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# Jubileum Part I: God’s Prophetic Outline for Prosperity

By Wilfred Hahn

Just what does the Bible say about the rich ... the poor ... about wealth distribution ... how things will be when Jesus Christ restores all things (Acts 3:21)? Quite a bit. In fact, as much as 40% of the Bible is said to deal with these and related topics.



Most wonderfully, the Bible concerns itself primarily with the captives and the poor, whether in spirit or physically. In this 3-part series, our aim is to show just how wonderfully God has aligned the physical

creation with his heavenly kingdom and work of salvation. Should His requirements of love, mercy and forgiveness not be practiced, the societies of mankind are designed to malfunction and self-destruct.

We will begin by first consulting the Bible for its perspectives on these topics. In Part II, we will then explore God’s ideal plan for economic justice on earth—a program that will be reinstated in the Millennium period. Part

III reflects upon the wonderful blessings of “cancellation” and “forgiveness.” As we will discover, these concepts are necessary for both eternal salvation and the blessed existence of mankind during his temporal, physical, existence on earth.

## The Poor and the Rich

Every time we risk writing about Biblical perspectives on wealth and its distribution, we seem to invite incendiary responses. Quoting Robert E. Lucas, “Of the tendencies that are harmful to sound economics, the most seductive, and ... the most poisonous, is to focus on questions of distribution.”<sup>1</sup> We would agree. Even my background as a practitioner in the “Darwinian” world of the global in-





vestment industry, has not spared me from being accused a Marxist.

Therefore, let's settle this point right at the outset. We are here more interested in the Bible's view on these questions of wealth, the poor, forgiveness and God's desired economy for mankind, not the secular theories of men. As it is, the field of economics and its myriad theories (which is a subject body that belongs to the humanities, not science) has yet to settle on a unanimous view. It should also be recognized that this field of "non-sciences" has had a terrible, terrible track record.

Moreover, populist views and policies on these matters tend to change with the times and zeitgeist. For example, in America today, to speak of wealth redistribution from the rich to the poor would be economic heresy. According to the thinking in higher-echelon political circles, the rich must be protected. In short, aren't they the ones that provide the capital that provides jobs and incomes for everyone else? Therefore, the right and privilege to achieve huge outsized after-tax incomes and wealth must be preserved. At least, that is the reasoning that is prevalent in the halls of power.

However, let's get back to the Biblical view and put these things into proper focus. It is not so much that specific tenets of capitalist theories about wealth creation and distribution are dead wrong. It is that their implementation does not always emphasize fairness, compassion and love. Don't believe it? If that were not the case, one would need to wonder why the Holy Spirit went to the trouble of inspiring the Bible. Its central message would be obviated.

As the Bible repeatedly shows, God chooses to observe the motives of the heart rather than the punctilious observance of ritual or theory. "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6, see also Matthew 12:7, 9:13). Through Micah, God admonished the Jews, saying, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

The same message is found in the New Testament. Even the gospel cannot be operative without love and mercy. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

People may have great "head" knowledge of Scriptures or elegant economic theories about wealth creation and prosperity. However, it is all insignificant noise if its implementation (putting into practice) does not involve love. The two Royal Laws, which Christ said encompassed all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40), were best summarized by the law expert mentioned in Luke 10:27: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

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The very last days of the Church Era—the terrible times that Paul talks of—are described as being “without love,” “unforgiving,” instead characterized by the love of money and love of themselves (2 Timothy 3:2-3). That exactly describes the attitudes required to underpin an environment of economic oppression, high indebtedness and widening wealth skews. That day is here today. If anything (by at least some measures), these conditions are likely to get worse ... and most certainly, much worse by the time the Tribulation unfolds.



#### The Bible Versus Political Polemics

Using such terms as “Marxism” or “Capitalism” is not helpful in discussing what the Bible actually says and mandates vis-à-vis wealth. Neither “ism” is supported in the Bible. (In fact, the Bible supports no “isms” of mankind.) Actually, the Scriptures and ancient wisdom precede these man-made theories by several millennia. To the extent that Karl Marx might have theorized some of the flaws of capitalism (as does the Bible), this did not qualify him as a godly man. Much to the contrary. His seminal failings were that he did not operate out of a spirit of love (more likely envy) nor a fear of God. Likewise, any rich person or proponent of capitalism would not be sinfully wrong, were they inspired by a sense of justice or love for fellow mankind. Without love and mercy, the ultimate consequence of even the best theory and doctrine will be destructive.

The essential points and attitudes to which we must orient ourselves in relation to wealth and physical possessions are found in the Bible. These were established long before Adam Smith or Karl Marx came along. To emphasize, Biblical

“wealth theory” cannot be disassociated from love and justice, and has no union with concepts of “self-interest” (Adam Smith and later concepts of the “good” of capitalism or affluence); nor associations with “envy” nor covetousness; and more lately, the “good of greed.”

#### Why Are There Poor?

Wasn't Abraham, the Biblical patriarch, wealthy? This observation is often made in the defense of the rich. It completely misses the point. To be “relatively” or “absolutely” wealthy is not a sin (though it is also true that very few are capable of justly managing wealth). The Bible does not condemn the state of being rich; it rather indicts the elite rich that oppress their fellow mankind and take no concern for the poor.

Without a doubt, there were numerous wealthy individuals mentioned in the Old Testament. But, what conclusions should we draw from this observation? First, we need to draw a distinction between those rich that were righteous and those that were not. We have already drawn attention to the critical differentiation—love, mercy and justice. However, let's also consider some practical aspects. Who would not agree that it is impossible for everyone in the world to be as rich as Abraham, in relative terms. This is simply not physically possible. Nor does the Bible ever promise that everyone can be “rich” (as do today's popular and widespread [false] Prosperity Gospel teachers).

The Bible draws a distinction between the state of being wealthy and that of “hoarding.” These are not one and the same concepts. It is a mathematically-supportable fact that hoarding must result in a wealth distribution skew ... in other





words, a relative division in wealth or standard of living. In fact, such is the very definition of hoarding. As outlined in James 5:1-6, wealth is described as having been “heaped” or “amassed,” which is implied by the Greek word *saurizo*. This is an important distinction, as it gives evidence of a wealth skew. Wealth cannot be heaped and concentrated without there being a lessening or deprivation of someone else's relative wealth. The impulse for this effect may be unintentional, sin or conspiracy. At the very least, we must not forget the innate vulnerability of all human flesh. Everything else being equal, the “love of money” (1 Timothy 6:10), “the lust of the flesh” (1 John 2:16), and all mankind being born into sin testify to the corruptible bias of the world. Just who is incorruptible?

It is no surprise therefore that almost the entire emphasis of the Bible in relation to the poor is to their defense. But why should this be? Just why is it necessary for the Bible to counsel special aid and care for the poor? While there are godly people mentioned in the Bible who were wealthy, just why is it that the “rich” attract so little favorable mention in the Scriptures? The answer: the same reason that mankind needs salvation and forgiveness of sins. Therefore, what the Bible does consistently concern itself with are the poor and the oppressed, both physically and in spirit.

Moses said to the Hebrews, “There should be no poor among you” (Deuteronomy 15:4), this being a command from God. Jesus said that he came to preach good news to the poor. (“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed”—Luke 4:18.) He also said: “You will always have the poor among you” (John 12:8), pointing out the unfortunate state of a fallen world.



### God's Plan for Fair Dealing with Wealth

A thorough study of the economic principles within the God-given laws to the Israelites of the Sabbath and the Jubilee Year reveals the intended “wealth distribution” that God had planned upon earth. It is not unreasonable to take instruction from these commanded ordinances of the Israelites as, after all, they were called to be a light to the world (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6).

But aren't ancient laws and principles irrelevant today? No. Consider that God himself will again reinstitute these two Sabbath ordinances in the Millennium period. Think of it: when Jesus Christ restores all things (Acts 3:21), the Sabbath and Jubilee years will be practiced by the entire earth. Civil leaders today would then do well if they sought to pursue the same principles behind these two ordinances. Then, just what are these principles? We next need to examine the Bible's teachings about the Sabbath and Jubilee Years.

Of course, the Sabbath finds its original roots at Creation. God rested on the 7th day. The entire earth was to rest on this day. Ever since, all developed cultures—whether Asian, Western or otherwise—have operated on a seven-day, weekly cycle. Later, the Sabbath Law was given to the Hebrews. However, this occurred in several stages, as we will review in Part II.

As a brief foretaste, considered what God said through Moses, “At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts” (Deuteronomy 15:1). As such, we see that a seven-year debt cycle was instituted. There was no such thing as perpetual debt: every Sabbath Year, debts had to be laid flat. Anyone who could not pay back his debts by that time was forgiven this amount.





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### Points to Ponder—The Circaseptan Cycle

The seven-day cycle, ending with the day of rest, is evidenced by all of Creation. Here is an excerpt from an excellent article on this subject, written by Kenneth Westby, entitled “The Amazing 7-Day Cycle.”<sup>2</sup>

Now we discover that the beat all life is tuned to is seven.

How did seven come to be imbedded deep into the ancient genetic building blocks of life? Why is seven the key coordinating rhythm for life’s myriad complexities?

God did ‘wind up the clockwork’ leaving his fingerprints all over the clock. The new science of chronobiology has had some of science’s most impressive successes in seeing back to creation with its discovery of ‘primitive origins’ to the seven-day cycle found in human cells and other life forms.

God somehow coded into the infinite complexities of life a clock that ticks to the time of a seven-day rhythm. We humans have no control over these innate circaseptan rhythms and benefit best by simply living in sympathetic harmony with them. More importantly, the seven-day cycle in physical nature points beyond temporal reality to a far greater spiritual reality.

God, with masterful design, uses time itself and a seventh day rest to call his creation to pause and listen. He has a message which explains why we were created and for what special purpose. His words are so majestic, so exciting, so unbelievable, so beyond our mundane world that they could only be comprehended as coming from God himself. His message dispels ignorance, solves life’s grand mysteries, and offers a future too beautiful to be true.

His personal message introduces himself as our creator, he gives us dignity and a special relationship to himself by declaring we have been made in his image, he then offers to save us into an eternity with him—if we but follow him. He invites us to join him on his journey, to walk with him, to talk with him, to learn from him, to even rule with him. How could we refuse such an invitation?

The mystery of the seven-day cycle was never intended to be a mystery, but a call from the Creator to get in harmony, in sync, with him. It is high time we get in step with God.

In Part II and Part III, we will focus on God’s perfect plan for economic justice and the great gifts of “forgiveness” and “cancellation.” <sup>(MC)</sup>

### ENDNOTES

- 1 Robert E. Lucas, “The Industrial Revolutions: Past and Future” (2004)
- 2 <http://www.godward.org/archives/Special%20Articles/7-Day%20Cycle.htm>