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Last-Day Change of Seasons

By Wilfred Hahn

"Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look!" (James 5:1-3).



The entire prophecy found in James 5:1-6 lists at least six financial or economic signs of the last days. I have counted almost 50 such general signs following years of Bible study. This passage in James is the most concentrated assembly of such indicators. They include hoarding, accumulation of wealth, wage inequities, different classes of workers, luxuries and indulgence (consumerism at its peak!), conditions of economic brutality, and perhaps even widespread obesity. Most significantly, the edifice of wealth is then turned into a curse as it is corroded and proven illusory.

James' pronouncement indeed is a prophecy. He clearly refers the "to the last days" (verse 3). Though it is true that the last days already were in force during his

time in the first century, it remains that the last days — the very last days — are surely in force today. The "day of slaughter" that he mentions (verse 5) has yet to occur and is future, referring to the Great Tribulation and has the same meaning as the "Day of the Lord."

Our direct aim is to examine the prophetic implication that rich people will "have hoarded wealth in the last days." It is timely to do so. For the first time in history, a global wealth survey has just been published. And, its conclusions are sobering, if not surprising.

The First Worldwide Survey of Wealth

In December 2006 a ground-breaking report entitled *The Worldwide Distribution*



*of Household Wealth*¹ was released. The results were much worse than had been previously indicated by other studies that surveyed income. Wealth and income, though surely related, are quite different. Income is generally defined as the annual flow of earnings and incomes, while wealth is the accumulation of income and hoarded assets.



However, before tackling this topic further, a few disclaimers. No, this is not a riposte against rich people. I often get letters suggesting that I have it in for rich people ... that I am a Marxist ... socialist ... and so forth. It surely would be strange if I were any of these given my profession. Actually, I don't hold to any doctrines other than what the Bible supports. And, doing so, neither supports capitalism either...the apparent sacred shibboleth of most countries and economies today.

Capitalism is not a Christian system, though many people may believe this to be the case. It is not. The Bible never makes any statements that endorse or support the systems or theories of man. Capitalism is a human system...a theory of wealth creation ...even a religion. It happens to be a very useful invention, just as are automobiles and telecommunications systems.

Returning to the recent wealth report, according to its authors' research, the top 10 percent of adults in the world own 85 percent of global household wealth (2005). The average member of this wealthy group therefore has 8.5 times the holdings of the global average. Further-

more, the top 2 percent and 1 percent of the world's population is estimated to own 51 percent and 40 percent of world household wealth, respectively. This is a more extreme distribution than had been estimated by surveying global incomes in previous studies.

Very likely, the world today has a much more imbalanced wealth skew — the rich are richer, and the non-rich relatively poorer — than ever before in history. How extreme might this condition yet become in the future? It is hard to say. However, there comes a point where a further skewing becomes highly toxic for the world's economic healthfulness. That point may indeed be nearer than we think. In fact, if trends continue at the pace of recent years, severe economic problems are sure to emerge in America as well as around the world. As it is, America itself is experiencing a rapid skewing of wealth. Again, if trends continue as they have over the past 10 years, it would not be surprising to see the US have wealth imbalances more extreme than Mexico and much of Latin America.

God indeed blesses people and allows some to become very wealthy. The only problem is that for the majority of them, vast riches are no blessing but rather a

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trap and a diversion. Many of them become consumed with the task of warding off canker worms and thieves. The poor have their problems, as do the rich. Thankfully, there are some rich people who have not been tainted with the deceptions and temptations of wealth.

Times and the Seasons

Having reviewed a major last-day economic sign of hoarding and wealth, we jump to a Scripture verse that will surely seem unrelated. However, readers will soon see its significance.

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time (Daniel 7:25, KJV).

In this passage we are told that the Antichrist will think, or try “to change the times and the laws.” He may not successfully achieve this result, however, he will surely attempt to do so.

The most perplexing statement is that he will “think to change the times.” Just how is this possible and what could it mean? The Aramaic word, which is translated “time” in this verse, is *zeman*. A better fitting translation would more point to the idea of seasons and periods.

This same word, *zeman*, is used by Daniel in 2:21 as he praises God, saying “And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.” Here, God is acknowledged as being able to change the “time and the seasons.” In this verse, we see that the

Aramaic word *zeman* is in fact translated as “season.” The Aramaic word *iddan*, on the other hand, is here translated as the word “time,” more closely aligning with the meaning of a specific length of a year or a specific time point.

Turning our attention back to Daniel 7:25, we can safely conclude that the Antichrist will indeed attempt to change the “seasons.” However, doing so, we are not necessarily required to preclude the idea of changing the length of a year. As you’ll see, this is significant.

All the same, how could the Antichrist change the seasons? Actually, it isn’t that farfetched. It has been done many times before.

In 237 BC, during the reign of King Ptolemy III (the son of the Egyptian king who sponsored the productions of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament) the priests (who were the astrologer/astronomists of their day, as were the magi at the time of Jesus’ birth) issued the official decree of Canopus. It announced the adoption of a new Egyptian calendar that would include a leap year. Reading a portion of this decree will stage the vantage point for our further examination of how the seasons can be changed:

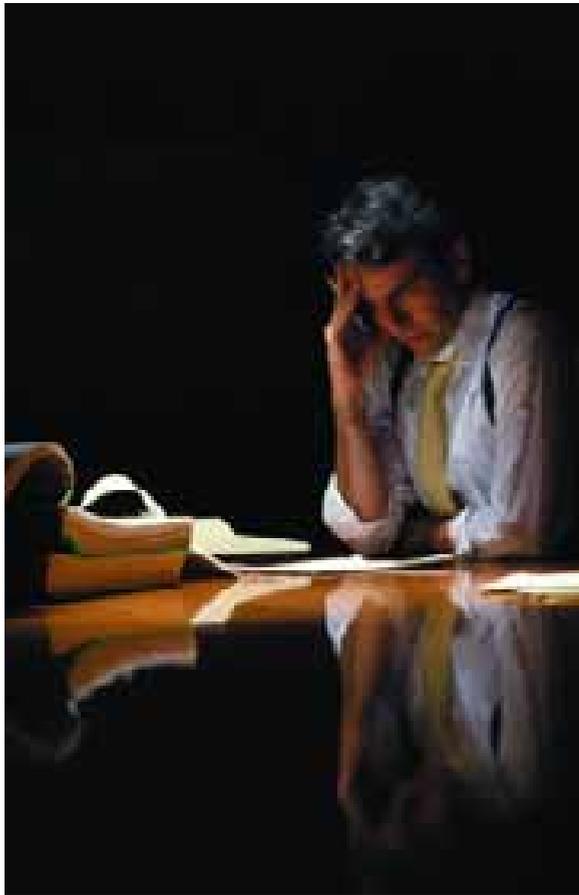
And that the seasons of the year may coincide with the constitution of the world, and that it may not happen that some of the popular festivals which ought to be held in the winter come to be celebrated in the summer, owing to the Sun changing one day in the course of four years ... from this time onward one day, a festival of the Well-Doing Gods (King Ptolemy and Queen Berenice), shall be added every four years to the five additional days, before the New Year, so that all may know that the error deficiency which existed formerly in respect of the arrangement



of the seasons, and of the year ... hath been rectified.²

We learn an interesting fact here. Over time the seasons had occurred at different points in the year. If the year (*zeman*) were defined as 365 years (or 360 years as it was in much earlier times), we would today discover that eventually we would be celebrating Christmas in the middle of summer. Thus, the seasons are changed.

While the Egyptian astronomers had corrected their calendars at that time, it was two centuries later that the Romans incorporated the leap year into their calendar. Today, we still use this Julian calendar. However, interestingly, at the time that Julius Caesar put this calendar into effect, he added a full two months as a temporary measure to get the seasons to agree with the traditional times. Indeed, we see that Julius Caesar changed the times and seasons, as did the Egyptian astronomers.



Think what a change in the length of the week to eight days could do for a troubled financial world. Now the masses of over-indebted people could work six to eight days a week — at least one more day — to pay off their debts, and have four more days a month to pay the rent or car lease payment.

The Times of the Antichrist

It will indeed be easy for the Antichrist to change the seasons. He only needs to change the calendar. But why would he do so? I can think of at least one possible reason and it connects with the general topic that we began with — the lopsided wealth skew of the last days and the demise of the globalized commercial and financial network, the systemic form of endtime Babylon the Great.

What great solution could the Antichrist bring to the terrible economic times that unfold in the Great Tribulation (second half of the seven-year Tribulation Period)?

Why not “try” to change the length of week? Impossible? Actually, there have al-

ready been proposals of this type. The Metric Week has been long discussed. A week of ten days lends itself to more flexible working arrangements and other benefits, claim its promoters. However, for illustration sake, rather than the Metric Week, let's consider an eight-day week...one that the Beatles apparently may have invented with their song, “Eight Days a Week.”

Think what a change in the length of the week to eight days could do for a troubled financial world. Now the masses of over-indebted people (the vast majority as the recent wealth survey confirms) could work six to eight days a week — at least one more day — to pay off their debts, and have four more days a month to pay the rent or car lease payment. And, as interest rate levels are generally calculated

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at an annual rate, adding one day a week therefore makes the interest-rate year longer by at least 52 days, effectively lowering interest rate levels.

This longer year could also solve the problem of unfunded pension systems around the globe, primarily attributable to an aging world population (another last-day phenomenon). Given that the year would be longer, people will have to work until an older age, thus qualifying for retirement pensions later and easing pension liability problems.

Wouldn't such a monumental change meet much opposition? Yes and no. It will likely please some people — the modern-day pagan human who lives to consume. Working more hours means they can consume more. How delightful! According to today's warped economic theories, it is consumption after all that is the foundation of all wealth. In the name of saving the world, people could in this way be asked to do the patriotic thing for all mankind...consume.

Thoughts to Ponder

An eight-day week? Or, a Metric Week? Admittedly, it is conjecture. Yet, the idea of changing the times isn't much different than is already practiced in farming today. For example, poultry farmers change the "time and the seasons" for their brooding

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hens by controlling the lighting. Doing so, they trick the hens into thinking that the day is shorter, inducing them to lay more eggs.

Changing the number of days per week would definitely change the times and seasons, assuming the number of weeks per year remained the same. The six-day workweek (assuming one has the weekend off) lines up

with the works of man (the number of six) and the eight-day week coincides with a prominent significance of the number eight in Scripture — "new birth, new creation, new beginning."³

The Antichrist would be trying to initiate a "new beginning" with this measure. The seven-day week, which God himself instituted, and which the entire world today observes — no matter the nations, tongues, religions and people — would have been overturned.

Likely, the world's financial markets may be thrown into turmoil over these changes and in the end such a change of seasons will end up being unsuccessful. The Bible only says that the Antichrist will try to change the seasons, not stating that he will be successful in this endeavor.

The elusive eight-day week. It is probably not such a strange idea. Who hasn't said, "If only I had more time"? 

ENDNOTES

- 1 World Institute for Development Economics Research, UN University (UNU-Wider)
- 2 E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Rosetta Stone* (New York, Dover Publications, 1989) Quote taken from *The Star of Bethlehem*, Michael R. Molnar, Rutgers University Press, 1999 pg. 54.
- 3 Ed F. Vallowe. *Biblical Mathematics: Keys to Scripture Numerics*. The Olive Press, 1998. pg. 85.