

ZECHARIAH

Message Eleven

**The Evil and Wickedness of Commerce
versus
a Divine Sense of Value
concerning Christ and the Church**

Scripture Reading: Zech. 5:5-11;
Luke 16:13; Phil. 3:7-8; Acts 20:28

I. The vision of the ephah vessel signifies the evil and wickedness of business, or commerce, on the earth—Zech. 5:5-11:

- A. Commerce seems to have a proper appearance; actually, commerce is evil, full of wickedness—vv. 6-8:
 - 1. The vision of the ephah vessel shows us that the most evil thing on earth is commerce—vv. 5-11.
 - 2. The woman sitting within the ephah vessel signifies the wickedness contained in commerce, such as covetousness, deceit, and the love of money—vv. 7-8a.
 - 3. This vision corresponds to that of Babylon the Great in Revelation 18; these two visions show that in the sight of God the wickedness contained in commerce is a form of idolatry and fornication:
 - a. The beginning of commerce is connected with Satan, and its end, with Babylon—Ezek. 28; Rev. 18:
 - 1) Ezekiel 28 is the beginning of world commerce, and Revelation 18 is the consummation, the peak development, of world commerce.
 - 2) The most severe judgment from God will be brought against Babylon because it will be the consummation of aggrandizement by trade and the epitome of sin—vv. 2-3, 5, 15-17a, 20.
 - b. Commerce is the field in which, more than any other, “the corruption which is in the world by lust” (2 Pet. 1:4) relentlessly pursues even the most high-principled of Christians and can easily overtake them to their undoing—Neh. 5:1-13; 13:10-14.
 - 4. Building a house for the woman in the land of Shinar signifies that God’s sovereignty will cause the wickedness in business, which the people of Israel learned from the Babylonians in their captivity, to go back to Babylon—Zech. 5:9-11.
- B. We need to be delivered from the commercial mind—Matt. 19:27—20:16:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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1. Satan is a businessman, a merchant, and his thought is according to his commercial principle—Job 1:9-11; Ezek. 28:16, 18; cf. Rev. 18:2-5, 9-19.
2. Peter's concept in dealing with the Lord in Matthew 19:27 was commercial, according to the principle of work; in His answer to Peter the Lord strongly indicated that His reward is not commercial but according to His desire and grace—v. 28—20:16:
 - a. Peter's natural concept, representing that of all believers, was commercial—vv. 11-12.
 - b. The Lord's word in verse 14 shattered Peter's natural, commercial mind and destroyed his concept of commerce—16:23-26; 2 Cor. 10:4-5.
- C. "No household servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"—Luke 16:13:
 1. Mammon stands in opposition to God, indicating that wealth, or riches, is the opponent of God, robbing God's people of their service to Him.
 2. To serve the Lord requires us to love Him, giving our heart to Him, and requires us to cleave to Him, giving our entire being to Him—Matt. 6:19-21:
 - a. In this way we are released from being occupied and usurped by mammon so that we may serve the Lord wholly and fully—4:10.
 - b. In order to serve the Lord, we must overcome the enticing, deceitful mammon of unrighteousness—Luke 16:9, 13; Matt. 13:22.
 3. Giving money and material things in resurrection is a strong indication that we are under God's administration in resurrection and have overcome the possession of material riches—1 Cor. 16:1-3; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 11:29.
- D. "Let your way of life be without the love of money"—Heb. 13:5a:
 1. Whatever one loves, his whole heart, even his entire being, is set on and occupied and fully possessed by—cf. Mark 12:30; 2 Tim. 3:1-2a.

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2. “Those who intend to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin”—1 Tim. 6:9.
3. Because of the love of money, some have been led away from the faith and have pierced themselves through with many pains—v. 10.

II. We need to have a divine sense of value in order to appreciate the supreme preciousness of Christ and the exceeding worth of the church—Luke 16:15b; 1 Pet. 2:4, 7; Matt. 13:45-46; Acts 20:28:

- A. The Bible has much to say concerning a change in one’s concept of value—Psa. 118:22; 1 Cor. 1:18; Matt. 6:32-33; 10:37-38; 16:26; 18:8-9; 20:25-27; Job 22:23-28; Heb. 11:24-26:
 1. Before a person believes in the Lord, his concept of value is perverted, but once a person is saved, his concept of value changes—Luke 19:2, 8-9.
 2. If we have a thorough change in our concept of value, we will know to choose the most excellent portion—10:41-42; Matt. 26:6-13.
- B. We need to appreciate the supreme preciousness of Christ—Mark 14:3-9:
 1. “Coming to Him, a living stone,...with God chosen and precious”; “to you therefore who believe is the preciousness”—1 Pet. 2:4, 7a:
 - a. In verse 4 *precious* indicates preciousness that is recognized and held in honor.
 - b. The Christ chosen by God as a stone, even a cornerstone that is precious to God, is the preciousness to the believers—v. 7a.
 - c. We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ—vv. 4, 7a.
 2. “What things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ. But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ”—Phil. 3:7-8:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- a. We need to know Christ in His excellency, in His supreme preciousness; no person, matter, or thing is more precious than the Lord Jesus as the treasure within us—2 Cor. 4:7; S. S. 5:10-16; Matt. 10:37.
 - b. The excellency of Christ is derived from the excellency of His person—17:5; Col. 1:13.
 - c. When Christ was revealed to Paul, he saw the excellency, the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, of Christ and suffered the loss of all things and counted them as refuse so that he might gain Christ—Gal. 1:15a, 16a; Phil. 3:7-8.
3. “As He reclined at table, a woman came, having an alabaster flask of ointment, of very costly pure nard, and she broke the alabaster flask and poured it over His head”—Mark 14:3:
- a. The gospel causes genuine believers to treasure the Lord Jesus and to value His supreme preciousness—vv. 3-4.
 - b. The goal of the gospel is that we would pour out upon the Lord Jesus what is most precious to us, “wasting” ourselves upon Him—Matt. 26:6-8 and footnote on v. 8, Recovery Version.
- C. We need to appreciate the exceeding worth of the church—13:45-46; Acts 20:28:
1. “The kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking fine pearls; and finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it”—Matt. 13:45-46:
 - a. The merchant here is Christ, who was seeking the church for His kingdom.
 - b. After finding the church in 16:18 and 18:17, He went to the cross and sold all that He had and bought it for the kingdom.
 2. “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood”—Acts 20:28:
 - a. *His own blood* indicates the precious love of God for the church and the preciousness, the exceeding worth, of the church as a treasure to God.

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- b. Paul's emphasis here is the value of the church as a treasure to God, a treasure that He acquired with His own precious blood—1 John 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.
- c. The church was precious to Paul because he realized that the desire of the Lord's heart is to gain the church and that He obtained the church through His own blood; therefore, Paul was willing, most gladly, to spend and be utterly spent for the church—Eph. 1:5, 9; Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; 2 Cor. 12:15.