

The Answering Service

FROM AMERICA'S PROMISE

Answers to questions from Radio and Tape Listeners

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Question No. 1:

There is so much in the Old Testament that speaks against usury in the Bible, but what does the New Testament say about it?

Answer:

Usury is mentioned only twice in the New Testament: **Matt. 25:27 and Luke 19:23**. These two passages are two accounts of the same parable which Jesus taught the people.

Basically, the story goes like this: A man gave his servants charge over his goods, while he went on a journey. One servant he gave five talents (money), another two, and another just one. The first two servants each doubled their money through good (lawful) business dealings. But the last one buried the talent and did nothing with it. When it came time for the rewards to be passed out, the first two servants were rewarded accordingly.

The unproductive servant then presented his single talent with these words: "Lord, I knew (*ginosko*) thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed; And I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine" (**Matt. 25:24,25**). In Luke's account, he said, "I feared thee, because thou art an austere (dry, hard, or harsh) man."

Jesus then gives the verdict: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest (*oida*) that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed; Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers (bankers), and then at my coming I should have received mine own with USURY" (**Matt. 25:26,27**). Luke's account is basically the same, even using the same Greek word *oida*. This is very important.

The wicked servant said, "Lord, I knew (*ginosko*) thee that thou art a hard man." The Lord replies, "Thou knewest (*oida*)..." Why is there a difference in wording here?

Ginosko means "to know by experience or by observation." *Oida* means "to know subjectively, to understand or perceive, or to be under the impression of something."

Thus, the wicked servant in effect said, "Lord, I knew, by experience and observation, that you are a hardman, stealing crops that you did not plant, so I was afraid to do anything with your talent, lest I should lose it and incur your vengeance."

His Lord answers, "You lazy bum, if you really were under the impression that I was a hard man and a thief, you should have loaned out the money at usury and increased my money by stealing from the poor!" In other words, Jesus here is equating usury with reaping what you have not sown and harvesting where you have not

planted. Such theft is to farming what usury is to economics.

That is all the New Testament has to say about usury, in particular. As you can see, Jesus considered it to be stealing. He certainly did not condone it.

**Question No. 2:
Who is the Antichrist?**

Answer:

The term "antichrist" appears in only four verses of the New Testament. All four verses are in first and second John:

1 John.2:18. "Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

1 John 2:22. "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."

1 John 4:3. "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist. . ."

2 John 7. "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

It is obvious from reading these passages, that John had no conception of some great individual, at the end of the age, rising up to a position of great power and all the world worshipping him. His concept, is clearly that there were many antichrists already in the world, and that whoever does not confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh is antichrist.

The term "antichrist" comes from two Greek words, *anti* ("instead of, in place of, in the room of") and *Christos* ("Christ, the anointed"). Thus, the term "antichrist" literally refers to someone who stands in the place of Christ, either as a Vice-Christ or as a usurper of Christ's rightful position.

John obviously-treats the antichrists as people who stand in the place of Christ as usurpers. They deny that Jesus is the Christ, because they, themselves, have become Christ. They, also, deny that Jesus Christ really came in the flesh, and here one must know a little history to understand the accusation which John levels at these people.

In John's day a sect had arisen called Gnosticism. The Gnostics (from *gnosis*, "knowledge") attempted to combine the "knowledge" of all the mystery religions of Babylon, Egypt, and Greece with Christianity. This religion adopted the dualism of the Greeks (i.e., matter is evil, and spirit is good).

In applying Greek dualism to Christianity, they came up with a doctrine called Docetism. This doctrine stated that the "Christ image" (spiritual, immortal, and good) inhabited a fleshly body (material, mortal, and evil) called "Jesus." In making the distinction between Jesus and the Christ image, they denied that Jesus was the Christ, teaching instead that "Christ" merely-inhabited the body of Jesus.

The result was that they denied that Christ died for our sins. Rather, only Jesus BODY died on the Cross. Christ Himself did not really die, they said (contrary to **Romans 8:34**). Thus, these docetic Gnostics undermined the Cross and the basis of justification.

John had these heretics in mind when he wrote in **John 1:14**, "And the Word was made flesh." The Word did not merely inhabit a flesh body; it was literally made flesh.

The "antichrist" banner was carried by different people and groups all through the middle ages. Today, we have witnessed a revival of the doctrines of Mystery Babylon in various guises. In modern occult circles it is taught that man can become Christ through various means. One such religious group are the Jews, whose Zionist rabbis are teaching that the Jewish State is their Messiah (Christ). This is not surprising, since the Jews have solid control of the occult as a whole. Thus, Judaism has taken on the antichrist banner, for they not only deny that Jesus is the Christ, but they claim to stand in the place of Christ. They are usurpers.

One should keep in mind, also, that the modern concept of "the Antichrist" is reached by assuming that the "beasts" of the book of Revelation are the same as "the Antichrist." While there may be some connection, these terms are different and should not be treated as synonymous.

Question No. 3:

Micah 4:10 sounds as though the daughter of Zion is to bring forth a child. Can you explain?

Answer:

Micah 4:10 reads, "Be in pain and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies."

Yes, the daughter of Zion is to bring forth a child. The daughter of Zion is not an individual person, but the latter-day nation of regathered Israel. She is pictured as a woman in travail, and her child (like her) is a prophetic nation, the next stage in the future development of the Kingdom of God on the earth.

This is made evident in **Isaiah 66:7,8**, which reads: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."

It is obvious that this man child is a nation that was to be born in the end of the age, after the establishment of the daughter of Zion (nation). The birth pangs, according to **Micah 4:9**, are caused by the people's forgetting that they have a king (Jesus Christ); ie., forgetting that they are a Christian Nation. As a result, they would "go even to Babylon" (**vs. 10**) into captivity to Mystery Babylon. There the daughter of Zion would be delivered of her child and be redeemed from the hand of her enemies. The Kingdom Age would begin.

The man child, which the daughter of Zion brought forth, is also mentioned in **Revelation 12:5**, where it is said that he is "to rule all nations with a rod of iron." A cleansed Israel, with Christ at its head, shall rule all nations. For further explanation of **Rev. 12:5**, see tape #8001, "That Old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan." **Micah 4** is explained in great detail (5 sermons) in our series, "Into Babylon to Prepare for the Kingdom" (#7414 -7416).