

## THE RELIGION OF JESUS AND THE RICH

### I. THE TEACHING OF JESUS IN THE GOSPELS CONCERNING THE RICH.

- A. Mark 10:23: "Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!'"
- B. Luke 6:24: "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation."
- C. Matt. 19:23-24: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (sewing needle) than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'"
- D. Luke 12:15: "And He said to them, 'Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.'"
- E. Matt. 6:19-21: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
  - 1. "The practice of the preacher-carpenter who had not where to lay his head, who is not recorded as having possessed a single coin, who had nothing to leave his mother, and whose grave was borrowed from a friend, accords fully with the message he delivered."

The Outlook, December 10, 1898

### II. OTHER PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SHOW GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS RICHES.

- A. 1 Timothy 6:9-10; 17-19: "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a 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 ... Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

- B. James 1:11: "For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits."
- C. James 5:1-6: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you."

### III. THERE ARE TWO VIEWS OF WEALTH WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN THESE PASSAGES:

- A. In the first place: Wealth is a peril or danger to be avoided.
1. Jesus gave two examples of this in Luke 12 and Luke 16.
    - (a) The Rich Fool. (2) The Rich Man and Lazarus.
  2. It is the Root of all Evil.
    - (a) "Money is loved because money can buy things with which men and women can satisfy their lusts, their pride, their courser or finer ambition. Money itself is not evil - the evil is in the heart of the person who has money and in the use to which it is put by its possessor."
  3. We are warned not to appoint Elders who are Lovers of Money.
    - (a) 1 Timothy 3:3: "... not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous."
    - (b) Titus 1:7: "... not greedy for money."
    - (c) 1 Peter 5:2: "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly."
    - (d) The same is true of the Deacons. (1 Tim. 3:8)

B. In the Second Place: Wealth is viewed as a trust.

1. Every one of us have gotten our possessions by God's Grace. (1 Peter 4:10)

(a) We may be hypocritical with God in this partnership by:

(i) Dedicating our heart - but reserve our possessions.

(ii) Dedicating our talents - but reserve our pleasures.

(iii) Dedicating our possessions - but reserve our heart.

(iv) Dedicating our pleasures - but reserve our time.

2. Some Old Testament worthies were rich but used them right.

(a) Abraham - David - Solomon

3. In reference to money, every Christian should:

(a) Make all he can -

2 Thess. 3:10-13: "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

1 Tim. 5:8: "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

(i) However, not at the expense of physical health or the welfare of the soul.

(b) Save all he can -

John 6:10-12: "Then Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.'"

(c) Give all he can.

(i) With so much suffering and privation, there is a difficult question as to how much a Christian can keep.

a. How many suits, dresses, shoes, hats, etc., can we buy?

b. How many cars, houses, farms, etc., can we own?

c. How much money can we conscientiously put in the bank?

i. Especially when there is so much poverty.

4. Jesus is emphasizing the right use of money.

(a) Both rich men in Luke were condemned by using riches wrongly.

(i) There is no indication that they had gotten them illegal.

**IV. THE WEALTH OF THE WORLD IS CONCENTRATED IN THE HANDS OF A FEW MEN.**

A. In the United States - 13% of the people own 87% of the wealth.

1. We have only 5% of the world's population but 56% of its wealth. The common man in the United States is far better off than his counterpart in other countries.

B. In Asia - The masses live on the verge of poverty.

Theodore H. White, *Thunder Out of China*, says that "In Asia there are over a billion people who are tired of the world as it is; they live literally in such terrible bondage that they have nothing to lose but their chains. They are so cramped by ignorance and poverty that to write down a description of their daily life would make an American reader disbelieve the printed word ..."

D. In the Middle East: The plight of the Arab countries.

1. Wealth is highly concentrated in the hands of a few.

E. In Spain -

"America' war had cut blindly across the course of the greatest revolution in the history of mankind, the revolution of Asia. We had temporarily lanced one of the pressure heads and released some of the tension by an enormous letting of blood. But the basic tensions and underlying pressures were still there, accumulating for new crisis. Peace did not follow victory. All through Asia men continued to kill each other; they continue to do so today and will be doing so for a long time to come.

"In Asia, there are over a billion people who are tired of the world as it is; they live literally in such terrible bondage that they have nothing to lose but their chains. They are so cramped by ignorance and poverty that to write down a description of their daily life would make an American reader disbelieve the printed word. In India, a human being has an average life expectancy of twenty-seven years. In China, half the people die before they reach the age of thirty. Everywhere in Asia, life is infused with a few terrible certainties - hunger, indignity, and violence. In war and peace, in famine and in glut, a dead human body is a common sight on open highway or city street. In Shanghai, collecting the lifeless bodies of child laborers at factory gates in the morning is a routine affair. The beating, whipping, torture, and humiliation of the villagers of Asia by officials and gendarmes is a part of the substance of government authority. These people live by the sweat of their brow; they live on what they can scratch out of exhausted soils by the most primitive methods with the most savage investment of their sinew and strength. When the weather turns against them, nothing can save them from death by hunger. Less than a thousand years ago, Europe lived this way; then Europe revolted against the old system in a series of bloody wars that lifted it generation by generation to what we regard as civilization. The people of Asia are now going through the same process."

VI. YET THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH MONEY CANNOT BUY:

- A. Friends, Health, Happiness.
- B. A Mother's Love - or a Child's Devotion.
- C. It cannot buy Salvation into Christ.
  - 1. A man does not own his wealth - he owes it.