

True Riches of God

Fred R. Coulter—March 25, 2006

When people get rich, as we've seen with the life of Solomon, having been the richest and perhaps the wisest man in the world, wealth does something to people. On the other hand, the lack of wealth also does something to people in the way of effecting their beliefs and convictions.

Example: There was a man in Afghanistan who was arrested and thrown in jail and charged with converting to Christianity and he is subject to the death penalty.

Also, we have from Nigeria, so please be sure to pray for the brethren over there. They had the Muslims come and burn down the homes of Christians, and it did affect some of the brethren, three of them were killed in the fire. The Muslims just run amuck!

They think they are doing God's service when they kill anyone who professes the name of Christ (John 16). Then we have a letter from Kenya and thanks us for the things that we have sent, and:

After we have been battling the disease of the ungodly, I may cry, and bless you for thinking of us.' He says that we're a friend indeed for sending the messages and so forth. May God bless you. We want you let you know that we continue in your teachings, materials, tapes, etc. We use them to study and afterward distribute them to those who like to study the Word of God.

Then we a few other inquiries from Kenya.

Fred, we've been stricken by drought these days. Sometimes we've been given relief food by the government. Apart from that we have other expenses: stamps for sending literature, visiting new friends, Bible studies, photocopying, paper and distribution.

He asked for some money for the Feast and we sent it to him. We're glad to do that.

Even though there has been in some African countries, there have been some what we call 'Christian embezzlers.' We try and screen things out so that we are doing the best that we can in sending them the money.

In Ethiopia who is translating the books: *The Day That Jesus the Christ Died* and *The Christian Passover* and we've sent him a little money, but he and his group—about 12-14—are able to support the situation.

We're happy to help them, but we're a small church and we don't have the resources to do massive welfare relief for people over there.

What happens is that there are two ways that wealth affects people. When you're under duress and in threat of your life you have a different perspective—of course, God gives you the power of His Spirit to help you—concerning life and death.

Here in America, in the western world, what do we have? *Everything!* It's not wrong to have everything, but it's how you use it and how it affects you spiritually. That's what is the key important thing.

When you have nothing, but you have Christ and His Word, at least some of it. Like the Waldensians during the Middle Ages, they were able to evangelize much of central Europe. How did they do it? {note video by SDAs: *Israel of the Alps*}

They would send the men out two-by-two, after they were thoroughly trained in the Scriptures; they had mostly the Gospel of John as well as some others. They would send them out at merchants to sell and buy things, and they would have a copy of certain of the Scriptures that they would give to the people who bought from them, and say, 'Here is a gift that is worth more than what you have just bought from us, or what we have just bought from you.'

Eventually, you will see that they were persecuted, killed and absolutely run into the ground by the Roman Catholic Church through the Inquisitions and sending armies against them. Finally the last remnants of them were let out of prison in the middle of the winter and sent over the Alps to go to Geneva. If you could get over the Alps in the middle of the winter then you would be free.

They were so exhausted when they got to Geneva—the ones that survived—they were so thankful to be away from the persecution that the Waldensians just melted into the Protestants, *unfortunately!*

Here we have a similar situation: Revelation 2:8: "And to the angel of the Church of *the* Smyrneans write: These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead but is alive."

When you're facing death, it's important to understand that there is the resurrection. It's important to have the conviction that there is.

Verse 9: "I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich)..."—*spiritually*—because if you are martyred or if you are thrown in jail and are faithful and subsequently executed then you have the *riches of eternal life and the Kingdom, guaranteed to you!*

In this age, it's starting to pick up and go on more and more, and it will get more in the future.

"...and the blasphemy of those who declare themselves to be Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. **Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer.** Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days...." (vs 9-10).

That actually happened! There was a phase of persecution under Domitian where they had ten years of the severest persecution in the Roman Empire.

Jesus says, "...Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life" (v 10).

Matt. 10—here's the admonition as Jesus said. We need to realize that the day is coming here. I think we need to do as Jesus said, 'While it is day, work, because the night is coming when no one will be able to work.' Here are the instructions that Jesus gave to those who went out:

Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I am sending you forth as sheep in *the* midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

There comes a time thought, that we have to tell the Truth regardless of what people do, as witnessed by Stephens martyrdom and his preaching to the Sanhedrin (Acts 7).

Verse 17: "But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues... [churches or cathedrals] ...and you shall also be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness to them and to the Gentiles" (vs 17-18).

This is when you are arrested and brought up. This is not going around glad-handing and passing out Steuben crystal!

Verse 19: "Now, when they deliver you up, do not be anxious *about* how or what you should speak..." ***That's why it's important to know the Word of God and have it written in your heart and mind,*** so you will know what to say and speak.

"...for in that hour it shall be given to you what you shall speak. **For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you**" (vs 19-20).

This is the key that's important. We need the Spirit of God! When people are deprived of physical things, then they will concentrate more on the Spirit of God. They will concentrate on the ***true riches of the spiritual riches of God,*** rather than the physical riches.

Verse 21: "Then brother will deliver up

brother to death; and *the* father, the child; and children will rise up against *their* parents and *have* them put to death. And you shall be hated by all for My name's sake; but the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved" (vs 21-22).

It's talking about enduring to the end of their life or the Tribulation or whatever their circumstances are as they come down through time.

Verse 23: "But when they persecute you in this city, escape into another... [we're look to difficult days ahead, *very difficult days*] ...for truly I say to you, in no way shall you have completed *witnessing* to the cities of Israel until the Son of man has come. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is sufficient for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the servant as his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* those of his household?" (vs 23-25).

There's going to come a time when everyone who names the name of Jesus Christ, and in particularly those who have the Spirit of God and those who keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, are going to become open fodder for the authorities in this world: religious and political.

What's going to precipitate that final really tough persecution and martyrdom? *The mark of the beast!*

Verse 26: "Therefore, do not fear them... [that's what Jesus told the Smyrnans] ...because there is nothing covered that shall not be uncovered, and *nothing* hidden that shall not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, **but do not have power to destroy the life; rather, fear Him Who has the power to destroy both life and body in Gehenna**" (vs 26-28).

That's why Jesus said that ***if they were faithful unto death He would give them a crown of life!*** They had the *true riches, because:*

- they loved God
- they believed God
- they were faithful to God
- they carried out the things that were true to Him and what God wanted them to do

The thing that is important to realize is that they can't take your life; that's in God's hands!

So, in the *King James Version* it gives the implication that it is an immortal soul. However, the Greek word 'psuche' is translated ***life***, which is more proper, because is says, 'The soul that sins shall die.'

Let's see in Luke 12 the opposite. Let's see what happens when people get all focused in on the

physical. There modus operandi is to make money, to own property, and everything is from that perspective.

Isn't that the way it is in the world? There's something about riches that affects people. What is that? *Jesus said that the deceitfulness of riches choke off the Spirit (Mark 13)!* That's why we'll see that the whole message to the Laodiceans really contains a whole lot more than people have understood and have preached through the years. We've 'beat-up' on the Laodiceans how many times down through the years?

The fact remains is that when you have everything you want, and it comes to you on a remote control, everything is convenient. Think about your house: it's cool, you turn the thermostat up and it gets warm. You don't have to go outside and cut wood or shovel coal. If it's hot you turn the thermostat down. You have food in the grocery stores and supermarkets! Everything is there from all around the world. Concerning buying, they make it *easy* to buy, and *easy* to put you in debt. The deceitfulness of riches is going to bring down this nation. There is a deceitful streak in the Israelites:

- Abraham lied
- Isaac lied
- Jacob lied

So, when it comes to getting wealth, then what we did as a nation—and all the nations of the world have now done this—they have a central bank which is a privately held corporation and has nothing to do with the government.

We now as a nation—just the United State, not counting the rest of the world—if you count all the debt everywhere you have over \$50-trillion of debt. Sooner or later it's going to come due! Sooner or later we're going to face very difficult economic times! ***That will also precipitate difficult spiritual times!*** We need to be ready!

Luke 12:13: "Then one from the multitude said to Him, 'Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.'... [What riches was he concerned about? *The physical riches!*] ...But He said to him, 'Man, who has appointed Me a judge or a divider over you?' And He said to them, 'Watch out, and keep yourselves from covetousness...'" (vs 13-15)—*which is the desire to have physical goods!*

The desire to have something, and you will do anything to fulfill that desire, because it's gets you money, wealth or property! Take that word *covetousness* and write it down, and put it up next to your television. Every commercial that comes on, put another world there: *sex!*

Through the lure of covetousness to have,

and sex to sell it, they have enslaved millions and millions of people into financial ruin! The deceitfulness of riches!

Think about what would happen if we had a downturn in the economy and you lost your job, and you couldn't find any work. Think about the history of the Weimar Republic in Germany when they finally had inflation to the level that they couldn't even keep track of it, they couldn't print the money fast enough. They had to pay the workers at 10, 2 & 4 so they could give the money to their wives and they would take knapsacks and later shopping bags and then finally wheelbarrows—full of money—to go down to the bakery to buy bread. It cost one billion marks for a loaf of bread.

- think about what would happen here
- think about what will happen when the dollar finally goes down

Because it will go down! You need to think about that! Think about the *deceitfulness of riches* and deceitfulness in it, and what happens when it changes their attitude and their perspective.

"...for no one's life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses" (v 15). *Think about all that you have*, and it's true—it happened to us when we built our house—you get more and more possessions.

Look at the little children today, they have boxes of toys! Look at all the things that different people possess. I look at the things that we possess. If we had to scale down and move away, we'd have a hard time deciding what not to take. But we can't focus in on that as the purpose of life.

All of this has developed into a compulsion to buy, *buy, buy!* And the spoiled kids that boxes of things at home, when they go to the supermarket or the store, especially the toy store, they want this, that and the other thing, and Master Card and Visa makes it all possible.

Sometimes you go into stores and instead of looking at all the merchandize, just listen to the cash registers! **"...for no one's life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses."**

Verse 16: "Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. And he was reasoning within himself, saying, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to lay up my fruit?"' And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater ones..."'" (vs 16-18).

What does that take? *Thought and planning!* Financial planning! Look at the financial planning things they have on television. They have investment plans, stock plans, buy gold & silver, buy

real estate, borrow and use other people's money. All of this sort of thing to get rich!

They have a plan, but the whole purpose of this is to show that in spite of great plans, in spirit of how successful that you are, ***a day of reckoning may come!***

“...and there will I lay up all my produce and my good things. Then I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest...’” (vs 18-19)—***retire!***

Nothing wrong with good retirement, ***but*** what is the whole purpose of this? ***This is to show when you forget God because of the physical things!***

“...take your rest, eat, drink, *and* be merry.’ But God said to him, ***‘Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you;*** and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?’” (vs 18-20)—***so the family can fight over it!***

Take away all of the criminal cases out the judiciary system and what do you have? ***Fight’s over:***

- businesses
- inheritances
- whether people pay or not pay

That’s the majority of it! Getting puffed up with self-sufficiency!

Verse 21: “So *shall it be* to the one who lays up treasure ***for himself, and is not rich toward God.***”

The true riches are the spiritual riches, which are not measured by the things that you can see, weigh and measure. That’s why Jesus said to ***‘lay up treasure in heaven and not on the earth.’*** When tough times come:

- Who can help you the most?
- Who can intervene for you’re the most?
- Who can protect you with angels?
- ***God can!***

Remember Elijah and what happened to him. He prophesied that there wouldn’t be any rain for three and a half years. Where did God send him? ***Out of the country to Sidon to a widow woman who got angry when she first saw him, because he said that she had to put him up!*** She said, ‘All we have is a little flour and oil and you come to take it from me.’ Elijah said, ‘God sent me; He’ll take care of us.’

What happened? ***That oil and flour lasted for three and a half years!*** Take a little flour every day and make what you need to make, and there’s

still more there. You do this for three and a half years. ***It’s the same lesson as feeding the multitude!***

It’s not the physical feeding that was important; it demonstrates a spiritual point: ***faith and trust in God, which we will see are spiritual riches that God will provide for you!***

Verse 22: “And He said to His disciples, ‘Because of this, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat; nor about your body, what you shall put on. The life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. Consider the ravens; for they do not sow, nor reap; neither have they a storehouse or granary; but God feeds them. *Of* how much greater value are you than the birds?’” (vs 22-24).

Then Jesus gives a statement, which is really a good statement. Think about this concerning all the important, powerful, rich people in the world: bankers, corporation owners and all the government people:

Verse 25: “And which one of you, *by* taking *careful* thought, has the power to add one cubit to his stature? Therefore, if you do not have the power *to do even the least*, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow; they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. But if God so adorns the grass that today is in the field, and tomorrow is cast into an oven, how much more *shall He clothe* you, O you of little faith?” (vs 25-28).

- ***Faith comes first!***
- ***Love comes first!***
- ***Hope comes first!***
- ***Belief comes first!***

Those are the spiritual riches of God!

Verse 29: “Then do not be seeking what you shall eat or what you shall drink, and do not be anxious.... [worried] ...For all the nations of the world seek after these things; and your Father knows that you have need of these things. ***But seek the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you***” (vs 29-31).

If you are seeking the Kingdom of God, He’s going to give you the spiritual riches, and He will give you whatever you need based upon:

- your faith
- your diligence
- your wisdom
- what you have done

as long as you have always honored God in doing it!

The whole thing of the deceitfulness of riches causes people to forget God. It's like this nation, we have forgotten God because of all the things that we have. That's why they're all going to go, so then they'll begin to call on God.

We're going to be given something far greater than all the physical possessions that you could possibly acquire on this earth!

Verse 32: "Do not be afraid, little flock, **for your Father delights in giving you the Kingdom.**" Tie in with Luke 18, the parable of the rich man, who said, 'What may I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to sell all that he had 'and come and follow Me.' He couldn't do it **because he put all the riches first!**

Let's look at the Laodiceans, not from a condemning point of view, but from the point of view of what Christ is really saying to them, and some of the things that they have gotten caught up in.

What is the greatest possession that we have today? *The Bible!* We have all of it, and we have all the things that show us and teach us so that we can know and understand it as never has been in the history of the world to do so.

How many people, even in the Church of God—because they're busy earning a living to take care of the physical things—do not have time to pray, do not have time to study because they're running—hurrying and scurrying—here and there. They're focusing on the physical to take care of the physical, **rather than take care of the spiritual first**, and let God bless them when they tend to the physical **after taking care of the spiritual first!** What happens when wealth comes? *Your priorities get a skewed!*

Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, write: These things says the Amen..." *Jesus is going to have the final word*, after all, He is the Word of God! That's what He's called!

"...the faithful and true Witness, **the Beginner of the creation of God**" (v 14).

- Why does He say this?
- Who was the Creator?
- *Jesus Christ!*
- *He was the Creator; created everything!*

He made all the things so that we can get wealth; use all the things that He created on the earth for it.

In order to save us, what did He do? *He gave it all up to become a man (Philip. 2)! He divested Himself!* What else did He do? *He took upon Himself all of our sins, sicknesses and diseases (Isa. 53)! He was crucified! He took, spitting,*

shame, beating and scourging to save His creation and His spiritual creation!

We're going to see what God is doing in giving us the true riches of the character of God now. **He is creating it in us!** So, He is the Beginner of the creation of God:

1. the physical
2. the spiritual

Set your priorities and set aside 45 minutes a day for God and see if that will help change your spiritual perspective and your attitude toward life. Set your clock early or whatever, and set aside that time first!

How many people spend all the time developing or trying to take care of their physical bodies, but they haven't the time to pray or study. **Put the spiritual first**, then the physical, and the physical will be blessed!

Verse 15: "I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot... [that's what happens, people become bland] I would *that* you be *either* cold or hot."

God can deal with you if you're unconverted and in the world, He'll just leave you there. He can deal with you if you love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being and are zealous for God! But the 'tweeners,' the 'lukewarmers' are hard to deal with.

Verse 16: "So then, because you are lukewarm, and *are* neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth."

The spiritual condition of focusing in the physical things and neglecting God can lead to *spiritual disaster!*

Verse 17: "For you say..." Isn't it interesting that we live in a world where everyone's opinion counts!

- whether right or wrong
- whether good or evil
- whether smart or stupid

It counts! Politically correct!

"...I am rich, and have become wealthy..." (v 17). *You may have started from a lowly position, but now you have become wealthy!*

"...and have need of nothing'..." (v 17). *They forget that they have need of God!*

"...and you do not understand that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (v 17). *That's what happens with the deceitfulness of riches!*

You become so involved in the physical that you don't understand that your human nature is still evil. That you don't understand that your condition really is miserable.

Look at all of the wealthy people when they end up in trouble, *their lives are nothing but a mess of misery!* It seems that almost any church you want to name starts out humble and then they gradually expand, build up and become very wealthy. Then they leave God. Sooner or later God is not there anymore, because they politicize the things of morality, and then they moralize the things of politics. They get it all backward, just like it is here.

When you're rich and you don't understand that *you're really poor spiritually*, just know this: Whatever money you may have in the bank can go! It's happened before. So, if you're not relying on God, look at the difficulties!

You're poor to God, you're blind to your own condition and you are naked! That's what it says, God says:

Verse 18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire so that you may be rich..." *To purify gold takes a lot of work!* You want it as pure as can be so it has more value. How do you purify it? *You heat it up and you melt it!* They you let it cool down and get rid of the dross. Then you heat it up and melt it again and get rid of more dross. You do the same thing with silver.

There was a special on Fort Knox and the question came up: Is the gold still in Fort Knox? *or* Has it gone to all the foreigners? So, they showed that, yes, the gold is still there. I makes you wonder why they referred back to the 70s and where it is today. It was confirmed that it was there in the 70s.

What they did to keep track of the balance of trade, they would keep track of it with these huge gold bars, which were really heavy. They would have little cubby holes here and there, and under Fort Knox are all these compartments where they have the gold. One of the men who went there for 20 years said that if you dropped one on your foot, you were through, because it weighed so much. I thought: Look at all that gold, I wonder where it is today.

The gold that Christ is talking about is *the gold of spiritual character* that we build on Christ. This also takes care of the problem with self-righteousness, too.

1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ."

That's very important, because men like to come along and improve on God, and have strange

doctrines, and have all kinds of weird teachings.

Verse 12: "Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones..."—*symbolic of spiritual character, riches and treasure!*

Now look at the other building materials that burn up when there's a trial, "...wood, hay or stubble" (v 12).

If you put those to the furnace like you would with gold, silver or precious stone, it's gone! Ashes! It looks good; the only problem is that you can make it look good and nice, but it has not depth or substance, and when trials come it is gone!

That's why Jesus says in Revelation 3:18: "**I counsel you to buy from Me gold purified by fire...** [we go to Christ and ask Him to help us] ...so that you may be rich... [before God] ...and white garments so that you may be clothed, and the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and to anoint your eyes with eye salve, so that you may see."

Physical wealth blinds a person *spiritually!* Here is part of the problem. It happened with Solomon when God blessed him and gave him everything, because he started out with a tender heart. Solomon was perhaps the greatest Laodicean in history. It does something to the mind, and *when you begin to neglect God, here's what happens:* You get a guilty conscience and rather than repenting and going back to God and Jesus Christ, what do you do? *You get busy in more physical things to avoid facing the reality of your spiritual condition!*

This is what Christ is saying. You've got be able to see what the true reality is, and see yourself for what you are.

Verse 19: "As many as I love... [God loves all the Laodiceans] ...**I rebuke and chasten....**"

It says in the book of Proverbs that correction is a way of life. Jesus also inspired Paul to write that if we don't have correction from God to help us, and we don't yield to that correction, then we're no longer His sons. That's all important to understand!

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..." *That's conscience that plagues you when you are not putting the spiritual things first to secure the true spiritual riches!* That's Christ knocking and you have to respond.

"...If anyone hears My voice and opens the door... [you have to take the action] ...I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.... [then He gives encouragement] ...To the one who overcomes... [it can be overcome] ...will I give *authority* to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also

overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne” (vs 20-21).

Let’s see what Christ gave up. Remember the parable of the young man whom Jesus told to sell all his possessions and he would inherit eternal life. But think about what Jesus gave up!

- He did it because He loved you
- He did it because He loves His creation
- He did it because He loves mankind

He is eventually going to save the majority of all mankind in His great and fantastic plan!

2-Corinthians 8:9: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

We going to see that that is one of the greatest spiritual riches we can receive. The love of God is *first*. Then *hope*, *faith* and then *the grace of God!* But everything flows from God’s grace: *His love, faith and hope!*

“...that although He was rich... [created the universe, owned the universe and everything that is there] ...He became poor for your sakes...” (v 9)—*He gave it up!*

If you ask the question, ‘Lord, what have You done for Me lately?’ This answers it. He gave up everything to save you. So, the question from the Lord to each one of us is: What have you done for Me lately?

When He knocks on the door and you open it, do you still have the chain on it? That chain is your own human nature and selfishness.

“...so that by His poverty you might become rich” (v 9)—***the true riches of God!***

Let’s look at some of the *true riches of God*, and see what they really are.

1. **The Grace of God**

- that’s how God calls us
- that’s how God deals with us

With His grace!

Ephesians 1:6: “To the praise of the glory of ¹**His grace**... [God’s grace brings God glory and also brings glory to us] ...wherein He has made us objects of ²**His grace** in the Beloved Son, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins, according to the riches of ³**His grace**” (vs 6-7). *God’s grace is going to bring the spiritual riches!*

We will see how *grace and love are tied in together*.

2. **Mercy**

Ephesians 2:4: “But God, Who is **rich in mercy**...”

If you want to know about God’s mercy, study through the whole Bible. Psa. 132 says His mercy endures forever! And every one of the verses ends with that phrase. That cannot be a vain repetition, because if His mercy endures forever, then you can’t repeat it enough to make it a vain thing, because it is a spiritual thing that endures forever.

“...because of His great love with which He loved us” (v 4).

3. **Love of God**—God’s love to us!

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

- How are we to respond to God? *With love!*
- In what way? *With all your heart, mind, soul, being and strength* (Matt. 22 & Mark 13).

Everything that God does is based upon His love, which then comes His grace and then His mercy.

Ephesians 2:5: “Even when we were dead in *our trespasses*...”

That’s something to understand! Christ died for you, and especially for us even before we existed, knowing that somewhere down the line—He obviously knew that—that all the determination of how many people would be created would be given an opportunity for salvation. So, He did it while we were still sinners.

“...has made *us* alive together with Christ...” (v 5). *God views all humanity without the Spirit of God as **the walking dead!*** Why? *Because:*

- 1) they have the law of sin and death in them
- 2) they are subject to death
- 3) they have nothing in them to give them eternal life

Which also says that there’s no such thing as an immortal soul!

When the disciples said, ‘Let me go bury my father,’ Jesus said, ‘**Let the dead bury their dead.**’ Without the Spirit of God, ***you are dead in your sins—period!***

- doesn’t matter how sincere you are
- doesn’t matter how famous you are
- doesn’t matter how respected in the world you are

You’re still dead in your sins, and vanity runs your life! If you are overwhelmed with riches, maybe you

ought to stop and think about *who* gave them to you. Satan is the ‘god of this world,’ and he rewards his own!

If you want a real conversation some time, and a real experience talk to someone who works in a cemetery. They see the end everyday, and it comes in a casket or an urn. ‘Dust you are and unto dust you shall return.’ That’s why if you don’t have the Spirit of Christ *you are dead!* They never bury all their wealth with it.

“...has made *us* alive together with Christ...” (v 5). *So, when you repent and receive the Holy Spirit through baptism and the laying on of hands, you have passed from death to life!* Even though you have come to the end of your physical life, *you will be resurrected, you are guaranteed eternal life, if you are faithful to the end!*

“...(For you have been saved by grace.)... [there we have it, grace and love] ...And He has raised *us* up together and has caused *us* to sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus” (vs 5-6).

Not yet, but if we have the Spirit of God we have something heavenly within us, because it comes from God and His Throne. Where is God’s Throne? *Heaven!*

Verse 7: “So that in the ages that *are* coming He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Receiving the grace of God is one of the *true riches of Christ!* We have grace and faith, and see how all of these come together.

4. Good Works

Verse 8: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God.”

Being physical and being the *living dead*—not having the Spirit of God—there is nothing within our power that we can muster within ourselves that we can do to earn salvation, or that we can do to create circumstances where God is compelled to save us! *It’s His gift!*

Verse 9: “Not of works, so that no one may boast. For **we are His workmanship, being created** in Christ Jesus...” (vs 9-10).

That’s why Jesus mentioned to the Laodiceans that He was the Beginner of the creation of God—*physical and spiritual!* We have been called to receive the Spirit of God, so we’re part of the spiritual creation that He’s working.

“...unto the **good works** that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v

10).

We will see that if Christ is creating the *true riches* in us, *creating the true character of God*—faith, love, hope, mercy, grace, goodness, kindness, etc.—*then we’re going to have good works!*

Let’s see the comparison between riches and good spiritual works.

1-Timothy 6:17: “Charge those who are rich in this present age not to be high-minded... [because it will lead to Laodiceanism] ...nor to put *their* hope in the **uncertainty of riches...**”—*especially today!*

If you’re into stocks, bonds and CDs that’s all precarious. You have to put it someplace, but if you do, pray for God to give you wisdom in doing it. It’s uncertain! And also there’s an uncertainty of life; tie the two together.

“...but *to put their hope...* [one of the important things] ...**in the living God,** Who abundantly gives us all things for *our* enjoyment; to do good, to be **rich in good works,** to be generous in giving, to be ready to share; **treasuring up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may lay hold on eternal life**” (vs 17-19).

There you have the whole comparison right there in those four verses.

5. Faith

Faith is one of the true spiritual riches of God!

James 2:5: My beloved brethren, listen. Did not **God Himself choose the poor** of this world, **rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom,** which **He has promised to those who love Him?**” *Let’s look at this very important verse:*

God Himself has chosen us! Yes, we have to respond to God, that is true, but He’s *chosen* us! None of us are really rich in this world. Some have more money than others, but you compare that to the really rich, rich in the world, we’re really pauper in varying degrees!

- “...**rich in faith...**”—just like the Smyrnans; they were rich in faith and belief!
- “...**heirs of the Kingdom...**” Stop and think what it’s going to be like to *inherit* the Kingdom!

People look at homes, cars, wealth, jewelry, power, prestige—all of these things—and what does God offering in the Kingdom? *Once you have the spiritual character and true wealth of God, He’s going to give every one of those things!*

Then think about inheriting, with Christ, the universe! This one verse says a lot!

- “...**He has promised**...” What is the promise of God worth? *God cannot lie, so it's going to come to pass!*

But not to those who are covetous, but:

- “...**to those who love Him**”! That comes right back to #3—*love of God!*

Once we inherit that, we won't have the vanity of seeking wealth in this world. Compare that with the wealth of this world to the true spiritual goal!

1-Peter 1:1: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant **mercy**... [one of the gifts and spiritual riches of God] ...has begotten us again... [with His Holy Spirit so that we have the spiritual power from God] ...unto a living **hope** through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; **unto an inheritance incorruptible** and **undefiled**... [no leans against it] ...and **unfading**... [not going to vanish or go away] ...**reserved in heaven for us**” (vs 1-2).

That's why God wants you to build the *true riches* first, so you can receive all of these things.

Verse 5: “Who *are* being safeguarded by the power of God through **faith** for salvation *that* is ready to be revealed in *the* last time. In this you yourselves greatly rejoice...” (vs 5-6).

We get all inspired when we hear it, read it, see it, believe it and understand it!

“...though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials” (v 6).

We are going to have trials. They will vary. Some will be more intense, some will be long and some will be short.

I've read through the situation concerning Joseph (Genesis); he was in prison for seven years. When God lifted the trial, it happened in one day! Joseph came from the dungeon to #2 in all of Egypt, ***in one day!*** God can change your circumstances in one day!

Verse 7: “In order that the proving of your faith, which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire...”—tie in with Rev. 3 and the Laodiceans. God said to ‘buy of Me gold tested in the fire.’

“...may be found unto praise and honor and glory at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ” (v 7).

6. The Glory of this Mystery

We touched about receiving part of the glory of God, but ***the glory of understanding the Truth!*** I want you to think about how you were in the world before God called you. Remember when God called

you, you responded and you started learning, and learning more and more.

Now we have a great understanding of the plan of God and living in the end-time when God said that there would be understanding given, that we have more understanding than perhaps anytime in the whole history of the Church of God.

Think upon that, and think about the Laodiceans who have gone back into the world and haven't repented, how much they're going to miss, and how that knowledge is taken away from them because they don't exercise their spiritual senses.

Colossians 1:24: “Now, I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you...” *That takes a lot of deep spiritual understanding to rejoice in suffering!*

The suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us! Paul was able to envision being taken up to the third heaven. He was able to rejoice in tribulations where we can't. Most of us moan and groan in trials and tribulations.

“...and I am filling up in my flesh that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ...” (v 24). *Paul was told by Christ directly when Paul was called, ‘You are going to suffer for Me,’ and he did!*

“...for the sake of His body, which is the Church; of which I became a servant, according to the administration of God that *was* given to me for you *in order* to complete the Word of God” (vs 24-25).

Paul is referring directly to finalizing his epistles for the official canonization of the New Testament.

Verse 26: “*Even* the mystery... [secret] ...**that has been hidden from ages and from generations**...”—*God didn't make this known!*

People think that they had this dispensation for eternal life; ***no they did not!*** God did not reveal it to them. There were prophecies of it, but it was hidden, and ***God is the One Who has to open the understanding!***

Some of the *spiritual riches* that God has given is the understanding of His Word, which is *the mystery of God!*

“...**but has now been revealed to His saints**” (v 26). *We can say that on a continuous, on-going basis down through the history of the Church!*

Verse 27: “To whom God did will to make known what *are* **the riches of the glory of this mystery**...” *Paul is talking about all the spiritual riches that is the knowledge and the Truth of God*

“...which is Christ in you, the hope of

glory” (v 27). *So, we have come full circle again to hope, faith, love, to the true riches of God!*

7. The Goodness of God that Leads to the Character of God

Let’s see the riches that we are to develop that God gives to us, and we are to seek after through the good works that we are to do, motivated by faith, through the grace of God and the Holy Spirit of God!

This is also one of the problems of the Laodiceans: rich and increased with goods and become lukewarm.

Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering... [all the riches that come from God] ...not knowing that the graciousness of God... [the grace of God] ...leads you to repentance?”

Why did you repent? *Because you yielded to God, and He led you to see yourself and your sins to repent!* He does that on a continuous basis. If you don’t, and you despise it, then Paul says:

Verse 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, who will render to each one according to his own works” (vs 5-6)—*there we have works again!* To the seven churches, what did Jesus say? *To the one who overcomes! The works!*

Here’s the difference like we covered in 1-Cor. 3 between gold, silver and precious stone and wood, hay or stubble:

Verse 7: “On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking... [these are the true spiritual riches] ...glory and honor and immortality—eternal life.”

That’s a promise, and all of this starts out with the goodness of God.

Verse 8: “On the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the* Jew first, and of *the* Greek; but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good....” (vs 8-10). *That’s referring to the good works that we are given to walk in!*

8. Wisdom and Knowledge

You can also put in the book of Proverbs, because there’s a lot of wisdom and knowledge. But we want to go to the *riches* of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Romans 11:30: “For just as you once did not believe God, but have now been shown mercy through their unbelief... [referring to the Jews who rejected Jesus] ...in the same way also, they have not believed at this time in order that through the mercy shown to you, they also may have mercy shown *to them*” (vs 30-31).

God is going to use us to show mercy to the whole world. Isn’t that something? Think about that! *Think about how great the calling of God is, and the true riches of God!*

Verse 32: “For God has given them all over to unbelief in order that He might show mercy to all.”

That is one of the greatest mysteries in the world! That God has deliberately given them over to spiritual blindness in the present time in order that He might deal with those whom He has called. When Christ returns He’s going to show mercy to the whole world and then these people that Paul is talking about here will be resurrected in the second resurrection, *which will be the greatest show of mercy through the whole plan of God.*

Verse 33: “O the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and the knowledge of God!....” *I want you to think about this:*

- How many people understand the meaning of the Holy Days? *Very few!*
- How many people understand about the meaning of the Last Great Day and the second resurrection?
- How many people understand that all that Paul is talking about here is going to take place?

“...How unfathomable are His judgments and unsearchable are His ways!” (v 33).

Paul did not understand the fullness of the second resurrection, because John had not yet written the book of Revelation.

We are able to understand it today, and that ought to just humble us before God greatly! That one of the greatest apostles of God... Just like Daniel who wrote all the prophecies in the book of Daniel and said, ‘When are these things going to be?’ God said, ‘You’re not going to know!’ Think about it! The one who gave the prophecies was told he wasn’t going to know!

We’re able to have the knowledge of it because of what they did! We’re able to understand about the Last Great Day and the second resurrection—when God is going to do this—because we keep the Holy Days. That’s why it has to be:

- by the Spirit of God

- by the revelation of God
- by the Word of God

God grants the understanding!

It doesn't make us great and important people at all because God gives us understanding. It ought to make us grateful, thankful and humble because we have the knowledge. That we ought to **stand for the Truth!** That we will let **no man steal it from us!** That we will let **no man take it away from us!**

Verse 34—tie in Isa.41: “For who did know the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who first gave to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?” (vs 34-35).

In other words, if God's way is perfect and no man can add to it, **what is man unless he yields to God?**

Verse 36: “For **from Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things**... [because He's going to work it out according to the pleasure of His will] ...to Him *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

9. Suffering Reproaches

Moses was willing to suffer the reproaches of Christ than to have the pleasure of sin in Egypt for a season.

Hebrews 11:26: “For he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt because he was looking intently to the reward.”

10. The Full Assurance

To understand how great of what God is doing **to give us the true spiritual riches!**

Colossians 2:1: “Now, I want you to understand what great concern I have for you, and for those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh... [lesson to the Laodiceans] ...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love **unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ**” (vs 1-2).

What did Peter say we are to do? *To grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!*

Verse 3: “**In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**” *God has to reveal it with His Spirit!*

I think Eph. 3 is one of the most inspiring places in all the Bible. **To see all the true riches, the spiritual riches, all brought together here:**

Ephesians 3:14: “For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named**” (vs 14-15).

We're going to be part of that Family. Those in the first resurrection will forever have the blessing of living in New Jerusalem. They will be of the Family of the Father! They will share and rule with Christ!

Verse 16: “That He may grant you, **according to the riches of His glory**... [that can only come from God] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man”—which gives you the *true riches* of:

- love
- faith
- hope
- joy
- grace
- good works
- mercy
- understanding the plan of God.
- the goodness of God
- the wisdom and knowledge of God

Verse 17: “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.”

Colossians 3:16: “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...” *That's one of the greatest riches of all!*

Ephesians 3:18: “*And* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height.”

Every time I read that, that makes my mind just feel so small! But Paul wants us to comprehend it, which is one of the spiritual gifts of God.

Verse 19: “And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge **so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**”

This is why God is doing this. That's they greatest riches of all, to be filled with all the fullness of God.

- this is why we go through the things that we go through.
- this is why we are to grow in grace and knowledge

Notice how Paul closes, and this comes full circle beginning with love, faith, grace and so forth.

Verse 20: Now, to Him Who is able... [has the power] ...to do exceeding abundantly... [a superlative of superlatives; you can't say it any

greater, better or higher] ...above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us... [God's Spirit] ...to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 20-21).

Those are the true riches of God! You can take the points and you can have your own personal Bible study and expand more and more on this. When you do, you will understand the great wonderful things that God has for us.

When you do, you will never ever again let the physical things and the riches of this world perform it's deceitfulness upon you!

- *The Day That Jesus the Christ Died* by Fred R. Coulter
 - *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter
- Video: *Israel of the Alps* {produced by the SDA Church}

FRC:bo
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- 4) Revelation 3:14-18
- 5) 1 Corinthians 3:11-12
- 6) Revelation 3:18-21
- 7) 2 Corinthians 8:9
- 8) Ephesians 1:6-7
- 9) Ephesians 2:4
- 10) John 3:16
- 11) Ephesians 2:5-10
- 12) 1 Timothy 6:17-19
- 13) James 2:5
- 14) 1 Peter 1:1-7
- 15) Colossians 1: 24-27
- 16) Romans 2:4-10
- 17) Romans 11:30-35
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- 19) Colossians 2:1-3
- 20) Ephesians 3:14-17
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