

# Money and the Judas Syndrome

Outrageous taxes and tax abuses have not ensured any nation's prosperity. What is the key to national financial health and security? What can be the results of ignoring God's laws regarding money? How did money figure in Judas' attitude of criticism of Jesus which led to traitorous betrayal?

In God's theocracy of Israel, God insisted He had a prior claim on a flat 10 percent of the increase of the labor of His people. Put another way, God insisted no power in the universe had any authority to rob you of 90 percent of everything you produced! What if you and I could keep 90 percent of our income?

*by Garner Ted Armstrong*

**I** watched a television interview with a published author on a major news network a few months ago. He insists the United States Internal Revenue Service is unconstitutional, that it exercises powers it does not really possess, and that the U.S. Congress is "cowed" by the IRS.

He related how a man in a northwestern state was sent a bill by the IRS for about \$70,000. But the bill never arrived. Among the some 45,000 mistyped addresses by sloppy clerks in the IRS, his tax bill had the wrong address on it.

Years passed. Finally, the statute of limitations had run out. But eventually some clerk in the massive bureaucracy discovered their mistake, and promptly sent the man a huge tax bill, including "penalties," for more than a quarter of a million dollars!

They said he should have chased down the IRS, and insist that they chase him, so he could pay the tax they said he owed!

Stricken, knowing the huge bill bankrupted him, ruined his business, the man committed suicide.

His widow fought back in tax court. Eventually, she won, after paying large legal costs.

And so it was that a handful of uncaring, unfeeling, government employees destroyed a human life, destroyed a family, destroyed a lifetime of hard work and sacrifice.

In another story, a couple of entrepreneurs, a man and wife, owned their own eighteen-wheeler, and crisscrossed the country hauling freight.

The IRS allows travel expenses in connection with one's business, such as motels, meals, gasoline, and the like, as a deduction. The couple owned a home, and always came back to their home between trips. But since they traveled so much, the IRS decided the cab of their truck was really their home, and forced them to pay tax on all their expenses.

Then there was the story about a couple whose children were in a day care center while they both worked. The IRS invaded the day care center, separated their children, placing some in one room, and the rest in another. IRS agents then barricaded the two rooms, pushing tables against the doors. Upon the tables, they placed the stacks of IRS forms they wanted the couple to sign, acknowledging they owed the IRS.

When the couple came to collect their children, they were forced to sign the forms before they could have their children.

Each year, a significant number of Americans commit suicide because of IRS penalties and harassment.

Whether you live in the United States or not, how much do you pay in income tax, state income tax, sales tax, hidden taxes, luxury tax, hotel tax, airport tax, state tax, county tax, school board tax, local tax, and a plethora of other taxes? How much of every dollar you earn is taken from you by some form of government?

In his sensational book, *The Tax Racket*, Martin L. Gross has exposed "Government Extortion From A To Z." He covers such things as "Marriage Tax," "School Tax," "Social Security Tax," "Airport Tax," "Luxury Tax," "Gasoline Tax," "Personal Property Tax," "Value-Added Tax," "Small Business Taxes," "Junk Food Tax," "Inheritance Tax," "Telephone and Cable Taxes," "Options, Stocks and Bonds Taxes," "Hotel and Travel Tax," "Income Tax, Federal, State, and City," "License Taxes," "Nanny Tax," "Gambling Tax," and many, many others. I heartily recommend it to anyone—so long as you realize the net result may be a growing rage against the incredible drain on the average person's income as a result of government excesses!

Early on in the book, Gross explains how all of us work for the government the first several months of the year; how and when we arrive at "Tax Freedom Day," or the day in the year when we begin working for ourselves and our loved ones.

He wrote, "Today, our "Tax Freedom Day," when we stop working for governments and put the first bite of tax-free food in our mouths—for U.S. citizens, is May 6 nationally. Bad enough, but in New York it extends to May 24, some 144 days into the year. Connecticut pays until May 22, followed not far behind by Minnesota, New Jersey, and California."

### *America Is Under a Curse From God*

There is a cause for every effect. Today, our nation reels under massive debt. We have gone from the largest creditor to the largest debtor nation in only a matter of a few years. Today, we are so deeply in debt that we rival nations like Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina.

Our vanquished enemies of World War II have burgeoned up to superpower status, enjoying a standard of living in many cases higher than that of the United States. Germany and Japan are being heard from in the global political arena, and as I have been warning for years, are even now moving into the international military arena. Japan's yearly expenditures for armaments are more than Britain and France combined.

Our families are being destroyed. Our schools are lowering standards, then claiming the students are getting better grades. Uniformed officers must patrol many schools; metal detectors are in place to apprehend students carrying weapons. Drugs, sexual promiscuity, early pregnancy, unwanted babies, and abortion stalk the classroom.

America staggers under a massive burden of crime and violence, all the while gobbling up unbridled orgies of murder, dismemberments, shootings, stabbings, and gigantic explosions in a never-ending series of megaviolence in the movies and on television.

A new computer chip, called the "V" chip, was recently announced, and received President Clinton's endorsement. It will allow parents to block out violent, objectionable programming on their home TV sets. Television industry leaders were quick to defend their outpouring of death and gore, and the media surmised that the installation of the "V" chip would probably be a signal to the producers of violent television to produce even more violence than before.

Twenty-year studies by universities are not necessary to prove the direct relationship between television violence and growing violence, smoking, drug use, and alcoholism among America's youth.

Millions of Americans lock themselves in while criminals roam freely outside.

Tens of thousands of frightened people go to sleep on the floor, on mattresses, in rear rooms, because of random drive-by shootings in gang-ridden neighborhoods'. Tens of thousands of Americans are murdered every year. Your nightly TV news features the latest shootings, stabbings, arson, riots, burglaries, drug busts, and shoot-outs with police.

The criminal justice system is so overloaded that only a fraction of offenders ever come to justice. Thousands of killers languish on death rows in America's prisons, living for years; decades in many cases, without ever paying for their violent crimes.

We can't build prisons fast enough. The moment a new prison is built, it is overcrowded.

Meanwhile, we suffer from disease pandemics like AIDS, herpes and warts, muscular dystrophy, heart disease, emphysema, breast cancer, cancer of the lymphatic system, cancer of the liver, lung cancer, and cancer of the bone marrow, called "leukemia." We are afflicted by skin cancer, diabetes, alcoholism, drug addiction, blindness, deafness, eczema, dozens of skin diseases, baldness, loss of vision, arthritis, cancer of the prostate, cervical cancer, Parkinsons disease, flus, colds, night sweats and worries, insomnia, manic depression, mental disease, dementia praecox, paranoia, fear, Alzheimer's disease, gout, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, chicken pox, typhus, smallpox, bubonic plague, the fear of the spread of the Ebola virus, viral infections of all kinds, schizophrenia, and dozens of other ailments.

Millions of Americans have up to five or six of the above. Over a hundred million people suffer from some form or other, and perhaps two or three, chronic diseases.

One of the largest items for millions of Americans living on fixed incomes is what they have to spend on pharmaceuticals, medicines to relieve pain.

Why?

Because our peoples are under a curse from God! There are living laws in place which, when they are broken, cause the poverty, squalor, sickness and disease; which cause divorce, venereal disease, illegitimacy, and AIDS.

There is a cause for every effect. The effects we have dealt with above are destroying the fabric of our nations. The average home is in deep trouble. Normal marriages, with father and mother in their God-ordained place, rearing their children in the knowledge of God; knowing right from wrong, good from evil, are giving way to "live-ins," homosexual "marriages," and millions of "singles" who may have been divorced once or twice or more, and who have young children.

The obvious cause of increased youthful crime and violence, the growth of neighborhood gangs, drug abuse, smoking beginning in the sixth and seventh grade, and alcoholism in high school is the disintegration of the family. God's laws were set in motion to preserve and protect the family. Ignored, broken, those same laws carry the penalties we see everywhere around us.

### ***What Are Your Hopes and Dreams?***

What do you really WANT out of life?

First, you very likely would like to have at least ONE MILLION DOLLARS! The reason I placed this first is because, even though millions of people have completely misplaced priorities and false values, it is MONEY they covet more than anything else.

But, aside from plenty of money to spend on physical things, what do you want? How about good health; a total absence of debility, aches and pains, sickness and disease? How about a body like those depicted in some of the exercise programs you see on TV? How about being eternally YOUNG and powerful, with strength and plenty of energy and vitality?

And how about peace of mind? Millions of us are stricken with fear, worry, anxiety, depression; a huge percentage of the population are mentally ill, barely able to function day to day.

Along with peace of mind, how about happiness? Think of all the things we really WANT! We want success, abundance, prosperity; we want fulfillment and we want LOVE; someone who adores us; someone with whom we can share all the wonderful things of a full, zestful, interesting, exciting life!

We want happy marriages, healthy, respectful, obedient children! We want long lives, and plenty of time to do the things that are so appealing to us, like traveling to exotic places, spending time on the fabled south sea island, basking in the sun!

Oh, we could go on and on about the things we WANT! But what do most people have? They have the OPPOSITE of all these things.

Millions live lives of frustration, emptiness, anxiety, stress, and sickness. Millions are uneducated, unemployed. Millions live in terrible poverty, barely eking out a kind of "existence" that is hardly describable as a life.

Millions are divorced—many for the second and third time! Millions more are single parents. The very fabric of family life in our societies is coming completely apart!

Just as there are causes which produce penalties—all the evil things around us we *don't want*—so there are causes which would produce all the things we do want.

Let's turn to the word of the Almighty Creator God of all of mankind to see WHY all these curses have come upon us! First, God promises US GREAT BLESSINGS if we will obey the laws that produce those blessings:

He says, "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit" (Leviticus 26:3,4).

What does such a fabulous promise mean to farmers and orchard-keepers? What does it mean to national economics? What does it mean to starving nations, in the grip of famine, when other countries blessed by God can send them millions of tons of food?

"And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely" (Leviticus 26:5).

That means God promises to control our weather in such a way that food can be grown all year around!

But look at the massive onslaughts of winter storms that have afflicted our peoples! RECORD-BREAKING COLD has gripped our nation in recent months, cause massive destruction. Before that, there was the most mind-boggling FLOODS in our history that caused billions in crop losses; that interrupted shipping on our major river systems and our interstate highways.

Then there was Homestead, Florida, and a season of one hurricane after another that dealt the U.S. Gulf coast massive blows!

Why? Is all this just a cycle of some kind? Is it merely bad luck? Or is Almighty God involved in some way?

Christ said droughts and famines, increasing earthquake activity and massive disease epidemics would signal that the great tribulation is near! Are we nearing that time?

After revealing all the bountiful *blessings* our peoples would reap if we obeyed God's laws that produce them, God listed the curses that would come upon us if we did not!

Is there anyone, from lowliest person standing dejectedly in the unemployment line to the most prominent members in the congress who can say, "America is a nation that obeys God?"

God says, "But if ye Will NOT hearken unto Me [and we have not!], and Will NOT do all these commandments [and we have *not done them!*]; And if ye despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I will also do THIS unto you: I will appoint over you terror [and millions live in fear and terror!—terrorism is now striking even in the heartland of America!], consumption, [flu and colds, respiratory infections are now one of the MAJOR health problems and causes of death in the United States!], and the burning ague that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it" (Leviticus 26:15,16).

Then follows a series of horrible curses that would be laid upon those who despise God's laws, and who abhor His righteous judgments. Drought, famine, disease, defeat in war, and eventual captivity are prophesied to happen to those who reject God's laws.

God shows that rejection of His righteous laws causes the automatic curses that come upon us.

### ***What Christ Said About Employer-Employees***

Read Matthew 20:1-16. Study this portion of Scripture carefully.

In this story, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Who will soon rule this world as King of kings and Lord of lords, upholds the absolute sovereign right of any landowner or employer to cut individual contracts.

There is no concept here of a "level playing field" for workers, or of organized unions, to strike against the employer, or torch his home or fields, There is no concept here of government interference in the marketplace. Instead, idle workers are offered, individually, a contract. Each likes what he hears, and accepts his contract.

One cheerfully agrees to work for the day for a set wage.

Another cheerfully agrees to work for half as long, for a set wage. Still another agrees to work for only an hour in the late afternoon for a set wage. That each is paid the same amount is irrelevant in Christ's example, for each agreed to a specific set of terms.

Thus, Christ upholds the right of an employer to pay whatever is agreed upon, as well as the right of any worker to decide to work for the amount offered.

Prior to the hiring, the idle men had no jobs. They could have refused the offer of work, or argued about the pay. Instead, each agreed.

Thus, Christ condemns the entire concept of "collective bargaining" and a "guaranteed minimum wage." Instead, He upholds the personal sovereignty and dignity of each individual.

Of course, the deeper spiritual implications of what Christ taught are obvious. God calls some to labor a lifetime, struggling against Satan, against the world with its pulls, tugs, and attractions, and against the appetites of human nature, before eventually entering God's Kingdom.

Others will be among the "last, who shall be first," and will repent at the time of the heavenly signs (Revelation 7), calling out to God in fright, shock, and remorse. God will hear them, forgive them, and bring them into His Kingdom. Should those, then, who labored long complain? But why? They are not only granted eternal salvation, but they are rewarded according to their works.

There is no "collective bargaining," or "guaranteed minimum effort," or "affirmative action" on the way toward God's Kingdom.

### *The Way of Giving*

There are two opposite ways of life revealed in God's Word. The way of "getting" is the way of this world. It is the way of greed, avarice, cunning; the way of competition, jealousy and strife.

The world's economics are fueled by this way. The stock markets, futures trading, speculation, mutual funds—the entire global economy is fueled by the fundamental greed of human nature.

But God's way, the way of Christ, was the way of giving! The most oft-quoted scripture in the Bible is John 3:16, in which says, "For God so loved the world that he GAVE His only begotten Son, that whosoever believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The perfect love of the Father toward the Son was expressed in letting go. In giving. What could be a greater sacrifice?

Jesus Christ continually exposed the carnal-minded way of getting of this world. He said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Jesus called the way of this world the way of "getting," and of placing great value on material things, "mammon." He said, "No man 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."

He went on to describe the average daily way of life lived by millions. It is a life of fear, of anxiety, of worry and apprehension about the future. He said, "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Wherefore take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' For after all these things do the nations seek: for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (verses 25-32).

God knows we have need of the necessities of life! It is a matter of priorities. If we put His Kingdom first, He promises to supply our needs.

## *The Guilt of Judas*

Judas Iscariot was a thief, a liar, a cheat, a posturer. Yet, he was self-righteous; he completely ignored his own avariciousness and hypocrisy. Consequently, he was Jesus' foremost critic. Judas was a living example of the old saw, "Methinks m' lord protesteth overmuch."

He was also an example of the axiom, "whoso accuses is usually guilty of the very thing of which he accuses another."

On two different occasions, as Jesus sat at supper with His disciples and friends, Judas criticized Him for "extravagance."

It was six days prior to the final Passover when "they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him [Lazarus had been raised from the dead only days earlier]. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

"Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?' This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag [common purse], and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, 'Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always'" (John 12:1-8).

Judas' insidious carping infected some of the other disciples as well. Four days later, Jesus was in the house of Simon the leper, in Bethany, for another supper. "There came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat. But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, 'To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor'" (Matthew 26:8-12). The first occasion was when Mary poured ointment on His feet. The second was when an unidentified woman poured ointment on His head. The two events were several days apart.

By the time of the second supper, in the home of Simon the Leper, Judas' constant criticisms had taken root in the minds of some of the other disciples, so that several of them, unnamed, criticized Christ for allowing this "shameful waste." It was shortly after this supper that Judas, overcome with jealousy, resentment, and hatred, went to the chief priests and bargained for money to betray Christ (Matthew 26:14,15).

The carnal mind seeks to justify itself. Guilt is turned away from self, directed in self-righteous wrath at the innocent. Thus Judas, whose conscience was writhing inside him, built up in his mind a huge, wrathful desire to "get even" with Jesus.

Long before, Jesus had plainly said before them all, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a demon?" (John 6:70). Judas knew who and what he was. Yet, in his twisted mind, even though he clearly knew Jesus also knew who and what he was, Judas sought to assuage his own screaming conscience by continual criticism of Christ!

This is the "Judas factor." It is the unbridled greed, coupled with vanity and jealousy, that causes human beings to become covetous of material things. It is the spirit of betrayal, of thievery, and of false accusation. It is the spirit of Satan, not of God.

Millions are afflicted with it. Material, carnal, wholly temporal, it is the swelling greed that leads huge chemical companies to produce dangerous compounds that can pollute whole watersheds, bays, and estuaries, and cause massive changes in marine biology.

It is the greed of industry and technology that pollutes, ravages, and destroys a once pristine environment. It is the greed of politicians who will lie, cheat, connive, conspire, posture—do anything to remain in a position of power.

It is the greed of thugs, muggers, robbers, arsonists engaged in insurance fraud, and those who would kill their own parents to seize their inheritance.

It is the greed of extortionists, who would deliberately entrap public officials in order to obtain money; the greed of those who commit horrendous crimes like murder, who then sell their stories to screenwriters or journalists; the greed of those with top secret security clearances who would sell their country's secrets to an enemy for money.

Concerning those who would attempt to lead God's people into false doctrine, or to "lead away disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:30), God says their motives are transparent—that they covet money, and they covet power.

"Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 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. 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 6:5-10).

Nowhere does the Bible say "money is the root of all evil," as people misquote this verse. No, it is the love of money—placing money between the person and God, lusting, coveting, desiring, dreaming about money!

Money, as a medium of exchange, can be used to accomplish great good. It can be used to build beautiful homes, purchase healthful food, obtain an education. It can build marvelous institutions, relieve suffering and poverty, and care for the sick.

Money can be used to preach the gospel by purchasing television time, publishing, traveling, preaching.

It is the perversion of the lust for money, which is so commonplace today, which eats at character like a cancer.

The Judas factor is like a virulent poison, infecting the minds of millions, in every country and every race.

### ***Judas—an Insider Who Worked with Jesus***

Just as Judas was one of Christ's own original twelve disciples—an insider, so it is that God's Word warns there will be those who will draw back in the latter days; those who will get their eyes on the tithes of local congregations, and who will begin to find excuses to become independent, so those tithes will go to the local minister, and not to help accomplish the work of God.

Judas was Christ's worst critic. He was a traitor. He was a thief. He wanted to run things himself. He coveted money and power.

As Paul warned the ministry of the church in Ephesus, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made your overseers, to feed the flock of God [it is GOD'S FLOCK not the flock of the local pastor], which He hath purchased with His own blood.

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30).

What would be their motives? "To draw away disciples after themselves." To gain a following. To become the one in charge, and to reap the harvest from having gained a following of people, who would look to their new leader, who would tithe and give offerings to him!

Paul warned Timothy, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times [the times we live in, now!] some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits [Judas became possessed of the devil himself], and doctrines of devils [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy [when they know better]; having their conscience seared with a hot iron..." (1 Timothy 4:1,2).

Paul said they would have a "form of godliness" (2 Timothy 3:5), but their primary character would be as 'lovers of their own selves, covetous [lusting after physical, material things], boasters...traitors, heady [self-willed; headstrong], high-minded [filled with ego and pomposity]" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Today, there are thousands of different "ministries." There are hundreds and hundreds of different denominations. Each Sunday morning, one may scan many different television programs where the speaker is continually pleading for money. They present books, albums, tapes, magazines—and then say "For your *gift* of only (perhaps \$30.00 or so), we will send you this free book." That dozens of these "ministries" are actually running a business is plain.

But we believe this is not God's way.

Instead, we believe we must rely on God, on faith, to put it in the hearts and minds of those who receive FREE tapes and literature from this work to voluntarily begin to GIVE to the work, so that we may have to give to others!

We know that this is the work of God, and not of mortal men. We know that it is God Who will bless it. Therefore, rejecting the way of Judas, the way of betrayal, covetousness, and greed, we embrace the way of God—the way of Jesus Christ, who said, "Freely ye have received. Freely give!"

-End-

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