

# The Return of the King Revelation 6-19

## Jesus, Money, Stewardship, Rewards & Eternity: What is God's Desire for us Laodicean Age Believers?

### Rev 3:14-21

For the past six weeks we have looked at how Christ's words about the dangers of living for the temporal treasures of materialism stayed with Peter to the end of his life, even to the point of his last chapter of life, 2 Peter 3. We saw these as:

## Peter's Lessons on: the End of the World, Materialism, Contentment & the Un-Cluttered Life

But, the lessons of Peter's last chapter are dwarfed by the even more clear and direct words of Christ's last letter.

As we each open our Bibles to Revelation 3:14-21, we find Christ's Last Words to His Church, written down in this letter to the last church. The theme of this final letter is very pointedly about Materialism.

Peter alluded to what Jesus taught him about materialism in 2 Peter 3; but in Revelation 3, Jesus point blank condemns materialism in any form. In fact, we could entitle Christ's letter with these words:

## Materialism in Believers Makes Jesus Nauseous

Listen again with me to Christ's shocking words to all of us in His church delivered to us in Revelation 3:14-21:

And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, **I will vomit you out of My mouth.** 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To

him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

In Matthew 23 religious hypocrisy made Jesus so angry that He spoke His harshest words recorded in the Gospels to the Pharisees & Sadducees.

In John 2 defiled worship made Jesus so angry He acted in the most violent way ever recorded in the Gospels.

But here in Revelation 3, something happens that we have never before seen in Christ's life. We have seen Him moved with compassion, weary in ministry, angry at the white-washed hypocrisy of religious leaders, and violently driving out money changers and livestock sellers in the Temple. But we never saw Jesus sick before.

## When Christ Gets the Flu Bug

In the 89 chapters of the Gospels we see Jesus tired, sorrowful, quiet, dynamic, reflective, kind, tender, engaging, receptive, prayerful, and troubled: but never anywhere in His earthly ministry was Jesus ever seen nauseated by anything.

Jesus was face-to-face with demons, face-to-face with Satan, touching the rotted flesh of lepers, placing His fingers into the ears of deaf people, plastering mud onto sightless eyes of a blind man, touching the feverish brow of a dying woman, and even grasping the cold, lifeless hand of the corpse of a dead child; but none of that sin, suffering, and defilement is ever seen making Him sick.

As far as we know **only one thing** can make the Holy, Harmless, Undefined Savior of the World, Creator of the Universe, and Risen & Good Shepherd: **nauseous**. That one thing is in Revelation 3:16-17.

Jesus is sickened to the point of nausea-induced vomit by believers who declare to Christ by the choices of their lives, these words:

v. 17a Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched<sup>1</sup>, miserable, poor, blind, and naked

## Loving Jesus Means Avoiding Anything Nauseous to Him

---

<sup>1</sup> "Wretched" from Greek talaiporos is a combination of talaton (talent or weight) and peira (trial or piercing) as Paul said those who long to be rich pierce themselves; "miserable" is used in 1 Cor. 15:9 for those who have no future hope of Heaven; "poor" is ptokhos (beggar, pauper) from word for failing from or falling down; "blind" taphlos (opaque, smoky) is the word for blindness by obscured sight same word used 49x Gospels, but in 2 Peter 1:9 used for spiritual blindness; "naked" is gumnos (uncovered).

Jesus warned those believers at Laodicea to be very cautious about money & possessions. Possessions had distracted those early believers from why they had ever been left here on Earth.

Possession-distraction was a theme in Christ's teaching. A simple scan of His parables shows that 16 of Christ's 38 parables were about the proper stewardship of money and possessions. A closer look shows that about one out of every seven words that Christ spoke in the Gospels are about money and possessions.

Jesus was making the invisible God's wishes, and expectations known to us His children. The summary of all Jesus taught may be stated as: Money is an important monitor of our hearts that reveals we either serve materialism or God.

## Christ's Simple Guide to Money

If we could slip into the back of the crowd and hear some of those messages on money, possessions, and eternity that filled Christ's teaching times, here is what we would hear:

1. **Jesus said your money can't stay neutral, we either serve god or our money:** Matthew 6:19-24 (NKJV) "Do not **lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your **treasure** is, there **your heart** will be also. 22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "**No one can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and riches** (Greek word *mamonas*).
2. **Jesus said never forget your money already belongs to God, we are God's stewards:** Matthew 25:18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. NKJV (and hid his master's money. NIV)
3. **Jesus said your giving must be proportionate to gain my favor:** Mark 12:43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; NKJV
4. Jesus said selfishness ruins giving: Luke 6:35 "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will

be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. NKJV

5. **Jesus said always remember giving will be eternally compensated:** Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” NIV Ask people around you that are happy and successful in God's ways and you will find they are sacrificial givers and tithers.
6. **Jesus said temporal treasures can always be exchanged for eternal wealth:** Luke 16:9 (NKJV) “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. Luke 16:9 (NIV) I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves [in Heaven is implied], so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.
7. **Jesus said I love and bless givers:** Acts 20:35 (NKJV) “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

## What is Our Responsibility as Stewards?

Each of us are given a stewardship by God of the time and treasures (money) that we have in our oversight. God is watching each of us individually to see what we do with what He allows us to possess temporarily in this life.

Now turn back to 1 John 3:16-18, where John explains how clearly our view of money reflects the control God has over our hearts and lives.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and **shuts up his heart from him**, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

## Are We Insensitive to the Poor?

One way to jar us into thought about our stewardship is to think of all people alive on the Earth today, and how we relate to them.

Consider the world as if it were shrunk down to a community of just 1000 persons: In our town of 1000 where each of us live:

- 200 of us live high on a hill called the economically developed world;
- 800 of them live on the rocky bottom land called the rest of the world.

## **WE, THE FORTUNATE 200 ON THE HILL HOLD 80 PERCENT OF THE WEALTH OF THE WHOLE TOWN,**

- We own over half of all the homes in town;
- Our homes average over two rooms per person;
- We own 85 percent of all the automobiles,
- We own 80 percent of all the TV sets,
- We own 93 percent of all the telephones,
- And we make an average income of over \$ 20,000 per person, per year.

## **THE NOT-SO-FORTUNATE 800 PEOPLE ON THE BOTTOM LANDS:**

- Most get by on only \$700 per person per year,
- Many of them on less than \$350 per person, per year, or a dollar a day.
- They average five persons to a room.

How do we the fortunate group of hill-dwellers use our incredible wealth? Well, as a group we spend less than 1% of our income to aid the lower land. In the United States, for example, of every \$100 we earned in 2012 (according to Forbes):

\$ 32.90	is spent on our homes
\$ 16.60	goes for food (almost half prepared by others)
\$ 6.90	is for health care
\$ 14.60	we spend on transportation
\$ 4.20	is spent on recreation and amusement
\$ 3.90	buys clothes
\$ 2.30	is given for religious and charitable uses, and only a small part of that goes outside the U.S.

I wonder how the villagers on the crowded plain (a third of whose people are suffering from malnutrition) feel about us folks up there on the hill?<sup>2</sup>

Now, look again at 1 John 3:16-18:

---

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from materials in Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey's, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 61-62.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

## Has Jesus laid down some Principles for living around wealth?

The test of our hearts is what our possessions do to our spirits. When we hear of a genuine need in a family, individual, or ministry, what does it do to us?

- Do we start thinking of ways to help?
- To stretch our self in such a way as to give more?
- Or does it down deep offend us?
- Do we simmer with a resentment at the thought of being questioned about what is ours?

Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4?

Philippians 4:11-19 (NKJV) Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. 14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

## Contentment Must Become a Learned Way of Life

How do we learn to be content, and then model and teach contentment to our families? One of the best ways to start is to do a study of 1 Timothy 6:6–17, which describes seven principles that promote contentment.

**Principle 1—Remember that things are only temporary:** *Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and we can carry nothing out (1*



Timothy 6:6–7).

You cannot take it with you. There are no U-Haul trailers behind hearses.

**Principle 2—Only seek necessities, and wait for the rest:** *Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content* (1 Timothy 6:8).

We need shelter and the basic provisions of life, but everything beyond that is simply a great blessing. Whether it comes or goes is okay. God has said that all we are supposed to expect in life are food and clothing, so we should be happy with that.

**Principle 3—Avoid a consuming desire for prosperity:** *Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and many foolish and harmful lusts, For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows* (1 Timothy 6:9–10).

America has been fed a prosperity diet. You might say, “That is not me—I am not rich.” If you own a car, you are rich. Ninety-five percent of the people in the world can’t afford a car. Your watch and the clothes you have on are worth more than what hundreds of millions of people on earth have. Tens of thousands even starve to death around the world each year, but Americans regularly throw away super-sized leftovers.

**Principle 4—Flee materialism:** *Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness* (1 Timothy 6:11).

Do you seek to accumulate possessions—or to grow in Christlikeness? Value what will count for eternity!

**Principle 5—Cling to eternal life:** *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called. Keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing* (1 Timothy 6:12, 14).

We need a whole generation of people who are holding tighter to eternal life than they are to this world.

The writer of Hebrews says, *You had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven* (Hebrews 10:34). When those Christians were persecuted and their jobs and possessions taken away, they still rejoiced because their focus was on Christ.

If we're not careful, before long our possessions can possess *us*. They then become an anchor that holds us back. The care of riches clouds our minds from seeking the purity of Christ.

**Principle 6—Fix your hope on God:** *Command those who are rich ... not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God (1 Timothy 6:17).*

There is nothing wrong with wealth, but we are to recognize the danger of relying upon it. All that we own can evaporate as quickly as a blip on a computer screen. There are few things that are real possessions in this world. Through money, stocks, and bonds you are trusting that a company, a bank, or a government won't fail. But the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy, can never fail us—and our trust in Him is certain!

**Principle 7—Give until it hurts:** *Let them do good, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:18–19).*

The real cure for materialism is to give until it hurts! Giving “until it hurts” means giving at the cost of personal sacrifice. For example, the widow gave both of her mites, or all that she had (Mark 12:42–44). The woman who anointed Jesus broke the flask of fragrant oil and irrecoverably gave all she had to Him (Luke 7:37–47). Sacrificial gifts are especially important to Jesus.

That is why the last words that John wrote in 1 John, should speak to each of us:

1 John 5:20-21 (NKJV) And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. 21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

#445 Something for Thee



## What is Materialism or Coveting in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Terms?

Do you remember the 10<sup>th</sup> of the Ten Commandments? Almost all of us at one time or another, have learned these words. Why not repeat the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment with me now:

Exodus 20:17 (NKJV) *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”*

In 21<sup>st</sup> Century terms, God is saying watch out for six dangerous desires that can ruin your life, destroy your eternal legacy, and pierce you through with many pains:

- *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house”.*

Don’t long for all the bigger, better, beautiful, spacious, comfortable houses you’ve seen and don’t have.

Don’t wish for it, or get a second job to earn more money for it, or spend all your time looking for it: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with the house you have; and use all your extra time to serve Me instead of longing for a bigger and better house.

- *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife”.*

Don’t long for all the externally looking prettier, skinnier, younger women you’ve noticed in life.

Don’t wish you had one like the ones you see at work, don’t wish you had one like you see on TV, in movies, or online.

Don’t wish she looked like a gymnast, or a cheerleader, or an actress/model: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with the wife God has given you; and use your extra time to serve your wife and children instead of longing for a better wife.

- *“You shall not covet your neighbor’s male servant, nor his female servant”.*

Don’t long for a more comfortable life with less hard work, with less struggles

and cares, and with more free time to do what you please, like all the rich and the famous you've watched, and heard about: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with the place in life where God has put you; and use your extra time live more of each day for His glory, surrendering for His will to be done in your life.

- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's ox" [his plow animal or job].*

Don't long for that dream job that everyone else has, with all the freedom, perks, security, and high pay like you've seen or heard about: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with what God has placed into your hands to do for Him, and trust Him to guide your path; and use your extra time to stay tuned into His Word, and following God's leading, and you will have the very best job in life that is possible to have.

- *"You shall not covet your neighbor's ox" [his transportation].*

Don't wish you had a car (or truck, or boat, or bike, or motorhome, or snowmobile, etc.) like others have, that is bigger, newer, fancier, sportier, or more powerful or impressive: ***because that is idolatry!***

Be content with what you have, and thank God for all the struggles your car gives you because that is what God uses to increase our faith, our patience, and our dependence upon Him; and use your extra time and energy you save in not trying to impress everyone around you to start spending more time pleasing God.

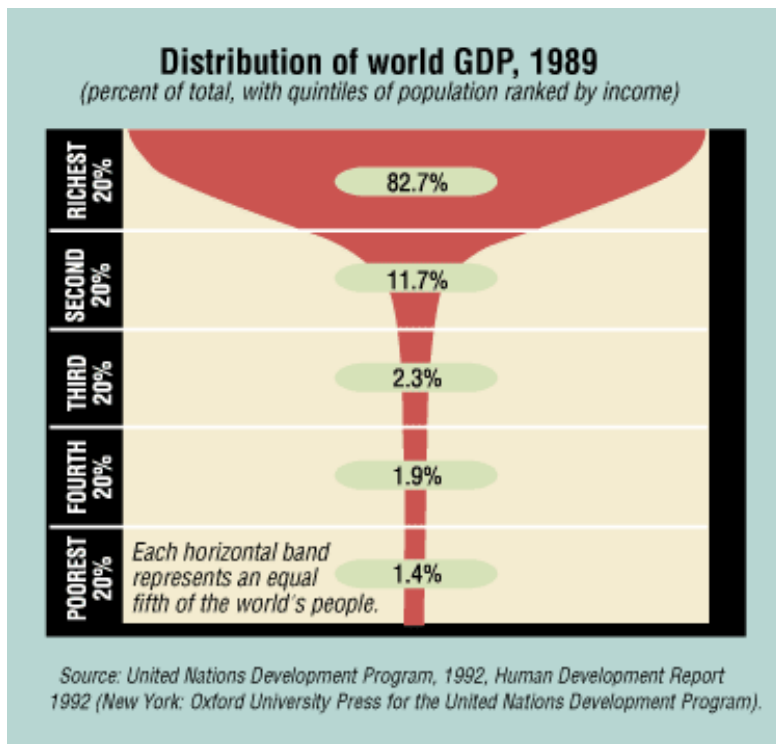
- *"You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's." God says we are not to long for anything we don't have that someone else has: ***because that is idolatry!****

Now, back to Christ's challenge in Matthew 6. Should we spend our lives collecting and guarding, seeking out and holding onto trash that will only be taken away from us by God and burned (1 Cor. 3:13-15)?

Or should we spend our lives laying up eternal treasures that will stay with us forever, and that we can give as endless offerings of worship to God (Mat. 6:19-21)? Which means we are back to asking God: "Incline mine heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness" (Ps. 119:36).

Forbes, 2012			\$54,686.00	\$6,267,015,600,000.00
	%		<b>Household</b>	<b>114,600,000</b>
Stats	100.0%		\$54,686.00	\$6,267,015,600,000.00
Housing	32.9%		\$17,991.69	\$2,061,848,132,400.00
Transp	14.6%		\$7,984.16	\$914,984,277,600.00
Food	16.6%	42% out	\$9,077.88	\$1,040,324,589,600.00
Med	6.9%		\$3,773.33	\$432,424,076,400.00
<b>Educ</b>	<b>2.9%</b>		\$1,585.89	\$181,743,452,400.00
Util	7.8%		\$4,265.51	\$488,827,216,800.00
Clothes	3.9%		\$2,132.75	\$244,413,608,400.00
Fun	4.2%		\$2,296.81	\$263,214,655,200.00
ins/pens/ssi	10.2%		\$5,577.97	\$639,235,591,200.00

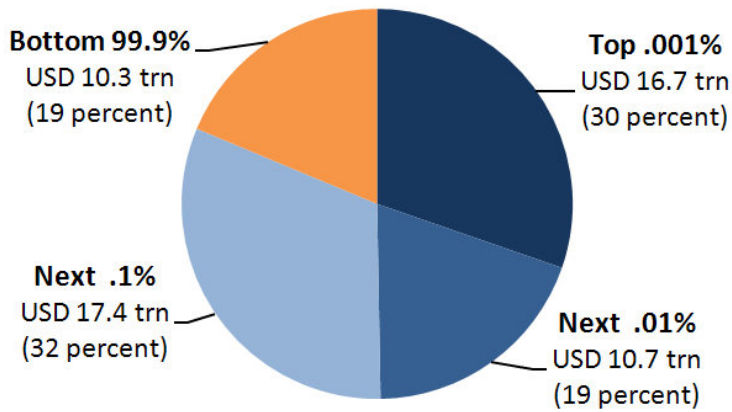
Distribution of World GDP<sup>3</sup>



## Global Distribution of Wealth

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2001/12/wade.htm>

## Global Distribution of Wealth



James S. Henry, 2012

The distribution of total liquid net worth in the world per person in 2012. The chart is divided into the top .001% (91 thousand people), the next .01% (800 thousand people), the next .1% (8 million people), and the bottom 99.9% (6 billion people).<sup>4</sup>

That means 891,000 hold half of the money of the world. Also, 8.9 million hold 81%.

Jesus often warned us about the longing for wealth. His brother James picked up that message and deeply speaks to our hearts about the way that the desire for wealth can “corrode” our souls, our lives, and our ministries. It isn’t wealth it is the longing for it and the use of it that is dangerous!

*James 5:1-6 Look here, you rich men, now is the time to cry and groan with anguished grief because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. 2 Your wealth is even now rotting away, and your fine clothes are becoming mere moth-eaten rags. 3 The value of your gold and silver is dropping fast, yet it will stand as evidence against you and eat your flesh like fire. That is what you have stored up for yourselves to receive on that coming day of judgment. 4 For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. Their cries have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts. 5 You have spent your years here on earth having fun, satisfying your every whim, and now your fat hearts are ready for the slaughter. 6 You have condemned and killed good men who had no power to defend themselves against you. TLB*

## AVOID WHAT RUSTS YOUR SOUL

<sup>4</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic\\_inequality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_inequality)

This is James' next hard hitting point: An Authentic Christian AVOIDS THE DANGERS OF WEALTH (5:1-6).

They know that

- Hoarded Riches corrode spiritual living v.3;
- Money Talks to God v. 4. (God watches if you pay your debts, and fair wages to employees. If not the greed cries out for His judgment!);
- Luxury Living is dangerous to their spiritual health (5:5-6).

Let's take these six verses apart piece by piece. James 5:1-6

**ALL OUR WEALTH WILL NEVER BUY HAPPINESS:** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Tertullian, a convert to Christianity from paganism said 1,800 years ago, "nothing that is God's is obtainable by money".

**ALL OUR POSSESSIONS LEFT ON EARTH WILL SOMEDAY RUST AND ROT:** 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

**ALL MISUSE OF OUR WEALTH WILL BE REPORTED TO GOD:** 3 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.

**ALL GREED WITH OUR WEALTH CRIES OUT TO THE GOD OF JUSTICE:** 4 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.

**ALL OUR INDULGENT OR LUXURY LIVING WITH OUR WEALTH OFFENDS GOD:** 5 You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

**ALL NEGLECT OF SHARING OUR WEALTH WITH THE POOR IS AN OFFENSE TO GOD:** 6 You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. (NKJV)

## **What Good Are My Treasures**

What good will my treasures<sup>5</sup> on earth be when I die? John Piper helped us envision the final irony of materialism: (KAL007). Picture 269 people entering eternity in a plane crash in the Sea of Japan. Before the crash there is a noted politician, a millionaire corporate executive, a playboy and his playmate, a missionary kid on the way back from visiting grandparents. After the crash they stand before God utterly stripped of Master

---

<sup>5</sup> Piper, Desiring God, p.

Cards, checkbooks, credit lines, image clothes, how-to-succeed books, and Hilton reservations.

Here are the politician, the executive, the playboy, and the missionary kid, all on level ground with nothing, absolutely nothing in their hands, possessing only what they brought in their hearts.

How absurd and tragic the lover of money will seem on that day--like a man who spends his whole life collecting train tickets and in the end is so weighed down by the collection he misses the last train. Answer? No good!

So Peter lays it out for those saints in Century 1, and for all of us since. Inspired by God who jealously wants all of our attention, all of our affections and cravings, Peter passionately pens his final words in 2 Peter 3.

Here are his five lessons, and as we will note that each revolves around a warning about materialism:

- Materialism Blurs our Purpose in Life as Disciples: **Live Redemptively** (v.1-9)
- Materialism Clouds our Minds with the Idolatry of Coveting: **Keep Alert** (v. 10-11)
- Materialism Clutters Our Lives with Discontent: **Build Fireproof** (v. 12-13)
- Materialism Blinds Our Eyes with Earthly Treasures: **Look Up** (v. 14-17)
- Materialism Corrodes Our Wills by Serving Two Masters: **Obey Jesus** v.18