

THE LION-LAMB'S WEALTH - REV. 5:12 #2

Every person looks to another level of wealth that is beyond his or her comprehension or understanding.

*The young child receives her weekly allowance and thinks - if I only had as much money as my parents every week, then I really would be rich. Just think of having hundreds of dollars every week. What could I possibly do with all that money? Of course, all of the expenses necessary in the running of a household never enter the mind of the young child - she only sees the vast wealth that her parents have.

*At the same time that the young child is envying her parents' wealth, her father is going to work thinking, if I only received the salary of the Chief Executive Officer of my company, then I really would be rich. Just think of having a paycheck of \$10 thousand dollars a week. How could a person possibly spend all of that money? And those bonuses at the end of the year. The stock options that the CEO is given. Yes, if I ever could work my way up in this company to the head position, then I would certainly be set for the rest of my life.

Of course, all of the stresses and pressures that the Chief Administrator faces in answering every quarter to the stockholders are usually not considered - the worker sees only the position and opportunities that the CEO of the company has.

*At the same time, the CEO of the company is sitting in his office dreaming of being a star athlete. If only I could have the salary of the basketball player, LeBron James, then I really would be rich. Just think of having a contract which guaranteed \$20 Million a year. And this doesn't even include his \$90 Million

dollar Nike contract. Every time LeBron James steps onto a basketball court for a game, he makes about a quarter of a million dollars. \$5,081 per minute is pretty decent pay - wouldn't you say? Yes, if I could only have the salary that LeBron James makes, then I really would be wealthy. Of course, the CEO doesn't usually think about the price that LeBron James has paid to become one of the best known figures in the world. James is virtually a prisoner in his own mansion. He can't go to the store to shop like all of us can. He can't go to the beach without being recognized and mobbed for autographs. I'm sure that there are many times when James would give up the vast majority of his wealth just to be free to go out and experience life like we all are privileged to do. But most people don't see the downside of his fame, they just think of all of the money that he makes and think - if I only had the contract that LeBron James has, then I really would be wealthy.

*At the same time, LeBron James might be sitting in his den thinking, if I only had the wealth of Bill Gates, then I really would be rich. Bill Gates is worth somewhere around 55 Billion. It's impossible to give an exact figure because his wealth increases some 677 million dollars a day - that's over 28 million dollars an hour, 24 hours a day, whether he's awake or asleep. Someone has calculated how much Bill Gates has made per hour since he began the Microsoft business. If you assume that he has worked 14 hours a day since Microsoft was founded in 1975, Bill Gates has made roughly around a million dollars an hour. If he were to drop a thousand dollar bill on the ground at work, it wouldn't be worth his time to stoop down and pick it up. He would make more money in the 4 seconds or so that he would continue working than in the time that it would take him to stoop down and

pick up the thousand dollar bill. Now I don't know about you, but it is impossible for me to even fathom this kind of wealth. If Bill Gates were a country, he financially would be the 6 largest country in the world today behind only the U.S., Japan, Germany, Malaysia, Israel and Venezuela. He has far more wealth than all of the gold that is contained at Fort Knox. If he continues to live and work and accumulate wealth, it has been estimated that in about 20 years, he will become the world's first quadrillionaire - whatever that is - I think it is a thousand billion dollars. It is impossible for most of us to even imagine this quantity of wealth. It is beyond our comprehension. But I mention it only because it illustrates our inability to even be able to scratch the surface when considering the wealth of God. For as wealthy as Bill Gates, the richest man in the world today according to Forbes magazine, is, his wealth is absolutely nothing compared to the wealth of God. To compare Bill Gate's riches with God's wealth would be to compare a drop from an eyedropper with all of the water of the 7 oceans of the earth. In fact, all of Bill Gate's wealth is really God's wealth anyway - and God could take it any time that He chose. It's no wonder that the angelic chorus of thousands upon thousands and the elders encircling the throne of God included the wealth of God as they sang: *Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and **wealth** and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise. Rev. 5:12*

The word that is translated *wealth* here comes from the root which means *to fill*. It has the idea of pouring and pouring and pouring in an attempt to fill something that never can be filled. It pictures God's wealth as a stream that just keeps flowing and flowing in an endless manner. Like the Niagara falls that just

keeps pouring thousands of gallons of water per second endlessly without ever filling up the valley below. That is how these heavenly beings picture the wealth of God. God's riches just keep flowing and flowing from an inexhaustible resource - the infinite person of God himself.

Now in the context of this song, the foundational example of God's wealth is found in His creative power. We find that in the previous song that closed chapter 4. Notice it with me in Revelation 4:9-11:

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twentyfour elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

Just as the tangible evidence of Bill Gate's wealth is found in what he has made, the MicroSoft Computer software that is found in the vast majority of computers in the world, so the tangible evidence of God's wealth is found in what He has made, His creation. Before God spoke the worlds into existence, there wasn't anything. Now this is impossible for us to fully imagine because we weren't there and couldn't experience it. But in the beginning, the Bible says that there was only God. There was nothing else outside of God. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke the universe into existence out of nothing. Ex Nihilo is the phrase that theologians use to describe the process. It simply means *out of nothing*. So everything material that is now in existence originally had its source in the creator

- God himself. Colossians 1 reminds us, *For by Him all things were created. . .all things were made by Him and for Him. Col. 1:16,17.* Hebrews 11:3 says, *By faith, we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.* Because God created all things, He ultimately owns all of his creation. So God's creation becomes an evidence of the vastness of His wealth that the angelic chorus included in their song.

Now the enemy has done everything that he can think of to obliterate God as creator from the minds of God's creatures because Satan knows that if God is acknowledged as creator, then His vast wealth and privileges will also be recognized. The history of the universe since the fall of Lucifer from the heavenly realms is a continuous attempt at a hostile takeover of God's creation by Satan. Satan wants to be recognized as God. In order to achieve his desired end, he knows that he must first remove the true and living God from the minds of the human race as the creator. He has devised elaborate philosophies and theories in his attempt to rob God of his glory as creator. Today, students are taught that they came into being in our public schools by a process called evolution. Now it is simply astounding that evolution has gained such a strong foothold in our educational system. Evolution contradicts proven laws of physics. There has not been the physical evidence found in all of the archaeological fossils that have been uncovered to demonstrate a progression of evolution. It makes common sense in looking at the structure and order of our world that there would be some kind of intelligent design for the universe. But despite all clear reason, scientific

laws and evidence, evolution continues to be the accepted theory of the origin of the universe. It is clear that God's enemy has blinded the eyes of many in his attempt to rob God of the glory that is due to Him as the creator of all things. But the Biblical truth remains that God the Father laid out the entire plan for His universe, that the Son of God spoke all matter into being by the word of his power and that the Spirit of God breathed life into creation so that it became a living thing. All 3 members of the Godhead had an integral part in the creation of the universe, so God is rightfully recognized in the Bible as the creator of all things. Therefore, in order to fully understand the wealth of God, we would have to completely comprehend every single facet of creation.

Now there are 2 wonderful applications that are implied by this heavenly chorus singing of God's wealth that are important for us to realize for they will change our outlook on life. We could continue to probe the extent of God's wealth but that would be like looking in Bill Gate's coin purse - we can't even begin to comprehend how wealthy God is. But we can see some of the implications of the wealth of God in our lives for God reveals these in His word. And we only have time this morning to look at 2 of these.

1. The vast wealth of God found in the fact that He has created all things means that we are God's property, He owns each one of us. Therefore, it is our responsibility to recognize this fact and give God his rightful place in our lives. We will only find inner peace as we allow God the place that He rightfully deserves as creator.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth as recorded in 1 Cor.

6:19,20: *19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20. you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

At first, we might think it quite presumptuous for the Apostle to impose this standard of morality on these Corinthian people. After all, in light of the accepted immorality of the majority of Corinthian citizens, the lifestyle of these Christians would be considered tame. What right did Paul have to speak to them in these terms? The Apostle Paul realized the implications of God's wealth. God owns all that He has created. Therefore, God owned these people for He had created them.

God, then, has every right to impose any standard of morality that He so chooses on what He owns. And eventually, every single person of God's creation is going to stand before Him as creator and owner and give an account of his or her actions throughout life.

People today who claim that it is unfair for someone to try to impose morality on another are only half right. Certainly it is unfair for me to try to impose my morality on you and for you to try to impose your morality on me for I have no right of ownership over you and you have no right of ownership over me. But God has every right to impose His morality on His creatures because God has created all things and, therefore, He owns all things. So when God revealed his 10 commandments to Moses and demanded that they be passed on to the human race, He had every right to do so. And those who know and proclaim God's word are given authority by God himself to reveal His morality to members of the human race. Whether people accept God's right to set up moral standards for them doesn't

in any way lessen His right or authority to do so. It doesn't matter if the majority of people in public opinion polls vote for a lesser moral standard than what God has set up. God as the creator and owner of all things has the right to set the standards. He has clearly done so in His word. And one day, every member of His creation will give an account according to those standards that He has set forth. That is part of the privilege that comes from the wealth of God.

2. But there is another implication that we need to see as well. Whereas the first implication gives us a sense of accountability towards God, this second brings great comfort and assurance into our lives. The vast wealth of God means that God has unlimited resources to fill the lives of His children with everything that is needed for their contentment and fulfillment of purpose. And that is exactly what God desires to do in the life of each of his children.

Jesus said to his followers on one occasion, *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10*

The Lord gives a similar picture in this verse as is found in the original term translated *wealth* that we looked at earlier. It is Christ's intention that each of his children experience a life overflowing with the wealth of God. Now we have some difficulty here because we are tempted to think of wealth only in financial terms. But the more wealth that a person accumulates, the more it is realized that true wealth often does not have any monetary basis. Certainly that is true on God's part. God owns everything. He has unlimited monetary resources. But God's wealth is certainly not limited to His spread sheet. God's love and mercy and grace and patience and goodness and all of his other attributes are also

manifestations of His vast wealth. And God desires that His children be recipients of as much of His wealth as they can handle. It is interesting how God's creative powers are connected to His desire to fill his children up with His wealth in the Bible - it is because God has created us and knows exactly how we operate and what we need that He is able to know just what wealth to share with us.

Listen to these words that the prophet Jeremiah records in *Jeremiah 33:1-3*

¹ *While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time:* ² *"This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it -- the LORD is his name:* ³ *'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'*

Here Jeremiah was in an unenviable situation. He had prophesied an unpopular message to the citizens of Jerusalem. Jeremiah had confirmed all of their fears by telling them that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies were going to successfully overcome the city of Jerusalem and take the Jewish people away as captives to a foreign land. The people had responded to Jeremiah and his message by capturing him and treating him harshly. Instead of listening to his message from God and repenting of their sins, begging God for his mercy, they had turned on the messenger and further invoked God's wrath. But isn't it interesting how God comes to his servant Jeremiah who has been faithful to his commission to bring comfort and strength.

First, God reminds Jeremiah that He is the creator. ² *"This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it -- the*

LORD is his name: Jeremiah, let me remind you of who the creator is. It's me. I made the earth; I formed it and established it - just in case you have forgotten, my name is the Lord. So all the wealth is mine. Jerusalem is mine. Israel is mine. Nebuchadnezzar doesn't even have any wealth - it's all mine. And you are mine Jeremiah. I made you. So I know you better than you know yourself. I know what you are thinking. I know what you are feeling. And I know just what you need in your life right now.

So ³ 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' Jeremiah, allow me to fill you up with the resources of my wealth. Allow me to meet all the needs that you have at this most difficult time in your life. Allow me to pour my peace into your heart. Allow me to give you courage and strength to stand firm for your convictions. Allow me to give you physical strength to endure. Allow me to give you the faith needed to trust in me. Whatever you need, Jeremiah, I have it to give to you. For I am the Lord, the creator of all things, the God of unlimited wealth.

Do you know the God of whom the angelic chorus sang in Revelation 5:12? Do you know the God who is totally unlimited in His wealth? He is a God who has the right to set standards for those He has created. Are you seeking to keep His standards and honor Him with your life? He is also a God who delights in sharing the vastness of His wealth with all of his children. What is your need this morning? God knows what it is - He made you. God knows you better than you know yourself. Will you call upon Him today? Will you ask Him to help you in your time of need, whatever that need might be?

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth . . .