

GOD AND ECONOMICS



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Sponsored in part by Russ Jones, DDS

Definitions...

- God
- Economics
- Labor and Capital
- “Political Economics”



God as ultimate cause...

- A word about the current crisis and everything else...
- NIV Isaiah 45:7 "I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things!"

Genesis and Human Life...

- God at work...
- Scarcity of Food
- Need for Clothing
- Acquiring Knowledge apart from God
- Scarcity of Time
- The beginnings of “division of labor”
- Cities, Economics and God

Economic themes in the Law

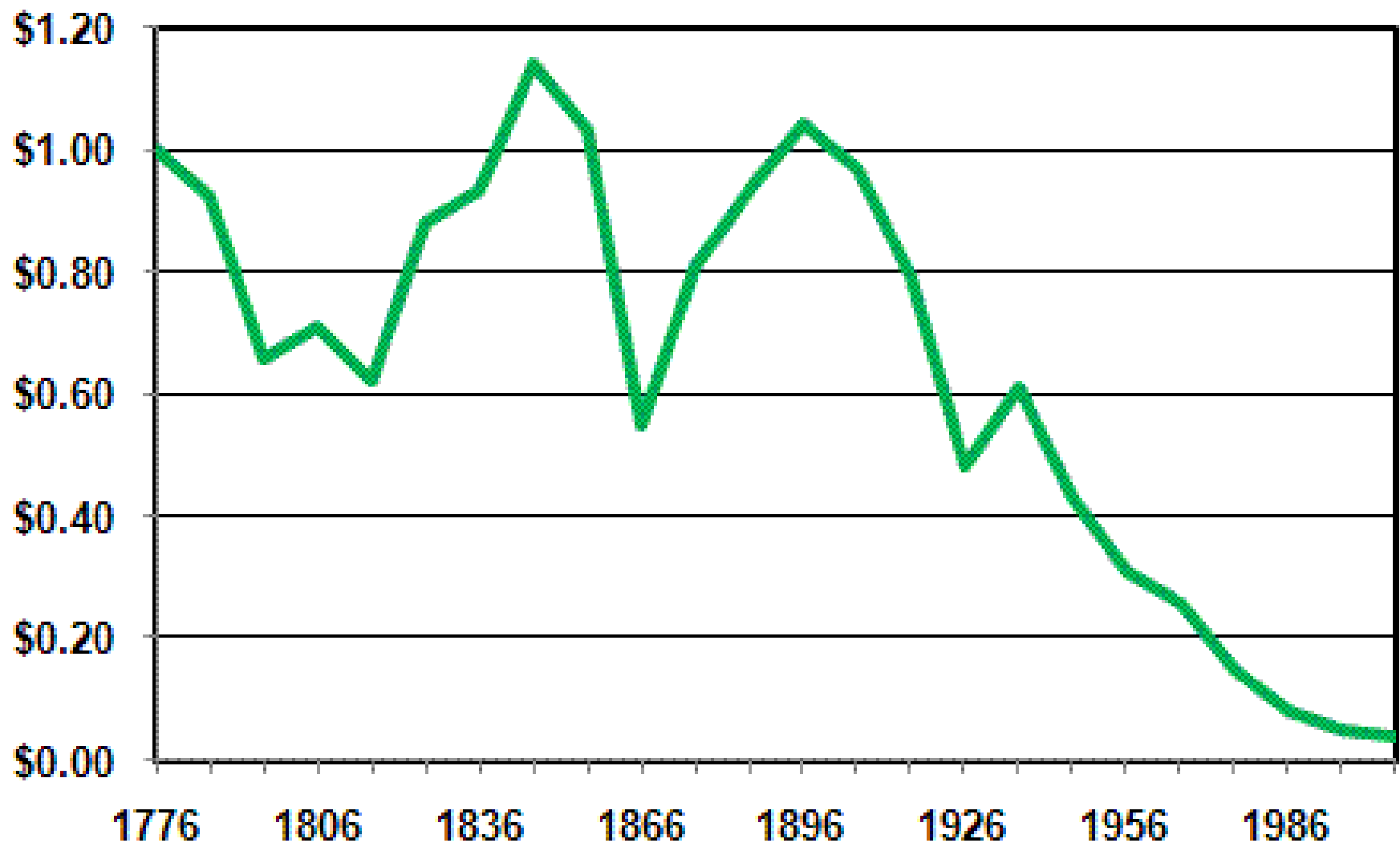
- Family > Tribe > Nation
- God as King, Lawmaker and Owner
- Private Property?
- Labor and Slavery
- Sabbath and the Jubilees
- Lending and “Usury” / Interest rates and inflation
- What is money in the OT?

Money in the OT

- NRS Genesis 13:2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.
- Job 28:15 It cannot be gotten for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price.
- NIV Deuteronomy 2:6 You are to pay them in silver for the food you eat and the water you drink.
- 1 Chronicles 21:25 So David paid Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the site.

By the way...

- “Lawful money in the United States” (Bronson v. Rodes, 74 U.S. 7 Wall. 229 229 (1868))
- Debasement of currency: The silver content of the most common coin, the denarius, was a hefty 90% in the age of Nero (54 - 68 A.D.). Two centuries later, by the reign of Claudius II (268 - 270 A.D.), it was down to a meager 0.2%.
- A new problem: Inflation



Lending and Interest

- The main Hebrew words used for "usury" are nashak or neshek, meaning "to strike with a sting like a snake, bite, lend with usury, exact interest on a debt"
- Geometric increase – geometric crops?
- Can the future be predicted? (James)
- Wisdom with money



Exodus 22:21-25

You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. 22 You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. 25 If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.

= an economic covenant

Leviticus 25:37

36 Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from them, but fear your God; let them live with you. 37 You shall not lend them your money at interest taken in advance, or provide them food at a profit. 38 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God. 39 If any who are dependent on you become so impoverished that they sell themselves to you, you shall not make them serve as slaves. 40 They shall remain with you as hired or bound laborers. They shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee.

Why the difference?

- First-born into a Covenant
- Fellow-Israelite
- Nations / Gentiles

Deuteronomy 15:7

6 When the LORD your God has blessed you, as he promised you, you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.

7 If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. 8 You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.

Other verses...

- Elsewhere in the Bible, the taker of interest is simply described as a “wicked man” (Proverbs 28:5 & 8), whereas the one “who does not ask for interest on loans” is a man who has the right to “enter Yahweh’s tent” and live on His “holy mountain.” (Psalms 15:1-5).

After Babylon: Nehemiah

Then there rose a great outcry of the common people and their wives against certain of their fellow Jews. Some said: "We are forced to pawn our sons and daughters in order to get grain to eat that we may live." Others said: "We are forced to pawn our fields, our vineyards, and our houses, that we may have grain during the famine." Still others said: "To pay the king's tax we have borrowed money on our fields and our vineyards.

I myself, my kinsmen, and my attendants have lent the people money and grain without charge. Let us put an end to this usury!



Economics in the NT



- Jesus and the Providence of Paradise
- Parables
 - Placing at an interest?
 - Trading vs Loaning (next)
- Money in the NT – For what purpose?
- Jesus and the Money Changers
- “Communism” in the Acts of the Apostles
- James and the Rich (next)

Luke 6:35

- 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

James 5

Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. 2 Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. 4 Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

In Revelation

- A major theme
 - The Four Riders
 - The “Mark of the Beast”
 - The Power and Fall of Babylon

Verses

- 6:6 = "A quart of wheat for a day's pay, and three quarts of barley for a day's pay, but do not damage the olive oil and the wine!"
- 13:17 = no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

Jerusalem as Babylon

- Dating Revelation
- “the great city that rules over the kings of the earth”
- A place of business and exchange
- A place of lending
- The center of an economic realm

Patterns that repeat

- Debt and enslavement
- Debt and power

Islam as an Economic System

Is this inspiring? Is this a call to action?

- The cosmic covenant...
- God's law govern human affairs
- No disconnect between spirituality and "real life"
- God works and provides...
- Through his people

Questions and Answers