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## Redeemed From the Curse of Poverty

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"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. 3:13,14).

Our text says, "Christ hath redeemed us..." (v. 13). If you ask Christians, even Spirit-filled Christians, "What did Christ redeem us from?" they usually say, "From sin." That's partly true, but not nearly all of the story.

The rest of verse 13 tells us in no uncertain terms what Christ redeemed us from: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law..." (Gal. 3:13).

The expression "the Law" as used in the New Testament refers to either the Ten Commandments, the first five books of the Bible called the Pentateuch, or the whole of the Old Testament. In the Book of Deuteronomy, which is part of the Pentateuch, Moses stated the blessings and curses of the Law.

In the first part of Deuteronomy 28, God talks to Israel about the blessings of the Law that will overtake them if they obey His commands (vv. 1-14). Then skipping down to verse 15, God says, "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee."

The curse or punishment for breaking God's commandments is threefold: poverty, sickness, and the second death. In this discussion, we'll only deal with the curse of poverty. Let's look at some verses that talk about the curse of poverty.

Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out....

Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it. Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.

Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit. (Deut. 28:16-19, 38-40)

### **Poverty a Curse - Not a Blessing**

You can readily see these verses are talking about poverty and lack. God said poverty and lack was a curse which was to come upon the people of God because they failed to keep His commandments and His statutes (Deut. 28:15).

The curse of poverty should come upon all of us - Gentiles and Jews alike - because all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). But Galatians 3:13 tells us that instead of the curse coming upon us, Jesus was made to be a curse for us.

Jesus didn't go to the Cross for Himself - He did it for us! The curse fell on Him instead of upon us. He bore the curse for us so we wouldn't have to.

Jesus became our substitute and paid the debt for our sins through His death on the Cross. And God wrote it down as though we had paid the debt for sin ourselves! Now because of Jesus, we are free from the curse of the Law - and that includes the curse of poverty!

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

Some endeavor to only put a spiritual interpretation on this verse. They say it's talking about Jesus becoming spiritually poor so we might be made spiritually rich. But there's more to this verse than that.

Although Jesus' needs were always supplied, if He became poor at all, it would only have been from the material standpoint because He never gathered to Himself earthly riches and treasures. For example, Jesus didn't even have His own home. He said about Himself, "...The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

But Jesus certainly wasn't spiritually poor. Someone who was spiritually poor could not work miracles, raise the dead, turn water into wine, feed 5,000 people with a little boy's lunch, or heal the sick!

Often people's thinking is out of line with the Bible, and that's what defeats them. They use some isolated scriptures to form an erroneous doctrine that is not in line with the whole counsel of God's Word.

For instance, some people have made a doctrine out of Luke 18:22, where Jesus tells the young rich man to "...sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." These people try to use that verse to prove that every rich person who is born again needs to sell all his possessions and give to the poor.

Years ago down in the East Texas oilfields, I met a man who had been told that he had to sell everything he had in order to be saved. One night after I'd preached about our redemption from the curse of poverty, he said to me, "Brother Hagin, now I can be saved."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

He said, "Let me tell you my story. My wife and I were married as teenagers. We were brought up on the farm with no specialized training and very little education. All we knew was farming. So we saved enough money to make a down payment on 90 acres of farm land.

"The first and second year we were able to make our payments on our little farm. But the third year we had a crop failure, and we couldn't make the payments."

The bank gave this man and his wife grace that third year. But the next year they had another crop failure, and again they weren't able to make their payments. The bank was about to foreclose on them.

Just about that time, however, some people came along, wanting to lease this man's land to drill for oil. By leasing some of his land, he was able to pay off his farm.

This man's farm was one of the first farms in East Texas to be drilled for oil. Soon after these people began drilling for oil, they struck oil on this man's land. They put oil wells all over his farm, and he became very wealthy.

In the process of time, a church was started in that area where the Full Gospel message was preached, and this man's wife was saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit. He went to the meetings, too, but the minister told him that he'd have to sell everything he owned if he wanted to be saved. The minister based that on the story of the rich young ruler to whom Jesus said, "Sell all you have and give it to the poor" (Luke 18:22).

This man said to me, "I thought, I can't do that! I remember when we were in dire poverty and about to lose everything we had. What would I do if I sold everything I own? I can't go back to farming."

He continued, "I've come to this church regularly now for 25 years. I've paid my tithes, given offerings, supported missions, and helped send several young people to Bible college. But in all that time, I've never been born again. I just couldn't see how I could sell everything I had and the preacher told me I had to in order to be saved.

"But," he said, "after hearing you preach, Brother Hagin, I realize I don't have to sell everything to get saved. It's so good to know God doesn't want us to be poor!"

Thank God, that man did get saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit. But it's sad he went so long without being born again. He could have been saved all along.

The minister at that man's church used an isolated text which didn't mean what he thought it meant. He thought Luke 18:22 meant you have to give everything away to be saved; you don't.

Certainly if your material possessions are hindering you from serving God with your whole heart, you need to do something about that. But Jesus' words to the young rich man are not a requirement for salvation!

It's not wrong to have money. It's wrong for money to have you!

Another isolated text some people use to prove that Christians aren't supposed to enjoy material prosperity in this life is Mark 10:23: "...How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Some folks read that verse and say, "The Bible says a rich man can't get to Heaven."

But that's not what that verse says. That's the kind of wrong thinking that defeats people. We need to read the entire context of that verse to know what Jesus really meant. Jesus was saying we must put our trust in God, not in earthly riches. But He was not saying a rich man cannot be saved.

We cannot accept man's opinion. We have to take God's Word on the subject. Let the Word of God be the Supreme Court of appeal, the final say-so, on any subject.

The Word of God emphatically teaches that poverty is a curse (Deut. 28:16-19,38-40). And the Word of God teaches that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, which includes the curse of poverty (Gal. 3:13). He redeemed us from poverty so we wouldn't have to live in poverty and lack in this life.

Let's look at what Jesus said during His earthly ministry about God meeting our material and financial needs.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Jesus is talking about the material things of life being added unto you, such as food to eat and clothes to wear (Matt. 6:31,32). The way some people talk, it sounds like Jesus said those things would be taken away from you if you live for God.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again (Luke 6:38).

Did Jesus speak the truth when He made this promise, or was He lying about it? I believe He told the truth, don't you?

Notice Jesus said, "...shall men give into your bosom..." Of course, God is always the One who motivates people to give to us as we believe and obey His Word. However, God isn't going to rain down money from Heaven to meet our needs! The money will come from people on this earth.

### **Abraham's Blessing**

In my own experience, I've found when I receive revelation about some scriptural truth and endeavor to take a stand on it, there's always someone to argue, "Yes, but that blessing is just for the Jews."

For instance, I've heard people argue, "Under the Old Covenant, God promised to bless the Jews financially and materially, but that's not for us nowadays."

But did you ever study to find out who the Jews really are? They were never called Jews until after the division of the tribes. The name "Jews" is a shortened version of the name, "Judah."

The blessing of the Old Covenant isn't the blessing of the tribe of Judah. The only blessing Judah received which was different from the other Israelite tribes was the promise that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.

The blessing of the Old Covenant isn't the Jews' blessing; it's Abraham's blessing! Judah, as well as every other tribe of Israel, inherited the covenant promises through their father, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Israel inherited the promise through his father, Isaac. Isaac inherited the promise through his father, Abraham. It's Abraham's blessing!

Now let's go back to Galatians 3 again: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ..." (vv. 13,14).

Under the New Covenant, Abraham's blessing belongs to us! Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law so we wouldn't have to live under the curse - but under the blessing.

The blessing of Abraham is threefold in nature. It's a spiritual blessing, a physical blessing, and a material blessing. This agrees with what the Spirit of God said through the Apostle John in the New Testament.

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

Let's go back once more to Deuteronomy. We've looked at those scriptures which have to do with the curse of poverty. Now let's look at the blessings of the Law.

"And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God" (Deut. 28:2).

The truth is, the curse should come on us because we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). We've broken His commandments. But, thank God, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, which we rightfully deserve. We were made righteous in Christ so that the blessing of Abraham could come upon us (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:14)

Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. (You'll be blessed wherever you are!) Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out...The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee IN THY STOREHOUSES, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. (Deut. 28:3-6,8)

Some say you shouldn't desire material possessions in this life. But God says He will bless what you have stored up! He promises an abundant supply!

And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.... (Deut. 28:11-13)

Verse 12 says, "...thou shalt not borrow." Does that mean it's wrong to borrow money? No. If it's wrong then God told the Israelites to do wrong when He told them to lend, and we know He wouldn't do that.

Actually, God was saying, "I'm going to bless you so much you won't have to borrow."

You may not be at a place financially yet where you don't have to borrow. But begin to stand in faith for such an abundance that you don't have to borrow. It's a part of the blessing of Abraham that is yours in Christ!

The blessing of Abraham that has come upon us gives us a full supply - spiritually, physically, materially and financially.

"But my God shall supply ALL your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:19)

The phrase "all your need" would include financial and material needs, as well as spiritual needs. In fact, if you'll read the entire context, you'll find that Philippians 4:10-19 is specifically talking about financial and material needs.

There is an important balance to this subject of prosperity that people need to understand. God has promised to supply His children's every need. But that doesn't mean a person can just sit down and do nothing and expect God to bring the money in supernaturally.

That's not in line with the whole counsel of the Word.

You do have a right to ask God to bless you financially just as He blessed Israel under the Old Covenant. But God also promised to bless everything they set their hands to: "I will bless the work of your hands" (Deut. 28:12). God never promised to bless Israel if they didn't set their hands to something!

God also said, "Blessed shall be...the fruit of thy ground..." (Deut. 28:4). God couldn't bless the crops if the Israelites hadn't planted them! And God promised that His blessing would be upon their storehouses (Deut. 28:8). But God wasn't going to fill the Israelites' storehouses while they did nothing!

You see, you don't just sit down and do nothing and say, "God is going to meet my needs." If you do, you'll become a laughingstock to intelligent people, a reproach to Christ, and a disgrace to the message of faith. Put your hand to something and believe God to prosper the work of your hands!

We can believe God and exercise faith for anything that is promised to us in the Bible. But we get on dangerous ground when we go beyond the Word. As long as you're in the Word, you're in the light! If you base what you believe on the Word, you're on safe ground!

So don't settle for living under the curse of poverty. You've been redeemed from that curse of the Law by the blood of Jesus Christ! Stand on God's Word and claim the blessing of Abraham that is yours in Christ. Believe God for a full supply in every area of your life!

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