

The Bible
and
the Poor

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All Scriptures taken from the King James Version, adapted into modern English when appropriate by the author.

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This book is dedicated
to all those who are not afraid
to exhibit the selfless compassion
that is exemplified in the loving sacrifice
of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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He has anointed me
To preach the Gospel to the
Poor...
Luke 4:18

Introduction

Her face was covered with blisters. Her eyes reflected desperation as she searched through a garbage can looking for something to eat. My husband and I had lost our home in a failed business venture, but we had a camper to live in. We were warm and dry at night. She was not. Jesus has called us to be His hands and feet. He moved me toward her and I handed her some money. She didn't thank me. She hardly looked at me and swiftly proceeded on her mission of daily survival. She may have been mentally unstable, I don't know.

I wondered how many failures it took to bring her to this place, or if her situation was the result of others who contributed to her downward spiral; abusive parents, a spouse, maybe. That really wasn't any of my business, and I was not to be disobedient to my Lord's command to judge, only to obey Him to respond to His "Least of These" no matter who they are or what they have done.

This book is meant to serve as a reminder to my brethren in Jesus that this is what we are here for; to follow our Lord's example exemplified in His word, and be the lights He has called us to be - even when it hurts, even when there is no thank you or gratitude. That's not important. Our obedience is what our Lord sees and rewards. It is my prayer that this little book will touch your hearts to be sensitive to those whom the Lord calls His "Least of These."

He has sent me to heal the
broken-hearted,... Luke 4:18



Chapter One

"I Work!"

Years ago my husband and I lost our house in a failed business venture. The Lord had been calling us into ministry about the same time, which served to greatly cushion our devastation. We purchased our first travel trailer and began doing art shows in California as an outreach.

In California we were catapulted into a whole new environment. We were now considered to be among that state's homeless population. We began to see and experience things that we were insulated from in our previous comfortable semi-middle class existence. We knew then what it was like to be homeless and poor; and it was this identification that was part of the Lord's plan to educate two of His servants in what it means to identify with His Least of These.

We spent a total of nine years in that part of the country and lived over thirty-five years in camper trailers during the course of our art show ministry, which eventually transitioned into a speaking ministry in the churches.

When we were in California, we ministered at a very special church. The pastor and his wife were committed to helping the homeless and opened the doors of their church at

night and allowed the street people to sleep there. He did this in opposition to his denomination. He eventually had to withdraw from them in order to continue what the Lord had called him to do. He was the one who first told me about the amount of Scriptures there were about God's care for the poor. He said there were two thousand and three hundred of them. Others have said the figure is closer to five hundred. One would be enough.

From that point on I began to study what the Scriptures had to say on the subject. I learned that there were more scriptures about God's concern for the poor than any other moral issue in the Bible. If that is the case, then care for the poor should be a major issue in the hearts of God's people. From what I have been able to observe, I have learned that for the most part, sadly, it is not.

After we had returned to New England, I called a friend from a Bible study we had attended together years ago. She was really glad to hear from me again. Then in the course of our conversation, I mentioned about the church's and the government's responsibility to care for the poor. I was speaking not just from our experiences in California, but mostly now from my knowledge of what God's word has to say on the subject.

Her response was a vehement, "I work!"

She had been implanted with a stereotyped perception that all people who are poor do not work. This is a myth. Because of my own experiences with poverty and homelessness, I had a bit more experience than she had.

I remembered the woman I met who had to work so many jobs just to try and keep a roof over her head she had a stroke that eventually enabled her to get income based housing. Thank God it was there for her. The point is, poor people can work very hard and still not be able to afford medical care and some basic necessities.

I remembered reading in a newspaper about a distressed woman who walked into a food bank and told the workers there, "It doesn't matter how many jobs I work, I still can't make ends meet." Then she broke down sobbing. I understand that feeling very well, I have experienced it many times myself.

I remembered when I became ill on the road in my camper. I had a severe sore throat for almost two weeks. It must have been strep throat, I don't know for sure. I did not have the money to go to a doctor and so I just rested, and ate as much garlic as I could. It's a natural medicine that kills bacteria and viruses. Eventually, with prayer and God's mercy I was healed. I might have died. Sadly many people do die for the same reason. In the United States the chances of dying before the age of fifty-five is higher than any of the other countries that have Universal Health care, because people cannot afford a doctor and preventative care.

People are told to prevent colon cancer by getting a colonoscopy. If someone is working two part time jobs (because the employers don't hire people to work more hours because then they have to pay for their medical insurance); then that person who has no medical insurance can't afford a colonoscopy. Colonoscopies cost around three thousand dollars. So, this worker can get colon cancer and die because it was never detected in time. He works too, like my friend, but he can't make enough to afford health insurance, or pay for a colonoscopy.

Yet my friend thinks that just having a job will solve all the problems associated with homelessness and poverty. She resents having to pay taxes to help someone else's need, like myself. That hurts.

The worst part of all this is that God's people are developing a spiritually destructive prejudice against the poor that is in blatant opposition to God's word.

A pastor's wife I met was harboring a considerable amount of bitterness against the poor who receive benefits from the government. She works hard, but her family is just above the poverty line that would qualify them for those benefits. She deeply resented this and she complained to me that she had to drive through a snowstorm to get to work while others didn't have to work at all to be supported. This is a common attitude that many harbor against people on welfare.

As a result of this attitude, many Christians actively try to influence their politicians into cutting these social safety net programs, without realizing that many people who need help are seniors, the physically disabled, mentally challenged and many others who would like to work but can't because of other challenges. I know of one woman for example, who has to care for her paraplegic son, and needs to work because her benefits are always being cut, but can't because she doesn't have anyone to look after her child.

By focusing on those who try and abuse the system, we can fail to see the wheat among the tares (Matthew 13:24-30), and when that happens the poor are neglected in direct opposition to what the scriptures require regarding the poor.

The point of all this is that many Christians desperately need an education in what God requires concerning the poor.

For those like this pastor's wife who resented that she had to work without being able to qualify for those benefits, she needed to realize that when she works she is contributing to her retirement benefits through social security. The more she works, the more money she will get. This program was instigated to help the poor have some retirement money because it is extremely difficult for low income people to save enough and still provide for their daily needs because of the increasing costs of living. She is also, through her taxes, helping to support a social safety net that she, or her children or grandchildren may need someday. Circumstances can

change in a heartbeat. Illness or a natural disaster can render anyone into a category requiring some government assistance.

I have a Christian friend who was abandoned by her husband leaving her to care for their two children. Because of your tax dollars, she was able to get training and she is now a teacher and can support her family.

Because of your tax dollars, low income seniors and other poor people, can get housing and lifesaving medications they would otherwise not be able to receive.

One excuse I heard from someone was that this person did not want her tax dollars going to people who didn't serve God and were His enemies. Aside from the fact that there are many God fearing Christians that the Lord is helping through these programs, (just as He provides through your secular job) we are to view those outside of God's kingdom as Jesus sees them. He didn't shun them, He ate with them, much to the chagrin of the religious Pharisees. The scriptures also counsel us; - *Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink: for in doing this you shall heap coals of fire on his head (Romans 12:20)*. The coals of fire is a reference to a custom of the day. People would sell coal door to door carrying it on their heads. The coals of fire thus indicates placing a blessing on the head of the enemies we are instructed to care for.

After our years on the road, and now as seniors, the Lord enabled my husband and I to obtain low income based housing, for which we are extremely grateful. For the first time in over thirty-five years I now have a bathtub again. I tell people, "Never take your bathtub for granted."

Shortly after I moved in, elements in the government were trying to push through a bill that contained massive cuts to the poor, including a six billion dollar cut to HUD, which helps low income people, seniors like us and the disabled, have affordable housing. We received a letter from the office here telling us to please call our congressmen and tell them to

not vote for those cuts to the program, as it would leave them only about thirty-five thousand dollars to manage eighty-one units.

I did call our congressman at the time and also told other friends to call as well to protest this new bill which would not only cut HUD, but also Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and food stamps. The majority of people on food stamps are children, seniors and the disabled.

One of my acquaintances recoiled in horror at my request. Another woman I know who I talked to on the telephone about it, responded by declaring adamantly, "I believe in minimal government!" When I tried to explain what I had learned in the Scriptures about a government's responsibility to care for the poor, this devout Christian woman snapped, "I don't want to talk about it!" and hung up, terminating any further discussion on the subject. It bothered me, actually, it grieved my spirit because of her apparent lack of compassion for those who may become homeless because of our government's callousness in this area.

She didn't care if I became homeless again, as long as it was going to save her tax money. I find that attitude morally reprehensible. And according to the Word of God, He doesn't like it either.

Jesus told a parable about a poor invalid, a beggar named Lazarus, who was placed by the gate of a wealthy man (Luke 16:19-31). Apparently the beggar was brought there by someone who thought that the rich man would have compassion on the poor man and Lazarus would be helped.

Lazarus was hungry, desiring to be fed from only the crumbs from the rich man's table. He needed medical attention too, but only the dogs came to lick his sores.

We are not told how many long hours or days Lazarus spent within the rich man's view waiting for help that never arrived. We are not told how often the rich man passed by, or

how many times the wealthy man avoided the beggar's pleading eyes.

Then one day the beggar died and was carried by the angels into paradise. Was the rich man relieved that the beggar's convicting presence was no longer at his gate?

Shortly afterward the rich man died too, was merely buried and went to hell.

In his torment he cried out for mercy, but received none, reaping what he had sown (Galatians 6:7). He begged then that Lazarus would be sent to warn his family of the reality of hell and was told by Abraham that they had the word of God; Moses and the prophets.

But the rich man argued that if Lazarus came from the dead, they would repent.

Then Abraham said, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

As I mentioned previously, there are multitudes of scriptures laced throughout God's word that instruct us how we should view and treat the poor in our midst. Do we allow the word of God to be an influence upon us concerning how we view the poor? Or are our attitudes toward the poor influenced by someone's political agenda?

Did the rich man refuse to help Lazarus because he somehow thought the beggar did something to deserve his condition? God anticipated that response when He admonishes us not to judge (Matthew 7:1-5). There are some who refuse to help those they see as being in rebellion to God, yet these same ones who judge the poor can harbor inner attitudes and heart conditions that God deems just as rebellious. *For man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.* – I Samuel 16:7

Today, Lazarus is waiting outside our gates holding a cardboard plea for help. And those who have received the

treasure of God's word are instructed not to hoard wealth, but share it along with the life changing Gospel of Jesus Christ. We dare not view Lazarus with contempt when God sees him as a valuable treasure Jesus died for and rose from the dead to save.

Jesus is the Word of God (Revelation 19:13). We have been given the fulfillment of Moses and the Prophets. We now have the testimony of One who really did rise from the dead to show us the reality of heaven and hell. We have been given the truth of God's word, and like the rich man in Jesus' parable we are without excuse. We ignore Lazarus at our own peril.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. –
II Thessalonians 3:10

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs. –
Ephesians 4:28

But whoever has this world's good, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how can the love of God dwell in him? –
I John 3:17

Lazarus and the Rich Man

Luke 16:19-31

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Lazarus

had a good job, but he lost it when he became ill and could no longer work. He has some disability income, but it is not enough to make ends meet. He needs a little extra to help him survive. He's looking at you.

Lazarus

had a good job too, but he lost it when the company that employed him could employ no more. He could not find another job and used all his savings until they were gone, along with his apartment and his car. He never thought that someday he would be homeless and he is ashamed. It's hard

for him to find his way back up when he has come so far down. He's looking at you.

LAZARUS

has a criminal record from a past he is trying to forget. But employers tend to favor résumés that shine with untarnished perfection. Now he can't even get a license to perform simple home repairs. He needs help from someone who is not afraid to care. He's looking at you.

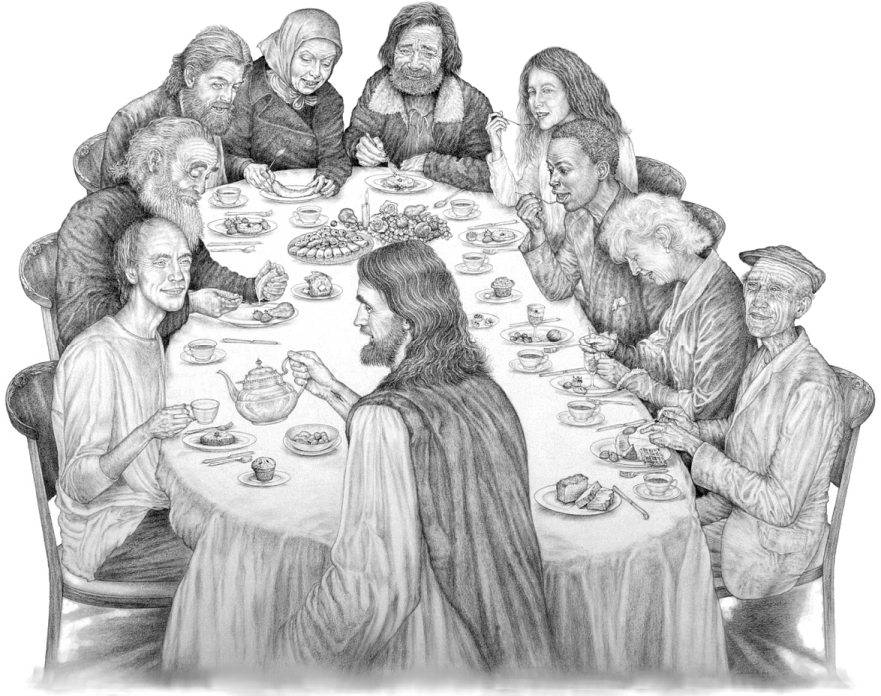
LAZARUS

is a little slow. The facility that housed him was shut down from lack of funds and he was sent out on his own. He doesn't have the mental prowess to calculate a solution to his homelessness. He can't even get an ID without an address. He really doesn't know what to do. So he's looking at you.

LAZARUS

soiled his life with addictions that took advantage of his weaknesses. He knows he has failed, but he is still a human being and God loves this one who is wounded by the side of the road. He's lonely, hungry and cold. He needs to hear the Gospel so he will know that Jesus sees him as a valuable treasure worth dying for. Do you? What can you do to help this one, because, he's looking at you...too.

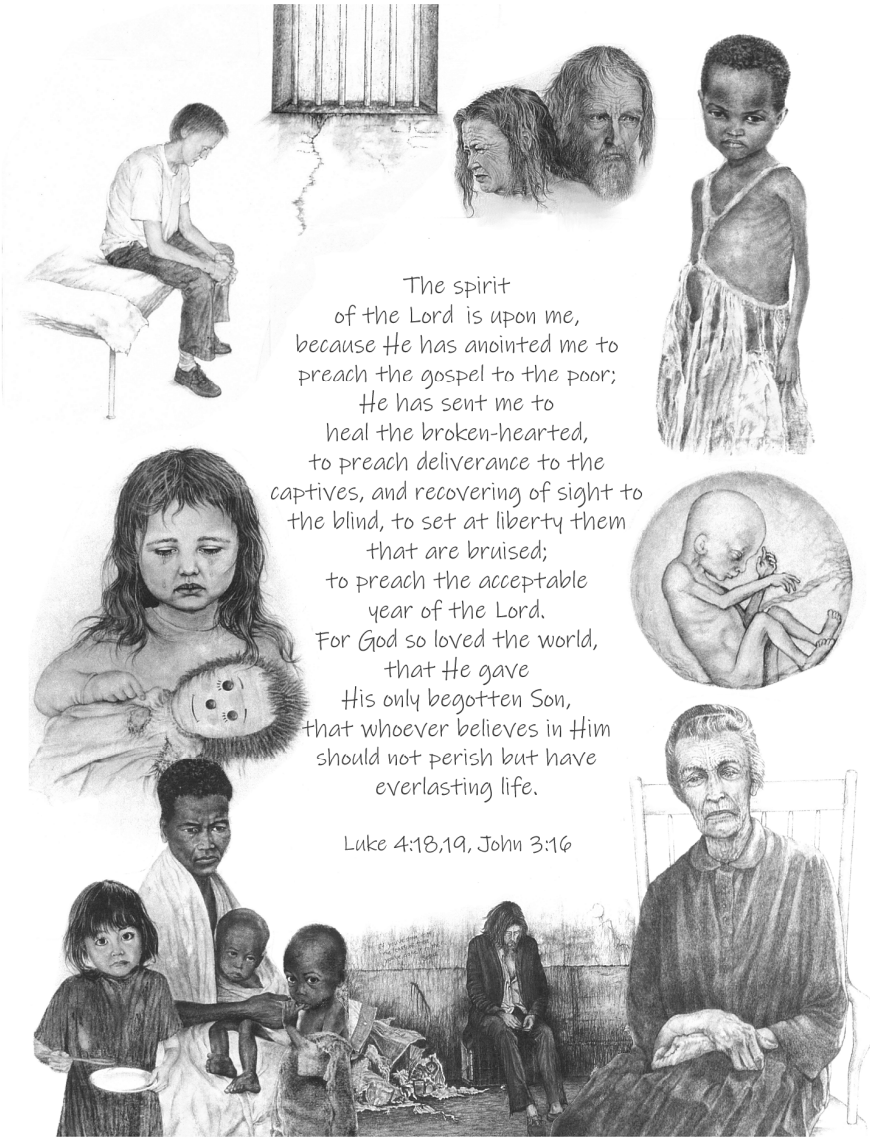




Then He said also to him that invited Him, "When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbours; lest they also bid you again, and a recompense be made you.

But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." - Luke 14:12-14



The spirit
of the Lord is upon me,
because He has anointed me to
preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent me to
heal the broken-hearted,
to preach deliverance to the
captives, and recovering of sight to
the blind, to set at liberty them
that are bruised;
to preach the acceptable
year of the Lord.
For God so loved the world,
that He gave
His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him
should not perish but have
everlasting life.

Luke 4:18,19, John 3:16

Chapter Two

Education

Because of my experiences with homelessness and poverty, I had done an extensive study on what the scriptures have to say about God's requirements concerning treatment of the poor, or His "Least of These." Feeling that there was a need to share what I had learned on the subject, I innocently posted my study on a Christian forum board. To my surprise, I was immediately labeled a "Marxist." I was totally baffled by the response.

I was never a very politically savvy person. For the longest time I thought O'bama was Irish, and the Tea Party movement had something to do with Lewis Carroll. When I initially posted my study, I was completely unaware that the subject of defending the poor had political ramifications. I didn't understand the basic differences between Republicans and Democrats.

Then one day I came across a video of some people verbally abusing a street man.

"If you're lookin' for a handout you're in the wrong end of town. Nothin' for free over here, you have to work for everything you get!"

A group of irate people, who were part of a Tea Party rally, had gathered before a disheveled man sitting on the curb holding a cardboard plea for help. The message that was

scrawled on the little sign also declared that its bearer had Parkinson's disease. Apparently the man had seen this Tea Party rally as an opportunity to gather some support in his affliction. Instead he became the target of a vicious and humiliating tirade.

As I watched this sickening display I couldn't help thinking about Jesus' parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:20-31), and Jesus' statement "If you have done it to the least of these, you have done it to Me" (Matthew 25:40).

I couldn't understand the lack of compassion those men in the suits were exhibiting to that poor, disabled human being sitting on the curb at their feet.

Some people have suggested that this particular video was staged. That could be true, but I have since learned that the attitudes expressed by those ultra conservatives was a representative of the attitudes that have been expressed by Christians I have met, much to my disappointment.

One day when I was praying about those attitudes I had seen expressed by some Christians regarding the poor, the Lord gave me the word, "Education." Then He showed me again that His people need to be educated on what the Bible teaches about God's care for "The Least of These."

Christians want the government to follow the constitution. Likewise, God wants His people to follow His constitution; His word that is contained in the Holy Scriptures. As Christians, our view of the poor must be formed by God's Word alone and not by any political ideology. Most Christians who support "minimal government" don't realize that the concept does not originate from the Bible, but was adapted from the philosophers of the enlightenment period.

While totalitarian governments are to be avoided, the Bible supports enough government to make sure the poor are taken care of and protected from oppression.

The Scriptures clearly recognize that human nature is

depraved - "All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." – Romans 3:23. God knows that because of sin, human nature is basically selfish, and those who are stronger will naturally take advantage of the weak. Liberation theology, which is often described as "oppressor- and- victim," is disparaged in conservative political circles, but this concept is clearly expressed in the Scriptures.

God requires that His leadership be aware of this principle of "oppressor and victim" in human nature, and enact safeguards to protect the vulnerable. Psalm 72 illustrates this very clearly. It was written by David for Solomon. The Psalm contains instructions for how a just king should rule. The Psalm is also a Messianic Psalm, with applications to the future rule of the Messiah, and again we are shown the importance God places on caring for the poor.-

He shall judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with judgment (verse 1).

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor (verse 2).

For he shall deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him that has no helper (verse 12).

He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy (verse 13).

As I mentioned previously, this Psalm has Messianic parallels, but at the same time it is also reflecting God's heart in operation through compassionate government leadership.

Unfortunately, a majority of Christians are totally unaware of what the word of God actually teaches about the poor, and are allowing themselves to be led into apostasy in this area. So was ancient Israel before the captivity. The Hebrews had adapted a callous attitude toward the needy in their midst, resulting in many abuses.

God sent His prophets to educate them in this area and correct their behavior. The prophetic warnings went unheeded and God permitted Israel to be overcome by their enemies. There were many other factors that contributed to Israel's captivity, but if they had understood that God promises protection to those who care for the poor, and if they had demonstrated the compassion He requires in this area, it may have stayed their time of devastation, or completely avoided it.

When we understand that the things that were written in the past are there for our protection in the future, we need to take heed to these warnings as well.

Oppressing the poor always carries severe judgments from the Lord. But since so very few of God's people seriously study the word of God for themselves, (according to recent surveys) and get most of their theology from their pastors and talk show hosts, many are being led further and further into the prophesied apostasy. Apostasy happens when God's people have fallen or are falling away from what the Bible actually teaches.

I have discovered in conversations with believers on the subject that most of them parrot the same political rhetoric. These people also listen to conservative media. There is nothing wrong with that, as long as what they are hearing lines up with the word of God.

As we progress into the future described for us in the book of Revelation, a picture is painted for us in chapter six of an imbalanced economy represented by a set of scales. Inflation renders the basic necessities of life unaffordable. A day's wage only buys a handful of wheat while the luxury items that are always affordable to the rich are unaffected - "Hurt not the oil and the wine." Thus we are shown a prophetic portrait of the -*generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from*

among men - Proverbs 30:14. Christians need to be working very hard not to be part of that “generation.” This generation can advance when the rich are favored and there are not enough safeguards to protect the poor. We are told very specifically throughout God’s word that it is His desire that the poor be defended.

Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. - Proverbs 31:9

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. - Deut. 15:11

As I mentioned before, there are hundreds of Scriptures in God’s word that deal with His care for the poor and the needy. As it is a major issue in the scriptures so it should be a major issue in our hearts.

I would like to address some of the frequent responses I have received from Christians and answer these viewpoints with a Biblical perspective. I am not a member of any political party and this is not an endorsement of any political ideology. If your political party does not line up with regards to God’s word concerning the poor, or any other moral issue, then don’t change your party - work to change your party in this area.

My political position is on the sidelines, holding up God’s Word on the issue, hoping the Light of it will break through and align those who profess faith in God with the Truth His Word proclaims.

I am an ambassador for the Lord (II Corinthians 5:20) and here I have no continuing city, but I seek one to come (Hebrews 13:14). In other words, my politics are not of this world, they are directed by God and I vote for Jesus on a daily

basis. My only concern is that God's people operate according to God's word, so they may ultimately pass our final exam found in Matthew 25:31-46 - "If you have done it to the least of these My brethren, you have done it to Me."



Chapter Three

Politics or God's Word?

As Christians, our attitude toward the poor must be formed by God's word alone and not anyone's political agenda, otherwise we run the risk of operating in opposition to God on this issue which is a spiritually dangerous place to be.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that I have heard Christians parrot the same responses, almost as if they have been programmed. I want to answer these parroted responses from a Biblical perspective. If the word of God is important to you, you should carefully and prayerfully consider the scriptures I present that refutes them.

#1 - It's not the government's responsibility to take care of the poor.

The most commonly parroted myth I hear is that it is not the government's responsibility to take care of the poor. First of all, we need to understand that the word of God applies to everyone, not just believers. Therefore it is also a government's responsibility to provide for its poor and not just the responsibility of the church as many have mistakenly assumed. -

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.
- Proverbs 14.34.

The king that faithfully judges the poor, his throne shall be established forever. – Proverbs 29:14

In Jeremiah 22:16, we are told that King Josiah “*pled the cause of the afflicted and needy. Then it was well. Is not that what it means to know Me?*”

If God’s laws did not apply to all, then he would not have sent Jonah to warn Nineveh, nor would He have given prophecies to Jeremiah about God’s coming judgment on all the nations in the latter days. -

But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation - Jeremiah 10:10.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; - Jeremiah 9:25.

Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from his holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon his habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. - Jeremiah 25:30,31,

And I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations - Jeremiah -25:13. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. – Psalm 9:17

If it was not God's will for secular nations to operate according to His principles, then why are the people of the secular nations that God is judging in the New Testament book of Revelation being told to repent? By what standard are

they being judged? God's word, of course, it is eternal. -

And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. - Revelation 9:20,21

When the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar fell under God's judgment, the prophet Daniel told him to break off his sins by righteousness and take care of the poor and perhaps God would prolong his prosperity (Daniel 4:27); - because God promises protection to those who care for the poor, whether it is an individual or a government. -

Blessed is he that considers the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. - Psalm 41:1,2

We cannot mistakenly assume that if we cut benefits for the poor that the money we spend on our defense will avail us anything, because *-Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman wakes but in vain (Psalm 127:1)*. In other words, whether we are building a house or an army, it will benefit us nothing if we do not have His favor. And if we violate His commands to care for the poor, we cannot expect that our own efforts no matter how mighty we think they are will be sufficient to protect us. The United States has sinned greatly and violated God's word in many ways. If we continue to follow policies that eliminate or severely cut back on the poor, we remove the

“charity that covers a multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8) and our defenses will come tumbling down.

In the prophetic book of Zechariah, God shows through the prophet what sins caused His people to be brought into the captivity and the prophet’s words also apply to us at this hour in our nation’s history. –

“Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger (alien), nor the poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart,” (Zechariah 7:9-11).

God’s people refused to listen and hardened their hearts, so God refused to listen to them (verse 13). God came with a “whirlwind” and scattered them among the nations (verse 14).

Years ago during the time of our sojourn in California, we had the opportunity to hear Anton Sawyer speak at a large church there. She was a prophetess from South Africa who had come to the United States in response to the growing prosperity doctrine, the “name it and claim it” distortion of Christianity that was spreading in the church. Her major theme was, “What have we done to God’s Word?” She would get Ezekiel type visions, but she didn’t know what many of them meant. She related one of them that I remember very clearly. At the time, being the non-political person I was, I didn’t understand it either. I do today.

In her vision she saw a tornado heading toward some people who were having a party with an elephant. There was a little run down shack between the tornado and the party people. In the vision, the Lord told her to run into the shack, even though it was directly in the path of the tornado. She obeyed the Lord and went into the shack. The tornado went around the shack and proceeded on toward the party goers and the elephant.

The shack represented God's care for the poor. The remnant who can hear Him will be protected because of their obedience to care for them. The others, well, here comes the tornado.

Years ago after we had returned to New England, President Bush Junior, had just been reelected. My husband had a very clear realistic dream that he was standing before President Bush. The all of a sudden my husband began to prophesize to this man. The president looked convicted and walked away, red faced and looking back over his shoulder as my husband continued to pour forth the Lord's judgments.

When my husband woke up he couldn't remember much of what he said in the dream only that this president would do something that would bring this country under the Lord's judgment and part if it had to do with cutting back on the poor.

We wanted to get this message to the president, but didn't know how. Shortly after that we ministered at a church, and we shared the dream with the pastor there. He told us that he had mutual friends with the president, and that President Bush had already been given the word not to cut back on the poor from members of his own prayer group. He didn't listen and the cuts were made. He also left the country's economy in a shambles. He also instigated the war on Iraq. The sanctions that were imposed on that country by the United States created an artificial poverty which resulted in the deaths of thousands of children. God will not permit these crimes to go unpunished. And as of this writing, the United States is currently repeating these acts of cruelty on the civilians of Venezuela and Iran.

Like ancient Israel, the leadership of the United States professes knowledge of God. When the Republicans or Democrats who agree to vote for policies that favor the rich and at the same time cause affliction to the poor by cutting

food stamps and other benefits as our country has been doing, it is mimicking the very same behavior that caused Israel to fall before her enemies.

Christians also need to recognize that God operates through secular agencies as well as His own people. God provides for you through your secular job. He operated through a secular king to instigate the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem after the captivity and He used secular kings to provide for Jesus' family so they could flee to Egypt to escape Herod (Matthew 2:11). If it was not for that provision through secular means, we might not have our Messiah Jesus.

While some Christians are vehemently protesting the government's being involved with charity, at the same time they will also agree that if a secular government decided to follow Biblical principles that would be a good thing.

One of those principles is illustrated in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. In this parable, the Samaritan sees a man in need, has compassion on him, takes him to an inn and agrees to pay for his care for as long as needed (Luke 10:30-35). When the individuals that comprise the leadership of any government recognizes that the citizens under their jurisdiction are not having their medical needs met and responds by paying for their care, this government is operating according to a Biblical principle. At the same time the "Innkeepers," the hospitals, nursing homes, etc. are receiving payment they would not otherwise have received and in turn the health service businesses and caregivers are paying taxes on that income contributing back into the system.

We can't insist that the government follow Biblical principles in regard to the abortion and homosexual issues and then insist that it not follow Biblical principles in regard to the poor. This is nothing less than hypocrisy.

While it certainly is the will of God for the church to take

care of the poor as well, at the same time God's word admonishes His people to "count the cost" when they are contemplating entering into any new campaign (Luke 14:28). If all the government entitlement programs are removed and if the church is willing to accept the responsibility of caring for those who suddenly find themselves without medical care, we have to keep in mind that some cancer medications can cost eight thousand dollars a month and a two day stay in a hospital can cost almost twenty thousand dollars. Is the church willing to undertake the enormous expense of a paraplegic's lifetime in a nursing home? Can the church really do it all?

God can provide miraculously, but at the same time when the cost is counted, benevolence funds that were previously just a hobby for the deacons, must become a central part of a church's budget. According to the pattern we have in the Old Testament, the tithe was for the priest's/pastor's salary and the poor, (Deut. 14:28, 29). Building maintenance and everything else was provided by offerings.

Very few churches today operate according to this example. If the heart of the church matched God's heart for the poor as exemplified in the scriptures, maybe the government's role in caring for the poor might not have mushroomed to the degree it is now.

#2 - Taxes for benevolence is a violation of the constitution

There are those that argue that it is a violation of the constitution of the United States to forcefully take money from one people and give it to another. I have heard some Christians refer to taxes as "stealing," "extortion" and "sin." Jesus advocated voluntary giving, but at the same time the

scriptures tell us that we have governments that are appointed by God to minister to those things that are required in this life, taxes are necessary and both Jesus and the Apostle Paul instructed us to pay them (Romans 13:1-7, Matt. 17:27). We are to *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.* (Matthew 22:17-21).

As Christians we must be careful to avoid a selfish “I’ve got mine, you’re on your own” attitude which can result from a legalistic interpretation of the wording in our constitution.

Actually, the concept of “limited or minimal government” which is used by some to justify the elimination of taxes to help the poor does not come from the Bible, but through the philosophers of “The Enlightenment.” The ideas of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and most notably Baron de Montesquieu were the models upon which the majority of the United States government was based.

The Bible tells us that there is the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. Jesus violated the Pharisees “constitution” by healing on the Sabbath, because He was being compelled by His compassion to help someone in need. Jesus was operating in the spirit of the law and not the letter. If our government operated totally by the letter of the constitution, we would not be sending disaster relief to other countries and even our own people in the wake of natural disasters.

We have to stop and ask ourselves, why is it okay to take tax money to build roads, but wrong to use tax money to care for our nation’s poor?

We must be careful not to place the constitution of the United States above God’s constitution, His Word, which has been summarized by our Lord to this – “Love God with all your heart mind and soul and your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39).

He that gives unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hides his

eyes shall have many a curse - Proverbs 28:27.

When we show favor to the rich by not taxing them appropriately, or removing inappropriate credits and loopholes while at the same time we cut back on the poor, according to His Word, we can actually bring a curse upon us from the Lord.

If you study the tax history from the Tax Policy Center, it reflects an interesting pattern. During the Regan-Bush era the tax rate on the wealthy was lowered and the economy went down. During Clinton's administration it was raised and the economy prospered. Then again during the next republican reign, the tax rate was again lowered for the wealthy and the economy responded by deflating accordingly at the same time cuts were being made to the poor.

The legislation that had been proposed years ago that will cut funding for the poor, children, the elderly and the handicapped while at the same time providing tax cuts for the wealthy totaling several trillion dollars has been passed. God has provided though the prosperity of others to be a provision for those who are in need – this is a vital Biblical truth that we ignore at our own peril.

He that oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he that gives to the rich, shall surely come to want. – Proverbs 22:16

There are those who do not want to give tax money to a government they see as rebellious to God's word and to those who have not worked, yet, if it was not for God's unmerited compassion for the rebellious, none would have any hope, because - *God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8.* We are told that while we were "without strength" or weak Jesus died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6). Therefore we are told in God's

word that those who are strong are to help the weak and not please ourselves; for the strong are also recipients of that same unmerited forgiveness.

Many of these Christians who do not want to pay taxes to support programs like Social Security and Medicaid, don't realize that someday they, or a member of their family may need those benefits themselves. Circumstance can change overnight. A natural disaster, medical emergency or some other event can render someone in need of government assistance.

I have a friend who has a son that is disabled and needs help through Medicaid. My friend works, but without the extra help her family receives from the government for her son, their family would not be able to survive. She pays lots of taxes, and in turn she receives the benefit from contributing to a system that was designed to help people like herself.

Sadly, it is a short sighted selfishness in many of God's people that keeps them opposing the help that is so desperately needed by so many others.

The United States has sinned against God greatly in many ways, so again, for this very reason we must be careful not to remove the charity that covers a multitude of sins, (I Peter 4:8) because when the Lord hears the cries of the oppressed and the needy He will arise (Psalm 12:5). We need to carefully ponder the implications of what happens in the wake of God's response to those cries from the victims of unjust economic policies.

The Lord gave us this illustration through a young man we met several years ago. He told us he was walking through a park when the Lord prompted him to feed a street man. He obeyed, found a street man and purchased some food for him. Then the young man was crossing the street. He inadvertently stepped out in front of an oncoming car that was barreling toward him at forty miles an hour with no possible way that it

could stop in time, but it did, one inch from his hip. I believe the Lord gave us this example to illustrate this principle in His word; if we care for the poor, He will protect; if we turn our backs on the poor, then we hand our sword over to our enemies.

3 - If any man does not work, he should not eat!

Christians often quote from the scripture, "If a man does not work, he should not eat," (II Thessalonians 3:10) as a justification for removing or cutting back on entitlement programs; but at the same time these same Christians forget that there are many on those programs who cannot work, or may not be physically able to work as hard as others to keep up with the escalating costs of life's necessities.

The Bible tells of those in David's day that had become so physically exhausted they could not keep up with the other warriors and had to remain behind while their brethren marched off to war. (I Samuel 30:10-25). When David and his men returned with the spoils of their victory, David commanded that the bounty be shared with those who had not partaken in the battle. This was seen as unfair by some of the other soldiers who had risked their lives and fought so hard to earn those rewards. Those who protested were called "wicked" men of Belial. The word wicked is used in the Scriptures to designate those who despise or neglect the poor (Proverbs 29:7, Psalm 10:2, 37:14, 82:4). But God through David had compassion on those who were not as physically strong, treated them equally, and thus giving to those who cannot "work" so to speak, became a statute in Israel. The New Testament reiterates - "*Those who are strong should support the weak and not please ourselves*" (Romans 15:1) and we are admonished to work so we will have money to give to those who have needs (Ephesians 4:28).

We also see in this Biblical illustration, David as a representative of government, forcing those to give who did not want to surrender their share of the spoils voluntarily to help the ones who could not work. This example should answer those who insist that giving to the poor should only be voluntary and not forced. The point is, unless there is some government oversight in this area, the needs will not be met.

It was a custom in the first century Christian church to have what was known as love feasts. The equivalent today might be called a fellowship supper, or a potluck. Imagine showing up at church with covered dish in hand and being escorted to a separate room with seating designated for those in your economic category. In other words, if you were poor, you didn't get to sit with those in your congregation who were more affluent. How would you feel about that? And yet, this is what those Christians, especially in the church at Corinth, ended up doing.

The rich would bring a sumptuous feast, while the poor in the other room had nothing or very little to eat. None of the blessings of the rich trickled down to those less fortunate.

Eventually the Apostles realized what was going on and they had to step in to regulate the selfish behavior of those professed Christians who had not yet learned that it was God's desire for them to share their abundance with others. "To whom much is given, much is required" (Luke 12:48) spiritually as well as materially.

Likewise, when necessary, a government who takes its responsibilities towards its people seriously, will also regulate giving when required.

I think we have to be careful not to let the "If I can do it, so can they" attitude create a master economic race view of the poor that sees those who are not measuring up to someone's preconceived standard become objects of persecution. God's people must guard themselves from allowing a political

ideology to create a destructive prejudice against the poor. Those who can work are required to do so, (11 Thess. 3:10), but at the same time it is also required that those who work are to provide for the needs of others (Ephesians 4:28), and that would include taxes. The Bible does not sanction hoarding wealth (Matthew 6:19).

A friend of mine who worked as a nurse recounted this story to me of one of her coworkers. This woman's husband left her with two small children and she was forced to move in with her parents. They encouraged her to get a career and she became a nurse and is now able to maintain herself and her children. My friend used this example to show that if that woman could do it so can anyone. My friend was not taking into consideration that the woman had a supportive family, a free place to live while she was attending classes, financial support and free babysitting. Many people do not have these advantages and they become trapped in their circumstances.

#4 - "Trickle down" economics is the best economic policy

Many Christians endorse the "Trickle down" economic theory. The simplest way to describe it is basically that by giving the wealthy enormous tax breaks, it will cause them to put that money back into the economy and the benefits will "trickle down." Because it is a "trickle" it usually evaporates before it reaches those on the bottom of the falls who need it the most.

Because of the basic depravity of human nature, the Bible and early church history attest that the "trickle down" theory does not always work. When the beggar Lazarus was laid at the rich man's gate, none of the rich man's wealth "trickled down to Lazarus' aid (Luke 16:20-30).

I previously mentioned the love feasts of the early church

where the rich and the poor were separated in different rooms. The wealthy would bring a sumptuous feast while the isolated poor would have little or nothing to eat. None of the abundance of the wealthy trickled down into that other room. This practice continued until the apostles got wind of what was happening and intervened. According to this example in Biblical history, some regulation was needed in order to make sure that the poor were fed.

God's trickle-down theory works this way; He promises that when the wealthy give to the poor, then God will prosper them even more, (Proverbs 19:17). This will in turn prosper the nation because it is operating according to a Biblical principle contained in the word of God.

I assure you according to God's word, that cutting back on the poor, while favoring the wealthy by not requiring them to help the needy through proportionate taxation, or by not removing tax credits and loopholes that the super-rich use to keep them from paying their fair share, will not solve America's financial problems it will only make them worse. Any economic policy that operates in opposition to the word of God is destined to fail eventually. I read the testimony of one corporate executive who said that his secretary paid more in taxes than he did, and he did not believe that was fair. It is not.

When King David sinned by having an affair with another man's wife and then caused the woman's husband to be killed to cover up the scandal, the prophet Nathan was sent by God to the king and gave him a prophetic illustration of the principle behind what David had done. -

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. – II Samuel 12:1-4

David became so enraged over the injustice of the situation he vehemently condemned the rich man in the prophet's parable. So while this was an illustration to expose the injustice of David's personal sin, again the principle behind it operates today when a government removes health care or provisions from the poor in order to spare taxing the wealthy who can abundantly afford to underwrite services for the needy.

#5 - When a government provides for the poor it is communism/socialism

In the early days of the Christian church, the people would bring their surplus that was earned through a free enterprise system to the apostles for them to distribute to those who had needs. –

Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need – Acts 4:34,35. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. – Acts 2:44,45

Therefore the principle of having a central fund as a safety net for financial emergencies was established in the word of God. People were taught to look after the needs of others. The purpose of the Old Testament tithe was the same. -

"Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house." - Malachi 3:10

This principle was established in God's word, long before the concepts of "Socialism" and "Marxism" were ever invented.

Both communism and socialism were distorted from the early Christian communes and while these systems are flawed attempts at achieving some sort of ideal social system, which cannot be obtained without full submission to God, the basic principle of both ideologies originated from the Bible.

God blesses the individual, so in turn the individual can be a blessing to others. When everyone is operating according to this principle, you would have a social system that truly worked. But human beings are flawed and this system will never fully materialize until the supernatural return of Jesus Christ and we are once again operating in the same powerful anointing that prevailed in the first century and made the Christian community so effective in this area. However, any government that chooses to model itself after the Biblical example by using a free enterprise system to provide a social safety net for the needy in its society is operating on a godly principle, and has nothing to do with communism or socialism.

Chapter Four

Oppressors and Victims

The scriptures recognize that human nature is depraved. –

All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God. – Romans 3:23

And because human nature is basically selfish, those who are stronger will naturally take advantage of the weak. The book of Amos illustrates this principle explicitly and portrays God's indignation on the oppressors and their abuse of the poor.

One of the prominent reasons that God brought His people into the captivity was because they had neglected and oppressed the needy. There are other sins mentioned in God's indictments, but Israel's treatment of the poor stands out by the frequency with which it is addressed.

I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes, that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek – Amos 2:7.

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy – Amos 4:1.

Your treading is upon the poor – and you take from him burdens of wheat – Amos 5:11.

For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right – Amos 5:12.

God continues through the mouth of His prophet Amos, to describe a selfish, covetous, self-indulgent, greedy people – (Amos 6:4-6) that are not “grieved for the sufferings of Joseph.”

Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt by his own brothers who possessed an uncompassionate, hard hearted lack of compassion for their little brother’s welfare (Genesis 37).

God’s people here according to Amos’ declaration are being upbraided for a similar lack of compassion to their brethren who are afflicted.

God says He hates their “palaces” (Amos 6:8) luxuriant dwellings places that were constructed through the oppression of the poor. He condemns these complacent ones who are so focused on their own personal gain at the expense of others. –

Hear you this, O you that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great – and falsifying the balances by deceit? That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yes, and sell the refuse of the wheat? – Amos 8:4-6.

To me this sounds a lot like what's going on today; the dishonest business practices and greed, governments that favor the wealthy creating an imbalanced economy and inflation that makes the poor vulnerable and merchandise for the rich.

Instead of viewing the poor as God sees them, as people He has called us to care for, the poor in this generation, as well as ancient Israel's, have become to many merely a commodity to be used.

In the New Testament the Apostle James reiterates. –

Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.

You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you. – James 5:1-5

James certainly would not be all that popular in certain conservative political circles even though he is clearly expressing God's perspectives.

When a government recognizes that there are abuses against the poor in its society and seeks to correct those abuses by regulating the abusers, it is operating according to the Biblical commandments to protect and defend the poor.

God continues His judgments upon Israel by saying

that He will not forget their works and makes a reference to the coming earthquake.

And the land shall tremble for this and everyone will mourn who dwells there (Amos 8:8).

And the Lord GOD of hosts is He that touches the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwells there shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as by the flood of Egypt.

It is He that builds his stories in the heaven, and has founded His troop in the earth; He that calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out upon the face of the earth (Amos 9:5,6).

It sounds like some of the disasters that are happening today. Unfortunately the poor must suffer along with the wealthy when sin causes the earth to quake, which is the great lesson learned from Eden: when one sins others suffer; but the poor are never forgotten before the Lord.

When God hears the cries of the oppressed He will arise. –

For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him (Psalm 12:5).

And He arises in the hearts of those who can hear Him to reach out to them with His hands of compassion.

He reminds us through the mouths of His Apostles to “Remember the poor” - Galatians 2:10. And we are told that those who neglect them are void of God’s love. –

But whoever has this world's good, and sees his brother has needs, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how does the love of God dwell in him?– I John 3:17

Jesus tells us that there is great reward for those who have ministered to and provided for His "Least of These." But those who have, like ancient Israel, turned a deaf ear to the cries of the needy, and refuse to repent, well, according to the word of God they are standing on some pretty shaky ground.

For He brings down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, He lays it low; He lays it low, even to the ground; He brings it even to the dust.

The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy. -

Isaiah 26:5,6

But with righteousness
shall He judge the poor,
and reprove with equity for the meek of the
earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the
rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips
shall he slay the wicked. - Isaiah 11:4

Chapter Five

Before and After - Sheep, Goats and Samaritans

...and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, ... Luke 10:33

In the Gospel of Luke, chapter ten, verses thirty through thirty-seven, Jesus told a parable in response to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" If we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, then who is qualified to be our neighbor? This parable is called, the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In Jesus' day the Samaritans were objects of much prejudice by the self-righteous Jews; yet, Jesus makes the Samaritan the hero in this story that goes like this. -

A man is robbed, wounded and left near death on the side of the road. He is completely ignored by the religious ones who go out of their way to avoid him. Yet we see that the Samaritan "had compassion" on him and inconvenienced himself to help the wounded man. He treated his wounds, took him to an inn and stayed with him until the next day. He gave money to the innkeeper before he left, and told him to spend what was necessary to meet

the wounded man's needs. He gave of his resources and his time without hesitation.

The point of the story is; our neighbor is anyone who needs our help within our capacity to help them. We are not to turn away from the needs of our fellow man, no matter who they are. We are all made in the image of our God.

We notice in this parable that there are three people types; the one who needed help, the people who didn't help, and the one who responded to the wounded man's needs. Let's keep these people groups in mind as we turn the pages in our Bibles and read what happens when Jesus returns in Matthew 25:31-16.

If we look at this passage carefully, we will notice that we are seeing the outcome of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. We can see the same three people groups illustrated for us here; the Least of These, the ones needing help, the goats who didn't help them, and the good, compassionate sheep who did. We understand now how important our Samaritan parable really is for us to comprehend at this moment before the Lord returns. The Lord tests the righteous (Psalm 11:5) and the Samaritans, the sheep passed that test.

Jesus said, "You always have the poor with you" (John 12:8). The Lord was quoting from Deuteronomy 15:11. - *For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command you, saying, you shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy in your land.*

When God, through Moses, was giving His people His standard for their behavior, He told them that if they obeyed Him they would be blessed (Deuteronomy 11:26-27). Yet at the same time we can see that while the obedient would be blessed, there would be those among them that would remain poor. Why would God bless one group and not the

other? Why would it be the will of God for the poor to remain in the land? When we look at all the Scriptures that document God's care for the poor, and there are hundreds of them, a picture begins to form of their unique purpose in God's schoolroom of this life.

There is no indication that these ones were poor by any disobedience, as God is turning the attention of those whom He will prosper to the needy and directing them to favor those who have not received as much. The poor are with us always because as long as there is sin in the world, there will be injustice and poverty for some is the result of that injustice. Self-centeredness even among God's people can injure the poor in their midst. God has called His people to be lights in this life and reflections of His love for humanity. The prosperity God promises to one group is for the blessing of the other. The command to work in the New Testament illustrates this principle. - *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs (Ephesians 4:28).*

The Lord tests the righteous (Proverbs 17:3) and the poor are allowed to remain to be our tests. And God shows us in His word that someday there will be a final exam.

Jesus describes what will happen when He returns in Matthew 25:31-46. He will separate His sheep from an assortment of bewildered goats, who never possessed the compassion that is imparted to those who are genuinely saved and know their Lord. We are shown in this illustration, that neglecting "The Least of These" is the cause of the Lord's rejection of the self-centered goats.

They didn't understand that they were being tested in this life and their response to the poor that God allowed to remain among them would determine the outcome on graduation day. "When did we see You hungry and didn't

feed You?!" they exclaimed. They never saw that Jesus' identification with humanity would place His face upon impoverished children and all those who suffer in this life. Jesus told them and us, "If you have done it to the least of these You have done it to Me."

By contrast, the sheep could see Jesus' portrait in the beggar on the street and poured out God's love and compassion on those whom the goats looked upon with disdain. The fragrance of the sacrifice of their offerings of these ones whom God has blessed rose up to His throne as His command to help the poor was obeyed and their reward was an open door into His paradise.

Jesus wants us to see Him as the wounded one abandoned on the side of the road who needs our help. And that help isn't only helping to meet someone's physical needs. When we share the Gospel, we are quenching their spiritual thirst, we are clothing their nakedness with the covering of salvation; we are feeding them eternal life, releasing them from the prison of their sins and healing their souls.

The ramifications of how we respond to the needs we see around us has eternal rewards. The sheep are rewarded and the goats are punished. The goats obviously lacked the one ingredient that the Samaritan sheep have in abundance because they are saved, they know their Lord and that ingredient is compassion. The scriptures show us that without love or compassion we are "nothing" (I Corinthians 13:2).

The sheep whose worship is expressed in service to the needy, have passed their test. They will hear their Lord say, "The poor you had with you always, they were there for a reason. I needed to see if you would obey. Well done, My precious ones. You have reflected the selflessness of My

sacrifice for you. Enter the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

If we can apply the principles of Jesus’ simple parable of the Good Samaritan *before* we face His judgment seat, then we won’t have to ever worry about what will happen *after*.

God is testing us and He is watching to see who will pass His final exam - “If you have done it one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it to Me.”



And the King shall answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it to Me.’

Matthew 25:40



Remember the poor...

Galatians 2:10

Conclusion

There will be no political solutions for today's problems unless the Bible is consulted and it cannot be interpreted through the eyes of any man-inspired political agenda. What the Bible says regarding God's commands concerning the poor cannot be neglected or avoided. If we fail to respond to the poor in our land as God requires, then we risk duplicating ancient Israel's failures in this same area which ultimately contributed to her devastating captivity.

Many years have passed since my homeless days in California. I am no longer on the road, but I am still watching, observing, being led by God to new illustrations in the highways and the streets. Did you know that there are many people who are living in the woods by the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey, because the affluent community they live in refuses to provide a homeless shelter?

If I had not lost my home, if I had not been tossed out of my comfortable self-centered existence, I never would have known God's heart the way I do now. I know what it means to have no money, and I know how it feels when someone who cares is willing to help. And I know how it feels when a door is slammed in my face.

Sometimes you can get so low you can't get back up without help from someone. God wants us to be that someone

who is willing to provide for another's need.

When there is a major, obvious natural disaster people rush to help. But there are lots of less obvious disasters that are happening every day right in your neighborhood. Every time someone loses a spouse or is facing eviction, or loses a job, this is their earthquake, this is their devastating storm. It's not on the news, but it's on their faces and they are walking by our elaborately appointed houses of worship wondering if anyone in there is going to respond to these immeasurable tragedies of the heart.

I don't care what anyone says, if we do not have compassion, we do not have Christ and we can't pretend we know Him and turn our backs on people we know are in need. - *But whoso hath this world's good, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells he love of God in him? I John 3:17.*

God loves the poor and His heart is with them. The devil hates what God loves. As Christians who profess knowledge and love for the one true God, we must be careful not to find ourselves emulating the enemy of our souls in regard to how we view the poor and their care - or allowing radio commentators and politicians to override what the scriptures actually instruct us concerning the needy, the handicapped, our seniors and other vulnerable members of our society.

In conclusion, it doesn't matter which political party you belong to, caring for the poor is not a political issue, it is a Biblical issue, and any government that claims to be Christian, follows God's word, especially concerning God's commandments concerning the poor. God says that if His people humble themselves and turn from their wicked ways He will heal the land (II Chronicles 7:14). Aligning ourselves with God's word concerning the poor has to be included in this requirement for the healing of our nation. You can listen and heed what the Scriptures tell you to do in this area, or you

can refuse to face the truth. You have that option. You can hang up on God, and refuse to listen to His word, like ancient Israel did centuries ago – just before God allowed her to fall into the hands of her enemies.

It is a characteristic of an apostate church to not believe that God will respond to our actions, as was the attitude of ancient Israel prior to the captivity. Let us not make the same tragic mistake. We cannot continue to favor policies that fly in the face of God without reaping what we sow (Galatians 6:7). Those who mocked God by declaring that even He could not sink the Titanic, tragically learned otherwise.

As we look at other countries that allow the poor who cannot afford food and medical care to die in the streets, I will conclude with this thought; – What distinguishes a nation from third world status is the level of care it bestows upon its poor.



Without compassion we are nothing.

Scripture Directory

Part One

Aliens and Strangers

The alien or the “stranger” as he is referred to in the Scriptures, receives special consideration from the Lord and God commands His people to care for them along with the widows, orphans and impoverished. Therefore we must be careful how we treat the alien in our midst. Yes, some of them have entered our country illegally, which is wrong. But we must consider this fact; these ones are seeking to escape a poverty that most Americans cannot comprehend. Does God condemn the destitute for trying to survive? Will He cast out the single mother striving to provide for her children? Looking at the precedents we have in the Scriptures, particularly Matthew 25, I would have to say, no.

The woman that was caught breaking the law by adultery was spared by Jesus’ wisdom from being stoned to death by the compassionless who sought only to obey the letter of the law (John 8:3-11). Likewise, those who have broken the law of the land regarding immigration, should not be judged by the letter, but compassionately. That is; those who are not

criminals, but are working, and trying to obtain citizenship, should be given every opportunity to do so and be given the chance for a better life.

According to the Word of God, if these struggling ones are oppressed then we risk invoking God's disfavor.

The church should be vehemently trying to cast out the "aliens" in her midst; that is the sins within her own camp. If we fail to do this and support a merciless judgment upon the poor foreigner, we will have no support from God according to His Word. We will reap what we have sown or not sown and we shall behold our cities descend into ashes.

Here are some of the Scriptures that concern God's requirements regarding the alien and the poor.

You shall neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. - Exodus 22:21

But the stranger that dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. - Leviticus 19:34

And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not make clean riddance of the corners of your field when you reap, neither shall you gather any gleanings of your harvest: you shall leave them to the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God. - Leviticus 23:22

When you cut down your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. - Deut. 24:19

When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs

again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. – Deuteronomy 24:20

When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. – Deuteronomy 24:21

And if your brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with you; then you shall relieve him: yes, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with you. - Leviticus 25:35

And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. - Deuteronomy 1:16

He does execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loves the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. - Deuteronomy 10:18

And the Levite, (because he has no part nor inheritance with you,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do. - Deuteronomy 14:29

And you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates. - Deuteronomy 16:14

You shall not abhor an Edomite; for he is your brother: You shall not abhor an Egyptian; because you were a stranger in his land. - Deuteronomy 23:7

You shall not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy,

whether he is of your brethren, or of your strangers that are in your land within your gates: - Deuteronomy 24:14

You shall not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge: - Deuteronomy 24:17

When you have made an end of tithing all the tithes of your increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and has given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your gates, and be filled; - Deuteronomy 26:12

Cursed be he that perverts the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. - Deuteronomy 27:19

They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. - Psalm 94:6

("They" are described in the previous verses to verse six are "wicked" and workers of iniquity.)

The LORD preserves the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked He turns upside down. - Psalm 146:9

Ancient Israel refused to heed the word of the Lord and oppressed the poor, and the stranger, thus God pronounced this judgment. -

Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. - Isaiah 1:7

Thus the church is commanded to show compassion and mercy, to cleanse her house first from her own sins, or we shall reap what we have sown: a possible invasion by foreign

nations.

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. - Isaiah 14:1

And it shall come to pass, that you shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be to you as born in the country among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. - Ezekiel 47:22

And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourns, there shall you give him his inheritance, says the Lord GOD. - Ezekiel 47:23

It sounds like the Lord would prefer it if the Palestinians and the Jews lived peacefully together in the same land.

If you oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: - Jeremiah 7:6

Thus says the LORD; You execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. - Jeremiah 22:3

And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. - Zechariah 7:10

And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the

stranger from his right, and fear not Me, says the LORD of hosts. - Malachi 3:5

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. - Hebrews 13:2

Part Two

The following is a partial list of general instructions regarding the poor.

If you lend money to any of My people that is poor by you, you shall not be to him as an usurer, neither shall you lay upon him usury. - Exodus 22:25

You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: you shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. - Leviticus 19:15

And if your brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with you; then you shall relieve him: yes, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with you. - Leviticus 25:35

Neither shall you countenance a poor man in his cause. - Exodus 23:3

You shall not wrest the judgment of your poor in his cause. - Exodus 23:6

But the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie still; that the poor of your people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner you shall deal with your vineyard, and your oliveyard. - Exodus 23:11

And you shall not glean your vineyard, neither shall you gather every grape of thy vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God. – Lev. 19:10

And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not make clean riddance of the corners of your field when you reap, neither shall you gather any gleaning of thy harvest: you shall leave them to the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God. – Lev. 23:22

Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it: – Deut. 15:4

If there be among you a poor man of one of your brethren within any of your gates in your land which the LORD your God give you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother:

But you shall open your hand wide to him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wants. – Deut 15:7, 8

Beware that there be not a thought in your wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing; and he cries to the LORD against you, and it be sin to you. – Deut. 15:9

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command you, saying, you shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor, and to your needy, in your land. – Deut. 15:11

And if the man be poor, you shall not sleep with his pledge: – Deut. 24:12

You shall not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of your brethren, or of your strangers that are in your land within your gates: – Deut. 24:14

At his day your shall give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and sets his heart upon it: lest he cry against you to the LORD, and it be sin to your. - Deut. 24:15

The Lord makes poor, and makes rich: He brings low and lifts up. - I Samuel 2:7

He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lords and he has set the world upon them. - I Samuel - 2:8

And the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter.

And there came a traveler to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come to him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD lives, the man that has done this thing shall surely die:

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. - II Samuel 12: 1-6

And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. - II Kings 24:14

But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen. - II Kings 25:12

He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he has set the world upon them. - I Samuel 2:8

As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned to them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. - Esther 9:22

They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together. - Job 24:3,4

The murderer rising with the light kills the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. - Job 24:14

His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods. - Job 20:10

So that they cause the cry of the poor to come to Him, and He hears the cry of the afflicted. - Job 34:28

For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. - Psalm 9:18

The wicked in his pride does persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. - Psalm 10:2

He sits in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places does he murder the innocent: his eyes are privately set against the poor. - Psalm 10:8

He lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lies in wait to catch the poor: he does catch the poor, when he draws him into his net. - Psalm 10:9

He crouches, and humbles himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. - Psalm 10:10

You have seen it: for You behold mischief and spite, to requite it with Your hand: the poor commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless. - Psalm 10:14

For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffs at him. - Psalm 12:5

You have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge. - Psalm 14: 6

This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. - Psalm 34:6

All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto You, which delivers the poor from him that is too strong for him, yes, the poor and the needy from him that spoils him? - Psalm 35:10

The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. - Psalm 37: 14

But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me: You are my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God. - Psalm 40:17

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Blessed is he that considers the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and You will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: You will make all his bed in his sickness. - Psalm 41:1-3

Your congregation has dwelt there: You, O God, has prepared of Your goodness for the poor. - Psalm 68:10

But I am poor and sorrowful: let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high. - Psalm 69: 29

For the LORD hears the poor, and despises not his prisoners. - Psalm 69:33

But I am poor and needy: make haste to me, O God: You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying. - Psalm 70:5

He shall judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with judgment. - Psalm 72:2

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. - Psalm 72:4

For he shall deliver the needy when he cries; the poor also, and him that has no helper.

He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. - Psalm 72:12 - 14

O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor forever. - Psalm 74:19

O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise Your name. - Psalm 74:21

Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. - Psalm 82:3-4

He pours contempt upon princes, and causes them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

Yet set the poor on high from affliction, and make him families like a flock. - Psalm 107:40-41

Let them be before the LORD continually, that He may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart - Psalm 109:15,16

I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yes, I will praise Him among the multitude.

For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul. - Psalm 109:30,31

A good man shows favor, and lends: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

Surely he shall not be moved forever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies.

He has dispersed, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn shall be exalted with honor.

The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish. – Psalm 112:5-10

He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill;

That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. Psalm 113:7,8

I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. – Psalm 132:15

I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. – Psalm 140:12

The poor is hated even of his own neighbor: but the rich has many friends. – Proverbs 14:20

He that despises his neighbor sins: but he that has mercy on the poor, happy is he. – Proverbs 14:21

He that oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker: but he that honors Him has mercy on the poor. – Proverbs 14:31

Whoever mocks the poor reproaches his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. – Proverbs 17:5

The poor uses entreaties; but the rich answers roughly. – Proverbs 18:23 - Proverbs 18:23

Wealth makes many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbor. – Proverbs 19:4

All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursues them with words, yet they are wanting to him. - Proverbs 19:7

He that has pity upon the poor lends to the LORD; and that which he has given will He pay him again. - Proverbs 10:17

Whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard. - Proverbs 21:13

The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. - Proverbs 22:7

He that has a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he gives of his bread to the poor. - Proverbs 22:9

He that oppresses the poor to increase his riches, and he that gives to the rich, shall surely come to want. - Proverbs 22:16

Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: - Proverbs 22:22

Better is the poor that walks in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. Proverbs 28:6

He that by usury and unjust gain increases his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. - Proverbs 28:8

The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that has understanding searches him out. - Proverbs 28:11

As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. - Proverbs 28:15

He that gives to the poor shall not lack: but he that hides his

eyes shall have many a curse. - Proverbs 28:27

The righteous considers the cause of the poor: but the wicked regards not to know it. Proverbs 29:7

The king that faithfully judges the poor, his throne shall be established forever. - Proverbs 29:14

There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men. - Proverbs 30:14

Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. - Proverbs 31:9

She stretches out her hand to the poor; yes, she reaches forth her hands to the needy. - Proverbs 31:20

The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for you have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. - Isaiah 3:14

What mean you that you beat My people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? says the Lord God of hosts. - Isaiah 3:15

To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! - Isaiah 10:2

But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. - Isaiah 11:4

And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill your root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant. - Isaiah 14:30

What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord has founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it. - Isaiah 14:32

For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. - Isaiah 25:4

For He brings down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, He lays it low; He lays it low, even to the ground; He brings it even to the dust.

The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy. - Isaiah 26:5,6

The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. - Isaiah 29:19

The instruments also of the churl are evil: he devises wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaks right. - Isaiah 32:7

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. - Isaiah 41:17

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? - Isaiah 58:7

He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? says the Lord. - Jeremiah 22:16

But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time. - Jeremiah 39:10

But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left certain of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen. - Jeremiah 52:16

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. - Ezekiel 16:49

Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination,

Has given forth upon usury, and has taken increase: shall he then live? He shall not live: he has done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. - Ezekiel 18:12,13

(Note: oppressing the poor is consider an “abomination.”)

That has taken off his hand from the poor, that has not received usury nor increase, has executed My judgments, has walked in My statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. - Ezekiel 18:17

The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yes, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. -Ezekiel 22:29

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy

to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility. - Daniel 4:27

Thus says the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; - Amos 2:6

That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: - Amos 2:7

Hear this word, you kine (cows) of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink. - Amos 4:1

Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and you take from him burdens of wheat: you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink wine of them. - Amos 5:11

For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right. - Amos 5:12

Hear this, O you that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, - Amos 8:4

That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat? - Amos 8:6

Thou did strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. - Habakkuk 3:14

I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and

they shall trust in the name of the Lord. - Zephaniah 3:12

And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. - Zechariah 7:10

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. - Matthew 5:3

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. - Matthew 11:5

Jesus said to him, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. - Matthew 19:21

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called to Him His disciples, and said to them, Truly I say to you, that this poor widow has cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: Mark 12: 42,43

For ye have the poor with you always, and whatsoever you will you may do them good: but me ye have not always. Mark 14:7

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, - Luke 4:18

Then said He also to him that bade him, When you make a dinner or a supper, call not your friends, nor your brethren, neither your kinsmen, nor your rich neighbours; lest they also bid you again, and

a recompense be made you.

But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you: for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. - Luke 14:12-14

(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remains forever. - 2 Corinthians 9:9

Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. - Galatians 2:10

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

For if there comes into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there comes in also a poor man in vile raiment;

And you have respect to him that wears the beautiful clothing, and say to him, you sit here in a good place; and say to the poor, You stand there, or sit here under my footstool:

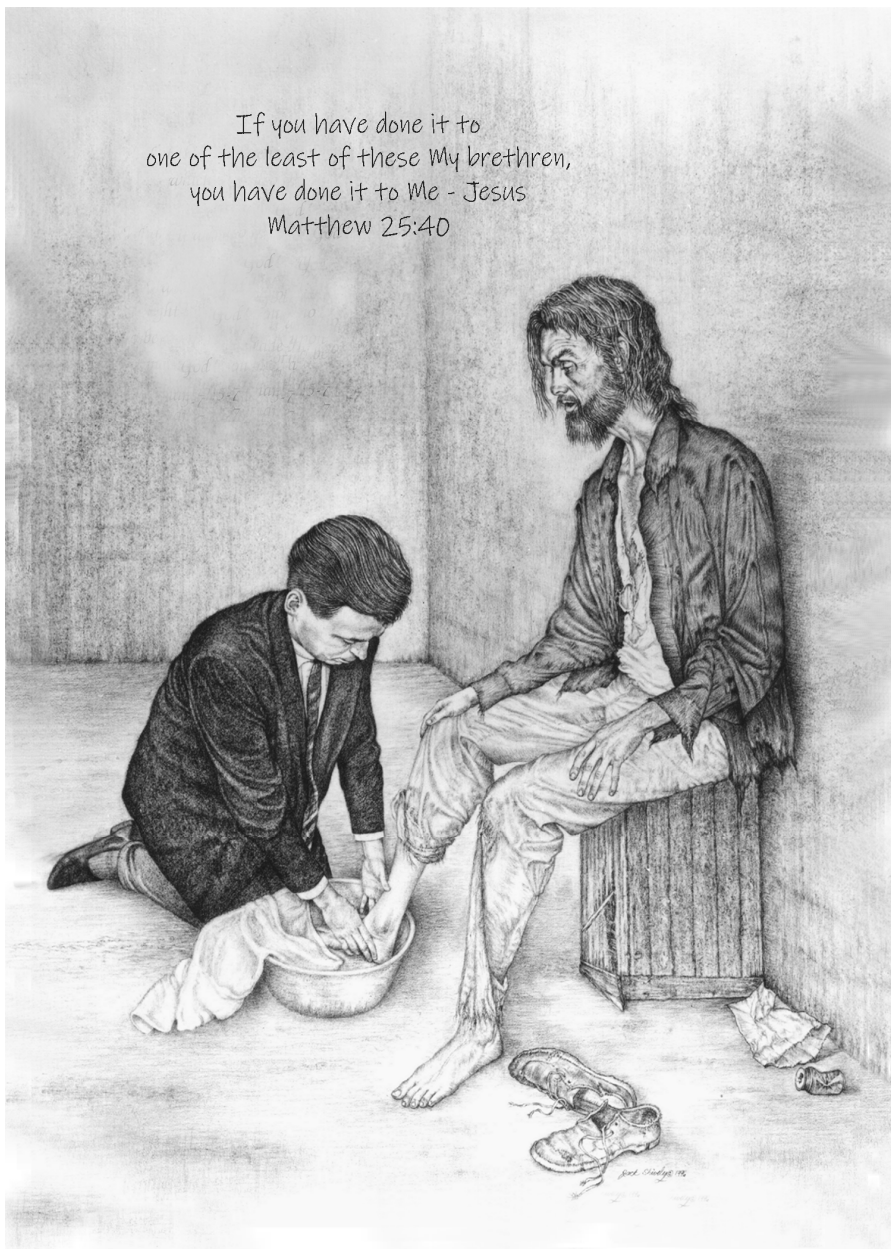
Are you not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of (with) evil thoughts?

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love him?

But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? - James 2:1-6

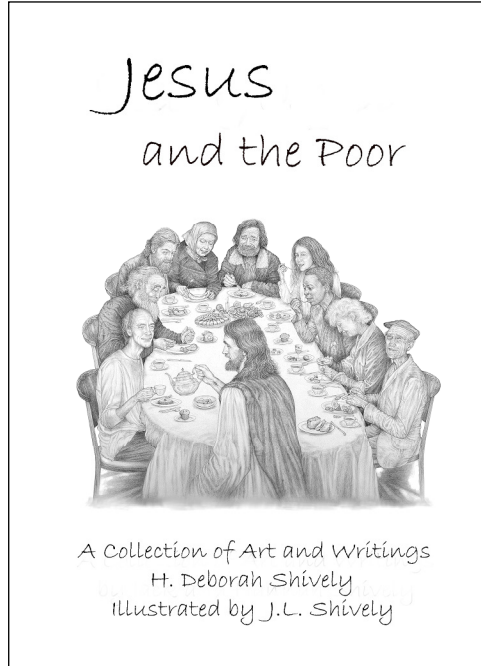
Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: - Revelation 3:17

If you have done it to
one of the least of these My brethren,
you have done it to Me - Jesus
Matthew 25:40



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