



BURNING ALIGHT: 12 ENDTIME FUSES – PART VII



GINI OUT OF THE BOTTLE

By Wilfred Hahn

We continue with our theme of 12 endtime fuses, covering the 8th in our informal list. As we have always pointed out, each of these so-called “fuses” identifies a shift in mankind’s beliefs. As such, we are not expressly listing endtime signs of various types, just those that relate to the new beliefs of mankind ... namely, the individual and personal choices that people will make. We maintain that all of these shifts are global in scope, and taken together, are of “endtime” significance.

The last “fuse” (#7) that we reviewed was mankind’s insistence that “lying and stealing” be the foundation of global prosperity and human self-dependence. The Bible says that this approach carries with it a curse and will ultimately result in a complete breakdown of mankind’s global systems and societies.

The 8th fuse that we will discuss is a related offshoot—the set of beliefs that underlie the endemic widening of the world wealth skew. What we mean here is the increasing unevenness of the world’s wealth distribution, both between individuals and

nations. Just how does this relate to an endtime shift in human beliefs?

The Road to Serfdom and the Ultra-Wealthy

It is only in the last 3 decades or so that major communist nations embraced many of the “free market” economic principles of the developed Western world. For example, the former mortal enemy of the United States—Russia—gave way to “glasnost” and radically shifted its economic orientations. China, too, shifted its focus in the late 1970s when Deng Xiaoping,

leader of China's Communist Party, led the nation toward a market economy.

These changes and others were seen to be so phenomenal that one political scientist even went so far as to pronounce the "end of history," as he believed that democracy and free market capitalism had finally trounced the whole world.¹ Viewing this as the pinnacle achievement of all time, no more history was seen to be necessary.

However, it is more than interesting to note that both Russia and China (the largest of previously non-aligned nations) were quick to adopt some of the worst characteristics of the Western world. Before long their societies were marked by massive wealth disparities. Today, 83 members of China's National People's Congress (NPC) are US dollar billionaires.² This is the largest concentration of billionaires in political office anywhere. (By contrast, the U.S. only has one billionaire in politics, New York mayor Michael Bloomberg.) Russia, according to a 2013 survey by *Forbes* magazine, has a total of 101 billionaires, and many of them have been dependent upon political linkages.

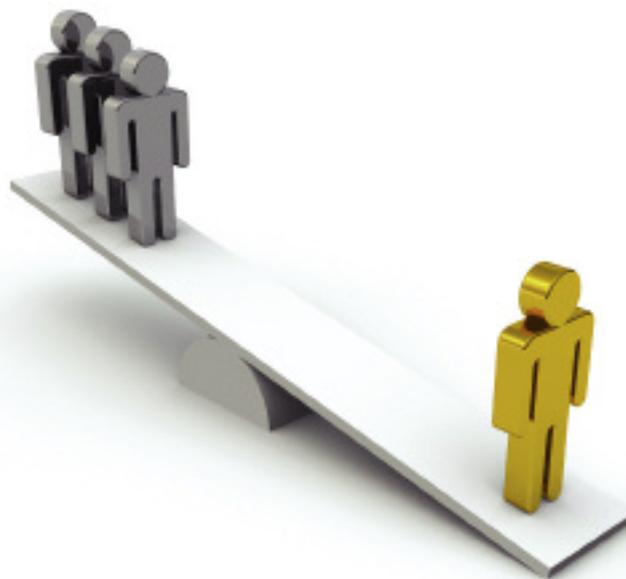
Such statistics are symptomatic of an unequal wealth distribution. Russia and China today have very high Gini scores. (The Gini rating has a scale from 0 to 1 and is named after Corrado Gini, an Italian economist. The higher the number, the more unequal the wealth distribution. For example, a measure of 1.0 would mean that 100% of all wealth was owned by one person.)

Wealth distribution in the U.S. is also very uneven. It has a Gini score that is nearly as extreme as Russia's. The reality is that this phenomenon of increasing concentration of wealth is a worldwide

trend. Wealth ownership may be more concentrated in the world today than perhaps ever before in human history. And, it is also interesting to note that this unprecedented wealth imbalance has occurred hand-in-hand with the growing focus of many organizations such as the United Nations, upon the eradication of world poverty (i.e. Millennium Development Goals).

Just why have these trends come about? Why at this time? Why would wealth distribution not be fairer and more even? Moreover, we will posit here that it helps to facilitate the emergence of a global elite ... a small group of people who are extremely wealthy and powerful, and may control key sectors of the world economy and political spheres. Such conditions would not happen without explanation. Crucially, human beliefs and philosophies have played an instrumental role.

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This tendency of “wealth begetting wealth” today is viewed by many economists as a flaw of capitalism. They observe that over time, the competitive economic arena leads to winners who then become very large or wealthy, in turn having the ability to suppress new competitors. These trends eventually lead to instability and future economic destruction.

Eschatology and Wealth

Is the condition of the wealthy becoming richer and fewer, the relatively poor more so, an endtime trend? Is it prophesied? Yes; James specifically prophesies that an amassing of riches plays a role in the end times. He says, “Now listen, you rich people [...] You have hoarded wealth in the last days” (James 5:1, 3). The King James translation, in this writer’s opinion, translates this condition of amassing wealth more accurately, stating, “Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days” (verse 3).

Here, we understand that not only has wealth increased overall, but it is also “heaped” or “amassed,” as is implied by the Greek word *thesaurizo*. This is an important distinction, as it gives evidence of a wealth skew. Wealth cannot be heaped and concentrated without there being a deprivation of someone else’s wealth. As we have often pointed out, for someone to become rich, someone else must be coaxed into becoming relatively poorer, or more indebted and indentured. Here, we see that indebted governments can play a facilitating role in the transfer of wealth from the masses to an opportunistic ultra-wealthy class.

These conditions are in alignment with the character described of the Antichrist of the “end” period. Greed and economic oppression are the prominent characteristics portrayed. For example: “The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and he enjoys the choicest food” (Habakkuk 1:15-16).

Moreover, “[...] he is greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples” (Habakkuk 2:5). This endtime regime is motivated by greed and is global in span, as it takes “all the nations” and “all the peoples” captive. “Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion!” (verse 6). “Woe to him who

builds his realm by unjust gain, to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!” (verse 9). Habakkuk’s prophecies could not provide a more accurate description of the world’s emerging ruling structure of our times, and perhaps yet in the future.

Biblical Perspectives on Super Wealth

We do not wish to participate in any politicizing when making our observations; but rather intend only to contrast these trends against the benchmarks and principles that the Bible prescribes.

Consider God’s prescriptions for the Hebrew. They were required to observe the Sabbath year. Every seventh year, they were to allow their fields to lay fallow and settle all outstanding debts. This convention, not surprisingly, served to slow this “winner take all” tendency of human economies. In a sense, it would serve to reprime the “Monopoly game” every 7 years. With a Sabbath year being observed, the development of wealth imbalances and economic inequality would be restrained, though likely not entirely eradicated.

In addition, there was the observation commanded of the great Jubilee Year. “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan.” The 25th chapter of Leviticus lays out a detailed set of rules as to how the Jubilee Year was to be observed.

In effect, every 50 years, a completely new game of “Monopoly” was decreed. Property was restored to its original owners. The year prior (the 49th year being a Sabbath Year), all debts would have been laid flat as well. The main difference of the Jubilee Year as compared to the Sabbath Year, was that land was returned to

the original tribe and family and indentured labor (slavery) was broken. Together, these two Sabbath ordinances (both the 7th Sabbath year and the Jubilee Year) ensured that freedom, wealth distribution and incentives for production and income stayed in balance.

The practice of the Sabbath and Jubilee years was very effective. It did not bring about an economically dependent class of people with a sense of entitlement ... who did not want to work for a living. Industrious and entrepreneurial people were still rewarded for their efforts. Individuals could still become wealthy. All the same, under this God-given 7-year and 50-year debt and economic cycle, it was much less likely that an oppressed class of indebted and poor could emerge.

Were the main principles behind these two Sabbath years observed today, our current globalized world of money would not be so dangerously imbalanced. It would be very different and not so vulnerable to an endtime development of a global elite. There was no basis for debt becoming a major asset of wealth, thereby ultimately facilitating the wealth skew that we see today. To illustrate this point in part, consider that more than 70% of the value of securitized assets in the world today are forms of debt.

The Jubilee Year ensured another benefit. There would be no permanent indentured slave class—either individuals or nation states. The maximum period of slavery could only be 50 years. As such, at least once in each person’s lifetime, one could be saved from slavery. All could be saved. Poverty, therefore, had fewer tendencies to fester as an intergenerational problem. That is not the case today.

The Endtime Super Rich in the Bible

The Prophet Daniel speaks of a class of elites in the very same verse that also



They will not be killed (a negative reward) and will be allowed to “buy or sell.” He causes, “[...] all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell” (Revelation 13:15-16).



refers to the Antichrist: “And he [the Antichrist] shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god: whosoever acknowledgeth him he will increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price” (Daniel 11:39, ASV).

Who are “them” that will “increase with glory” and “rule over many,” and play a role in the dividing of land “for a price”? The answer—those that “acknowledge him,” the Antichrist (which can also mean the Antichrist system of world rule). Virtually all English Bible translations use the word “acknowledge.” It means here that certain key people who recognize him and accept his authority will receive a reward—land. It should be noted that the original Aramaic word used for “land” in this verse can also convey the idea of property or economic domain as well as geographic area. After all, in ancient times, land was the main foundation of wealth and economy.

It only follows that these elites, whoever they are, must be a small group of people who likely will be influential in their own right. Why? They will be made

rulers over many. As not everyone can be made a ruler over many, these will be few. Not only is this logical, but the Bible also specifically tell us what the reward will be for everybody else ... in other words, all the rest of the masses that acknowledge and worship the Antichrist. They will not be killed (a negative reward) and will be allowed to “buy or sell.” He causes, “[...] all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell” (Revelation 13:15-16).

The elites, on the other hand, are bought off for their loyalty with further reward ... the additional pay-off of power or economic domain, quite possibly. It is the same or similar deal that Satan offered Christ when he was being tested in the wilderness, promising “[...] authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours” (Luke 4:6-7).

These elites selected for reward must have something to barter in return ... likely their fame or endorsement. We are given at least a few criteria with which to identify who these elites might be at that future date. In the first instance, they must be humans. Also, they must be capable of being rulers, already likely possessing some measure of power and authority. And, they must be willing worldly complicitors.

Although these final events play out during the future Tribulation period (and

therefore really do not concern us), it may already be possible today to discern the power structures that these elites might command. Of course, we can only speculate as to whom these persons may be that the Prophet Daniel mentions. One possibility is that they could be powerful heads of large multinational corporations (MNCs). After all, some of these companies are already today larger than many individual nations in terms of their commercial influence and economic footprint. Or, these may be wealthy powerbrokers whose domains span many industries and countries. We can only speculate.

Thoughts to Ponder

Are our views to be seen as a vote for socialism? Not at all. Readers must remember that the ordinances that God commanded of the Hebrews (the Sabbath and Jubilee years, rules of Levitical lending ...etc.) far precede the modern politicized idea of socialism (or any other "ism") and have very little in common. God's prescription would most certainly be more efficacious than any of the ideas of mankind.

The point to observe in relation to this 8th Burning Fuse, is that it is modern-day beliefs that have served to bring much of these conditions about. The rights of super-wealthy individuals or organizations to arrange their affairs to their maximum benefit, without consideration of the side-effects and fairness attributable to society, are out of balance. Indeed, the poor are still with us, as Christ said would be the case (Matthew 26:11).

The Israelites fell out of the practice of honoring the Sabbath and Jubilee years. Before long, they disobediently again chose to "work around the clock, 24-7," instead of allowing God's creation to rest. Prophets were sent to warn them of the consequences (e.g. Jeremiah and Ezekiel).

Eventually, the Sabbath became nothing more than a ritualistic nuisance. Amos revealed the attitude of those times: "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?—skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat" (Amos 8:5-6).

In contrast, God commanded the Israelites not to be so overly taken up with productivity and the act of squeezing the last "mite" from every transaction. He told them to ease up. "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 23:22).

In time, God punished Israel and Judah for not observing this ordinance. The 70-year captivity in Babylon was directly proportionate to the number of Sabbaths that Judah had not observed for the previous 490 years, as Moses had warned (Leviticus 26:34). "The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah" (2 Chronicles 36:21).

A similar parallel could be seen to apply to the entire world. Mankind's imperfect economies of oppression, poverty, greed, corruption and extremely unequal wealth distribution of the past thousands of years, will come to an end during the Tribulation. It will be followed by the Millennial world ... the Messianic reign representing peace and justice. (MC)

ENDNOTES

- 1 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992.
- 2 Hurun Global Rich List 2013