

WORD AT WORK

The Call To One Accord V
August 2002

Dear 12:

The August “Word at Work” attempts to reveal the true essence and application in today’s world of Luke 16:13, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Jesus elevated “mammon” to parallel God status. We can postulate the reason was probably only mammon embodies Satan’s chief tactic in competing for man’s worship. Service is one of the primary elements of worship. The Greek word for service in Luke 16:13 is also used in Romans 12 in the context of offering God our “reasonable service” or worship.

When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus replied in Matthew 22:37-40, “...‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” Love is the primary element of worship.

Love, loyalty and service are bound together to reveal a picture of who will we really worship. These three are the essential elements of worship. Through deception, Satan attempts to steal worship from Christians and is only successful to the degree we yield to the temptations of mammon. How do those temptations come? How can we recognize them? This month’s Bible study is dedicated to unmasking the enemy’s attempts.

Yours in Him,

Al Houghton

WORD AT WORK

VOLUME XXII NUMBER VIII
The Call To One Accord V

THURSDAY, August 1

Scripture: Numbers 13:22; Joshua 15:14; Judges 1:10

If we can appropriate enough mercy to deal with each others giants, we can birth the full measure of God's assignment. The magnitude of what we face has multiplied as we enter the third leadership generation since restoration of the Holy Spirit in 1900. Looking at Israel, we discover the third generation, Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai all had to be dealt with simultaneously. Caleb was given that job and the tribe of Judah finally finished the trio. We discover that Tal-mah-ee means to create ridges or furrows and it comes from ten-lem meaning to bank, terrace or accumulate. Tal-mah-ee, therefore, in its root meaning identifies the essence of the spirit of mammon – to bank or accumulate. It is interesting to see that A-hi-man – who is my brother, She-shahe-ee – self-righteousness and Tal-mah-ee – the spirit of mammon form the foundational triad that enslaved and brought forth pharisaism ultimately hindering the full measure of Jesus' ministry. It may be we need to give consideration to what these three giants stand for and how they work together to hinder God's plan for a city.

FRIDAY, August 2

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21

In Matthew 6:19-21 we're told, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Jesus, sharing in the Sermon on the Mount, taught one of the paramount issues of walking with God is guarding the heart; especially from the spirit of mammon. If we entertain or set goals that are specifically money-based then we open the door to be carried off by the only other spiritual force Jesus identified as having the strength to command the same kind of worship God wants from all of us. The warning seems to be if you open the door that spirit will rush in and capture your heart so you are led off in a direction which manifests itself in direct opposition to the purpose and plan of God. The problem is it may lay hidden and rise up at a very critical moment.

SATURDAY, August 3

Scripture: Proverbs 4:20-23

Proverbs 4:20-23 tells us, "My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life." The Hebrew word for "issues" in verse 23 is the same word used fourteen times in Joshua translated to establish the borders and boundaries of the inheritance. Proverbs makes it very clear that what we write into our heart comes out of the mouth and establishes the borders and boundaries of life. Perhaps Jesus gave the paramount importance to the spirit of mammon because He understood this principle and watched it capture an entire religious movement manifesting opposition from city to city. We should guard our heart lest we too become causalities.

SUNDAY, August 4

Scripture: Matthew 6:22-24

Verses 22-24 say, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Jesus drew the battle lines between the God of creation and the spirit of mammon! Both have the ability to command loyalty. Both have the ability to demand service and conflict is the inevitable guarantee! If we do not close the door on the spirit of mammon, we will find ourselves being led to a place where we despise what God loves. The battle lines are drawn. The spirit of mammon demands confrontation!

MONDAY, August 5

Scripture: John 2:13-16

We are told in John 2:13-17 “Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, ‘Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!’” This is the first time Jesus cleaned house in the temple. There is no doubt about the fact He made a major impression. But the spiritual principle demanding attention is the issue of turning Kingdom spiritual business into a pipeline for personal provision. Motivation can defile the altar. Jesus said “Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!” The Greek word here is **em-por-ee-on**. It means a merchandise mart or **em-por-ium**. It comes from the Greek word **em-por-os** which means a merchant or a tradesman that sells wholesale. The question we have to ask ourselves concerning the spirit of mammon is do we see this spirit at work today and do we see merchandise marts masquerading as church? Do conference speakers spend an inordinate amount of time pushing their material when they should be ministering to people? The spirit of mammon will create a merchandise mart wherever possible and we need to discern it, see it and act accordingly. Jesus began His ministry by confronting this spirit and we need to realize that walking with God begins when we make some choices concerning the spirit of mammon.

TUESDAY, August 6

Scripture: Revelation 18:1-3

One of the amazing things about following the spirit of mammon through the New Testament is that we begin to understand how powerful this spirit is in entrenching itself in the counterfeit church of the end times. This false church appears in the book of Revelation and is referred to as Babylon. Revelation 18:1-3 says, “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.’” The Greek word for “merchants” in verse 3 is **em-por-os**. **Em-por-os** is the root from which we get **em-por-ee-on** which Jesus used in John 2 when He first cleaned house in the temple. Jesus left us a pattern in confronting this spirit when it ultimately became the source of His crucifixion. As we progress toward the end times we must realize there is an inevitable confrontation brewing between the true Church and the counterfeit church over the spirit of mammon as outlined in the book of Revelation.

WEDNESDAY, August 7

Scripture: Revelation 17:4-5; 18:11, 15, 23

Revelation 17:4-5 identifies the counterfeit church and begins the description of how it wars against the true. Verses 4 and 5 say, “The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” As we continue through 17 and into chapter 18 we find four places in chapter 18 where this counterfeit church, Mystery, Babylon, is referred to as forming a union with the merchants of the earth. Verse 11 says, “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:....”; verse 15 states, “The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,....” And finally in verse 23, “And the light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore. And the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.” Such statements confirm complete domination by the spirit of mammon, a church wholly given over to pursuing prosperity. There can be little doubt after the picture painted in these two chapters that we will increasingly face this spirit. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that those who walk with God in the last days overcome mammon! Perhaps with this victory our true ministry begins.

THURSDAY, August 8

Scripture: Revelation 13:16-17

In Revelation 13 we find the emergence of antichrist and the confrontation he will have with the Church. Revelation 13: 16-17 says, “And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” The mark of the antichrist is a mammon mark. We’re reminded of what Jesus said, “You cannot serve God and mammon.” So we ask – how does the enemy *force* people to **worship** him? They simply must choose to accept a mammon mark, a mark without which no one can buy or sell. Antichrist obviously works in conjunction with the spirit of mammon to gain international **worship**. Is that spirit already at work? We would have to say – “yes.” It is time we began to discern this giant and take our stand. It certainly is preparation for walking with God in the last days.

FRIDAY, August 9

Scripture: Mark 11:11

Jesus, at the end of His ministry, was led by the Holy Spirit to survey the condition of the temple. He was driven to test the spiritual atmosphere. Mark 11:11 says, “And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.” Jesus surveyed the condition of the temple and no doubt saw the residue of the controlling spirit of mammon at war in the lives of the people and its level of achievement within the priesthood. Is it any wonder we see a full measure of confrontation in the events which follow as Jesus, already having cleaned house in the temple once, again finds the spirit initiating action. What a picture of what we have to conquer in order to be effective in ministry.

SATURDAY, August 10

Scripture: Mark 11:12-14

Verses 12-14 say, “Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. And when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, ‘Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.’ And His disciples heard it.” Jesus, after surveying the temple, is given a hands-on example for the twelve concerning the importance of the spiritual issue of mammon. The fig tree, which was leafy green,

looked great but had no fruit and was a perfect type of what Jesus found in the temple. The question is: what do we do when we see either an individual, a church or a religious system that is leafy green but with no fruit? Jesus made a choice. He commanded that no one else would be defiled from that fig tree. One of the questions we should ask is – do we have the same authority? Should we be doing what Jesus did? Who can determine whether a spirit of mammon has completely captured an institution or an individual? Jesus said, “by their fruit you will know them.” Jesus drew battle lines in the sand when it came to the spirit of mammon and perhaps nothing emphasizes that more than His treatment of the fig tree. Can we tolerate leafy green trees that produce no fruit? Do we attend one? Are we a member in good standing? Are we partaking of the leafy-green-no-fruit religious system? Where do we stand concerning the fig tree?

SUNDAY, August 11

Scripture: Mark 11:15-19

In verses 15-19 Jesus comes into Jerusalem, goes into the temple instigating round two. Round one occurred at the beginning of His three and a half year ministry and round two finishes it off. He said in verse 17, “‘Is it not written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”? But you have made it a “den of thieves.”’” In the second confrontation with the spirit of mammon the scribes and Pharisees could no longer tolerate the threat Jesus had become. Verse 18 says, “And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching.” A confrontation is brewing in the realm of the spirit that may become a dividing line in the Church. That confrontation is between those who adhere to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and those who choose to build by the spirit of mammon. This confrontation began and ended the ministry of Jesus. It appears numerous times in the New Testament and seems to be the ultimate issue that separates in the book of Revelation. Mammon is the ultimate dividing line between those who **worship the one true God** and those who ***bow to a deceiving outlaw spirit!*** Is the world being prepared for the antichrist? Is the Church being prepared? Choices must be made concerning the spirit of mammon! Do we know who we **worship**?

MONDAY, August 12

Scripture: Mark 11:20-24

Verses 20-24 state, “Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.’ So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Have the faith of God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, “Be removed and cast into the sea,” and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.’” Jesus made it very clear He expected the twelve to continue what He had taught them. They were to be temple cleansers. He gave them a perfect example by cursing a leafy green fig tree with no fruit and they saw the tree wither and die. When Peter comments on it, Jesus exhorts them that they too can have the same faith of God, they can speak to mountains and have them removed when it’s a purity issue. We know that “speak to the mountain” will work for a number of issues, however, its primary application is in the arena of temple cleansing, of setting people or organizations free from the spirit of mammon. Are we using the authority Jesus gave us in the arena of its primary intent or have we hijacked this principle to use for personal blessing ignoring corporate purity? Forceful faith has worked for personal blessing, perhaps it’s time we began to apply it to corporate purity!

TUESDAY, August 13

Scripture: Matthew 21:18-22

In Mark 11’s parallel passage, we find the same fruitless fig tree with Jesus proclaiming a slightly different elevated emphasis. Mark 11 majors on “speak to the mountain” but it is different in Matthew 21: “So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree,....’” Matthew’s account emphasizes cursing and withering the fig tree *before* speaking to

the mountain. Mark's account simply mentions speak to the mountain. Most of us have probably at one point or another in our Christian lives spoken to mountains of adversity and commanded them to be removed but how many of us have ever cursed the defilements of what Jesus faced in the temple and expected it to change an institution? Isn't it time we put this word in context and used it accordingly? We may be surprised at the results!

WEDNESDAY, August 14

Scripture: John 2:13, 18; Acts 8:18-22

We've seen the attitude of Jesus concerning mammon. The second generation always defines in practice revelations of the first. Apostolic attitudes toward mammon define Jesus' heart. In Acts 8:18-22 we are told, "Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.'" Peter seemed to have the same mentality concerning the spirit of mammon that Jesus had. When the twelve originally saw Jesus turning over the tables of the money changers and whipping the resistance out of the temple, they were reminded of the scripture, "the zeal of the Lord has eaten Me up." Jesus was a very stable individual. We would certainly expect God Incarnate to carry an above-average stability! There are only two places where Jesus could be described, in our vernacular, as having "lost it!" The only thing that sent Him into unusual dramatic demonstrative behavior was confronting the spirit of mammon. We could say - Jesus went ballistic! What does that tell us about God's heart when confronting the spirit of mammon? I believe Jesus' actions reflect the potential damage this spirit does to the Church. A confrontation is inevitable with this outlaw spirit because it grows in strength culminating as the very foundation for antichrist' throne. Lets determine to prepare the next generation by doing our homework and following the Holy Spirit.

THURSDAY, August 15

Scripture: Luke 4:5-8

In Luke 4 we get a glimpse of why the spirit of mammon may have pushed Jesus into frenzied temple-cleansing. We are told in Luke 4:5-7, "Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.'" Perhaps what ultimately initiated Jesus, driving Him to confront the spirit of mammon, is witnessing the theft of bona-fide **worship**. When Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, it was a massive mammon test! Jesus came to take all authority away from the devil and restore it to the Church. Satan knew the weight of the temptation and understood that everyone who bowed to the spirit of mammon gave him **worship**. When I as a believer, through deception, yield to the spirit of mammon, Satan can wave it in God's face as receiving my **worship**! No wonder Jesus reacted the way He did! No believer would ever knowingly bow his knee and give Satan **worship**. How much **worship** do we give him unknowingly? Every mammon influenced decision offers Satan **worship**! Perhaps the question for the last days will be – **who do we worship** by our financial activities?

FRIDAY, August 16

Scripture: Revelation 13:8, 12, 15

It is interesting to note the very same chapter (Revelation 13) which talks about the **mammon mark**, which the enemy initiates, also proclaims its **purpose** (verse 5) - **worship**. Verse 8 says, "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Verse 12 says, "And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Verse 15 says, "He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause

as many as would not **worship** the image of the beast to be killed.” The next two verses in Revelation 13 outline the mark that those who worship must take! The real message of the book of Revelation is – **who will we worship!** That is the simple theme that runs all the way through. There is a true Christ and a false Christ. There is a true Church and a counterfeit church. There is a true Holy Spirit and there is a counterfeit spirit of mammon. The question is which spirit holds our allegiance – **who will we worship?!** No believer would ever knowingly bow his knee and **worship** Satan but when we fail the very first mammon test that God institutes, the simple issue of whether or not we are going to tithe, – that is precisely how it is received. When a believer fails to follow the covenant of the tithe it can be received by Satan as **worship**. Whenever God speaks to us about giving a certain amount or a piece of property – if we refuse, Satan can receive our disobedience as **worship**. Mammon tests come to every believer. We just need our eyes opened to see them the way God sees. The preparation to stand strong in the end times may well be determined by what we do with the spirit of mammon **now**.

SATURDAY, August 17

Scripture: Luke 4:6-7

Luke 4:7 says, “Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” The word for “worship” here is the Greek word **pros-koo-neh-o** and it means to kiss “like a dog licking his master’s hand”. Whenever a believer yields to the spirit of mammon Satan receives his actions like a dog kissing or licking his master’s hand. Every time we make a mammon based decision in opposition to the Holy Spirit, picture what transpires in the realm of the spirit! If as a church leader I make wealth a qualification for a Board position, whose hand am I licking? The master’s hand I would be licking is not God’s, and Satan would receive my actions as **worship**. It’s time we ask God to open our eyes and let us see the way He sees when it comes to the issues of mammon. Then and only then can we be fully prepared to walk with God in these last days.

SUNDAY, August 18

Scripture: Luke 16:1-8

In Luke 16:1-8 we get a glimpse of how the spirit of mammon works. In verses 1 and 2 we are told, “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’” Then the steward said within himself, “What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, “How much do you owe my master?” And he said, “A hundred measures of oil.” So he said to him, “Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.”” The Greek word for “wasting his goods” in verse 1 is **dia-skor-pid-zo** and it means to run everywhere dispensing freely as you go. This would appear to be an attitude of spending that brought the steward into judgment. But the main question is how the steward decided to insure a place to live after losing his stewardship. We see the spirit of mammon working hand-in-hand with the spirit of manipulation to bring about a satisfactory conclusion apart from **trusting** in God. The real question we should ask is how intertwined are manipulation and mammon? The answer to that is unequivocally like a hand in a glove – they consistently work together to produce the same results.

MONDAY, August 19

Scripture: Luke 15:1-2

In order to get the full impact of what Jesus said, we must check the context. A red-letter edition reveals we’re pulling something out of the middle of a “mouth full”. We always have to retreat to what originates the soliloquy, which in this case is Luke 15:1 and 2. These verses say, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’” What we find in Luke 16 is a consistent group of parables bringing forth a point concerning the defiled leadership Jesus faced when answering their original criticism. What is the condition of our leadership? What do we face? Let’s believe our discernment will grow to match the Lord’s. Three of the parables in Luke 15

deal with the giants. Ahiman, (parable of the lost sheep) on “who is my brother” – while the parable of the lost coin, and the lost son both represent the attitude of Sheshai or self-righteousness. This entire picture would give credence to the notion there is a generation that may have to deal with the strength of these spirits working together. It may well be we have come to such a season.

TUESDAY, August 20

Scripture: Luke 16:9-14

In verses 8 and 9 Jesus made a dramatic point of being facetious when He said, ““So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”” Jesus proclaimed following the spirit of mammon, as it unites with manipulation, brings a person to an everlasting habitation called hell! The religious leadership Jesus ministered to was incarcerated, blinded, deceived and thoroughly captivated by this spirit. It was so dramatic that Jesus had to confront it both at the beginning and end of His ministry. The final confrontation cost Him His life. The book of Revelation paints a parallel picture. The Church when it discovers enough spiritual testosterone confronts the spirit of mammon at the end of the age paying the same price. Are we preparing the Church to face such an onslaught? Do we understand the full magnitude of mammon at work in our society? Perhaps it’s time we began to take a closer look.

WEDNESDAY, August 21

Scripture: James 2:1-4

James identifies the issue of mammon when he says, “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool,’ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” James identified a mammon manifestation common in our midst comprising partiality. When we show partiality to those with money and discriminate against those who don’t have it then we stand condemned. Satan receives our actions as **worship**. If we inherit a church with a mighty ministry of compassion, and choose to dismantle it fearing the sight of the poor may dissuade the young urban professionals we are aggressively seeking, Satan receives our actions as **worship**. Our misguided attempt to gain a wealthier group of parishioners at the expense of the poor makes Satan salivate. If we were to ask our pastor, “Do you bow your knee and lick the hand of the enemy so he receives you as a worshiper?” he would adamantly suggest such a scenario is no where in his life. And yet any actions in moving the church toward a seeker-sensitive mode while discarding the compassion ministry would certainly indicate exactly the opposite. Such is the ability of mammon to deceive in our church-world today.

THURSDAY, August 22

Scripture: James 2:5-13

Perhaps the most dangerous thing about the spirit of mammon is that it leads us to disregard and disdain mercy in order to gain position and power. The result is verse 13, “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy.” Who can withstand the Spirit of God when He begins to deal at this level? Jesus made it clear in Matthew 6 and Luke 16 when He said, ““No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”” James is showing us the very same thing. ***When in conflict, mammon demands we despise the principles of God to attain the goal. Mammon demands a loyalty which fosters disobedience and the consequence is judgment without mercy.*** God’s response to the spirit of mammon progressively incarcerating mankind, according to the book of Revelation, is growing severity of judgment! Surely this is something we can avoid. It’s time we cried out for God’s discernment enabling us to see the spirit of mammon at work that we may ***not worship*** a counterfeit!

FRIDAY, August 23

Scripture: Acts 4:32-35

In Acts 4:32-35 we're told, "Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need." The early Church passed the mammon test and they passed it in such dramatic fashion they birthed an anointing in their midst that was so strong, sickness and disease could not stand in its presence. The unexpected problem was - neither could the spirit of mammon! Is God asking the Church of the last days to walk in this dramatic dimension? Is He demanding we stand strong against the spirit of mammon? I believe today's Church must rise to a new standard. We probably will not use the same path the early Church traveled to get there. The primary avenue is covenantal commitment through relationship but only as administered by the Holy Spirit. Attempting to reproduce what they achieved by copying one little part of Acts 4 has only compounded the problem. This is something only the Holy Spirit can initiate and certainly *only* the Holy Spirit can administrate! Let's wait for God's implementation so we can have the biblical results! Two major prophetic events prohibit selling everything and giving the proceeds to the Church. The first historical event was the persecution of Stephen and second was Jerusalem being surrounded by Titus and the Roman legions. This is the reason why we cannot attempt to implement "passing the mammon test" in the same way they did. We must allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in this dimension on a daily and weekly basis.

SATURDAY, August 24

Scripture: Acts 5:1-5

When we pass the mammon test and allow God to lead us into the full measure of what He has for us there is a reward. One aspect of the reward for passing the mammon test appears to be faith to dispense God's judgment for those who refused. If we were to ask ourselves how much fear of the Lord is in the Church today most of us unfortunately would have to answer "very little." However, immediately following an Ananias and Sapphira event I rather suspect the fear of the Lord would rise dramatically! Does God have this manifestation in view for the Church? If He does, wouldn't it be wise to start preparing now and make sure we don't become the examples? Another reward for those who conquer mammon will be operating and executing "the anointing to spoil". Isaiah 53:12 declares Jesus will divide it with the strong. Shall we qualify? The judgment is Satan's hoarded money pays for discipling nations. Will we qualify?

SUNDAY, August 25

Scripture: Acts 5:7

Certainly after birthing the double anointing they had great opportunity, in the midst of the judgment, to be offended. It is not standard practice in church life to manifest judgment and then bury the person without telling the family. But such was the case here. The early Church chose not to be offended in order to maintain the full measure of what they had birthed. They had to agree they would live with an anointing that brought judgment on the spirit of mammon regardless of where it fell. They made their peace with God over that issue and continued to walk expecting a high standard of righteousness to prevail. It did! Have we set that standard of righteousness today? What is it going to take to establish it? Any volunteers for a burnt offering?

MONDAY, August 26

Scripture: Acts 5:15-16

Verses 15 and 16 say, "so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they

were all healed.” When the Church decided to banish the spirit of mammon, God gave them a double anointing, an anointing that would not only judge that spirit in their midst and set the Body free, but an anointing in which sickness and disease could not stand. It had to flee every individual in the corporate anointing. Such was the power the early Church experienced when they were willing to confront the spirit of mammon. Are we beginning to realize the glory that awaits us if we will but address the spirit of mammon in our midst? The early Church found out and I’m sure they were very glad they followed the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is that our generation’s testimony will someday parallel theirs!

TUESDAY, August 27

Scripture: Acts 7:51-57

Stephen was called to confront Jewish leadership concerning their heart issues in response to the appearance of Messiah. Stephen had the joy of fulfilling something Jesus promised when He first sent the twelve in Matthew chapter 10. In those early apostolic marching orders, Jesus promised they would not need to be concerned when taken in front of leadership councils. The admonition was, “But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. And you will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” Stephen proved that was in fact the case! He did it by revealing facts concerning the life of Moses that are unknown throughout the Old Testament. God gives us a glimpse of Moses at 80 in the Old Covenant but its not until Acts 7 that we see a picture of Moses at 40. The transformation was amazing! The transformation was qualifying! Moses qualified for the anointing to spoil and being a deliverer by passing a mammon test. God is looking for those who at this point qualify for carrying the same anointing.

WEDNESDAY, August 28

Scripture: Acts 8:5-6; 9:1-9

When a church determines to confront and conquer the spirit of mammon in their midst, they set in motion a spiritual force that leads to impacting cities and nations. When Satan attempted to stop what the early Church was birthing, he destroyed Stephen but was obviously not prepared for the Divine response. The Lord prepared the city of Samaria to receive the word of God with one accord. Verse 8 records the first city coming to the Lord. The second manifestation of Stephen’s willingness to confront his generation was that the very one who orchestrated his death was knocked off his donkey and brought into the Kingdom. Saul becomes a mighty man of God and launches into ministry as a result of Divine intervention. We don’t even know the magnitude of what God will do with the choices we make once we determine to confront and banish the spirit of mammon from our midst. Isn’t it time we take that step and lift up a standard of righteousness?

THURSDAY, August 29

Scripture: Acts 12:1-5, 18-25

With Saul out of the way, Satan has to move through his next higher asset in the arsenal. That, of course, is Herod the king. Herod, in order to please the Jews, kills James, the brother of John, and incarcerates Peter expecting to deliver him to the same fate. Alfred Edersheim in The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah tells us Herod went through four priestly families until he found one who “would do all his will”. This meant a priest so corrupt as to give Herod a full cut from every concession in the temple. Herod was obviously bound by the spirit of mammon. The early Church followed the Holy Spirit by confronting the spirit of mammon birthing judgment. Once experienced in-house, they could take it outside and dispense as needed where the enemies of God were hindering advancement of the Kingdom. How well are we doing in confronting the spirit of mammon? In the remainder of Acts 12 in verses 20-25 Herod dies when the people of Tyre and Sidon come to **worship** him with one accord over the issue of mammon because their country is supplied with food by the king’s country. When the people offer worship, an angel immediately strikes him and he dies the most painful death known to man.

Mammon demands **worship** ! The judgment the early Church initiated on the spirit of mammon selectively began to manifest in other regions as they took the gospel to the ends of the earth. Surely what they experienced is available to us.

FRIDAY, August 30

Scripture: Acts 19:29

In Acts 19:23-29, we find a manifestation in Ephesus of judgment on the spirit of mammon. The idol makers for the temple of Diana began to retaliate against the Church for making such dramatic inroads into their method of earning a living. We often fail to realize the economic impact of great revival. If we were to birth a double anointing in our city we should ask ourselves – who would be helped financially and who would be hurt? When God begins to move dramatically in a city, rest assured we will encounter resistance from the spirit of mammon as he begins to lose hold on the people he has held captive!

SATURDAY, August 31

Scripture: Romans 15:1-7, 14:10-23

Paul, in Romans, exhorts us to walk together **in one accord** to the best of our ability. He also tells us we're not to judge each other but rather to encourage each other and resolve we will not put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. Perhaps there is nothing quite as offensive as somebody taken over by the spirit of mammon in an attempt to do God's will or build God's Kingdom. The spirit of mammon is alive and well in the Church world today causing a variety of offenses. We must choose how to respond and remember God has given us a temple cleansing authority to curse the fig tree at the roots and speak to the mountain and command it to depart bringing freedom, restoration and wholeness. Perhaps we should begin our confrontation with mammon in the prayer closet and see what develops from there.

© 2002 Al Houghton\“Word At Work” Ministries, Inc. P O Box 366, Placentia, CA 92871-0366. Reproduction in whole or part is encouraged to share with others. IMPORTANT NOTE: Please keep us informed of your current address. The Post Office only forwards the “Word at Work” by grace through faith. www.wordatwork.org

ITINERARY

Al Houghton

July 31 – August 2

Five Stones Conference, Hawthorn Inn & Suites On The River Walk
830 No St. Mary's Street, San Antonio, TX 78205 (800-527-1133)
Services: **31st 7 PM - 1st 9 AM, 2 PM & 7 PM - 2nd 9 AM**

August 4

City Of Refuge, 1201 Austin Hwy Ste 200, San Antonio, TX 78209
Phone: (210)829-1792
Services: **10 AM and 6 PM**

August 16, 17, 18

Church Of The Holy Spirit Meetings at Valley Christian Center
577 Scrael Hill Road, Albany, OR
Phone (541)926-3188
Services: **16th 7 PM - 17th 7 PM - 18th 10 AM**