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PRINCIPLES OF INCREASE

THE COVENANT OF WEALTH

The Covenant of Wealth

Deuteronomy 8:18 says God has given you the *power to get wealth.* Read the verse in context and you will see why God is giving you that power!

But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Deuteronomy 8:18

God has given you power to get wealth so that He can establish His covenant. The word *establish* means "founded and grounded financially so that no economic problems could ever uproot or overthrow the orderly operation of that covenant on the earth."

Do you really think God wants the state of the world's economy to affect the operation of His Church and His chosen ministries? Do you really think God would want every economic slump in the natural realm to disrupt the ministry of His Church? *Of course not!*

God has a plan for His children to be so well established in finances that literally no problem in the economy will affect the Church's economy: good times, bad times, depression and recession make no difference. God intends for His Church to grow and flourish no matter what the world might be facing in its godless economics.

God has given all His children the *power* to get wealth so that they can be financially established. Then they can generously fund every need that arises for the operation of the covenant He made with Abraham. That is the primary reason He has given the saints the power to get wealth!

If you are seeking *first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, if you are using your God-given power to get wealth to establish God's Kingdom first, the secondary portion of the covenant comes into play. God will add the other things (your needs and desires) unto you.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33

Notice *God* adds "all these things." When you effectively do *your part* of first establishing His Kingdom, God will do *His part* and give you "all these things" you need and want for the good life *in abundance!*

The Wealth of the Wicked

You may be surprised to learn that God has a pattern of taking "all these things" from the wicked and giving them to His children. It's true.

God periodically transfers the wealth of the wicked to His children.

... and the wealth of the sinner [wicked] is laid up for the just.

Proverbs 13:22

You know, I can hear you saying, "Brother John, I believe you. I believe you because I believe the Word of God. It says the wealth of the wicked is laid up for the just, so it must be true, but my logical mind says it's just too fantastic. I have to confess that it is beyond my realm of experience. Yes, I believe the Bible, but I must be totally honest. I have never heard of the wealth being turned over to the righteous. I see from my experience that lost, wicked men simply do not give away their wealth."

Please be at ease. *You have heard of this wealth transfer* happening time and time again. Let me remind you of some of these times.

Wealth Given to Abram

How about Abram and the Egyptians? Do you remember that account in Genesis 12? Abram received great wealth from the wicked Egyptians.

Although Abram came from rich ancestors, when he arrived in Egypt, he couldn't even afford to hire a bodyguard. So he told his wife, Sarai, to tell everyone she was his sister.

Well, you know the story. Pharaoh fell in love with Sarai, and stated he would marry her on a certain date. The Scripture says:

And he [The Pharaoh] entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

Genesis 12:16

This was all good until Pharaoh discovered that Sarai was really Abram's wife. He became so angry that he threw Abram out of Egypt. Note a very interesting point: Pharaoh let Abram keep all the wealth he had given him!

And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and *all that he had.*

Genesis 12:20

In one short visit to Egypt, the wealth of the wicked was quickly transferred to the just man, Abram.

Notice how much wealth Abram acquired in this short time. Upon his

departure from Egypt he had great substance:

And Abram was *very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold*

Genesis 13:2

God sent Abram, out of Egypt with so much wealth; the Bible says he was *very* rich.

Further along in this passage, we see that Abram and Lot had acquired so many possessions while in Egypt that:

... the land was not able to bear them....

Genesis 13:6

They actually had such great substance that they could not dwell together, for they needed large amounts of land to sustain their large herds.

A close examination of Scripture seems to show that Lot's wealth came from his association with Abram. It is important to notice this fact. Abram's wealth was so excessive that even his nephew was able to prosper from his abundance.

Clearly, this shows that when God distributes the wealth, he doesn't mind if His children have more than enough. Listen to what He told Abram:

... Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

Genesis 13:14,15

These are not the promises of a God who wants

His children to dwell in poverty, starvation, and ignorance! No, indeed! The God of Abram *is the God of abundance!*

As you study God's Word carefully, you'll find that God has clearly stated His intention to take very good care of His children, especially those who walk in His footsteps and obey His will.

Also keep in mind that God gave all this land to Abram and his seed (the righteous). Remember that every bit of this property was once owned by wicked, heathen men, and God gave it to the just. The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the just.

Wealth Given to Isaac

Let's now look at another case where God transferred the wealth of the wicked to the just. Observe this process as it operated in the life of Isaac.

While Isaac was living in his homeland, he ran out of supplies because of a harsh famine. So he decided to do as his father before him had done and go

down into Egypt.

Isaac got as far as the land of the Philistines when God told him to stop. He told Isaac to stay out of Egypt, and continue dwelling in the land of the wicked Philistines, a land the famine had rendered barren and seemingly non-productive. Yet God promised Isaac if he followed His instructions (instructions you and I would probably label as foolish), he would prosper.

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father.

Genesis 26:3

Some will read this passage and immediately assume that God meant an abundance of *spiritual blessings.* Let's see what God really means by *blessings* in the midst of a famine.

Then Isaac sowed in that land [a land in the midst of famine], and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

Genesis 26:12

In verse 14, we see a further inventory of what God had given to Isaac.

For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and *the Philistines envied him.*

Genesis 26:14

Are we to believe the Philistines envied Isaac's spiritual heritage? Are we to believe they envied Isaac's good standing with God? Of course not! The Philistines envied Isaac because he grew huge crops in the midst of famine, crops he was able to sell to the Philistines for great amounts of money. They envied his large flocks of sheep for meat and clothing, his "great store" of servants who waited on his every need. In the midst of famine, Isaac cleaned out the wealth of the Philistines.

That's why the Philistines envied Isaac! He was the son of a living God who prospers His children by giving them the wealth of the wicked.

Yes, Isaac first and foremost had a deep spiritual inheritance, but God had also earmarked an abundant material, earthly inheritance for him, just as He had for Abram.

That's the same thing He wants for you:

Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; *this is the gift of God.*

Ecclesiastes 5:19

God gives both *spiritual and financial* wealth to His people. Poverty is simply not a biblical principal. It is time for God's children to stop claiming that poverty is what God wants for their lives!

Friend, let's face it, *poverty is not God's perfect will for you.* To live daily on the brink of insufficiency and claim that it is God's plan is a spiritual mistake. In biblical illustrations, the same truth keeps emerging: God has a people, and God takes care of His people *in the spiritual, the physical, and the financial realms.*

Hear the beloved Apostle John declare it:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospered.

3 John 2

Wealth Given to Jacob

In Genesis 31, we once again see this principle of taking the wealth of the wicked and giving it to the just. If you are plagued by a crooked or unsympathetic boss whom you believe hinders God's ability to flow His abundance into your life, read this next section closely!

No one had a more crooked, stingy, unsympathetic boss than Jacob. Laban was crooked, and he was a real tightwad! Ten times, Laban changed Jacob's compensation program! Jacob worked seven years to marry Laban's beautiful daughter, only to have Laban secretly switch daughters at the wedding. He tricked Jacob into a marriage with his plain daughter.

After Jacob worked faithfully for Laban for many years, God instructed him to **"return to the land of thy fathers."** Naturally, Jacob was willing to obey.

Before he left, Jacob revealed to his wives God's amazing, divine principle of taking the wealth of the wicked and giving it to the just. This principle had been operating in his life as he had worked for their father, Laban.

Read these verses carefully, for they provide a major breakthrough to correcting any previous misconceptions you may have about what God will do for His children.

And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.

If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked.

Thus God *hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.*

Genesis 31:6-9

Laban could do nothing to stop the transfer of his wealth to Jacob once God started the process. When Laban said he would pay Jacob only in the speckled cattle, God made all the cattle have speckled young. When Laban said he would pay only in striped cattle, God made all the calves striped.

God took the wealth of wicked Laban and gave it to righteous Jacob!

The groundwork had been laid many years earlier for the Lord's abundance in Jacob's life. The Scripture says:

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Genesis 28:20-22

Many people construe this vow to mean that Jacob would begin to tithe, but that simply is not the case.

Jacob was vowing with God to give Him 10 percent *over and above* his tithe in appreciation for His abundant blessings. He established a generous measure of return from God by the generous measure of the offerings he gave to God over and above the tithe.

The Bible says it happened to Abram! It happened to Isaac! It happened to Jacob! Each one of these great men of God saw the wealth (hard assets) of the wicked transferred from the wicked and placed into his hands.

Wealth Given to Christians

The same amazing process happened again right at the beginning of the Christian era. God took the wealth of the wicked and gave it to His sons and daughters to spread the gospel throughout the entire world.

It happened during the reign of Constantine the Great, ruler of both the eastern and western Roman empires from 312 to 337 AD. In the early part of his life, Constantine slaughtered Christians and fed them to the lions. Surely he qualified as a wicked man at the helm of a very wicked nation.

Yet one day God, in His grace, gave this ruthless murderer a vision in the sky, and instructed him to go and conquer in the name of God. Virtually

overnight the greater part of the world entered into Christianity. Immediately the great *wealth of the Roman Empire started to flow into the hands of the Christians.* Maybe it was not the on-fire Christianity of the early apostles, but God still gave the wealth of the wicked to His children!

In 313 AD, Constantine issued a law that changed the course of human history, the Edict of Milan. For the first time Christianity became legal in the Roman Empire. *All* of the power of Rome suddenly became the *power of the Church!* The wealth and resources of the Empire were now at the disposal of Christianity. Every part of the known world was touched by this new doctrine of Jesus Christ and his willingness to save sinners.

You will be glad to know that on his deathbed, in 337 AD, Constantine himself finally became a Christian!

Now, notice carefully that with the transfer of the wealth of the Roman Empire to Christianity, the objection of many well-meaning critics of this message is put to rest. They say the scriptures of the wealth transfer are purely Old Testament and do not apply to New Testament times.

I leave the decision up to you. Is 313 AD New Testament times or not? Surely it is, and with this great event, this concept jumps the boundary between Old and New Testaments, and brings this truth right into our day. Remember, God is the same throughout history, yesterday, today, and forever!

The Chosen People Take Egypt’s Wealth

Let me highlight one, final, powerful example of how God took the wealth of the wicked and freely gave it to the just. Israel was in bondage for 400 years. They were poorer than poor. Then God said, "Let my people go." How could this poverty-ridden nation, without an economic base, ever bring forth the great revelation of God's law as we find it in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy?

Let's start at the beginning of Exodus, when God decided to release this nation from Egypt's bondage. Egypt, through the Pharaoh, had a hold on Israel that was so tight and so humanly impossible to break, that Scripture refers to Israel's captivity as an iron furnace:

But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace....

Deuteronomy 4:20

God used Moses as His man for this great transfer of the wealth of the wicked into the hands of the just. Eleven plagues came in successive waves from God. Each one ended with no release for God's people! Keep in mind that none

of these judgments came upon any of the children of Israel.

Finally, God moved in what was no doubt, the most powerful judgment since the flood of Noah. The twelfth judgment came in on the wings of the dreaded death angel sweeping across Egypt, taking the lives of every firstborn man and beast.

Now, on the evening of the greatest of these judgments, God came to Moses with very strange instructions.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon

Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians....

Exodus 11:1-3

And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

Exodus 12:35,36

Do you see the miracle here? Egypt was full of the dead firstborn of all living things; there were rivers of blood, lice, and boils everywhere, and here came the unscathed Israelites, asking these bewildered, defeated Egyptians, "By the way, before we leave here, may we please borrow all of your gold, and silver and valuables?" The Egyptians *freely gave* all their gold, silver, and other precious possessions.

What a miracle! When Israel came out of bondage, Exodus 12:37 says they numbered about 600,000 men. If you add women and children, probably more than three and a half million Israelites left Egypt, but not as slaves! Three and a half million millionaires headed for the desert, equipped with virtually everything they needed!

Did you ever wonder what possessed the Egyptians to dare to enter the watery, walled canyon that crossed the Red Sea? The Word tells us the Israelites were so rich, and the Egyptians now so poor, that the wealth of the Israelites tempted the Egyptians to follow them into the parted Red Sea.

The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil....
Exodus 15:9

The Purpose for the Wealth

After 400 years of poverty, the children of Israel were now rich. They had great wealth. Let the depth of this truth come forth: God had given the Israelites the wealth of wicked Egypt, and yet, there was absolutely nothing in the wilderness on which to spend that wealth!

They had silver and gold, but there were no stores and no shopping centers. Their clothes never wore out!

They never needed to buy food. They had manna and quail to eat, water to drink, and light from the pillar of fire by night.

Now get the real purpose that God gave the wealth of the wicked to the children of God. The only thing they could use the gold and silver for was to build the tabernacle in the wilderness!

... and I will prepare him an habitation....
Exodus 15:2

God wanted them to take the gold and silver of the wicked, wealthy Egyptians, not to lavish upon themselves, but that they might build Him a dwelling place in their midst.

Please get this point well. *The wealth of Egypt was for building the dwelling place of God.* The value of that great building with its gold, silver, precious wood, jewels, and so on, was astronomical.

You cannot help but notice the parallel of these former days with the last days in which we now dwell. This time, *God is giving us the wealth of the wicked so that we can build Him a temple, a holy habitation not made with hands, but one made with lively stones.* This end-time temple is not a mortar-and-stone building. It is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, made of human bodies of the redeemed who are the true Temple of the living God, the dwelling place of God Jehovah.