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specific application of the Old Testament statute concerning wage payment was that workers had to be paid daily. *"You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to Jehovah and it be sin to you"* (Deuteronomy 24:14-15). Since the general principle that keeping back earned wages is sinful is an abiding truth in the present, there is little reason to dismiss this application, especially because the logic remains valid. The wage earner is poor, he needs the money, and he will cry out to God for relief if he does not receive what he deserves.

During the first century, when the Old Covenant was still in force (Hebrews 9:16-17), but the New Covenant was being preached (Luke 16:16), Jesus told the parable of the eleventh-hour laborers. The parable mentions *"a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers"* (Matthew 20:1) and *"when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages'"* (20:8). Daily payment is not the point; Jesus has a more important lesson about receiving blessings. Nevertheless, parables usually relied on a premise that was relatable to ordinary folk and this one depended on the notion that workers who were hired in the morning received payment by day's end. In modern America, that seems to only happen for people who are paid "under the table", so to speak – day-laborers hired from the Home Depot parking lot because they are in the country illegally, or workers who are hiding their income from taxation, alimony, or child support. With the exception of cash tips and sole proprietor service personnel, ordinary, law-abiding workers almost never receive same-day payment.

Some employers boast at hiring that they provide weekly pay, treating it as a perk in contrast to the much more common practice of bi-weekly pay. In the case of bi-weekly pay, there is often a 5-7-day lag between the close of the pay period and the disbursement of funds, meaning that work done on the first day of the month is often not compensated until the 21<sup>st</sup>. That is a far cry from what the poor need.

While a worker's wages are delayed one to three weeks after they were earned, that money sits in the employer's bank account, accumulating interest which the workers will never receive.

Revamping payment schedules and methods might be inconvenient to employers, but it is certainly fair and just.

## I DON'T KNOW

Dylan Stewart, adapted

Almost immediately after I obeyed the gospel, my grandad gave me what I still consider to be one of the greatest pieces of advice I have ever received. My grandad assumed I would begin teaching and defending the gospel, so he told me, "If someone asks you a question you don't know the answer to, just say, 'I don't know, but I'll find the answer.'" If you have ever heard me preach or teach, you've likely heard me say "I don't know" many times. Sometimes I say "I don't know" because I feel it is necessary to heed my grandad's advice and "find the answer" by studying the subject in question more before providing a definitive response. However, sometimes I say "I don't know" because certain subjects or details are beyond my ability to fully comprehend.

Paul, on more than one occasion, spoke of matters that, by his admission, were beyond mortal comprehension. For example, Paul said, *"The love of Christ... passes knowledge"* (Ephesians 3:19). In the next verse, he added that God *"can do infinitely more than all we can ask or imagine"* (20 isv). Then, Paul stated, *"The peace of God... surpasses all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7). While we can read and understand much in Scripture about Christ's love, God's power, and the peace we find in God, and what we do read concerning each of these subjects helps anchor our faith, Paul taught quite clearly that the full breadth of these topics rests beyond our ability to fully comprehend.

It is wise for us to be willing to admit when we do not or cannot know the answers to certain Bible questions. God told His people long ago, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8-9). Has this fact changed? Certainly not. We should be humble enough to realize that God has elected to keep certain details *"secret"* (Deuteronomy 29:29), beyond our scope of understanding. At the same time, we must remain steadfast in holding firm to what we do know. For example, when a skeptic asks how I know God formed the universe, I point to what Scripture states plainly: God spoke the world into existence (Genesis 1; Psalm 33:6-9). I can't explain how God created everything simply by speaking, but I can explain that He did create everything by speaking it all into existence, and the rest I accept

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## **"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"**

**ACTS 16:30**

### **LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

### **BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

### **CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

### **REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

### **BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

### **REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

## **"THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

### **SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

### **WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

### **THURSDAY**

Men's & Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

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by faith: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God"* (Hebrews 11:1, 3). Instead of trying to impress skeptics with clever answers informed by history, science, etc., we are better off simply appealing to what God has clearly revealed and what we know for certain from His word.

We should diligently study the Scriptures to obtain all the knowledge we possibly can since God has given us His word as a guide for knowing Him and learning His expectations of us (Romans 10:17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17). However, some things remain beyond our full understanding and ability to explain, so we should avoid dwelling on things that God does not expect us to fully comprehend. When occasions arise where we cannot fully understand all the details of a subject, let's have faith in what God has revealed that we can understand, and let's hold fast to it. Then, let's leave the rest of the details in God's hands.

# **"WHOLE COUNSEL"**

**ACTS 20:27**

**VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4**

**JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**

## **"THOSE WHO EXPLOIT WAGE EARNERS"**

Bryan Matthew Dockens

God has always been concerned for the needs of the downtrodden, among whom are workers whose wages have been withheld. He warned ancient Judah, *"I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurors, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien – because they do not fear Me,' says Jehovah of hosts"* (Malachi 3:5). Indeed, He curses those who do not pay the ones who provide them labor, saying, *"Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice, who uses his neighbor's service without wages and gives him nothing for his work"* (Jeremiah 22:13).

Jehovah's attention to this matter was not limited to Israel, but is of equal concern in the present Covenant wherein it is written, *"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth"* (James 5:1-4).

Although it is not explicitly commanded in the New Testament, a – Continued on page 2 –

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