

PUTTING GOD IN DEBT?

“The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.” (Prov 22:7)

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.” (Prov 19:17)

- God is the Sovereign of the universe. We cannot order Him to do anything. Even if He slays us we should still trust Him (Job. 13:15).
- At the same time God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). Every time He makes a promise that promise comes true (2 Cor. 1:20). He has even challenged us on some occasions to “prove” or “test” Him (Mal. 3:10-12).
- It is obvious that God has promised special blessings to those who take pity on the poor. The Living Bible paraphrases Prov. 19:17 like this: **“When you help the poor you are lending to the Lord-- and he pays wonderful interest on your loan!”**
- If we “lend” to God, it seems that God, in some sense, is in debt to us. Let us prayerfully consider this possibility.

The Scriptures mention “borrowing” and “lending” a number of times. Each time the borrower is servant to the lender. Our own personal experience confirms this truth. A bank, for example, dictates the terms of the loan. There may be some room for negotiation, but, as the Scriptures teach, the borrower is servant to the lender.

In Deuteronomy we are told that the lender reigns over the one who borrows: **“For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.”** (Deut 15:6)

Later Moses said that those who “lend” are like the “head” and those who borrow are like the “tail”. **“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: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them:”** (Deut 28:12-13).

The very idea of an Immortal God in debt to moral man seems absurd, but so does the Incarnation. God, as you know, came to earth as a servant in the person of Jesus Christ. He did not come to be served, but to serve others and give His life as a ransom for many.

Ps. 41:1-3 offers some very specific benefits of helping the poor: **“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.”**

Though Jesus was rich He became poor (2 Cor. 8:9) His mother said that God was going to scatter the proud, put down the mighty, and exalt them of low degree (Lk. 1:46-55). Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor (Lk. 4:18). He promised the rich young ruler that if he would distribute to the poor he would have treasure in heaven (Lk. 18:22). He told His disciples: **“When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”** (Luke 14:12-14)

God has chosen the poor of this world who are rich in faith (James 2:5). He does not want us to forget them (Gal. 2:10). He promises us that when we minister to them, we are serving Him, and we shall in no wise lose our reward (Matt. 25:14-46).