

### **Selections from *The Early History*, chapter 3**

#### **Aristotle on Interest and Usury**

In the Politics (III, 23) Aristotle observes:

Of the two sorts of money-making one ... is a part of household management, the other is retail trade: the former is necessary and honourable, the latter a kind of exchange which is justly censured; for it is unnatural, and a mode by which men gain from one another. The most hated sort, and with the greatest reason, is usury, which makes a gain out of money itself, and not from the natural use of it. For money was intended to be used in exchange, but not to increase at interest. And this term usury, which means the birth of money from money, is applied to the breeding of money, because the offspring resembles the parent. Wherefore of all modes of making money this is the most unnatural.

Aristotle's views were an important influence on the scholastics.

#### **Some Biblical Passages Related to Usury**

‘And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers ... And said unto them, it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.’ (Matthew 21: 12-13).

‘For the love of money is the root of all evil...’  
(Timothy 6: 10).

‘He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own home; but he that hath gifts shall live.’ (Proverbs 15: 27).

### **Important Biblical Passages on Usury**

‘And if you lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thanks have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again ...’ (Luke 6: 34-5).

‘If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, though shalt not be to him as a usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.’ (Exodus 22: 25).

‘Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? ... He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent ...’ (Psalm 15).

‘And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee ... yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner ... Take thou no usury of him, or increase ... Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.’ (Leviticus 25: 35-7).

‘He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase ... he is just.’ (Ezekiel 18: 8-9).

‘Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury ...’ (Deuteronomy 24: 19-20).

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### Important Biblical Passages on Gambling

‘the land shall be divided by lot: according to the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. According to the lot shall possession thereof be divided between few and many.’ (Numbers 26: 55-6)

‘Therefore Saul said unto the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. And Saul said, Casts *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.’ (I Samuel: 41-2)

‘The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.’ (Proverbs 18: 18)

‘The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the Lord.’ (Proverbs 16: 33)

‘And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen... And they gave forth their lots; and the lots fell upon Matthias; and he was number with the seven Apostles.’ (Acts 1: 24,26)

‘And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.’ (Matthew 27: 35)

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