

SABBATH THOUGHT 2022-02-19—WEALTH

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Given the financial impact that COVID has had upon the world, it came as a complete surprise that the number of people who are worth more than \$1,000,000 INCREASED by about 25%. This was in spite of the supply chain problems, inflation, lost jobs, firings, lost businesses, work restrictions, retirements, etc. In other words, there is a very large segment of the population that MADE MONEY from the COVID crisis. How? I am not a business expert so I could only speculate; but even so, the “how” is not that important.

About 71% of the world live in poverty or are considered to be in a low income bracket. Another 22% or so are in the upper income range, leaving about 7% with a high income status. The actual numbers are not all that meaningful because this is not something new. There have always been a few rich elites and a large minority who do fairly well, but the vast majority just barely get by or struggle every day for their necessities.

What is important is the effect of wealth. When someone wins the lottery and comes into a huge sum of money, their lives are turned upside down. After winning the lottery, people usually say something to the effect, “This changes nothing in my life. I plan to continue to work, be with my friends, etc”. The reality is quite different. Relatives and friends begin calling and asking for money, they decide to “upgrade” to a larger house and buy that expensive sports car. They send their children to private schools. All these new things become topics of conversation with their friends who, either because they are jealous or weary of hearing about all the new things, pull away.

Few who come into sudden wealth escape these things. More often, they are completely changed. Most eventually spend it all and end up back where they started. Sadly, the impact is lasting. They had a taste of wealth and want it back. Those few who manage to hang on to the new found wealth begin to want more. The big new house, cars, and expensive clothes are just the beginning. It progresses from vacation homes to yachts to private planes. It never stops. In fact, greed can only be satisfied with more greed.

Having wealth is a full time job to keep it and even more work to increase it. The rich require the services of financial advisors, accountants, business staff, personal assistants, personal trainers, household servants, chauffeurs, full time mechanics, and even pilots. **Who** they are becomes lost in **what** they are. Whether it was a lottery winner, inheritance, or a successful business that produced the wealth, the end is the same. Too much of it and their lives change forever because wealth becomes a distraction from what was important in the past. We all know this and God warned against it because He knows the human heart:

DEUTERONOMY 8:10-18 When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. 11

Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command you today, 12 Lest *when* you have eaten and are full and have built goodly houses and lived in *them*, 13 And *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, 14 Then you become haughty of heart, and **you forget the LORD your God** Who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, 15 Who led you through the great and terrible wilderness *with* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where *there was* no water, Who brought forth water for you out of the rock of flint, 16 Who fed you in the wilderness with manna which your fathers did not know, so that He might humble you and that He might prove you to do you good in your latter end. 17 **Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth.'** 18 But you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He Who gives you power to get wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant which He has sworn to your fathers as it is this *very* day.

Did you notice that having a covenant with God is dependent upon NOT FORGETTING that wealth comes from Him? **Covenants are the foundation for any relationship with God.** No one has an association with God without a covenant. Forgetting that God owns everything and gives it to whom He chooses is a cause of spiritual death. It is hard to resist the greed that wealth produces. The obvious conclusion, then, is:

PSALM 37:16 Better is the little that a righteous man has than the riches of many wicked.

But there is another kind of wealth in the world—family wealth. This is the old money of the very elite. They are not only rich but also powerful. Behind all the politics and large enterprise business executives are the ultra-wealthy who have powerful influences. Nothing on a national front, or even global scale, happens without the directives and backing of those few elite. What I find interesting is that they always work in the background. They are nameless and faceless using their most trusted employees to pass along their influence and control of the world. It must be a very dismal life to be forever hiding from the regular people of the world.

Those with this kind of wealth, especially over their generations, have become the ultra-wicked. Through their wealth, they have exerted control over the lives of the world in order to ensure their continued riches and power. Such is the temptation of maintaining their wealth and power that they become willing to commit any sin and engage in any evil work. Those who forget God gave them their wealth eventually turn to wickedness:

PSALM 52:7 “Behold, the man who did not make God his stronghold, but trusted in the abundance of his riches. **He strengthened [hardened] himself in his wickedness.**”

Just look at the politicians in the USA. I did a search for politicians who had been convicted of crimes and was stunned at the number of senators, congressmen, executive appointees, legislative appointees, etc. Guess what? The list started in 1777 which was twelve years BEFORE our first president! Sadly, it will only continue to grow as the end times get closer. This is even reflected in Revelation:

REVELATION 18:3 Because all nations have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and **the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her [Babylon's] luxury.**"

Our English translations hide much that is fascinating in the Greek. In the above scripture, the Greek word for "merchants" is *emporos*, from which comes our word "emperor". The end-time world order called Babylon will be a system over which are the Beast and False Prophet (Rev. 16); however, much of the economic system will be ruled by the merchants who are economic EMPERORS. They control all the wealth.

The danger of wealth is twofold: a distraction from God and a willingness to commit evil in order to preserve it. All evil is the result of the temptation of lust. In other words, it begins as a thought in our hearts and minds:

JAMES 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and is enticed by his own lust.

There are two ways to avoid evil. The first is to be content with what God has given us. Whether it is money, a wife, a home, a job, being truly content to have that which God supplies for our needs prevents temptations from even entering into our minds.

The second way to avoid evil is to avoid or prevent the circumstances that cause temptations. Not playing the lottery or avoiding relationships with evil people prevent us from being exposed to evil. Simply speaking, avoid being in a position of being tempted.

Believers who are among the wealthy have a warning from God and should always pray they never forget it is God who provided it. However, most of us will never have enough wealth to become tempted; however, we should also not put ourselves in a position of being beholden either. By that I mean, becoming dependent upon the wealthy in ways that might put our salvation at risk. The world's elite want control and power over the entire world, especially GOD'S people.

This is the purpose behind the socialist agendas (or whatever brand name is now in vogue). It starts with distributing wealth whereby those in poverty are given free money. Years ago, I was involved in a treatment foster care program that provided temporary home for children whose parents either would not or could not provide for them. I personally knew of women who would get pregnant just to increase their welfare payments. Again, the desire for, and acquisition of, wealth is dangerous.

After wealth distribution, there is “free” healthcare to all. In recent times, I have heard of free cell phones, citizenship freely given to illegal immigrants, free money for not working (during COVID), welfare to non-citizens, etc. These all lead to a dependency. For example, many government freebies required proof of a COVID vaccine. While this all sound innocuous, the end goal is to have a world population that is completely dependent upon governments for their livelihoods.

When growing up, healthcare was determined by affordability. There was no expectation that the latest and greatest advances were available to all. My grandfather, a physician, sometimes got paid with a chicken or eggs. None of the physicians in my family were ever rich. They never treated people as a means to gain wealth. Specialty clinics that brought great wealth to doctors only became the business model in the 1980s when the insurance and pharmaceutical companies started taking control of hospitals and doctors.

We must always view the world from the perspective of our covenant relationship with God. Any temptations that put that in jeopardy must be avoided, whether it is wealth or power or even our very lives. Nothing in this world is worth exchanging for our crown in the kingdom of God. The elite who are bringing this world under their absolute control are threatened most by His potential children. They must eliminate everyone whose loyalty cannot be bought or bribed. Believers are called to be faithful to God above all of mankind, so they are a threat to their control. They hate God because they know their works are wickedness.

Believers need to be wary of the motives and works of this world to avoid being deceived. In a very real sense, we are “in the midst of wolves. Therefore, *[we need to] be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*” (Mat. 10:16). Jesus Christ warned against deceivers in the latter days THREE TIMES in the Olivet prophecy of Matthew 24. The deceivers will all be part of the Beast power and backed by the miracles of the False Prophet. In other words, they will be part of a government that uses wealth and power to control the world and the elite are aligned with them completely.

On the other hand, the wealth of Satan’s world is nothing compared to eternal life in God’s coming kingdom! Stay close to God, pray for His agape love in your heart, and do good works for brethren. Christ is coming. When the world is at its worst, “the sign of the Son of man *[will appear]* in heaven” (Mat. 24:30). That is when we need to remember to “look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). The kingdom of Almighty God will prevail!

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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