little scary? The answers to all these questions are offered in this Bible study. Trust me; there is nothing to worry about because the answers to these questions will return much value into our lives, both now and in the life to come.

The Scripture used throughout this study is quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. Any explanatory insertions by the author in any of the Scripture verses are enclosed in {braces}.

The Mammon of Unrighteousness

In this Bible study, we will be looking at the meaning of the biblical phrase “the mammon of unrighteousness” that Jesus talked about in the Gospel of Luke 16:9–13.

Luke 16:9:

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye {they} fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

The *mammon of unrighteousness* is an expression that was completely understood to the people of the biblelands, and literally refers to their worldly possessions, also known to them as their personal treasures that God gave to bless them.

Jesus was instructing his followers to take care of their personal possessions, and the reason was that in Bible times everything that a person owned they believed came from God and that their possessions were gifts given directly from Him to them, no matter how their possessions literally came to them, they were thankful to God for them. They understood that, “The earth *is* the LORD’S, and the fullness thereof” (Psalms 24:1), and the believers believed this wholeheartedly. If their belongings were inherited, or given to them, or if they worked for them, to them they were thankful to God Who opened up to them His “good treasure” to bless them with His abundant blessings.

Deuteronomy 28:11–12 displays how the LORD blessed them with their treasures, “the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand.” The people in the biblelands would remember that it was God Who blessed them as Deuteronomy 8:18 expresses, “thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.”

The *mammon of unrighteousness* is set in the biblical context of stewardship, as they believed that their possessions were on loan to them from God above, and they

believed that if they were faithful stewards, then God would give them even more to care for and enjoy in both this life and the next. However, if they were slothful or wasteful stewards with their belongings, then they believed that they would lose what they owned, and thus, their own actions were tantamount to knowing exactly why they possessed much or had little.

Years ago as I first read the words *mammon of unrighteousness*, I imagined that Jesus was referring to a beast of some kind or something else weird; and just the other day someone told me that they thought that the *mammon of unrighteousness* had something to do with the Manna that the children of Israel ate in the desert. The word *mammon* is an Aramaic word rather than a Greek or English word and the translators literally transliterated the Aramaic word only with the equivalent English letters, rather than translating *mammon* into the appropriate English word or meaning when compiling many of our New Testament versions of the Bible.

There are actually many Aramaic words that are still left in the King James Version of the Bible (more than forty), and many of these are used several times. I will give you a few examples of some of the Aramaic words that are still transliterated into English letters in our Bibles; the word *Abba* in Mark 14:36, the word *Gethsemane* in Matthew 26:36, the word *Golgotha* in John 19:17, the word *Raca* in Matthew 5:22, the word *Rabboni* in John 20:16, the words *lama sabachthani* in Matthew 27:28, the words *Anathema Maranatha* in I Corinthians 16:22, and the words *Talitha cumi* in Mark 5:41.

For people who love words, these are some excellent examples for study because more often than not, the correct meaning was just barely translated correctly into English, like our current study of the *mammon of unrighteousness*.

We have one Bible that was translated over into English directly from Aramaic Texts (Lamsa, George M. *The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1981.), and he translates the *mammon of unrighteousness* correctly into the words "earthly wealth." If this were translated correctly into our Bibles from the start, then no one would ever need to guess about Jesus' subject on the stewardship of our possessions.

In Luke 16, Jesus was teaching that when we faithfully take care of our belongings (referring to them as the *mammon of unrighteousness*) that we have received from

God, then in the end (in heaven) we will receive greater rewards that will last for all eternity, even after our worldly possessions fade away (or *fail* us).

By making the time to take care of our possessions we will literally have even more time to enjoy the finer things in life such as love, light, peace, happiness, and holiness. As a result, the things we own will last longer, perhaps much longer for they will be blessed by God Who lovingly gave them to us to care for and watch over.

Jesus continues with his teaching about the *mammon of unrighteousness*:

Luke 16:10-12:

-10: He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

-11: If therefore ye hath not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches* {of life}?

-12: And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's {as in wasting time when working for someone or borrowing things and abusing them}, who shall give you that which is your own?

Taking care of our possessions, even things that we may consider the *least* in our lives, such as a simple hair comb, is perhaps one of the *least* of our belongings, and yet when we become *faithful* to care for the little things we have and are thankful to God for them, then God blesses our faithfulness and supplies even more abundance.

By being *faithful in that which is least*, God is willing and able to give us even greater abundance because that caring action proves (to ourselves) that we can be *faithful also in much*. This proof will increase our believing for even greater things.

A man or a woman's life literally becomes more abundant as they thankfully acknowledge God for their possessions, as well as caring for their personal belongings. By taking care of our personal effects and putting everything back in its place and keeping our rooms, apartments, or houses clean will bring great rewards into our lives. Our God indeed can supply our every need, and being thankful and caring for what we do own at this moment in time opens the floodgates for even more abundance from our God.

Luke 16:13:

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. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

The questions that first must be asked about the *servant* in verse 13 above are who are the *two masters* that a *servant* would *serve*, who is the *servant*, who is *the one*, and who is *the other*? If we get these wrong, then we will be heading down the wrong path and ultimately, we would come up short in understanding the essence of the great teaching of Jesus Christ who is the golden thread that links us to God's heart.

Recall Jesus said (in verse 9 above), *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*, and he discussed about being *faithful in the unrighteous mammon* (in verse 11 above)? Jesus cannot be recanting in verse 13 or backpedaling to now imply that we should abandon these (our possessions) and pursue only God, neither was Jesus implying that you will end up either holding and loving God or hating and despising Him, because that would make our Savior double-minded and a flip-flopper. The *servant* is you, the believer; the *two masters* are you and your possessions.

What helps free a man or a woman is being in control of their possessions, befriending them and faithfully taking care of them BEFORE they begin controlling your life and causing you to begin serving them, because then they would draw out all your time and you could end up hating and despising them.

We all have heard people say, and perhaps we have said or thought of some of these before, "I hate my stuff," or "I hate my TV," or "I hate my car," or "I hate my stereo," or "I hate my job," and even, "I hate my life." God's Word instructs, "And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance {more on this *reward of the inheritance* below}: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24). When our focus is on serving the Lord, and we are trying to take care of our things and being thankful for all our things, then we will also notice God's blessings upon them and just how blessed we really are in His service!

When we begin realizing that our stuff was given to us by God, as this idea forms the right mindset, we will be living in accordance with the precise will of God. By taking care of our stuff, we end up freeing up even more of our spare time, which allows us to be in the delightful service of our Lord and Savior.

Oh, and by the way, the word “stuff” is a good biblical word used for people’s belongings throughout the Old Testament. For instance, see Genesis 31:7, Exodus 37:7, I Samuel 25:13, and Nehemiah 13:8; Jesus even used the word “stuff” in Luke 17:31. After we become *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, THEN we can follow and participate in Jesus’ next inspiration that states, *ye cannot serve God and mammon*.

I would like to give you one example of *ye cannot serve God and mammon* that will help you understand this biblical concept. If I owned an automobile and the manual that came with it gave instructions as to when I should change the oil, alternate the tires, and change the filters, etcetera, and I follow these guidelines, the car would run much smoother. However, if I do not follow the instructions in my manual, just to save some time and money, what would happen to the automobile in the long term? Well, over time the car will begin to deteriorate at a much faster rate than if I had followed the instructions in the first place, and the repairs will be much more expensive and even more time-consuming.

Consequently, the money I had for other expenditures, like food and bills, etcetera, will be harder to come up with, and as a direct result of this, I am now working for the car and financially I become much more strapped, and I will have less free time than if I took care of the car in the first place. I am then serving *mammon* and despising it, and have no (or much less) time to *serve* my heavenly Father.

When believers take the time to be faithful in the small things in their lives, they will literally receive even greater and bigger things from God, not only now, but throughout eternity. However, if we cannot take care of our own possessions, then eventually our possessions begin controlling our lives, which literally gives us less time to walk with and serve our God. This is the meaning of Luke 16:13 (also See Matthew 6:24). God is a Spirit (John 4:24) and being Spirit we cannot literally see Him. However, as we care for the things He has given to us, the more real God becomes in our lives and the greater we will realize that we are serving Him.

God promised Abram (Abraham) that He would become his “shield, *and* his exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1), and as He was these for Abram, He can become these for us today.

The subject of Luke 16:1–13 is on stewardship, on caring for the physical things we own.

Romans 6:22:

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

The work of Jesus Christ made us free so that we may freely serve our God. *Fruit* represents what we produce as we serve our heavenly Father, and what we produce is *holiness*, and *holiness* means purity.

God has given to His children a way to recognize their *holiness* before Him. “Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). We can stand now and forever before our Maker with dignity and the assurance of knowing our own heavenly purity and we can know that at the end of this life (with the return of Christ) we will be received into everlasting life and rewarded, and surely *we shall see God*.

Jesus taught us that when we follow the instructions in God’s Word, and stand even through adversity, that we should, “Rejoice, and be exceeding glad {And why?}: for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12). When we care for our possessions and faithfully put in the required time to care for our stuff, then a real spiritual quality of life will be committed to our trust (the true riches).

The time, oh, the required time of which we have so little is not overwhelming if we consider that doing something else extra is actually a time savings, and I offer that ten or fifteen minutes a day extra is the difference maker in huge ways. Try it, and you will realize that this is so very true, so very easy, and so very rewarding because that *mammon of unrighteousness* paves the way towards blessing — you.

The *true riches*, such as *fruit unto holiness*, will begin to be manifested in our lives and in our surroundings, as we become good stewards with that which God has granted and blessed us.

In heaven, you will not receive more of the same mammon of unrighteousness that you presently have, nor will you be asked to take care of them any longer because in heaven you will receive new, everlasting treasures. Mammon is titled as unrighteous treasures only because they are temporal, lasting only for a while, but in eternity, you will “receive the reward of the inheritance” that will endure perpetually and help care for and support you. Being faithful stewards with your earthly possessions will “receive you into everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9), meaning that they will bring to you many more rewards that are eternal.

“The LORD recompense {reimburse} thy work {Ruth’s *work*}, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2:12). Ruth was a widower, destitute, and childless, but she was promised *a full reward*, just as all believers can aspire towards the receiving and enjoying of their own *full reward* by being faithful in this life with the things God has already given to them, whether plenty or little (Proverbs 16:8).

Proverbs 3:9-10:

-9: Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

-10: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Proverbs 15:15-17:

-15: All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast.

-16: Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD {respectful honor for the LORD} than great treasure and trouble therewith.

-17: Better *is* a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

Ruth came under a covenant with God (*under His wings*) by trusting in the LORD God, trusting that He “is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6), not only in this life but in the next as well. Ruth knew that “having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (I Timothy 6:8), and because she was trying even with the little she had, she eventually became extremely blessed with great abundance and the gaining of a loving husband, Boaz, and a son, Obed. Ruth knew and believed what Hebrews 13:5-6 substantiates, “and be content with such

things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper," and He certainly was for Ruth and He surely will be for those who are faithful stewards.

Ruth and Boaz were the great grandparents of King David, who was in the lineage of Christ the King of kings and Lord of lords. In Ruth's story, her faith, as does all biblical faith, links to Christ who is the golden thread to God's rewards. Following Christ and his teachings in the Word of God is positively better and more profitable than following a rainbow and its supposed treasure chest.

Our dedicated faith to be faithful stewards with the stuff that we have been blessed with by God, as Jesus Christ taught us, assures us in the present tense that our faith has led us to the ever present promises of God wherein we will merit a future "inheritance incorruptible."

I Peter 1:3-5:

-3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:

-4: To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

-5: {For} Who {FOR YOU} are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I Corinthians 15:46 reads, "Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual," meaning that we should *first* be good stewards of the *natural* (or physical) things God has given to us in this world. Then, *afterward* in heaven, we will receive *spiritual* treasures that we can lay up in our heavenly treasure chests by being faithful stewards today. Jesus said, "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:20), for our heavenly treasures will be everlasting.

II Corinthians 4:18:

While we look not at the things which are seen, but {we should *look* towards or} at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal {that mammon of unrighteousness}; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

This verse is pretty cool when you think about it in relationship to some of the *temporal* theories that the scientific community has been circulating about our planet, propounding their “new” discoveries that the world may not last, even though God already told us this centuries ago in II Corinthians 4:18.

And what’s more, people who advocate these theories are now suggesting that we (as a race) should start planning to move to a dead planet (like Mars) and re-seed and cultivate and repopulate it for the salvation of our posterity. It is the same old story of history repeating itself, it is the story of Nimrod and Babel all over again, and reminds me of the conquerors and barbarians of old after they had plundered and laid waste an area, they moved on to the next conquest where the grass was hoped to be greener, only these days the goals are much loftier.

I would suggest that they first try rejuvenating our own earth before they blast off (and with a mega fortune of taxpayer dollars), because if they cannot fix a living planet which is *temporal* according to God’s Word, then why would we suppose that they could kickstart a dead planet to life? Could it be that man is just trying to play God and save the world by man’s wisdom (I Corinthians 1:18–31)? Well, all I can say is “happy trails,” but for me, I would rather follow God’s instructions to “wait” here, on earth, for Christ’s return for you and me (I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:14–17, and II Thessalonians 3:5). As he left the earth so he shall return to the earth “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

How ridiculous (and pretentious) it is to imagine that man can save man, “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psalms 49:7, this is an awesome Psalm to read), but Jesus did; he paid the *ransom* (price) for all men and women (I Timothy 2:6; and I Corinthians 6:19–20), and soon, much sooner than we might ruminat!

Our escape and salvation from the bonds of this world are in accepting and knowing our Savior, Jesus Christ, and by daily walking with our God; and further, we may fellowship with Him by taking care of what He has given us to enjoy in this life. I Corinthians 7:31 reads, “they {that is us} that use this world, as not abusing *it* {not overusing *it*}: for the fashion of this world passeth away.” The universe, including the earth, will melt and burn away (II Peter 3:8–14, and Isaiah

34:4), but this will happen only on God's timetable, not man's, and the believers will already be in heaven enjoying their eternities.

We will be able to stand before God knowing that we have done our personal part in caring for what He has given us if we take care of our personal belongings that God has blessed us with, regardless of the ineffectual movement to save the planet that is becoming a religion unto itself.

Keep in mind that many in days gone by "worshipped and served the creature {creation} more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (Romans 1:25). There are those today who think they know better than God about the unobtainable pursuit to "save our planet," yet in spite of our shortcomings, God already has the future covered in His infinite wisdom.

Jesus only asks us to take care of our stuff, not to abuse what we use, and not be so concerned about what everyone else is doing (Matthew 7:1-5). All too many people are living in an ever increasing crisis mode and have put themselves in a state of frenzy worrying about global problems that they have no control over, all the while trying to get us all to buy into what they are selling.

Remember Jesus said, "Come unto me {not them}, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29).

There is folly in worrying about what your neighbors are doing all over the entire earth. We were not meant to be like Atlas and carry all the world's problems upon our shoulders. Not one of us has been commissioned by God to save the earth because it is temporal, impossible, and therefore cannot be preserved forever.

The earth is given to sustain man so he could worship God and serve Christ our Lord with our fellow believers. True, a lot of good has been done to help curb the wasteful handprint of man on this earth, and much more is needed, but we, as Christians and good stewards of the mammon of unrighteousness — our temporal possessions, are to simply trust in God to be our sufficiency.

Living in the light of godly principles backs down darkness without a fight.

Remember, just like the song, “He’s got the whole world in His hands,” not, “we have the whole world is in our hands.” In other words, we need not sweat the small things, or fret about the big things. We are encouraged to do our best and not worry about things that are out of our control, and in the end, trust God, He will right every wrong, and so — please, no worries.

Revelation 21:4:

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

“For, behold, I {God will} create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I {will} create” (Isaiah 65:17-18). “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first {former} heaven and the first {former} earth were passed away” (Revelation 21:1). However, today (praise the LORD), God gives the true riches of life to His children that can become daily enjoyed; this is the great lesson Jesus Christ taught us when he spoke of *the mammon of unrighteousness*.

“God Bless You!”

Benediction:

Proverbs 18:9 and 28:20a:

9: He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

20a: A faithful man shall abound with blessings. . .

Acts 20:32:

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

“When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life or in the life of another.” Helen Keller:

“God gives every bird his worm, but he does not throw it into the nest.”
Swedish Proverb

“Ask God’s blessings on your work, but don’t ask him to do it for you.”
Dame Flora Robson

“Sow an act, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit, and you reap a character. Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.” Charles Reade

“I have held many things in my hands and have lost them all . . . But whatsoever I have placed in God’s hands - that I still possess.” Martin Luther

Bible Byte Communications is built on the rock Christ Jesus, teaching for the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel, and for the love of His healing Word.

About donating to Bible Byte Communications:
(biblebyte.org)

We firmly believe that you should NOT give what you need to live on; please take care of you and yours before considering a donation. May you truly be inspired and blessed by the LORD before you give; as we read in Deuteronomy 16:17 "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee." If you are *able* and desire to donate and help us get the Word of redemption out to others for free; we humbly thank you.

God Bless You!

To donate securely online, please visit our website.

To use regular mail, please send your check or money order to:

Bible Byte Communications
PO Box 814
Wiscasset, ME 04578