***The Biblical View of Economics

RV118-02***

We are studying Revelation 6:5-6, continuing on the third horsemen of the apocalypse. This is the third seal. This is segment number 3.

**Runaway Inflation**

During the years 1914 through 1923, Germany resorted to paying off its debts by simply printing up the necessary Deutsche Marks. That was their currency (such as our dollars). The enormous influx of printing press currency into the German economy at that time produced an enormous inflation. Consequently, prices rose on all fronts. More Marks, in other words, were chasing the same amount of goods. Unless you increase productivity so that there is a surplus of what there is to sell, if you increase the supply of money, you make everything rise in cost, because there is more money competing for the same amount of product. As prices rose, it was necessary for salaries to rise to keep pace. People had more money, but what they had was constantly purchasing less and less.

On the other hand, those who had borrowed money, including the German government, were easily able to pay off their fixed-figure debts with the now more plentiful Deutsche Marks, which were steadily decreasing in purchasing value. Since the inflated Mark had lower purchasing power, the lenders, when repaid, were actually experiencing a great loss of personal wealth, because they had lent people valuable Deutsche Marks, but they were being paid back in cheap Deutsche Marks which could not buy the same amount of goods as the money which they had lent out in the first place.

The long term effect of printing money to pay for the German government programs and debts had disastrous effects on the German economy of the 1920s. By the year 1923, the German inflation had spiraled out of control. It was runaway. Up to this point, they had followed precisely the pattern which nations around the world, including our own, are following today. They are doing exactly the same thing – paying off previous debts with cheaper money by printing money for specialized programs of various kinds for specialized groups within the society.

Because the inflation in Germany spiraled up into the stratosphere, it was necessary to print ever larger denominations of currency just to meet pre-inflation prices. For example, what used to sell for, say, 25 Marks, before the German inflation began, soon required 100,000 Marks to cover. Then it went to one million Marks; then to a billion Marks; and, finally, it took a trillion Marks just to equal that 25 Mark purchase.

My son, who has been traveling in Germany the past few weeks, sent me a single 100 million German Deutsche Mark bill. He said, "I won't have to explain that to you. You know the story behind it." It's a remnant of what was being passed out in Germany in the early 1920s when the inflation was raging absolutely beyond anybody's control. The result was that on this particular Deutsche Marks, it even says, "From 1st October 1923." That is telling you that October 1st, 1923 is the very day when it will become effective currency. They had to even tell you the very day, let alone the month and the year, when you could start using this in trying to control how fast the inflation was going out of hand. This was printed in Berlin on August 22nd, 1923. So, from August to October, this was laying, stacked up, ready to be put into circulation.

It took 30 paper mills and 200 printing presses, working 24 hours a day to keep printing enough paper currency to inject into the German economy for people to have the money to buy the simplest things of life. As a matter of fact, you will see that the back side of this 100 million Deutsche Mark has nothing. Things became so desperate that they only printed on one side, and they left the other side blank just to be able to get the money out there fast enough for people to use, because that's what they needed to survive.

The result was that workers learned that it was necessary for their own survival to demand that they be paid twice a day. Their wives would come to the factory fence, and they would wait outside the fence. The men would get paid; they would rush out to that fence; hand the money through to their wives; and, their wives would go and buy anything (just food, or any kind of product – whatever had a material value) just to get rid of that piece of paper, because they knew that by the end of that work day, that paper money was going to be worth considerably less than the labor for which it had been paid. So, they were unloading their paper money just as fast as they could. They didn't care whether they bought toys or whether they bought any trivial matter, just so long as it was a material thing which would retain some kind of value.

On the last day of this vicious inflationary cycle, November 20th, 1923 (my birthday, but not the year I was born), they brought the thing to a screeching halt. They said, "This is all," and they slammed the door. Can you imagine the turmoil that was in Germany now? A loaf of bread cost 1.25 trillion Deutsche Marks. If you were fortunate to have silver, like an American silver coins, for a 10-cent piece, you could rent a luxury hotel room in Germany for a day. That's how far the German Mark had gone out of reach in the equivalency of American money.

There was a time when the German Mark was very close to the equivalent of the American dollar. When this inflation raged, the official exchange rate, in the early part of the 1920s was 4.2 trillion Deutsche Marks for one American dollar. On the black market, it was 11.7 trillion Deutsche Marks for one American dollar. When the depression hit Germany a few years later, the people were at the end of their rope, and they were then ready and looking for a strong man to come on the scene, and straighten all this out, and to give them stability. Inflation was the worst kind of trauma that a people could be put to when it is out of control. It's bad enough when they control it.

The result was that they all turned to a fellow named Adolf Hitler who came on the scene. Even though a lot of the thoughtful German people were uneasy about him, he electrified their imagination. This demonically possessed man had a magnetism about him when he spoke, and people turned to him and said, "You take charge, and do whatever is necessary to stop this." And he did. Before long, Germany was purring along again. The Mark was returned to where it was not printing press money, but it was something that represented gold and silver. Therefore, it had some real continual value. The government pulled itself back into being a productive nation. Unfortunately, what they turned to was the production of armaments and the preparation for World War II. Few things created as much human suffering as inflation in a society, especially at its runaway stage.

**Socialism**

This is the terrible condition which is portrayed by the black horse rider in Revelation 6. The wealth which the people in the tribulation will have accumulated in terms of currency savings will be drastically reduced in its purchasing power. People will soon suffer from food shortages and labor, and they will labor for a salary which is constantly decreasing in its purchasing power. But then socialism always degenerates into scarcity. It degenerates into unrewarding labor. It degenerates into regimentation and fear of the authorities who are enforcing their vain vision of utopia. That is the thing that we've been describing as the New Age movement.

So, during the tribulation, there's going to be a condition of severe economic hardship that is going to be brought about by the condition of socialism that the government social programs (which means socialism) and the consequent inflation of the currency to pay for those programs. At that time, an able-bodied worker will need all that he can earn to keep himself and his family alive on cheap food. The rich will still get by, and even enjoy some of the luxuries, but the laboring classes will suffer starvation. Government social programs will, under the antichrist, grow so exorbitant that great sums of money will be printed up to pay for the government deficits, and inflation will rage out of control worldwide.

As a matter of fact, with the computer-controlled money system in a cashless society, the antichrist will have all the money, and the people will have nothing but the little plastic card with which to be able to exist (at his favor). Taxation will drive productive citizens out of business. So, jobs will be terminated, and the government of the antichrist will be called upon to make more jobs. And the result will be that they will get exactly what they deserve when a people call upon government to make jobs. Taxation will drive these productive citizens to their knees. Old people and children and the sick will have very little hope of surviving. As a matter of fact, there will probably be a program to eliminate them, and to relieve the economic pressure by getting rid of some of these additional mouths to feed. The economic chaos that will prevail in the tribulation will drive people into a hand-to-mouth existence. It's a very grim picture as this black horse rider comes on the scene.

Consequent malnutrition will cause physical breakdown and susceptibility to disease. So, death will stalk the population. What God will be doing then will be judging the New Age world of the antichrist with exact justice and no mercy. He will, furthermore, be adding the disasters of nature which will further destroy the food supplies of the Christ rejecters. At that point, it's going to become very clear exactly who is Lord of creation, and antichrist is going to be humiliated.

People, of course, will be in desperation for food, and when people become desperate, they become violent. So, this will contribute to the red horse rider violence syndrome, and the bloodshed that will exist. Food rationing will become necessary in the tribulation. It will be a great embarrassment to the New Age leaders who have promised nothing but prosperity and plenty. The problem will be that at that time in history, there will be no United States – no free-enterprise capitalist United States still producing vast quantities of food for the nations to fall back on. Today they can get away with socialism all over the world because there's always the United States to come to in order to buy the food that their system cannot produce. The more people turn to this welfare state to solve their economic problems, the worse things will become. That has been historically the case.

Today the United States politicians are blaming government budget deficits (which create inflation) on the fact that we have been reducing taxes upon our people, and because we have been restoring our national defenses. But those same politicians never mention that the reason we have these deficits is because of the unaffordable luxury of the social programs which seek to redistribute wealth to select groups. That is the reason that we have budget deficits. It is not because we have reduced taxes, and not because we are building the national defenses that need to be built. It is because we are spending on programs that are socialist in principle, and which consequently, are unproductive.

The very fact that these presidential candidates can stand up and say these things shows the contempt for the American people that they have. They don't think that you people are going to put two and two together. They don't think that you're going to figure it out. They don't think that you are going to be able to know what's going on. No one can stop this inflation now, and they know it.

So, the candidates are running on a platform of increasing government subsidies to favored groups, and they intend to print the money. So, here it is. The 100 million dollar bill comes on the scene – printed on one side, but not on the other. This will be the old repeat of what happened in Germany.

The basic problem for the American people, however, is that they all want some financial favor from the government at the expense of the taxpayer. That's the problem. Everybody wants something from the government at the expense of the taxpayer. So, the politicians with the social program philosophy of the welfare state actually view the income of all American citizens as a lump of national income. There's a very perceptive thought. Don't miss it. You'll understand what the politicians are saying if you get this principle. They are viewing all of your income as a lump of national income. It's a pot into which everything goes.

When people come and say, as I saw one lady on television some time ago talking to Martin Frost, and pointing her finger at him and saying, "We have sent you to Washington in order to get some of that money that we need. What we want is for you to come and get some of that stuff for us," and she rubbed her fingers together. Well, it was a plain, clear declaration of what is characteristic of the American people – that somewhere out there is a lump (a big pot) of money. It never occurred to that poor benighted woman that she was saying, "I want you to put the gun to Sam Jones' head. That son of a gun has been earning money left and right, and I want you to jerk it from him, and give some of it over here to me. How can I live the way I live if you don't give me some more of that money from Sam Jones? Now, you get the gun to his head." It never occurred to her that when she's asking, the government has no money. It only has what it can take away. What is the mentality of the socialist-oriented politician? They haven't put it in words, but watch: they will in the near future, in all likelihood. They're saying, "Everything that Americans earn is a lump of national income that our government has to deal with and to dispose of."

That's how it works in a communist country. What everybody earns is a lump of national income. You can't say that in our country yet, but as always, you come up on the blind side, and you operate on that principle.

**Tax Cuts**

So, the idea then is for an elite group of wise men to distribute this national income as they deem fair and right. Therefore, any tax cut, which they're screaming against now, is viewed as taking money from the poor and giving it to the rich. That is because if you have a tax cut, that means that you're leaving Sam Jones with the money that he earned instead of taking it away from him and putting it into the national pot. So, a tax cut is being described as taking money from the poor, because if you took it from Sam Jones and put it in the national pot, then the poor would have a chance to get their hands on it. That's the idea – to share the income with the poor.

**The Biblical View of Economics**

There is a biblical position on this, and I hope that that will be clearly demonstrated before we're through with this session. The Bible is very explicit. You can be as negative as you want about it, but the Bible is very explicit about economy, and about the way God says that a nation can operate its finances. You can just forget it if you think that any nation can violate those principles any more than any individual can violate the moral code of God and still survive. The biblical position is that what each person produces is his own to use, minus some modest taxes to provide the government with the means to protect life, liberty, and private property.

The New Age economy of the antichrist will operate on the premise that poverty has a claim on wealth. Get that principle. It will operate on the premise which American politicians now operate on – that poverty has a claim on wealth. Consequently, the result will be that the money will be removed from the producers, and all will become equally poor, and in want, as a matter of fact, of the basic necessities of life. What, we read of the black horse rider condition is precisely what is now in the works in the American economy, which will bring this nation down to the point where it will be a non-effective power in the antichrist world.

The question for every individual is to have the basic elements that we need every day of our lives, which is food. That is the basic element. Without food, everything else is unimportant. That is the number one thing you must have.

**Food Comes from God**

The Bible, as I said, is very explicit about all economic matters, and it is very clear about the source of food. It's amazing how many Christians do not go through their day with this clearly in their minds, relative to the source of their food. Jesus enunciated this in Luke 11:3. In the context, He was teaching His disciples how to pray as members of the kingdom age: "Give us day-by-day our daily bread." We generally repeat that as, "Give us this day our daily food." Jesus indicated by this statement that we receive our food from God, and that we are to look to God for food. As we start listening for you now other biblical economic principles, keep that basic one in mind, and you will be amazed how everyone is connected to that. This is the trouble with poor people today. They do not understand this principle that Jesus declared so clearly: you get your food from God; therefore, you look to God for your food. You don't look to your state; you don't look to your neighbors; you don't look to the welfare agency; and, you don't look to your family: You look to God. Now, He may use all these external elements in one way or another, but the number one principle is that food comes from God, and that's where you must look for it.

Before the fall of Adam and Eve and to sin, in the Garden of Eden, man was given the garden to cultivate. As the result of his modest efforts, which preoccupied his time, and which he thoroughly enjoyed (cultivating the garden), he received an enormous amount of food from God as the result of the cultivation of that garden. In Genesis 1:29, we read, "And God said, behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree-yielding seed. To you, it shall be for food, and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth wherein there is life. I have given every green earth for food. And it was so." God said, "I have given you a basic vegetarian food supply." Here at the very beginning of human existence, it was very clear that food is the number one thing that you, as a human being, need to exist, and you get it from God.

After the flood, the food supply was expanded to include animal flesh (animal food) that could be eaten as well. What a tremendous provision. Notice Genesis 2:8-9: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there He put the man whom he had formed, and out of the ground, the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food – the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge and of good and evil."

Then notice verse 15: "And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to till it and to keep it." So, that Adam was an enormously successful farmer right off the bat. It was easy. Talk about a green thumb! The guy had the green thumb, and everything else on him was green. He could not touch anything without it sprouting to life. Everything grew – food galore, beyond anything he could possibly need. He had a surplus. He was piling it up. He was trying to find some foreign nation that he could sell the food to. He was trying desperately to get rid of this stuff. He had everything in the world. It came easy. He had a varied diet beyond anything anybody could dream.

However, once sin entered the picture, the garden and the ground of the earth was cursed. God, in punishment upon that violation (that rebellion against God's authority) now made it more difficult for man to get food. He still had to get it from God, but now he had to get it in spite of enormous obstacles. Genesis 3:17: "And unto Adam, He said, 'Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying, you shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground for your sake. In sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you. And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return unto the ground. For out of it you were taken. You came from dust, and to dust you shall return."

Now God said, "I will still be the source of food for you. But you're going to get it under enormous difficulties and under intense physical labor. You're going to be pouring sweat to get it, where before, you could walk around and, practically, touch anything and it grew, and you had leisure time galore to enjoy Me, and you had an unending future. Death did not stare you in the face. From this moment, you have died spiritually, and physical death will be stalking you and facing you every turn of the road; and, you will be seeking to avoid physical death by the food that you need, but it will be a struggle all the way." Yet, God did not close off the channel of the food. It was just going to be hard going.

This basic principle of God as the source of food is at the heart of human existence today. The antichrist's refusal to look to God for food is going to bring shortages and starvation to his people. It is sad that Americans, with their biblical heritage, persist in looking to government and the politicians for their food. They are destined, consequently, to suffer want. As long as you look to politicians and to government for your food, you will always have a marginal existence. If you live in a pagan country such as India, you do not look to the living Creator God for your food. If you look to any god, it's a demonic god. Consequently, the nation suffers enormously in terms of malnutrition and lack of food.

When God supplies our daily needs, we secure our food; we secure wealth; and, we secure it without sorrow. In Proverbs 10:22, we have this principle: "The blessing of the Lord; it makes us rich; and, He adds no sorrow with it." We can use God's riches for God's use on earth, and store treasures in heaven. When we leave the earth, we leave it all behind. We leave it either for the Lord's glory, or we leave it for Satan's gain.

The Bible is very clear. God is the source of food. Broader than that, He is the source of all of your wealth. And when God gives it to you, He gives it to you in such a way that it is not a sorrow to you. Oh, you can bypass God and get it by some dishonest or by some other means, but it will prove to be a sorrow to you. But if you get it as a result of God giving it to you, it will be a blessing. It will not be a sorrow. So, the principle is that all food comes from God. He is the source to whom we look.

**Biblical Economic Principles**

But then the Bible becomes very explicit, and we will begin on that now. The Bible becomes very explicit as to the basis of the economic principles upon which God will give you food. He is not going to give you food just because you get out there and say, "Give us this day our daily bread." He is going to give you food as a result of that prayer, providing that you follow it up with biblical approaches to economic principles.

1. **We Secure Food via our own Labor**

Point number one: the Bible says, "That you will be provided with your daily food if you, as an able-bodied person, secure it by means of your own labors. Genesis 3:17-19 indicated that to us – that Adam secured it through his labors. Notice, in the New Testament, in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, this principle that you secure food through your personal labors: "That you study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you; that you may walk honestly toward them that are outside (that is, the unbelievers), and that you may have lack of nothing." You will have lack of nothing because of what? Because you went about doing your own business; paying attention to your work; and, doing your work with quality so that it merited the reward of your employer, and the result would be you have acted in honesty toward the outsider. You didn't go to the outsider and say, "I want you to Washington and get me some of that," and rub your fingers together. That is dishonest. You're a thief and a robber. God says, "I will not give you your daily food. I may stuff your mouth for this time, and then you will starve next time. But if you want a consistent supply of food adequate to your daily needs, you look to Me, and you get it on My principles. And the first principle is that, as an able bodied person, you get out and you hold a job, and you earn the money that you need for that food.

The apostle Paul reiterated this important principle in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Paul says, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." That is not an American principle, by and large, today. The principle in America is to eat somebody else's bread – not to eat your own bread. At the heart of the corruption of American society is this concept: "I want something from the government." And when you say that, you have declared that you believe that everybody's income is one national pot, and you want a certain amount of it by your personal decision, and for someone with the power of government to favor you.

However, God says, "I will give you your daily food, and I give it to you upon the basis of your labors as an able-bodied person.

1. **Put God's Plan for your Life First**

Secondly, God says, "I will give you your daily food on the basis that you put God's plan for your life and spiritual goals first, and that you will trust God to prosper your life as you serve him with enough material provisions to meet your needs. Most Americans, you see, cannot meet that principle at all. They cannot earn by the attitude, "I serve God first; I pursue the things of the Kingdom of God first; and, I look to God to supply me as the result of my labors for material things with ample rewards to meet my needs sufficiently to enable me to minister in spiritual things. It is not just to keep yourself alive that you pursue material things. You do need food, and you do need to look to God. But when you look to God for food, it is to keep you alive for service. That's the point.

There comes a time when if you are not earning your funds in order to execute God's plan for your life and service, then the funds will dry up. They will be minimal. You will have to resort to devious ways to get it, and you will be shortchanged. You will never find yourself in luxury, perhaps, as you serve God, but you will find yourself adequately provided for, and you will not find yourself deprived of the essentials of life.

Matthew 6:25 puts it this way: "Therefore, I say unto you. Be not anxious for your life; what you shall eat; or what you shall drink; or yet for your body, what you shall put on. Isn't the life more than food, and the body than raiment? Behold, the fowls of the air, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet, your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?" It's simple, isn't it? But how many of us look at that old scroungy crow out there, pecking away at all those seeds and all that food that grows out – that nice little black fat crow, and connect and say, "God, thinks a lot more of me than he does that bird. He takes care of him; and, He will take care of me. He will give me my daily needs, and He will give me even more than that if I approach it on biblical economic principles.

Matthew 6:30: "Wherefore if God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we be clothes?' For the gentiles seek after all these things. For your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

That's the Biblical principle. First of all: "Lord, what do you want me to do with my life? I have a spiritual gift, maybe more than one. I have capacities to use. I have a short life to live. What do you want me to do? Why did you bring me into being? What is my calling?" And secondarily, you may then call upon Him with expectation to prosper your efforts in material things, and you may count on Him to provide you with them. These are not isolated passages. The Bible reiterates these concepts again and again.

Here's another one: 1 Timothy 6:6-7 say, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out." Oh, you think, "I'm going to prepare for my old age. I'm going to prepare for my retirement." And you're going to accumulate money for this thing and that thing. There's nothing wrong with doing that, but you better be well aware of the fact that you're only going to do that as long as God says, "OK." He can wipe you out with one blow – the smartest one of you. He can wipe you into poverty with one blow. So, what you have, again, you must understand, is at His discretion and kindness and decision. He's not going to give you what you will use to destroy yourself, and He's not going to keep from you what you need to fulfill your calling.

In Luke 12:16-21, we have this parable about the rich man. This man was so rich he didn't know what to do with the product that God had blessed him with. Now what shall he do with that? There are some of you, sooner or later, who come into the position of life where you say, "I've got a lot more than I need for food. I've got a lot more than I need for clothes. I'm ashamed for people to walk into my closet. Look at all these clothes. Look at all of these suits I have. I got 2 feet and 42 pairs of shoes. I don't ever like to let people look into my closet. I've got really more than enough. So, what shall I do? I know. The thing that bothers me is that it looks so cluttered in here. I don't have enough room for 42 pairs of shoes. I'll build a bigger closet – one of these big walk-in ones with multiple shelves that I can have all this on. That's what I will do."

That's one way. The other way is to say, "Let me back off and see if there is something in terms of God's eternal values in which I may invest this money and this surplus. And then when I die, I will take it with me."

Well, this poor man decided to build himself a bigger barn, and to give himself a life of ease. In verse 19, he said, "I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years. Take your ease. Eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said unto him, 'You fool, this night your soul shall be required of you, then whose shall these things be which you have provided.' So, is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

God is the source of our daily food. Principle number one says that He will be that source when able-bodied people secure their food as a result of their personal labors. Point number two is that He gives that food to those who seek, first of all, the things of the Kingdom of God, the fulfillment of their spiritual calling, and then He will prosper their efforts in material possessions.

1. **Government Redistribution is not Biblical**

Man is to enjoy the fruits of his own labors rather than having his incentive and productivity squelched by government confiscation for redistribution. This is a biblical principle. This is not a selfish, self-centered, conservative, fundamentalist viewpoint. This is what the Bible teaches. And you can pretend that the Bible doesn't teach things as long as those things are objectionable to your human viewpoint philosophy. But the Bible does teach us. The Bible says that a person who earns something has the right to enjoy the fruits of that earning – nobody else. There is no such thing as a national income pot from which other people are to be privileged to draw.

In Acts 5:3-4, we see Ananias and Sapphira. They came and they lied about what they were bringing as the result of the sale of their property, and giving to the Christian community: "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled you heart hard to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep that part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own power? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied under man, but unto God." That is a very interesting principle: Ananias, you didn't need to come in here and lie to this congregation and say, 'Hey, I'm giving you folks all the money we got from our property,' when you kept part of it back. You could have come and said, 'I'm coming before this congregation. My wife and I have sold this property, and we're happy to contribute two-thirds thirds to the welfare of the saints.'" He said, "That would have been perfectly alright. It was your money – the results of the fruits of your labor. You can give as much as you want, and you can keep as much as you want – whatever you think God is leading you to do. But to cheat and lie about what you're doing, that was disastrous."

Unfortunately for them, they lived in a time when God dealt very openly with Christians, and they dropped dead on the spot for this deceit. 1 Timothy 5:18 reinforces this principle that you are to be privileged to use what you earn: "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain; and, the labor is worthy of his reward.' The Old Testament said, "When you hook an ox up to that grindstone that's grinding out the meal, and stuff falls on the floor, and that ox reaches down as he walks around, and he keeps licking up some of these this food that has fallen on the threshing floor, you are not to put a muzzle on him to keep him from eating it. That animal is working. That animal has the right to the rewards of his labor." Then, in the human realm: "The laborer is worthy of his reward. The laborer is worthy of his wages, and it is his wages – not somebody else's."

One other Scripture reinforces this principle. These are not isolated passages. Matthew 20:13-15: "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I do you no wrong. Didn't you agree with me for a denarius?" Here was the man who had hired men to work in his vineyard. Some he paid a day's wage for an eight-hour day; and, some he paid a day's wage for one hour. The eight-hour characters complained that the man was paying the one-hour workers as much as they who had labored all day. The man said, "Didn't you make a labor contract with me for eight hours for one day's wages?"

Verse 14: "Take what is yours. Go your way. I will give unto this last even as unto you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is my eye evil because I am good?" Here you have the example of these people who are looking at this man's income as a pot that they all owned, and that they all had a claim on to tell him how to spend it. He was the employer. The pot that he had was the result of his own earnings and his own labors. And there was nobody on the face of God's earth except God Himself who had the right to tell this man how to use what he had earned. No human government has the right to take from anybody to give to someone else. That is a biblical principle. You may not like it. You may shake your fist toward God, and say, "We are an enlightened society. We don't like Your system. There are poor people here. They need help, and one thing and another. But you better realize who it is you're coming up against. You're coming up against Almighty God, and He's going to cut your legs out from under you. When a nation insists on going that way, He'll cut that nation down. We have plenty of examples in history. Man is to enjoy the fruits of his own labors rather than have his incentive and productivity squelched by government confiscation for redistribution.

1. **We are not to be Obsessed with Accumulating Money**

There is another point on the way God gives us our daily bread. Man, however, while seeking that daily bread is not to be obsessed with accumulating money so that it becomes his God. Here is the problem – for people to be able to accumulate money, and to accumulate it for God's glory. It's practically rare to find even a Christian who can do that. Take a look at that great man Job in Job 31:24. Job says, "If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, 'You are my confidence.'" Is there anybody here with a bunch of Krugerrands such that you say, "Hey, I'm confident. I don't care what those dudes do. I don't care if they go out printing dollar bills on one side. I've got my gold."

Continuing in Job: "If I rejoice because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much." He says, "Oh, I've got my reserves. I've got to distribute it. I've got it under legal care. I've got it put around. I've got it hidden. I've got it in different banks. I've got it in different ways. I've got it secured." Job says, "Oh God, if I'm looking to my gold, and if I'm looking to the enormous accumulation of wealth." And this man had plenty: If I beheld the sun when it shined or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart has been secretly enticed, or my mouth had kissed my hand." He says, "If I looked at the sun and blew it a kiss; or, to the moon." It was a sign of worship when you kissed. It was a symbol of worship. He said, "If I were to worship these false gods," and the Bible says that covetousness is one of the worst idols: "This also was an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God who is above."

What Job was saying is, "Whatever the reason is for this agony that has come upon me: the death of my children; and, the loss of my wealth, I can honestly say it wasn't because I was trusting in that wealth, or because I was worshiping the sun god and his associated deities like that pagans." Job had the thing straight.

Matthew 6:24 stresses this same principles: "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." And don't kid yourself and think that you can serve God and money. While we pursue our daily bread, we do not ever let our accumulation of wealth become our God.

1 Timothy 6:8-10: "And having food and raiment, let us be there with content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and the snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." If you want to hurt yourself, just make the pursuit and the accumulation and the preservation of your wealth the primary thing in your life. You'll shoot yourself down in good time.

Luke 18:24 is concerning the rich young ruler: "And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, 'With what difficulty shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God? It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Here again, we have that principle that when wealth becomes your God (and it's so easy for that to happen to people who have it), it keeps them even out of eternal life.

Mark 8:36-37: "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Then we have the same principle reiterated in Hebrews 13:5-6. The Bible is explicit about these principles: "Let your manner of life be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He has said, 'I'll never leave you nor forsake you,' so that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.'" Put your confidence in the Lord, not in the accumulation of wealth, and that you've got it stored hither and yon. Let your manner of life be without covetousness.

Do you remember what Colossians 3:5 says about that? "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth: fornication; uncleanness; inordinate affection (which is evil desire); and, covetousness (which is idolatry)." So, when you become greedy and covetous for the accumulation of wealth itself, per se, you've set up an idol. And then God says, "I will not give you your daily bread. You may get it, but you're going to get sickness; you're going to get distress; you're going to get problems; you're going to get emptiness of soul; and, you're going to spend your day, and you're going to lie down in bed and wonder what it was all worth, and what it is that you have done. How is it different today than it was yesterday; today than it was last week; last week than it was last month; or, last month than it was last year? And what is it all about? Where you going? And the first serious sickness that hits you – that sickness when you know you're on your way out, that's when it's all going to come into focus, and when you're not going to be able to do anything more about it. That's when the terrible blow is going to come to you: how much your material accumulation became your God; how little you have invested for eternity; how little there will be for you to take with you; and, how the food you had was not the food that God has given you.

Just go back and read the book of Ecclesiastes – the bitterness that Solomon enunciates in that book, as he says, "I look at the food that my wealth has accumulated:" wealth when he was out of fellowship with God; and, wealth when he money became the big thing. He was going to find satisfaction by becoming the richest man that ever was. And he said, "I look at my table, and it is loaded with the most exotic foods to be found anywhere in the world. People are coming and they're eating and they're helping themselves to the filet mignon, and the lobster, and the crab, and the deep sea bluegills from the Dead Sea, and this thing, and that thing. And they're eating it, and I'm sitting here with my milk and crackers." Do you know why? The guy has a stomach full of ulcers. Oh, boy, he got his food by devious means through money that he made his god. God says, "Now put that in your belly, Solomon, and see how you like that.

I am amazed at how much the Bible has to say about economic principles that govern the basic principle of getting your daily food from God. Violating these principles undercuts your capacity to receive food in plentiful abundance as well as everything else you need in life. We will continue pursuing these next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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