HAMARTIOLOGICAL HEURISTICS AS A HERMENEUTICAL KEY TO JUSTICE, MERCY AND THE MORAL TREATMENT OF THE POOR IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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EVANGELICKA TEOLOGICKA FAKULTA

HAMARTIOLOGICKA HEURISTIKA JAKO HERMENEUTICKY KLIC KE SPRAVEDLNOSTI, MILOSRDENSTVI A MORALNi POVINNOSTI vUCI CHUDYM V NOVEM ZAKONE

DIZERTACNf PRACE

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DECLARATION

1. I declare that this dissertation, titled "HAMARTIOLOGICAL HEURISTICS AS A HERMENEUTICAL KEY TO JUSTICE, MERCY AND THE MORAL TREATMENT OF THE POOR IN THE NEW TESTAMENT," was written independently and identifies all its sources.
2. I agree that this dissertation shall be made freely available for reference and private study. It is understood that copying or publication of this dissertation for financial gain shall not be allowed without written permission from the author.

PROHLASENf

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Ondfej Hron

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1 John 5:17

ABSTRACT

Evangelicals possess a great concern for helping the poor. This passion has not, however, translated into theological agreement concerning a believer's justice obligations unto the world's poor. At the core of this theological contention is the dissonance, mirrored within the philosophical discourse, over whether justice is ultimately needs based or ownership based. The main objective of this dissertation is to enable this core contention to be made evaluable on the basis of the biblical text. This aim is pursued via the proposal and application of a focused hermeneutical *discrimen* to the NT textual data concerning the moral treatment of the poor. Chapter 1 introduces the breadth of this endeavor. Chapter 2 isolates the core contention and identifies the resolution principle as the proposed means of data integration. This chapter also functions as a prolegomenon to the methodological challenges inherent in this pursuit. Chapter 3 investigates the domain of poverty, as it is delineated by the NT, and introduces several categorization frameworks by which the textual data may be differentiated. Chapter 4 outlines the hamartiological characteristics of the proposed hermeneutical *discrimen.* Chapter 5 applies the hermeneutical methodology to the NT data and evaluates the core contention in addition to offering an outline of the contours of NT obligation unto the poor. Chapter 6 looks ahead to the broader application of this dissertation's hermeneutical methodology. This dissertation concludes that the proposed *discrimen* and resolution principle are valuable for analyzing the NT data concerning the moral treatment of the poor and that justice obligation, as it is delineated in the NT, is predominantly ownership based.

Key **words:** hermeneutical method, justice, mercy, poverty, biblical ethics

ANOTACE

Evangelikalove maji vellcy zajem pomahat chudyrn.. Tato angazovanost vsak nenachazi jednotny teologicky pohled na rozsah moralni povinnosti —vericich k chudyrn. —ktera je zalozena spiSe na bazi spravedlnosti nez na bazi milosrdenstvi. Jadrem teto teologicke problematiky je neshoda —evidentni take ve fllosoficke sfefe —zdali spravedlnost ve sve podstate je zalozena na potfebe ci na vlastnictvi. Hlavnim ucelem teto disertace je umoznit hodnoceni teto zakladni problematiky na podklade biblickeho textu. Tohoto umyslu je dosazeno navrhem a aplikaci uzce specifickeho hermeneutickeho *diskrimenu* k textum Noveho zakona o moralnich povinnostech vi'ICi chudyrn.. Kapitola (1) identifikuje sifi tohoto usili. Kapitola (2) destiluje jadro teologickeho sporu, definuje princip rozliSeni a navrhuje ho jako prostfedek pro sjednoceni textu. Tato kapitola take slouzi jako prolegomenon k metodologickyrn. otazkam spjatjrn s touto Cinnosti. Kapitola (3) zkouma rozsililost chudoby tak, jak je pojata Novjm zakonem a pfedklada nekolik systemu zafazeni, jimiz mohou *bjt* texty rozliSeny. Kapitola (4) uvadi hamartiologicke charakteristiky navdeneho hermeneutickeho *diskrimenu.[Kapitola* (5) uplatimje tuto hermeneutickou metodologii na texty Noveho zakona a vyhodnocuje jadro teologickeho sporu. Tato kapitola dodatecne nabizi naznaceni obrysu novozakonniho pojeti moralni povinnosti vi'ICi chudyrn.. Kapitola (6) otevira dvefe sidi aplikaci navrzene hermeneuticke metodologie. Disertace vyvozuje, ze navrzeny *diskrimen* a princip rozliseni jsou prospesne pro analyzovani novozakonnich textu o moralni povinnosti vi'ICi chudyrn. a ze spravedlnost, alespoii tak jak je vymezena v Novem zakone, je zalozena pfevazne na bazi vlastnictvi.

Klicova slova: hermeneuticka metoda, spravedlnost, milosrdenstvi, chudoba, biblicka etika

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Evangelicals possess a great concern for helping the poor.[1] Unfortunately, this passion has not translated into theological agreement concerning a believer's obligations to the poor. The main area of dissonance, with regards to this important aspect of theological ethics, is the delineation of the extent of the domain of a believer's justice obligations. Such justice obligations differ from a believer's mercy obligations in that they entail morally binding duties. As such, believers' justice obligations are not voluntary or contingent after the manner of their mercy obligations.[2]

This distinction in obligation levels is important because it determines the order of priority in interhuman treatments of the poor. The isolation of these two domains also determines whether the merciful may consider the goals and values of each helping context without being comprehensively constrained by every need on a 'first come, first serve' basis. Thus the best approach and assistance distribution can be sought without fear that such discernment constitutes immediate moral transgression. The differentiation of justice and mercy obligations also establishes whether the

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[1] Sociological research conducted by Mark Regnerus, Christian Smith and David Sikkink asserts that Evangelicals, at least in the United States, are more generous to the poor, per capita, than any other religious or non-religious social group: Mark D. Regnerus, Christian Smith and David Sikkink, "Who Gives to the Poor? The Influence of Religious Tradition and Political Location on the Personal Generosity of Americans toward the Poor," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37:3 (September 1998): 481-493.

[2] Mercy, like justice, is an obligation because it inhabits the moral space. Biblically, mercy is both a mandated issue and a morally evaluated issue. Thus mercy mandates possess moral weight and moral significance before God but not the quality of moral constraint. In this way, justice and mercy differ from morally neutral willings, treatments and choices in that they receive divine evaluation and prescription.

unhypocritical ownership of possessions is morally possible.[3] This differentiation therefore arbitrates what constitutes consistent Christian living. The disambiguation of the domains of justice and mercy also determines what, if anything, may be demanded of believers by the indolent. This isolation also regulates which ends of social activism are justified and validated by justice. As such, this important distinction also furnishes the moral ground for social change.

The recent theological influences that have exerted the most palpable influence on scholarly evangelical understandings of a believer's obligations unto helping the poor are the social gospel, liberation theology and sustenance rights approaches.[4] These generally egalitarian trajectories have provided a challenge to the traditionally libertarian leanings of recent evangelicism.[5] At the very heart of this theological challenge is the dissonance, mirrored within the philosophical discourse, over whether justice is ultimately needs based or ownership based.[6] Addressing this core contention, on the basis of a case study of the NT textual data, is the main objective of this dissertation.

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[3] Because the Bibl.Jl1!Jondates giving to the poor, the obligation level of this mandate determines whether a believer can retain possessions (as long as there are any poor).

[4] Many practical level guidebooks concerning biblical justice and mercy towards the needy have likewise been produced within this recent timeframe. These works however do not address their theological presuppositions or engage the issues at a scholarly level. Some popular examples include: Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1974); Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison and Henri Nouwen, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* (Garden City: Image Books, 1983); Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Image Books, 1990); Marvin Olasky, *The Tragedy of American Compassion* (Washington: Regnery, 1992); Marvin Olasky, *Renewing American Compassion: How Compassion for the Needy Can Turn Ordinary Citizens into Heroes* (New York: The Free Press, 1996). Timothy J. Keller, *Ministries of Mercy: The Call of the Jericho Road* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989).

[5] A North American focused appraisal of these traditional leanings is provided in: Mark D. Regnerus, Christian Smith and David Sikkink, "Who Gives to the Poor?" 481.

[6] The isolation of this core contention is undertaken in the Justice and Ideological Preconceptions section of chapter 2 (beginning on page 12).

Making this cardinal contention evaluable on the basis of the biblical text also permits for a preliminary evaluation of the main emphases of the social gospel, liberation theol9gy and sustenance rights approaches.[7] Naturally, the focus of engagement will concern the individual and corporate obligations of believers to the materially poor-as this is the predominant focus of the NT data.[8] Evaluating the core contention also permits the contours of the justice and mercy obligation sets, as they are presented in the NT, to be described. These contours possess the practical utility of mapping the extent of a believer's justice and mercy obligations.

Identifying the domain of poverty is a concern which is intimately intertwined with the core contention.[9] Consequently, the textual isolation of this domain becomes a necessary component of addressing the nucleus of the present theological challenge.

Making this core l ntion evaluable requires the development of a focused hermeneutical approach that subsumes both a heuristic textual *discrimen* — the means of textually differentiating justice and mercy obligations — and the proposal of a rule for concept integration. The *discrimen* is heu istic in the sense that it embodies a general formulation derived from and dependant upon an observd set oftextual patterns — analogously to how modern antivirus software finds yet unknown viruses by the 'fuzzy' characteristics that betray their identity. The rule for concept integration, which will be identified as the 'resolution principle,' will be logically derived from the assumption of the _fa_yorability of conceptual determinism.

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[7] This evaluation is preliminary in the sense that a full evaluation would require the additional enveloping of the OT data.

[8] Broader engagement with strictly social structure issues will be deferred for a general lack of data within the current case study. Such an engagement is the proper domain of an extension of the proposed methodology to the data of the OT. Consequently, the present engagement will focus on addressing a believer's individual and corporate church obligations.

[9] The Justice and Defining Poverty section of chapter 2 (beginning on page 29) identifies and outlines this interconnection.

Assumptions

This dissertation will be pursued on the basis of two major assumptions. The first assumption is that engagement with the text will be guided by a hermeneutic of trust. This hermeneutic will be informed by two, in the present case, overlapping methods: canonical criticism and the grammatical-historical method. The second assumption to be employed is that, methodologically, determinism ispreferable to indeterminism. This assumption entails that, as far as method is concerned, approaches which lead towards conceptual containment are preferable to those which entrance greater ambiguity, indefiniteness and indeterminacy. This second assumption is another way of affirming that, methodologically, an answer is being sought —rather than merely a cacophonous presentation of variously arrayed possibilities. [10]

Thesis Statement

This dissertation endeavors to confirm the following thesis statement: The proposed *discrimen* and resolution principle are valuable for analyzing the NT data concerning the moral treatment of the poor so as to enablF a textual evaluation of the extent to which justice unto the poor is need or ownership based.

This thesis will be demonstrated by generating a text based evaluation of this core contention.[11] Additional results will include the preliminary evaluation of the main emphases of the social gospel, liberation theology and sustenance rights approaches to helping the poor. In addition, the contours of the justice and mercy obligation sets, as they are delineated in the NT, will be summarized.

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[10] This latter assumption is to be distinguished from 'textual forcing' which mutates and balloons this assumption into a 'will to a system' which filters and manipulates the data itself for the sake of conceptual 'fit.'

[11] The inherent complexities of generating a text based —rather than an externally conditioned evaluation-are discussed in the Justice and Particularity section of chapter 2 (beginning on page 25).

Dissertation Layout

Chapter 2

The presentation of the material will be as follows. The next chapter, chapter 2, will begin with the isolation of the core contention responsible for the contemporary evangelical dissonance concerning a believer's justice obligations unto the poor. This isolation is sought for the purpose of focusing and narrowing the scope of the research trajectory that will consequently be required in the pursuit of a resolution. The contention that is at the core of the contemporary evangelical dissonance over the domain of justice with respect to the poor will be found to be the divergence, likewise echoed in the contemporary philosophical discussion, over whether justice is ultimately needs or ownership based.

This isolation of the core contention requires a consideration of the recent philosophical dissensions over the nature of justice. The recent theological influences on evangelical conceptions of a believer's obligations to the poor —the social gospel, liberation theology and sustenance rights approaches-will be presented as part of pursuing these ideological preconceptions. The main contentions of these recent influences, beyond their participation in the core contention, will be noted for later evaluation (in chapter 5).

A high level summary of the interpreter particularity that makes the core contention so difficult to evaluate will be presented next. To this end, an interpreter's participation in a preferred social game as well as his psychology of helping and change will be engaged to briefly clarify the various conditioning that spurs the adoption and entrenchment of dissonant presuppositions concerning the core contention. This summary of the complex sources of an interpreter's variously conditioned presuppositions serves to provide a justification for the necessity of adopting a textual rather than an extra-textual approach to addressing the core contention.

A summary of the various proposed definitions of poverty will be outlined next. These definitions affect an interpreter's structuring of the core contention and

therefore confirm the need for a tex .!:l_l delineation of thdomain of poverty)which will be pursued in chapter 3).

Now that the chief extra-hermeneutical impetuses for adopting a textual approach to evaluating the core contention have been summarized, the nexus of the problem at the hermeneutical level can be articulated. The reason that the core contention is so difficult to evaluate, even at a textual level, is precisely because biblical mandates pertaining to justice and mercy obligations come in the same general grammatical forms. It is this actuality, that justice and mercy obligations carry no grammatical indicator of their ethical status, that generates the need for the proposal of a focused hermeneutical approach that offers an alternate textual *discrimen* (as pursued in chapter 4).

Following the identification of the hermeneutical nexus which accounts for the textual difficulty of evaluating the core contention, a baseline definition of justice and mercy will be offered. These baseline definitions provide a general frame onto which to attach the textual data and, as such, are stripped of any concrete content. These baseline definitions are necessary at this point to clarify what the textual *discrimen* is seeking to disassociate.

Building on the articulation of the baseline definitions of justice and mercy, a minimum set of the necessary characteristics required of any successful textual *discrimen* is identified next. This set of characteristics sets the stage and boundaries for the development of the proposed textual *discrimen* in chapter 4.

Now that the core contention and the particularity that makes a textual resolution necessary have been identified, along with the characteristics of the requisite textual *discrimen,* attention may be turned to hermeneutical contentions that account for the greatest divergences in evangelical ethics. Whereas an interpreter's extra-hermeneutical particularity accounts for her variously conditioned presuppositions in coming to the text, these theological and procedural variances condition the admissible data set itself. These variances serve to determine which manner ofbiblical data is admissible in ascertaining the domain of justice and how the data itself is to be processed.

These contentions concern the continued applicability of OT obligations, the hermeneutical mode of appropriation that is employed, the managing of the human/divine disjunction, the cultural containment of certain obligations and the data post-processing entailed in concept formation. The engagement of these contentions serves to increase awareness concerning hermeneutical presuppositions and articulates the need for the proposal of the resolution principle. The proposal of this principle concludes the considerations of chapter 2.

As described, the necessary breadth of chapter 2 serves to articulate the need for the characteristics and distinctiveness of the approach undertaken in this dissertation and thus, having functioned as a prolegomenon, sets the stage for what follows.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 will provide the preliminary definitions and delineations that will be employed in the data analysis (of chapter 5). The first delineation to be pursued will be the N:TA()J.Ilail!_o!J>(_) !ty. The textual usage and linguistic entailments will be analyzed to develop the notions of immediate and potential poverty.

The main subcategories of justice, its preceptive and remedial components, will be differentiated next. This differentiation serves to distinguish the preceptive obligations of justice from the just remedies attached to their transgression. This differentiation is necessary because the remedial components of justice may, unlike their preceptive counterparts, possess a merely conventional nature. This differentiation therefore narrows the scope of the justice obligations being pursued.

The final set of differentiations function to alert the reader to the main axes of dissimilarity evident within the biblical data pertaining to the moral treatment of the poor. The defining of these axes enables the efficient categorization and comparison of the biblical data in chapter 5. To this end, the main resolution levels entailed by the resolution principle will be identified first. This categorization will be followed by a delineation of the main cases of poverty, the delimiting of recipient breadth, and the

delineation of the main obligator (whether the individual, the church or societal rulers are obligated).

Chapter4

The preliminary delineations of chapter 3 anticipate the development of the focused hermeneutical methodology of chapter 4. The first goal of this chapter is to identify which texts are relevant to ascertaining believer obligations to the poor. Building upon the Hermeneutical Contentions section of chapter 2, the relevant texts will be identified as those that contain interhuman mandates. By way of preliminary definition, mandates consist of textual expressions of God's ethical evaluation: what He deems culpable and what He commends.[12] As such, mandates subsume both interhuman justice and mercy.

The second goal of chapter 4 is to present the proposed textual *discrimen.* The proposed *discrimen* is hamartiologically based and meets the set of necessary criteria identified in chapter 2. This *discrimen* will be employed to identify the obligation levels of the textual data in the NT case study that will be presentein the following chapter.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 functions as a case study of the proposed hermeneutical methodology. The focused methodology of the previous chapter will be applied to all of the NT mandates concerning the treatment of the poor. The first part of the chapter will present a tabulation of all of this NT data in addition to a brief discussion of its character. This data will be divided into manageable groupings via pragmatically chosen obligation 'aspects.' These aspects will serve to group the biblical data by the common goal or specific issue that the NT mandates aim to address. The main obligation aspects observed in the NT data concern: almsgiving, the Jerusalem collection, sharing, working, good

[12] Mandates are not to be understood as merely commands or instructions for they subsume all obligating speech acts.

works, possessions, wealth, covetousness, generosity, giving and lending, being first or last, receiving the least, widows, gleaning, partiality and oppression.

Following this presentation of the case study data, the resolution principle will be applied to the data for the purpose of concept integration. This integration will allow the author to subsequently propose an outline of the contours of NT obligation unto the poor. This integration will then be utilized to evaluate the core contention -whether justice is ultimately needs based or ownership based. Following this evaluation, the additional key challenges raised by the more recent theological influences upon evangelical ethics will also receive evaluation.

Chapter6

The final chapter will conclude this dissertation with an assessment of the utility, consistency and semantic fidelity of the proposed *discrimen* and resolution principle. A summary of the results of the dissertation will also be provided along with an outline of the potential research directions that they enable.

CHAPTER2

SOURCES OF EVANGELICAL CONTENTION

Despite their amiable concern for helping the poor, Evangelicals disagree over how best to do this. Seeking greater agreement regarding the provision of such help requires an awareness of the_1)Qurces of the present theological pai""t:i r ty and dissonance. These seeds of contention can be subdivided into two general types. The first type enfolds all those contentions which are broadly extra-hermeneutical and can therefore be evaluated on the basis of the biblical data itself. Such contentions must be made evaluable by any hermeneutical methodology which proposes to move beyond them. The second type encompasses contributing factors that must be evaluated on additional grounds due to their complex systematic nature. These contentions, in contrast to the first type, are ultimately hermeneutical in scope due to their prospective filtering of the biblical data set.[1]

This chapter will provide a summary of the key contentions of both types. The extra-hermeneutical contentions surrounding helping the poor will be summarized first. These contentions predominantly revolve around answering Socrates' question "what is justice?"[2] and add to it the definition question of "what is poverty?" Variously conditioned presuppositions concerning the philosophical and political contours of justice, as well as cultural and personal subjectivity, constitute the extra-hermeneutical center of the theological fragmentation over justice obligation. Disagreements over how to define

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[1] This chapter incorporates an expanded version of material included in the author's paper: Ondrej Hron, "Why Do We Argue over What Biblical Justice Demands? Particularity, Hermeneutics and the Necessary Characteristics of a Successful Textual Resolution" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA., 14 November 2007).

[2] Plato, *Republic,* 1.33lc.

poverty and hence who all should be considered as poor also serve to recursively impact notions of normative obligation. The variously conditioned particularity inherent in these extra-hermeneutical contentions serves to demonstrate the need for adopting a textual rather than an extra-textual approach to addressing the theological dissonance over justice unto the poor.

Contentions of the systematic hermeneutical type will be summarized second. The cardinal disagreements that will be noted in this section revolve around determining the domain of the biblical data which constitutes the relevant data set concerning helping the poor. To this end, pivotal contentions over the continuity of the covenants, modes of ethical appropriation, the human/divine ethical disjunction, cultural specificity and data post-processing will be summarized. The engagement of these contentions functions to generate awareness concerning hermeneutical presuppositions and articulates the need for the proposal of what will be identified as the 'resolution principle.'

Thus, the offered summaries span the range of ideological, contextual and personally subjective predispositions as well as the most prevalent systematic grounds for limiting and variously conditioning the biblical data set. Summarizing these sources of contention not only provides some utile background to the pivotal themes currently under discussion in the theological material, but also furnishes an explanation for why the proposed hermeneutical methodology must incorporate certain aspects into its breadth. Contentions of the hermeneutical type will be addressed both in this chapter and as they surface throughout this project.

Extra-hermeneutical Contentions

The variously conditioned presuppositions that make evangelical extra-hermeneutical agreement elusive will be summarized below in the general order of their contemporary self-evidentness. Our notions of justice are affected by an awareness of the ideological possibilities in the philosophical and political discourse and the social game context with which we identify the most. Similarly, our personal alignment with a

particular psychology of helping as well as our favored definition of poverty play a formative role in shaping our preferred notions of justice.

Justice and Ideological Preconceptions

Political conceptions of justice find their roots in the philosophical understandings that necessarily fuel the public-square manifestation. The intimate intertwining of these two conception spheres allows an evaluation of the philosophical realm to suffice as an evaluation of both. Nevertheless, before briefly summarizing the extant philosophical possibilities, it is helpful to consider why and to what extent these philosophical concepts are relevant for biblical ethics.

Biblical e_Ql_!cs, if it is anything, is prescriptive for it seeks to prescribe human ehavior._Granting this, it becomes necessary to discern whether all the biblical prescriptions are 'flat,' or if they really do communicate some central differences in obligation. Can justice and mercy prescriptions be untwined? In answering questions such as "what is biblical justice?" and "how can biblical justice be isolated?" it is not uncommon for theologians to turn to philosophical defin tions of justice to differentiate the biblical prescriptions. This reliance is not always self-conscious or even conscious. Such defmitions then serve to delineate which interhuman treatments are issues of justice and, consequently, where the domain of justice ends so that justice no longer legitimately applies to the treatment or complaint at hand.

Indeed, much more than theoretical clarity is at stake in these delineations. Such definitions necessarily have an immediate theological impact on addressing how Christians are to perceive and act on their obligations to the world's poor. Philosophical contentions over the boundaries of justice readily find their theological counterparts. Is *shalom* **(tli,W)** a superset of or practically coterminous with justice?[3] What can be

[3] For a brief discussion see: Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Justice and Peace," *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, eds. David Atkinson et al. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 19-20.

indignantly demanded of everyone[4] and especiallyofb lie ers? Similarly, all pursuits of the 'politics ofJesus,' the 'politics of Paul' and other NT writers are ql1:e t_s9: p ndant on definitiq_ q _gfj_g C.:: ·s The affects of justice understandings are understandably wide-ranging because believers are committed to acting justly (Mic 6:8). Ultimately, the very nature of what a normative Christian interhuman life looks like is at play. At issue in all these wide-ranging concerns is the expansiveness of justice — what all does justice obligate people and SQcieties !.<->9-.! It is this question that philosophical ethics seeks to answer and, in so doing, offers its bounty of justice definitions.

Philosophical Contentions over the Nature of Justice

The interpreter's political and philosophical leanings comprise his most self-evident set of justice presuppositions. Where along the continuum between complete societal or community responsibility and complete individual responsibility do we feel most comfortable? When Lev 25:35 mandates: "Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you," is proyiding the interest-free loan mentioned here an instance of justice or mercy? Similarly, is visiting "orphans and widows in their distress" (Jan¥1:27), so as to provide material and other practical assistance, an issue of justice or mercy level obligation? Answers to these questions are naturally conditioned by political values.

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[4] Nicholas Wolterstorff draws upon this obligation distinction, being indebted to Joel Feinberg, to differentiate justice and rights from compassion and mercy in: Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 83. Wolterstoffhas not wavered in affirming the crucial importance of some such distinction between justice and mercy: Nicholas Wolterstorff, "How Social Justice Got to Me, and Why It Never Left" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American AcademyofReligion, San Diego, CA., 18 November 2007).

[5] John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* is but one prominent representative within this recent stream of engagement: John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

The various historically extant philosophical approaches to justice could be categorized along several axes. Nonetheless, for the present purpose, the most relevant philosophical continuum becomes whether justice should be understood as ultimately ownership based or needs based. Arguably, it is disagreement over this axis which results in the greatest divergence over the nature of justice-particularly justice unto the poor. [6] Correspondingly, it is the 'pivotalness' of this continuum which distinguishes it as the core contention over justice. The Anglo stream of philosophical thinking has historically allotted significant attention to property and ownership rights as a starting point for understanding justice. Robert Nozick is a recent American representative of this philosophical trajectory.[7] In contradistinction, the recent 'veil of ignorance' approach of John Rawls heads towards the needs based end of the spectrum.[8] While the concrete formulations of the specific proponents on either side of this continuum differ, ownership based approaches adopt a generally libertarian approach to distributive justice while needs-based approaches affirm an egalitarian definition. Despite both Rawls' and Nozick's avoidance of the classical concept of desert,[9] most philosophical conceptions, whether patterned or non-patterned, ultimately identify justice as 'to each according to 'something.'" The 'something' in the formulation may be need, merit, ownership or some

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[6] Robert C. Solomon and Mark C. Murphy, eds., *What Is Justice? Classical and Contemporary Readings,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.

[7] Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia,* new ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 150-159.

[8] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 12, 19, 136-142.

[9] Alasdair C. Macintyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory,* 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 249.

mixture of relevant factors.[10] Justice, as long as it remains an obligating concept,[11] can be spoken of in terms of 'what is deserved' or 'what is owed' language. Rawls and Nozick differ with respect to the basis for what is due and concerning the dues themselves but ultimately assume that justice is concerned with establishing and protecting these dues.

The importance of this continuum in the philosophy of justice is evidenced by the recent rise in engagement with the issues of 'luck' or 'chance.' Such engagement hopes to provide the necessary backing for the preservation of ownership based or, alternately, needs based approaches to justice by querying the sources of inequality. Indeed, much of the contemporary philosophical engagement is concerned with whether ownership-driven or egalitarian notions of justice, particularly of distributive justice, should prevail.[12]

Analytical philosophy, in its often admirable aim for simplicity, generally moves its practitioners to embrace one of these two notions. Biblically, the situation may be more complex. It may be that distributive justice values ought to be a function of the degree of poverty at hand —somehow akin to the notion of equality mentioned in the collection for the Jerusalem church (2 Cor 8:13-15)-even granting that other considerations were also in play. Perhaps this was implied in John the Baptist's concern for the fruits of repentance in Luke 3:11: "Let the man who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise." Perhaps a visualization of some of the main options along this significant philosophical continuum will prove helpful.

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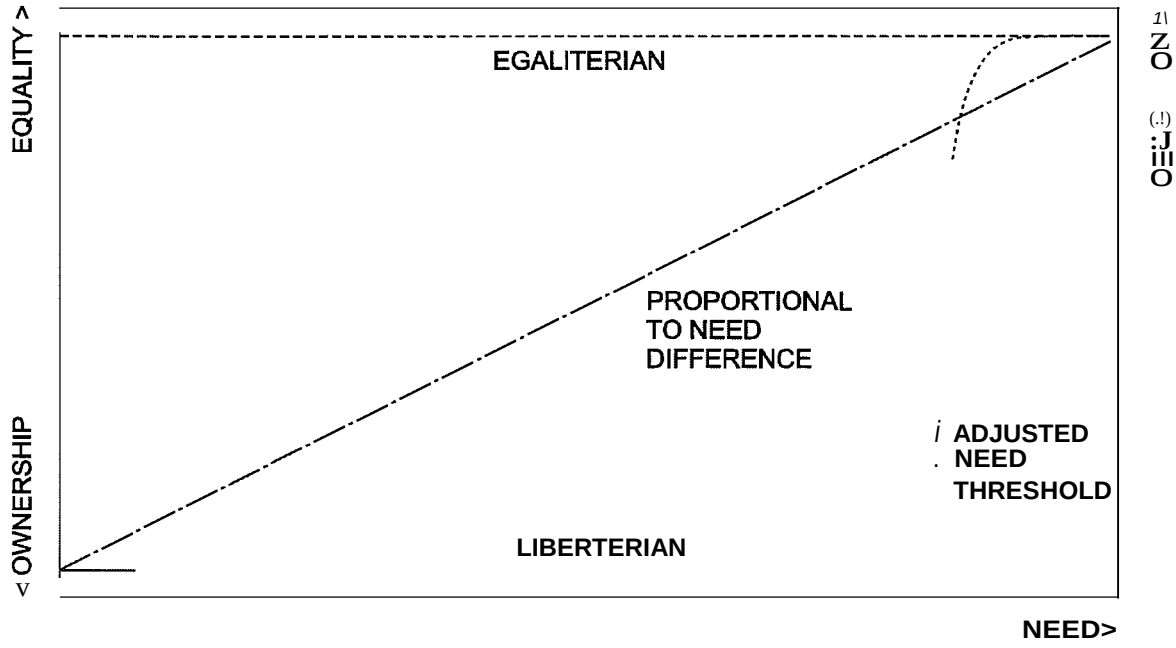
[10] Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, 155-163.

[11] Some postmoderns, such as John Caputo, attempt to maintain the concept of obligation but not its 'safety.' Caputo's justice obligation is based on the feeling of obligation which is spontaneously generated, in his view, in the presence of a victim of injustice rather than any 'safely' objective criterion. While relegated to particularity and subjectivity, Caputo nevertheless hopes to maintain justice's obligation. John D. Caputo, *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 5.

[12] See for example: Louis P. Pojman and Owen McLeod, eds., *What Do We Deserve? A Reader on Justice and Desert* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), ix.

Figure 1: Values of Distributive Justice



"Jeder nach seinen Hihigkeiten, jedem nach seinen Bediirfnissen!"[13] leads to the top line (in Figure 1) which could descriptively be labeled as Marxist. Other egalitarian conceptions, such as those following John Raw s' "difference principle,"[14] often look something like the above 'proportional' line. This 'proportional to need difference' line is quite malleable depending on whether it is understood with respect to some mean or some minimum needs leveL Proportionality may be adjusted to conform to some need threshold and thus construed to look much like the curve presented in Figure 1. The extant philosophical continuum between ownership based and needs based justice approaches requires the methodology proposed in this dissertation to address what the relationship between need and obligation looks like (in a Figure 1 manner). The methodology should enable the evaluating of whether justice is needs based or not, and if so, to what extent.

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[13] "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" (author's translation): Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Kritik des Gothaer Programms," in *Werke* 19 (Berlin: Dietz, 1962), 21.

[14] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 75-83.

Recent Theological Influences

Philosophical values readily find their way into the theological arena, both in their egalitarian form and their more libertarian variety. Nevertheless, the theological 'movements' that have initiated much of the theological reflection in the twentieth century have been indebted to broadly egalitarian conceptions. Correspondingly, the summaries in this section will focus on the needs-based side of the continuum — particularly in regard to its influence on evangelical understandings of justice and compassion. While the social _?. I?el, liberation theology and sustenance rights 'movements' do not find complete acceptance in evangelical theology, they have exerted a measured influence on Evangelicals such as Ronald Sider, Anthony Hoekema and those who find common cause with Nicholas Wolterstorff.

The social gospel made its appearance in early twentieth century North America whereas liberation theology began its ascent in South America in the latter half of the century. The sustenance rights approach is the most recent. While the first two approaches are fairly well defined and are generally understood to have passed the apex of their influence, sustenance rights is a nascent idea that hanot as yet emerged as a defined movement. Sustenance rights, despite its transatlantic influence, may never become a readily identifiable movement like the other two have. Even so, it has already gained recognizable mindshare within contemporary theological and missiological thinking among Evangelicals.

Social Gospel

Walter Rauschenbusch is deservedly known as the father of the social gospel. This movement, which included Samuel Z. Batten_and Washington Cladden among its leaders, nevertheless owes a significant debt to the foundation laid for it by the vehemently practically-oriented theology of Albrecht Ritsch1.[15] Rauschenbusch's

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[15] Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 19f9), *!].0.*

'Christian Socialism' entailed both a rejection of Marxism and the criticism of capitalism on the basis of its greed.[16] Rauschenbusch pressed for a "cooperative commonwealth" — the notion that property should be owned collectively.[17] "The Brotherhood for the Kingdom" was founded in order to reemphasize the present nature of the Kingdom of God among Christians.[18] In envisioning God's present kingdom as a higher moral order, Rauschenbusch nonetheless viewed the kingdom's outworking in very socialist and structural terms. In keeping with this trajectory, Rauschenbusch is commonly credited for being the first in North America to develop the notion of"institutionalized sin"[19] —what is otherwise known as structural or systemic evil. Seeking a solution, Rauschenbusch came to believe that salvation was best understood as a voluntary socialization of the soul away from its primary sin of selfishness.[20]

Rauschenbusch adopted the then common notion that evolutionary theory entails that everything is getting better. Believing the social gospel to be a higher Hegelian synthesis of history and theology, he asserted that the coming socialistic evolution of society would be the Kingdom of God -as best as could be expected on earth.[21] It is helpful to consider that Rauschenbusch's early writings ptedated the gradual formation of a substantial middle class in America -which was not a safety-net state at the time.

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[16] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order* (New Yorlc: Macmillan, 1919), 241-251; Dwight D. Murphey, *Liberal Thought in Modern America* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987), 60.

[17] Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1917), 55; Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 388-400; Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 552.

[18] Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order*, 23-24, 94-95.

[19] Elizabeth Balanoff, "Norman Thomas: Socialism and the Social Gospel," *The Christian Century* (30 January 1985): 101.

[20] Robert T. Handy, ed., *The Social Gospel in America: 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 262.

[21] Rauschenbusch, *Christianizing the Social Order*, 405.

Anthony Hoekema is among the Evangelicals who, in their concern to address social issues, have separated the theology of the social gospel from the ethics of the social gospel in order to preserve the latter.[22] Because these ethical convictions are widely articulated among Evangelicals, the proposed hermeneutical methodology must assist in isolating the biblical concept of oppression and systemic evil — as well as its remedies. The methodology must also identify notions of common property and evaluate whether such notions are subsumed under biblical justice.

Liberation Theology

Seeking to liberate an oppressed people group is the driving focus of theologies ofliberation. Three major types are generally isolated. 'Black liberation theology' tackles injustice towards those of African origin, 'feminist liberation theology' focuses on liberating women and 'liberation theology' targets the socioeconomic oppression of the poor. Naturally, it is the 'liberation theology' which seeks to address the plight of the poor that is most pertinent here.

This theology ofliberation originated in South and Central America through the efforts of the likes of Jose Porfirio Miranda, Juan Luis Segundo, Jose Miguez Bonino, Hugo Assmann and Gustavo Gutierrez.[23] With so many thinkers subsumed under this banner, some disparity exists concerning particulars as well as which societal model, if any, is presented as liberation theology's revolutionary goal. Nevertheless, it is widely held that Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation* functions as the *Magna Carta* of the

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[22] Anthony A. Hoekema, "Two Poles or One Goal?" *The Banner* (20 November 1970), quoted in Frederick Nymeyer, "The Social Gospel Malady;" available from http://www.contra-mundum.org/sa119/SA119-2.pdf; Internet; accessed 10 February 2008.

[23] Jose Porfirio Miranda, *Marx and the Bible: A Critique of the Philosophy of Oppression* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1974); Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976); Jose Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology* in *a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975); Hugo Assman, *Theology for a Nomad Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976); Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation,* revised ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988).

movement.[24] Due to its wide-ranging influence, the following discussion ofliberation theology will briefly summarize the main tenets of this central work.

Gutierrez's theology can be summarized around four cardinal convictions. Gutierrez's first assertion is that hermeneutics must be made dependant upon praxis and the theologian's social context. He thus eschews the Bible as a primary guiding authority for the development of theology in favor of the contextual practices of the church in pursuing 'economic justice' for the poor. Marxist political and macro-economic assumptions are pragmatically accepted as the proper roots of theology in his context. Gutierrez's second affirmation is that God maintains a special concern and love for the poor —a 'preferential option' which does not extend to the rich, free and fed. The church, Gutierrez contends, ought to mimic God in this regard. Gutierrez's third contention is that sin is pervasive and must never be perceived as solely privatized. Existing primarily as alienation and partially as self-centeredness, sin invades all aspects of human social life so as to constitute an enveloping 'hamartiosphere.'[25] For Gutierrez, all forms of alienation are themselves sin-rather than merely the result of sin. Exodus 1-3 (the exodus out of Egypt) replaces Genesis 1-3 (the account of creation) as the ultimate exemplar of the origin of sin and its proper solution. Due to his emphasis on alienation, structural evil becomes the principal sin in Gutierrez's hamartiology. The biblical connection between the issues of sin and salvation require Gutierrez to transform the traditional concept of salvation into liberation. This fourth conviction conceptualizes liberation as consisting of three interrelated components. Gutierrez consistently mentions political and socioeconomic liberation first, inner liberation in the form of peace for those struggling against servitude second and, lastly, liberation from personal sin.[26] Building on Jiirgen

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[24] Deane W. Ferm, *Contemporary American Theologies: A Critical Survey* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 64; Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 596.

[25] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation,* 103.

[26] Ibid., xxxviii.

Moltmann's *Theologie der Hoffnung,*[27] Gutierrez sets his three-fold salvation within an eschatological framework wherein the desire for hope creates within people the will to liberation.[28]

Michael Novak has characterized Latin American socioeconomic systems as "mercantilist and quasi-feudal ... statist ... privilege-centered, not open to the poor but protective of the rich."[29] In light of such a context, Gutierrez's downplaying of the importance of personal sin in comparison to structural sin becomes easier to apprehend. His setting also helps to illuminate why he makes no distinctions among the poor and why 'the poor' are always deemed synonymous with 'the oppressed.' In engaging with liberation theology, evangelical thinkers have sometimes gleaned its assumptions and principles. Ronald Sider, to take but one prominent example, adopts the notion that Exodus 1-3 deserves to take precedence over Genesis 1-3 as the beginning of God's self-revelation.30 While liberation theologians have significantly modified their politico-economic views in recent years,[31] Gutierrez's approach continues to provide a seminal theological backdrop for approachin[1.1':':ds based justice. Due to liberation theology's wide-reaching influence, the proposed methodology must be able to investigate what qualifies as unjust alienation and whether all of the poor are necessarily so due to oppression.

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[27] Jiirgen Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung. Untersuchungen zur Begriindung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1969).

[28] Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation,* 124-125.

[29] Michael Novak, *Will It Liberate? Questions about Liberation Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 5.

[30] Ronald J. Sider, *Lifestyle in the Eighties: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1982), 13-19.

[31] Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Toward an Assessment* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), 230; Paul E. Sigmund, *Liberation Theology at the Crossroads: Democracy or Revolution?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 40; Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 231-232.

Sustenance Rights

Human rights not only provide the moral foundation for organizations such as Amnesty International but also receive their fair share of philosophical attention. While the Bible generally avoids presenting moral responsibility in terms of rights-based language, except perhaps with respect to conjugal rights (Exod 21:10, 1 Cor 7:4) and supporting pastors (1 Cor 9:4-6), it is not uncommon for theologians to attempt to translate biblical prescriptions into rights language.[32] Pursuing one such translation effort, Christopher Wright defines individual rights in terms of what people are made responsible for with respect to others in the Bible.[33] Pursuing this trajectory in *Until Justice and Peace Embrace,* Nicholas Wolterstorff was among the first evangelical philosophers to translate biblical prescriptions concerning helping the poor into the notion of sustenance rights.[34]

Though the sustenance rights approach has gained considerable mindshare among Christian scholars, it appears to lack the formal organization required for it to be considered a movement. Nonetheless, general characteristics can be distinguished. The influential ideas articulated by Wolterstorff will receive rdpresentative treatment in this brief summary.

Wolterstorff formulates the concept of sustenance rights from within his much acknowledged articulation of *shalom* as holistic wellbeing, harmony and rest. His premise is that, in order to achieve *shalom,* "piety and charity are not sufficient."[35] Wolterstorffs notion of sustenance rights is complicated by his concern for both architectonic or

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[32] Nicholas Wolterstorff claims that "natural human rights are a gift of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to the world" since "human rights cannot long survive without theism" (approximate quotations): Wolterstorff, "How Social Justice Got to Me, and Why It Never Left."

[33] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord: The Ethical Authority of the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 253.

[34] Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace,* 81-83.

[35] Ibid., 81.

structural "social arrangements"[36] as well as individual responsibility. Sustenance rights entail that people possess a legitimate moral claim to being "adequately sustained in existence"[37] and that the actual enjoyment of this good be socially guarantied against threats which are serious, remediable and ordinary. Wolterstorff considers these rights to be basic or cardinal. Sustenance rights may only be abrogated in situations in which no arrangements can be made to ensure sustenance. Wolterstorff proposes that perhaps refusal to participate in 'decent' work, when it is available, would forfeit a person's sustenance rights. Every other refusal to participate in sustenance rights' three correlative duties —to avoid depriving people of sustenance, to help protect the vulnerable from such deprivation and to sustain the victims if deprivation does occur-is injustice. Thus all remediable poverty, except perhaps that caused by indolence, is necessarily due to unjust deprivation.

Though Wolterstorffs sustenance rights include access to a healthy environment and elementary healthcare, he clarifies his approach in terms of the right to food: "I want to say, as emphatically as I can, that our concern with poverty is not an issue of generosity but of rights. If a rich man knows of someone who is starving and has the power to help that person but chooses not to do so, then he violates the starving person's rights as surely and reprehensibly as if he had physically assaulted the sufferer."[38] Thus, whenever a reachable and therefore aidable person dies from starvation, all those, who had knowledge of her plight and possessed any means beyond those necessary for their own sustenance needs, commit murder by proxy. Wolterstorffs formulation appears to imply that anyone who wishes to remain free of gross injustice must give all of their non-sustenance resources away at the first familiarization with a famine or need crisis —so long as any sustenance needs remain outstanding. Wolterstorff does not address these

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., 82.

implications in discussing his correlative duties. This is likely because he is anticipating the matter in terms of societal responsibility. He nevertheless articulates examples in global and yet individual terms: "The rich man who does not know how to prevent poverty and uses that as an excuse for not aiding the poor is nonetheless trampling on the rights of the poor man."[39] Corporate global responsibility is also affirmed in Wolterstorff s characterization of the failure of the United States to budget greater amounts of economic aid as an enormous injustice.[40]

Wolterstorffs main contention is that all practicable aspects of helping the poor, providing perhaps that the poor are not indolent in the face of 'decent' work, are matters of justice. Consequently, the proposed methodology must assist in evaluating whether Wolterstorffs three sustenance rights duties are genuinely issues of biblical justice.

Summary

These recent influences serve to highlight the broad theological dissonance over social justice, a dissonance which parallels the philo ophical options. The contentions between more socialist thinkers such as Moltmann, himself influenced by Ernst Bloch, and more libertarian scholars such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, being indebted to Emil Brunner's personalism, are manifestly dependant on dissension over the proper definition and domain of justice.[41] While justice issues in theological ethics have

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[39] Ibid., 85.

[40] Ibid.

[41] The ranks of ownership oriented Christian thinkers also include the likes of Michael Novak and Ronald Nash: Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1993); Ronald H. Nash, *Social Justice and the Christian Church* (Milford: Mott Media, 1983); Ronald H. Nash, *Poverty and Wealth: The Christian Debate over Capitalism* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1987); Ronald H. Nash, *Poverty and Wealth: Why Socialism Doesn't Work* (Richardson: Probe Books, 1992); Ronald H. Nash, *Why the Left Is Not Right: the Religious Left: Who They Are and What They Believe* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996). As implied, Emil Brunner's attention was also drawn to this issue: Emil Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, trans. Mary Hottinger (New York: Harper, 1945).

sometimes been argued at the level of anthropology,[42] this level, with its additional complexities, can be bypassed (and perhaps even evaluated to some extent) via a focus on the content of the biblical mandates themselves. The complexity that the anthropological level brings arrives via its significantly increasing the size of the biblical data set. This potential increase in indeterminacy is methodologically avoidable if_ nthropological systems are not permitted to censor and filter the biblical data on justice and mercy. Providing this, theological anthropology contentions do not ultimately alter the justice level data-they merely seek to support justice definitions on differing foundations. [43]

Justice and Particularity

Theologians, like everyone else, participate in both contextual and subjective particularity. Such particularity affects and motivates, to some degree, our preferences with respect to justice constructs. This particularity is what helps to account for the disparate appeal of various justice formulations among Christian ethicists. These common particularities act to significantly mold the interpreter's plausibility structures which then, in turn, serve to filter the philosophical possibilities. The most common particularities that affect understandings of justice towards the poor result from participation in a particular social game and the subjective attraction to a particular psychologyofhelping, discipline and change. Anthropological preferences are naturally related to these common particularities -both as a stimulus to, and as a consequence of, being particular. The inherent potency of contextual and subjective particularity affirms the necessity and desirability of pursuing a methodological approach which is not only textual rather than extra-textual but also one which pursues its differentiation at the textual level. PU!§!l}.f!ga purely systematic level 'textual' approach-one which does not seek to differentiate its

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[42] See for example: Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Anthropologie in theologischer Perspektive* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

[43] Additional considerations concerning the avoidance of such data filtering will be entertained in the Modes of Appropriation section (beginning on page 42).

notion of justice at the textual level but rather at the level of theological constructs — is highly prone to and largely defenseless against the influence and alterations intrinsic to an interpreter's variously conditioned particularity.

Social Games

The five social game categories developed by Mary Douglas, in building on the work of Basil Bernstein, and later expanded by Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky remain influential in contemporary analytical culture theory.[44] Although this grid-group model has been employed to better interpret the general 'personality' of a culture, it is more properly confined to social games — as several social games may coexist within a given culture. Familiarity with, and a preference for, a particular social game almost invariably influences one's conception of justice — particularly distributive justice - as well as one's understanding of how justice should be sought. The terminology of 'cultural bias' aims to describe this significant manner in which one's submergence into a particular social game influences one's predispositions. This grid-group model has also appropriately found its Wf-Y into research concerning poverty and developmental economics.[45] The four general social games that form a socially-situated person's cultural bias may be identified as Authoritarian, Individualist, Hierarchist and Egalitarian.[46] The fifth social game is that of the autonomous hermit who

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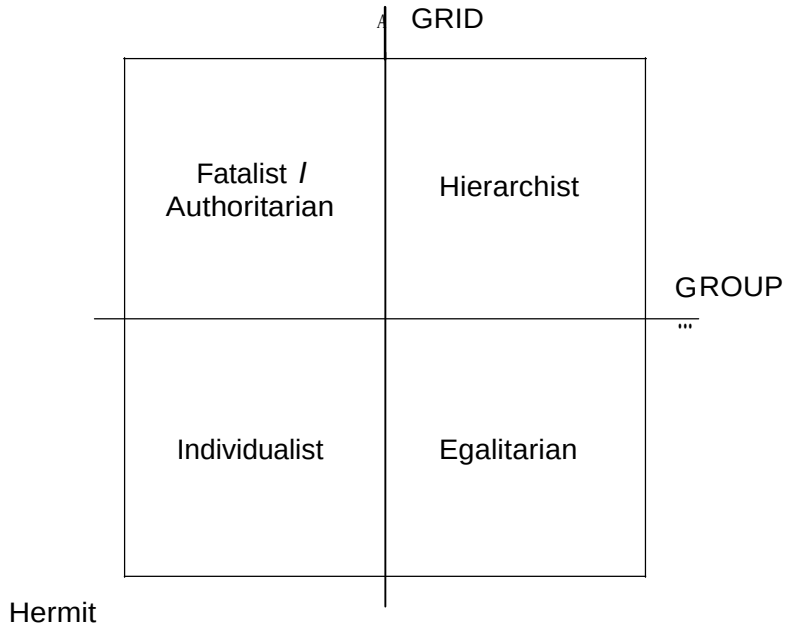
[44] Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky, *Culture Theory* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990). The more recent GLOBE Study work continues to build upon the grid-group model: Robert J. House et al., eds., *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004); Jagdeep S. Chhokar et al., eds., *Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of25 Societies* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaurn, 2007).

[45] Judith E. Lingenfelter, "The Impact of Cultural Bias on Ministry Strategies to Help the Poor" (paper presented at the AERDO Conference, Scottsdale, AZ., 1996); Judith E. Lingenfelter, "Why Do We Argue over How to Help the Poor," *Missiology* 26:2 (April1998); Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Agents of Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

[46] J. Lingenfelter, "Why Do We Argue over How to Help the Poor," 156-157.

shuns social interaction and thus is not relevant to addressing issues of social justice. This grid-group model is depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Social Games [47]



In Figure 2, collective decision making increases along the x axis and the strictness of social roles increases along thy axis. Thus people in social games on the left consider themselves in individualistic terms. The bottom two social games support levels of role elasticity often practically unimaginable elsewhere. Social games are intricately bound up with their social, economic and political contexts. In most low Gross Domestic Product contexts an individualist social game was not a survivable option and therefore garners little following. Political instability and settings with very high 'start-over' barriers create an aversion to risk and, correspondingly, to the low-group social games that increase it.

Differing social game contexts readily affect perceptions pertaining to helping and justice. Judith Lingenfelter astutely harnesses the extant social game possibilities to

[47] This figure is adapted from Judith Lingenfelter: Ibid., 157.

identify why Christians enmeshed in different social contexts disagree amongst themselves regarding how to help the poor.[48] In terms of addressing poverty, the following general schema may be discerned: the Authoritarian social game adopts a stance of powerlessness, the Individualist social game focuses on personal 'boot-straps' responsibility, the Hierarchist approach seeks to provide professional assistance and the Egalitarian social game organizes against the oppressiveness of social stratification.[49] Contextual social game realities make certain definitions of justice unthinkable and others seemingly common sense. While each context is likely best engaged with poverty strategies that mimic the prevailing social game,[50] the domain of justice cannot automatically be defended or determined on the pragmatics of the situation alone. The evaluative impetus, especially if it seeks to transcend the particularity of contextual perspectives and tendencies, must prove to be, in some manner, 'external.'

Psychology of Helping and Change

Interpreters' notions of mercy and justice are also colored by their personally subjective perceptions of the types ofhelping that are per,missible. Psychologists advocate several different understandings of helping, discipline and change-these dissonant understandings appear to appeal to people to differing degrees largely as a function of their personality and life experience. The Psychoanalyst, Behavioralist, Humanist and Existentialist philosophies of helping and intervention constitute the common four model differentiation scheme.[51] Most people's understanding ofhelping and discipline, whether

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[48] Ibid., 157-165.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 155, 165, 166.

[51] A pragmatically focused introduction may be found in: William Miller and Kathleen Jackson, *Practical Psychology for Pastors* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), 77-78. The contemporary ascent of cognitivism in psychology has not reduced the utility of these four categories for the present purpose.

they are familiar with psychology or not, slots squarely into one of these camps. The four models are themselves founded on the four classic personality theories: Psychodynamic, Behavioral, Humanistic and Existential. The central theorists behind Psychoanalyst personality theory are Sigmund and Anna Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Karen Horney. John Watson, Burrhus F. Skinner, Joseph Wolpe and Hans Eysenck championed the Behavioralist view. The Humanist model was shaped by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Erich Fromm. Lastly, the Existentialist approach was forwarded by Viktor Franld, Ludwig Binswanger, Rollo May and Medard Boss. Each of the four understandings ofhelping anticipate justice differently and consequently what should be expected of people.

Each approach likewise develops its own preferred model of helping-a model which extends to helping the poor, particularly the indolent poor. The Psychoanalyst approach attempts to expose hidden hindrances through 'transference.' The Behavioralist aims to reinforce positive traits via notions of reward and punishment. The Humanist attempts to woo via acceptance and the Existentialist seeks to provides cognitive challenge unto personal responsibility. Of the cktegories mentioned, only the Behavioralist and Existentialist models are generally comfortable with enabling intended consequences to carry out a pedagogical purpose. Consequently, our individual preferences for a particular understanding of helping taints our assumptions concerning moral agency, justice applicability and utility, and the obligation level of mercy. A person's preferred psychology of helping provides a composite, higher level summary of her values which becomes a diagnostically useful means of categorizing her prevailing assumptions. As with social games, this subjectivity also functions to make justice and mercy obligations difficult to distinguish on the grounds of personal reflection.

Justice and Defining Poverty

What constitutes poverty? Our notions of social justice are necessarily bound up with who we perceive as belonging to the recipient category. An interpreter's preferred definition of poverty modifies his 'Values of Distributive Justice' relation (as visualized in

Figure 1 on page 16). The various proposed definitions of poverty adjust the values to needs line or curve by adjusted it to the left or to the right — and so adjusting the domains of the perceived values of justice. Our preferred definitions of poverty not only affect what we perceive justice to be but also recursively affect whether we think justice to be accomplishable or not. Broad definitions of poverty reduce the possibility of being able to carry out our possible justice obligations to the poor. Such definitions serve to alter, perhaps inadvertently, the conception of justice towards some form of unattainable, Reinhold Niebuhr-like ideal.

While various utilitarious definition permutations have been developed for isolating the domain of poverty, the various trajectories may be summarized in terms of four broad categories. These four definition categories may be labeled as the absolute, relative, alienation and *non-shalom* conceptions.

Absolute definitions of poverty take as their delimiter some concrete drawing line. Various absolutes have been employed such as having less to live on per day than the equivalent of the 1985 value of $1 USD.[52] Asides from setting some absolute income cutoff, consumption definitions, such as those defining a certain minimal daily calorie intake, have also been suggested. While calorie requirements differ based on various factors including climate, minimums such as 1800 or 2112 calories per day have been forwarded.[53] In agricultural contexts, owning less than half an acre of cultivatable land has

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[52] World Bank, *World Development Report 1990: Poverty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 27; Chen Martha Alter and Donald Snodgrass, "An Assessment of the Impact of SEWA Bank in India: Baseline Findings" (a paper for the Harvard Institute for International Development, Washington, DC., August 1999), 25.

[53] Helen Todd, *Women at the Center: Grameen Bank Borrowers after One Decade* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996), 37-38; Shahidur R. Khandker, *Fighting Poverty with Microcredit: Experience* in *Bangladesh* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 55.

been suggested as a suitable poverty definition.[54] Other definition possibilities include considerations of the number of income earners in a family, illiteracy, female headedness and having a disabled household head.[55] It is notable that absolute definitions, which tend to be readily employed in non-Western and non-safety-net state contexts, also surface in the Western context via the notion of a 'poverty line.' Nevertheless, Western poverty lines are drawn at comparatively much higher daily income levels and aim to provide for much more than the basics of survival. Wolterstorff's adaptation of Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*[56] is notable because it seeks to span both the welfare state and non-welfare state contexts. In enumerating the rights of the poor, Wolterstorff provides an implicit definition of poverty as being in the state oflacking the "food, clothing, and shelter that are adequate for sustaining health and making it possible to contribute to society."[57] Wolterstorff further includes a lack of access to "water and air that are not injurious to health; and ... elementary medical care"[58] as part of his implicit definition. His definition remains absolute because it does not define poverty as a condition relative to other members of a society or social group.

Definitions which are based on statistical com arisons to the economic standing of the other members of a social group or society are properly considered l_a!ive. Such definitions are very common and generally define poverty as constituting less than the income level of a certain percentile of the population. This relative poverty

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[54] Mark M. Pitt and Shahidur R. Khandker, "Household and Intrahousehold Impact of the Grameen Bank and Similar Targeted Credit Programs in Bangladesh," in *World Bank Discussion Papers* 320 (Washington: World Bank, 1996), 17; Muhammad Yunus, "The Grameen Bank," *Scientific American* 281:5 (November 1999): 114-119; Hassan Zaman, *Assessing the Poverty and Vulnerability Impact of Micro-Credit in Bangladesh: A case study ofBRAC* (Washington: World Bank, 2000), 10.

[55] Zaman, *Assessing the Poverty and Vulnerability Impact of Micro-Credit in Bangladesh,* 2.

[56] United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* General Assembly resolution 217 A (III), United Nations Document A/810 at 71 (10 December 1948).

[57] Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace,* 85.

[58] Ibid.

may be quantified by various statistical means. By way of example, in 2002 the Canadian poverty definition, which varied somewhat from region to region, indicated "that a family is likely to experience poverty when it spends 58.5 percent or more of its gross household income on food, shelter and clothing."[59] Defining poverty in this way is ultimately relative because otherwise wealthy people may purchase an expensive home so as to leave themselves with little otherwise disposable income. Such relative wealth rankings are also utilized in non-Western contexts.[60]

The concept of quantifying alienation and powerlessness as a means of defining poverty has also become widely adopted. Once largely in the domain of the liberation theologians, an understanding of poverty as alienation has in recent times been adapted within evangelical missiology and practical theology. One such thinker is David Claerbaut who suggests that poverty constitutes being alienated from the key institutions in one's city and thus experiencing powerlessness.[61] While Claerbaut's poverty definition is aimed at urban environments, it may be extrapolated as inhabiting a position of non-influence in any context.

While Wolterstorff would certainly be sympathetic to understanding poverty as a lack of *shalom,* the broader definitions included in this category go beyond his conception. *Non-shalom* definitions of poverty often begin with the poor person's definition of poverty. In this sense, such an approach is parasitic on prior poverty definitions and understandings. Poor people may define poverty in terms of, for example,

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[59] "Issue Summary: Poverty & Homelessness," Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; available from http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/social/issue_viewer.asp?Issue_Summary_ID=21; Internet; accessed 7 September 2003.

[60] Barbara MkNelly and Christopher Dunford, "Impact of Credit with Education on Mothers and Their Young Children's Nutrition: Lower Pra Rural Bank Credit with Education in Ghana," in *Freedom from Hunger Research Paper No.4* (Davis: Freedom from Hunger, 1998), 14.

[61] David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry in a New Millenium* (Federal Way: World Vision, 2005), 85-114.

self-respect, dignity and the state of one's relations with one's neighbors.[62] Such definitions tend to significantly inflate the understanding of poverty. One such example is the background paper on poverty produced by the Social Action Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada-a fellowship which functions as the primary national association for Evangelicals within Canada.[63] This background paper defines poverty in subjective terms-as being in a position of not being able to fulfill one's 'calling.' People, according to this definition, are called to, among other things, "nurture children, to work creatively, to care for neighbours, to play, and to steward the earth."[64] Consequently, hindrances to fulfill these various callings become indicators of poverty-for "poverty exists when persons, associations or institutions lack the resources and space they need to fulfil their God-given responsibilities and callings."[65]

In ascertaining the biblical domain of justice it is thus helpful and congruent to also ascertain the domain of biblical poverty. With so many extra-textual definitions of poverty being advocated, entertaining the biblical notion of poverty becomes acutely necessary. This investigation will be undertaken in the Defining Poverty section of chapter 3 (beginning on page 56).

Hermeneutical Nexus

Now that the primary extra-hermeneutical impetuses for adopting a textual level approach to evaluating the core contention have been summarized, the nexus of the problem at the hermeneutical level may be broached. Nevertheless, in the process of pursuing the isolation of this hermeneutic nexus, it is helpful to further demonstrate and

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[62] William O. Ondari, "Poverty and Wealth: A Christian Perspective," in *Christ in the Classroom* 28 (Silver Spring: Institute for Christian Teaching, 2001), 347.

[63] "Good News to the Poor," Social Action Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; available from http://www.efc-canada.com/na/docs/poverty.htm; Internet; accessed 4 April2001.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

solidify the previously attested desirability of adopting a textual level methodology (rather than merely a broadly textual one). To this task we now turn.

With so many dissonant extents of justice being proposed as biblical, how are these various proposals to be textually evaluated? Left to themselves, justice preconceptions seem to entail justice indeterminacy. Perhaps the Christian ethicist is confined to the better categorizations of philosophy in isolating the proper domain of justice. Perhaps acceptable compatibility levels with biblical and systematic theology is as 'better' as it gets. Certainly it is fair to ask why the long-respected philosophical formulations are not sufficient. Why isn't a differentiation based on *suum cuique,* rendering to each what is due, sufficiently biblically compatible? The definition seems flexible enough to incorporate biblical content on what is deserved or owed. Perhaps justice can be defined as giving the offended party the 'good' they deserve and the offending party the 'bad' they deserve. Similarly, mercy may constitute giving someone 'good' which they do not deserve. Even though the Bible seldom speaks in terms of what is deserved —save concerning remedial or retributive justice —this differentiation is immediately commendable to our moral intuition. Only bne thing is lacking: how do we distinguish what is deserved from what is not? How do we discern what the Bible makes us unconditionally 'responsible for' towards others?[66] Desert-based language can encompass both ownership based and needs based conceptions of justice.

The philosophical and sociological indeterminism appears insurmountable. Thus Aristotle's formal principle of justice, to treat equals equally and unequals unequally,[67] leads immediately into the abyss of the material principle. The material

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[66] Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord*, 253.

[67] This ubiquitous summary rephrasement finds its source in the following claim of *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.3: "And the same equality will exist between the persons and between the things concerned; for as the latter the things concerned are related, so are the former; if they are not equal, they will not have what is equal, but this is the origin of quarrels and complaints —when either equals have and are awarded unequal shares, or unequals equal shares." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* trans. W. D. Ross (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), 76.

component's quest remains: how and what do equals and unequals merit besides inter-peer impartiality? Our intuition that justice and mercy present different obligation levels seems correct, but differentiating the two textually appears particularly difficult. What beyond the formal principle, in terms of the impartial application of a society's laws in judicial process (as affirmed by texts such as Lev 19:15, Deut 1:17, 16:19), can be biblically identified as an issue of justice? Can any light be shed beyond the reach of the few texts which explicitly label a particular moral prescription as an issue of justice or mercy?

Why are all our variously conditioned preconceptions such a difficult problem? What's at the heart of the issue–why it is so difficult to escape our particularity textually? The existence of so many preconception possibilities invariably leads to significant hermeneutical indeterminism precisely because biblical mandates pertaining to justice and mercy obligations come in the same general grammatical forms. Jussives, future indicatives with imperative overtones, syntax and speech acts provide no assistance to differentiation. Thus in practice, courting philosophical differentiations concerning what is deserved and undeserved on the basis of a perceived 'biblical compatibility' only backtracks us onto our own variously conditioned notions of justice and mercy. Few are the passages which explicitly label a particular interhuman treatment as an instance of justice or mercy. Extrapolations from these few explicit cases inevitably lead into the extra-biblical *cul-de-sac* of what we subjectively pre-assume to be just. This is why we can take several revolutions on the hermeneutical spiral and still come out where we started. Thus it is the lack of a facile textual level differentiation that serves as the nexus for the present hermeneutical elusiveness. This indictment reveals, in significant part, why various theological contingents claim biblical support for radically different justice and mercy prescription sets. The prevailing calculus is cheerless: the text plus variously conditioned presuppositions minus a textual *discrimen* equals the entrenchment of significant theological disagreement.

One other textual level option exists —but it is very unfavorable. The pessimistic temptation to surrender the distinction in obligation between justice and mercy must be resisted for too much is at stake. Soteriology would disintegrate like a

falling star.[68] Furthermore, it is the appreciation of justice prescriptions as being fully and unconditionally binding upon everyone who is able to actualize them that drives appeals to human rights and all demands for justice. This common conviction is what gives appeals to justice their ethical power. Even postmodernists, such as Jacques Derrida, are loathe to speak against justice, but rather claim it as their undeconstructable goal.[69] By contrast, indignant demands for mercy upon everyone who is able to actualize it possess no such ethical power. Mercy is simply not morally enforceable by its prospective recipient-though it may be demandable by God. In contradistinction to justice, mercy is conditionally binding such that its obligation level may be reduced or even negated by other considerations including the contextually appropriate goals oflove.[70] Erasing the obligating power of justice is repulsive, and making mercy prescriptions of equal obligation is a ready-made recipe for frustration. Fortunately this frustration is merely an evanescent form of idealism which is quickly healed by a little praxis.

What else does maintaining the difference between justice and mercy provide with respect to helping the poor? Maintaining a different obligation level for mercy prescriptions permits the merciful to consider the goals ahd values of each mercy level context without being comprehensively constrained by every entailed need. The best approach and assistance distribution can be sought without fear that such discernment constitutes the immediate moral transgression of justice.

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[68] The differentiation between justice and grace would be erased making verses such as Rom 4:4-5 incomprehensible and self-contradictory.

[69] Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,"' *Cardoza Law Review* 11:5 (1990): 945.

[70] The purposive component oflove may be summarily identified as seeking another's 'good' via actualizing biblical prescriptions while aiming at biblically applicable goals. Such a notion oflove is significantly unlike Joseph Fletcher's malleable conception for it incorporates specific content. See: Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (London: SCM Press, 1966), 95-97, 115, 119.

In sum, Miroslav Volf aptly asks how we can arbitrate between competing justices.[71] While his concern is largely for practical reconciliation and justice in situations of armed conflict, the same question applies to conceptual accounts of justice. Wi!Q<mt a biblically generated isolation of justice there is no convincing way to arbitrate among the many variously conditioned preconception possibilities. What is deserved, what is just, forever remains in the eye of the beholder. Approaches to poverty and justice both Marxist as well as capitalist, liberationist as well as libertarian, remain safely beyond evaluation. The biblical mandates will be 'innocently' assumed to communicate justice or mercy obligation levels congruent with each preconception set. As a result, the primary aim of the methodology proposed in this dissertation is to differentiate — at the textual level -justice and mercy prescriptions and, by extension, the domains of both of these levels of obligation.

Baseline Definitions of Justice and Mercy

While no sustained attempt has been made up to this point to significantly focus the reader's conception of justice and mercy, it is now pertinent, for the sake of clarity, to offer a minimalist baseline definition of each. While justice may be thought of both in terms of its goal as well as in terms of its ethical impetus, it is the latter conception which best distinguishes it from mercy. Said another way, while mercy and justice may seek the same goals in a particular circumstance, the ethical obligation that a matter of justice exerts upon those it obligates is comparatively supercedent.

This distinction between justice as result and justice as an ethical motivation is important. Considering justice in terms of a state of affairs, a marco level goal, does not identify the moral obligations that function in bringing about this state of affairs. A focus on justice as a state of affairs obscures the question of who is ethically bound to bring about this state of affairs — it thus has sometimes been made to indiscriminately obligate

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[71] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 205.

everyone to remedy each injustice. All goals of justice, then, take on the appearance of entailing injustice if not pursued. Who is obligated and whether a mercy or justice impetus is at play is obscured. This differentiation in impetus is assumed in all calls for justice — for it is the recognition of justice obligation on the part of the addressed that is being sought. It is in communicated obligation, rather than in communicating a description of some state of affairs, that justice possesses its ethical power. While this distinction is sometimes, likely innocently, lost in contemporary missiological material, it has also at times been purposefully avoided for the sake of garnering apparent moral justification and force for certain causes. Seeking justice and doing justice is not the same thing. Achieving justice and acting justly may entail different obligation levels. The existence of mercy terminology in the Bible certainly supports this contention.

When conceptually separated out from its concrete content and the state of affairs it seeks to bring about, justice is a level of obligation. Justice is the unconditional, providing no higher mandate intrudes, obligation level that makes the avoidance or accomplishment of a particular interhuman treatment ethically binding upon everyone (in the respective obligator category). By way of contradiStinction, interhuman mercy entails only conditional obligation levels. Mercy obligations are contingent — a concept partially analogous to the philosophical notion of being ethically voluntary. Such mitigation or distribution of responsibility is simply not permitted with justice — and this is why appeals to justice possess an ethical force missing from appeals to mercy. The differentiation concerns itself with the level of moral impetus. Justice is obligatory while non-justice is only conditionally so. It is this comprehensive obligatoriness which makes justice expectable — even demandable. Mercy composes the set of remaining interhuman moral obligations which are not justice obligations. Thus compassion (crrrA.ayxvi ollm), due to its empathetic source, is likewise to be distinguished from justice which is obligatory independently of sympathetic considerations.

Baseline Definition of Justice

Justice- an interhuman moral impetus that extends an unconditionally binding, providing no higher mandate intrudes, obligation level upon its intended obligator set.

Baseline Definition of Mercy

Mercy- an interhuman moral impetus that does not extend an unconditionally binding obligation level upon its intended obligator set.

Necessary Characteristics of a Textual Resolution

If greater agreement is dependant upon the identification of a textual *discrimen,* the necessary characteristics of any successful set of differentiation criteria must be identified. The author would like to suggest that the following five characteristics constitute the minimum requirements for a textual level resolution.

Firstly, the textual *discrimen* should be heuristic in the sense that it utilizes a general formulation derived from, and dependant upon, an observed set of textual patterns —analogously to how current antivirus softwarfinds yet unknown viruses by the suggestive characteristics that betray their identity. This requirement aims to insure that the differentiation possesses a textual level foundation.

Secondly, the *discrimen* must adequately function within all biblical genres and speech act categories such as Finegan and Besnier's directives (imperatives and spurrings), verdictives (assessments), representatives (descriptions), commissives (promises and threats), declarations (blessings and curses) and expressives (attitude expressions).[72] This

[72] Edward Finegan and Niko Besnier, *Language: Its Structure and Use* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 329.

condition allows for the possibility of ultimately discerning a "whole-Bible theology"[73] and aims to avoid a methodological filtering of the biblical data.

Thirdly, the heuristic needs to incorporate a text-level filter for identifying what may be called 'discriminate' mandates -those that are not intended to apply widely beyond their immediate recipient set. This aspect allows for the isolation oflocalized prescriptions which are textually revealed to not pertain to others within the same obligator category.

Fourthly, the results of the differentiation must synchronize with the semantic labeling present within the explicit data texts and remain consistent across the data so as not to generate contradictions. Logically, fidelity to the explicit passages is indispensable for any methodology which intends to further their conceptual reach. Consistency is a requirement for any proposal which aims to decrease indeterminism.

The fifth and final requirement is that the *discrimen* be identifiable in a large amount of mandate texts. While identifiability in anything beyond the explicit data is a step in the right direction, the broader the textual reach of the hermeneutical proposal, the better.

Hermeneutical Contentions

Approaching the Bible as a source for adjudicating the dissonance over justice and mercy also entails considerations concerning whether any filter should be applied to the biblical data. Whereas our extra-hermeneutical particularity accounts for our variously conditioned presuppositions in coming to the text, the following theological and procedural variances condition the admissible data set itself. The question here is: What

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[73] Elmer Martens is among the biblical theologians who advocate the supercession of exclusively NT or OT theologies with an approach akin to the "unitary canonical biblical theology" of Paul House: Elmer Martens, "Old Testament Theology since Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50:4 (December 2007): 688-690; Paul R. House, "Biblical Theology and the Wholeness of Scripture: Steps towards a Program for the Future," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect,* ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 267-279. See also: Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House, *Central Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

manner of biblical data is admissible in ascertaining the domain of justice and how should it be processed? These main contentions in this hermeneutical sphere concern the continued applicability of OT obligations, the hermeneutical mode of appropriation that is employed, the managing of the human/divine disjunction, the cultural containment of certain obligations and the data post-pr9_<: $§ing_entailed in concept formation. While some of the following contentions will be found to be immaterial for the present investigation of the NT data, they are nevertheless included to make this conclusion explicit. The engagement of these contentions aims to increase awareness concerning hermeneutical presuppositions and articulates the need for the proposal of the resolution principle.

Law and Gospel

When contemplating the whole Bible, considerations concerning the relationship between Law and Gospel are of primary importance in assessing the breadth of the appropriate data set. How much of the OT data is to be considered deprecated? While many evangelical demarcations have been forwarded, five general views will be noted here.[74] The Th onomic Reformed view maintains the broadest data set by affirming the authority of what is identified as the moral and civil portions of the OT while deprecating only the ceremonial component. The Holiness Code view considers the Decalogue, along with the moral portion of the Law and the Holiness Code (specifically Lev 18-19) undeprecated. Consequently, this view maintains the applicability of some of

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[74] Though the author's approach does not coincide with any of these views, the general categories followed here are from: Greg L. Bahnsen, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Douglas J. Moo, Wayne J. Strickland and Willem A. VanGemeren, *Five Views on Law and Gospel,* ed. Stanley L. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993). Related positions not covered here for the sake of brevity include the covenantal and variegated momism approaches inspired by E. P. Sanders and the New Perspective on Paul. See for example: Ed P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison in Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM, 1977); Ed P. Sanders, "On the Question of Fulfilling the Law in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism," in *Donum Gentilicum: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube,* eds. C. K. Barrett, E. Bammel and W. D. Davies (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 103-126. See also: James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul,* revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); D. A. Carson, Peter O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004).

the OT civil components — namely those present in the Holiness Code — though they are, on Walter Kaiser's approach, understood to apply only 'indirectly.' By this he intends that they apply to the present spiritual, no longer political, theocracy only in the form of principles.[75] The Westminster Reformed view maintains the applicability of only the moral sections from the Law of Moses. Th Dispensational view argues that the Law of Moses is displaced by the Law of Christ so as to limit the Christian ethicist's data set to the NT. The Lutheran or Modified Lutheran view, which, on Douglas Moo's formulation, argues for a synecdochic understanding of v6f!oc;,[76] entails a rejection of the Law in its totality. This approach also effectively truncates the biblical data set at the opening lines of Matthew. While all positions agree that where the NT specifically amends an OT mandate the NT specification should be considered preeminent, choosing any additional data masking technique should be done with much self-conscious care. As a result of this dissertation's focus on the NT data, contentions over the continued applicability of OT prescriptions become immaterial for the present concern.

Modes of Appropriation

How does the text communicate moral obligation? What should the hermeneutical process emphasize and distill during the transformation of textual data into Christian obligation itself? Five general categories of contemporary textual engagement may be outlined: divine command, principle, paradigm, virtue and "metaphor-making."[77] While there appears to be a developing concern among contemporary thinkers to attempt to arbitrate the involved issues at a meta-hermeneutical

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[75] Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Law as God's Gracious Guidance for the Promotion of Holiness," in *Five Views on Law and Gospel,* ed. Stanley L. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 154.

[76] Douglas J. Moo, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans,* ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 145-146, 151.

[77] This is Richard Hays' own term: Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), 298-304.

level —a level that is concerned with articulating the necessary prior conditions which are required for any legitimate pursuit of biblical hermeneutics-these attempts to defend a particular mode of biblical appropriation do not ultimately bypass the hermeneutical level appropriation concerns.[78] Consequently, it will be the hermeneutical level of concern which will be addressed in this section.

The divine command approach focuses on the concrete rule and principle prescriptions of Scripture. Obligation is transferred directly from non-deprecated prescriptions to parallel contemporary contexts, principlizing extrapolation is reserved only for issues not addressed in the biblical text. Parallel contemporary contexts are expected on the basis of a commonality secured via the human condition and its common moral concerns.[79] As a result, mandate integration is sought at the textual data level. Karl Barth employed a modified version of this approach which, building upon his bibliology, posited immediate access to the general and concrete moral demands ofGod.[80] Despite Barth's broad theological influence, evangelical diyine command approaches generally maintain a place for careful interpretive practice and thus Barth's l>_ypasof the interpretation element within this mode of appropriation goes unheeded.[81]

Principle-driven appropriation modes prefer to extrapolate principles from prescriptions, norms from rules, the general from the concrete. The task of integration is done at the level of principles. This common theological approach is utilized by many

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[78] Two of the latest such attempts include: Brian Brock, *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Saipture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[79] An articulation of this conviction is found even among writers favoring other approaches: Burridge, *Imitating Jesus,* 395.

[80] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* vol. 2 part 2, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), 663-665.

[81] R. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament,* 228-229.

contemporary thinkers including Walter Kaiser Jr. and J. Daniel Hays.[82] Richard Burridge's appropriation focus on the words and actions ofJesus, which he defends on the basis of the mimetic purpose implied in the bibliographic genre of the gospels, is also a species of this principle approach.[83]

Paradigmatic appropriation approaches attempt to discern the goals and intents behind the textual prescriptions and make these the normative principles of obligation. As a result, obligation integration is carried out at the goals and intents level. The most prominent evangelical proponent of this approach is Christopher Wright.[84] Analogous appropriation strategies include seeking to identify the rationale behind biblical prescriptions and having these rationales become a key component of ethical obligation.[85]

Virtue-based approaches have experienced a renewal of interest that is based, in no small part, on the recent and influential philosophical efforts of Alasdair Maclntyre.[86] Virtue modes of appropriation focus on the internal states which make obedience to biblical prescriptions possible and make this extrapolation the primary focus

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[82] Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "A Comparison of a Paradigm Approach to Biblical Law with a Principled Approach" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Valley Forge, PA., 16 November 2005); J. Daniel Hays, "Applying the Old Testament Law Today," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (January-March 2001): 21-35.

[83] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus,* 4, 28-31, 73-79, 144-148, 179, 183-184, 222-224, 280-282, 343-345, 389-391.

[84] Publications which argue for and explain this approach include: Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord;* Christopher J. H. Wright, *An Eye for an Eye: The Place of Old Testament Ethics Today* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983); Christopher J. H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990); Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004).

[85] Kenneth G. Radant, "Headcovering, Holy Kisses, Hierarchy, and Homosexuality: How Do We Discern What It Means to Obey Biblical Directives? A Truth-In-Context Model" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA., 15 November 2007).

[86] Macintyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.*

of obligation. This appropriation approach arrives at integration via the generally complimentary nature of virtues.

The metaphor-making approach of Richard Hays attempts to discern and isolate the biblical text's "focal images."[87] These focal images serve to facilitate a 'Kelseyian' synoptic judgment regarding the main themes ofbiblical ethics.[88] This thematic or motif approach stretches beyond the principle and paradigm trajectories in seeking a small set of themes to integrate the biblical data set. These motifs subsequently become the overarching lenses of moral obligation —conforming all of the textual data to their guiding image.

The reader will have likely noticed that the author's proposed differentiation of the hermeneutical modes of appropriation does not contain equivalents to Richard Hays' 'paradigms' and 'symbolic world' appeal modes.[89] This is because Hays' paradigm (exemplary modeling of positive and negative conduct) and symbolic world {representations of the human condition and God's character) modes readily dissolve into the author's mode categories upon further inspection. This occurs because one still must determine by which conduit exemplary modeling and Gdd's character are to be appropriated into ethical obligation. Should these modes be given rule-like, principle-like, goal-like, virtue-forming or metaphor-making authority? In other words, the extrapolations derived from Hays' paradigm and symbolic world textual data are still

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[87] R. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament,* 310.

[88] Richard Hays affirms David Kelsey's contention that such a synoptic judgment is indispensable to any systematic theology or ethics: Ibid., 194; David H. Kelsey, *Proving Doctrine: The Uses of Scripture* in *Modern Theology* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 163, 166. Kelsey's emphasis on the role of the imaginative judgment or construal has garnered broad favor even within biblical theology: Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 731-732.

[89] Richard Hays' influential rules, principles, paradigms and symbolic world differentiation scheme is itself an adaptation ofJames Gustafson's seminal considerations in: James M. Gustafson, "The Place of Scripture in Christian Ethics: A Methodological Study," *Interpretation* 24:4 (October, 1970): 430-455. Hays' work, in turn, continues to be adopted within contemporary ethical discussion. See for example: Burridge, *Imitating Jesus,* 363.

necessarily modulated by the options distinguished in the author's appropriation categories.

Evaluation

All of the above mentioned approaches, save divine command, needfully abstract the biblical data in hermeneutically deriving justice and mercy obligations. Such abstractions serve to adjust, reform or transpose the obligation data set–for this data restructuring is a part of the practical benefit they seek to offer. Consequently, disagreement over the best hermeneutical mode of appropriation leads to differing data sets.

By extracting the general from the specific, principle-based appropriation loses the concrete content of the specific mandates. In excerpting goals and intents, the paradigmatic approach loses the specific as well as the general mandates for the sake of their teleological intents. This information is likewise lost in the distilling inherent in the virtues-based appropriation process. By seeking a synthetic motif set, the metaphorical leap produces an interpretive grid which systemically disf=Iiminates against the non-motif mandates. Only the divine command approach maintains both the specific and the general mandates.

Though data loss makes integration easier by reducing overall complexity, it does this by reducing the detail — the resolution of the data. Sl!ch ea ly (l!l.Q sy:s_tt!.m.ic:_<!<l!l discrimination makes indeterminism in contested matters hard to avoid. Climbing the ladder of abstraction with a reduced data set necessarily increases the interpretive potency and sway of an interpreter's variously conditioned preconceptions — the loss of a part of the textual constraint means there is more room to maneuver. Any such construal can, and likely will, be challenged on the basis of the lost data. Justifying this data loss requires a justification of the accuracy and fidelity of the extrapolation process. But on what basis, save an investigation of the unfiltered data itself, can this justification be provided? Such considerations reaffirm the necessity of avoiding any mode of appropriation filtering within the hermeneutical methodology.

Human/Divine Disjunction

To what extent are God's unmandated actions and treatments applicable for interhuman obligation? Are they really exemplary in such a way as to generate some level of human obligation? Is God ever merely 'indirect' — in the sense of leading by example only–in His expectations of people? Due to the biblical discontinuity between God's role and the role of humans in the created order, extrapolations from the former to the latter are non-trivial. Some texts reveal that divine justice and interhuman obligation are at times diametrically distinct. One such example is Rom 12:19: "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.[90] Certainly some recursiveness exists in mandates such as "love one another, even as I have loved you," (John 13:34, 15:12), but it exists on the basis of the interhuman prescription. Explicit and recursive poverty-related examples include Deut 10:18-19 which states, "He [God] executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." Nonetheless, a broad-based God-human parallel is contested. It is possible that God's lunmandated treatments of people are something which only God should or could accomplish. Among such examples is Ps 113:7-8 which reveals that "He [God] raises the poor from the dust And lifts the needy from the ash heap, To make them sit with princes, With the princes of His people." Only God, from our 'commoner' standpoint, is able to make the poor sit among princes and nobles (1 Sam 2:8) or have large families (Ps 107:41). While God can open the eyes of the blind (Ps 146:8) and provide a barren woman with children (Ps 113:9), such intervention remains largely unaccomplishable from a human standpoint.

The example of Jesus, while significantly illuminatory and nuancing for many biblical mandates, is similarly constrained. Few feel bound by Jesus' unmandated, beyond

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[90] Such considerations also needfully extend beyond theological ethics into spheres such as soteriology: Garry J. Williams, "Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50:1 (March 2007): 73.

His immediate apostles and disciples, example ofliving in humble conditions and general homelessness. Similarly, not all believers are itinerant teachers as He was and few feel that Jesus' example constrains believers to confront Jewish leaders and theologians in the same manner and authoritative vehemence. An unambiguously ethics-related disjunction can be identified in Jesus' failure to offer any defense when brought before unjust accusers during His judicial process. In sum, the ethical appl! .<!bllity_Qfle_1>_us' example is mediated to us throughthenexus of parallel biblical mandates. Even Richard Burridge's recent and plenteous argument for the *mimesis-assuming* bibliographic genre of the gospel narratives does not sufficiently address the question of the extent of the precedent — despite offering significant engagement with the issue.[91] As with God's actions, Jesus' treatments of the poor are sometimes out of the range ofhuman possibility. Luke 7:12-16 recounts the restoration of an only son to his widowed mother. It is very likely that the death of the widow's son meant that her main source of provision had been taken away. Nonetheless such compassion (v. 13) is beyond the range of human intervention-it cannot be mimicked. Similarly, emphasis on Jesus' miraculous intervention on behalf of the poor also establishes less than is sometimes maintained — for the Messiah provides such treatment for the poor and non-poor alike (as for the centurion who could afford to build a synagogue in Matt 8:5-13 // Luke 7:1-10, for a non-poor[92] synagogue official in Mark 5:22-43 // Matt 9:18-26 // Luke 8:41-56 and for the royal official in John 4:46-54).[93]

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[91] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus,* 4, 28-31, 73-79, 144-148, 179, 183-184,222-224,280-282,343-345, 389-391.

[92] The presence of the "flute-players" (aUATJT c;) indicate that these professional musicians thought the synagogue official would be able to pay for their services: Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13,* vol. 33A (Dallas: Word, 2002), 249.

[93] Jesus' preaching and teaching, like John the Baptist's, also extended to the non-poor (such as tax collectors).

Evaluation

The author's contention, which is derived on the basis of analyzing all of the NT texts concerning divine treatments of the poor, is that filtering purely divine treatments and examples does not result in data loss with respect to humanly accomplishable treatment. No humanly accomplishable treatments of the poor are merely exemplified in divine action. While some theologians may contend that removing the consideration of how God personally treats something may reduce the frequency with which certain treatments appear for analysis, this need not be worrisome unless theological significance is attached to the frequency with which an ethical issue surfaces in the text.[94] In this sense the author disputes the independent helpfulness of Richard Hays' 'symbolic world' "representations of the human condition … and the character of God"[95] for the issue at hand. Similarly, Hays' 'paradigmatic' appeal mode, which encompasses positive and negative character narratives,[96] is necessarily parasitic on the divine evaluations and prescriptions present in the context (or elsewhere). The gist of the argument is that all non-mandate texts are ideationally parasitic on mandate texts for their ethical significance. Passages which do not evaluate the interhuman treatment described are necessarily dependant upon the evaluations that we read into them on the basis of texts which contain such evaluations. This 'intertextuality' is the best case scenario — at the worst we are merely reading in our variously conditioned presuppositions.

Cultural Containment

The extent of the cultural tainting or contingency of the biblical data, with the possibility of making some aspects of it presently inapplicable, is also contested. Such

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[94] Such theological weighing, though relatively common, is at minimum non-trivial. Few Evangelicals would argue, for example, that usury is more weighty than bestiality-even for OT believers.

[95] R. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament,* 209.

[96] Richard Hays grants theological primacy to this paradigmatic mode in the NT. Ibid., 209, 310.

dissonance logically manifests itself in the hermeneutical stances taken towards the biblical text. Many positions have been taken along the continuum between accepting everything as morally applicable and deeming everything to be culturally contingent and vestigial. Richard Hays, to take a prominent example, argues that everything in the text is culturally tainted but nevertheless metaphorically applicable via a motif-guided extraction of the analogous aspects of the ethical data.[97] Unfortunately, the contours of Hays' analogousness remain a largely ineffable component of the imaginative leap he prescribes. It is beyond the scope and necessity of the present concern to outline the breadth of the suggested possibilities.[98] Such an engagement is presently unnecessary due to the expanding nature of the contemporary theological concern for helping the poor. In the current theological climate, it does not seem necessary to argue that helping the poor is something more than a no-longer-applicable cultural taint. Tal<ing a longer term view, the predominant trend in the history of church thinking correlates well with the contention that helping the poor is a transcultural biblical concern —legitimately applicable beyond the initial recipients. Thus, cultural tainting, while a live issue in other theological quarters, recedes into a hermeneutically immaterial positlon within the present hermeneutical challenge.

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[97] Ibid., 299-300.

[98] Evangelical engagements with this issue include: I. Howard Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2001); Wayne Grudem, "Should We Move Beyond the New Testament to a Better Et.hic? An Analysis of William J. Webb, Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47:2 (2004): 299-346; Willard M. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Issues* in *Biblical Interpretation* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1983); Dave Veerman, *How to Apply the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993); Robertson McQuilkin, *Understanding and Applying the Bible,* revised ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1992); William J. Larkin, Jr., *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics: Interpreting and Applying the Authoritative Word* in *a Relativistic Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988); Daniel M. Doriani, *Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1996); J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005); Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, "The Problem of Cultural Relativity" in *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 80-86.

Data Post-processing

Once the hermeneutical methodology has been applied to locate all of the NT data concerning ethical obligation to the poor, another form of filtering may be applied. This filtering option is present within the concept formation process. The proper manner of data integration is significantly contested, with many thinkers pursuing their own uniquely individualized approach. Due to the assumptional nature of this interpretive step, the approaches employed are not always consciously self-reflexive. Thus the continuum between data overriding integration and non-overriding integration contains an innumerable contingent of data post-processing strategies. Despite this tremendous diversity, two general aims may be discerned. Approaches that aim to produce a 'non-destructive' integration can be differentiated from those which are prepared to adopt a 'divide and conquer' approach. The adoption of a guiding motif, or set of motifs, to integrate the data is one such overriding and data filtering approach. Indeed, at the heart of the issue in the process of data structuring is the possibility of data suppression.

Evaluation

Allowing for data suppression invariably leads to greater indeterminism. Richard Hays formulates his guiding themes (community, cross, new creation) to provide controls to the unbounded nature of his metaphor-making mode of appropriation-a mode which allows for a metaphorical leap while never clarifying which aspects of the data can successfully make the jump.[99] Hays further admits that other theme sets are also possible and that there exists, on his view, no real way to arbitrate between them. His focal images are "not derived in some strictly scientific or objective manner."[100] Consequently, it is difficult to see how his data post-processing approach escapes its indeterministic tendencies. In this way Hays' approach is like other concept formation strategies which

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[99] R. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament,* 298-304.

[100] Ibid., 198.

construct a discriminating data hierarchy — whether it be on the basis of the frequency of textual occurrence, a biblical author's overarching themes, or some suchlike pattern.

In concert with a purposed desire to avoid data loss, a 'non-destructive' integration will be sought in this dissertation. One aspect of avoiding overriding within the process of integration is to allow specific mandates to funnel their content to the general mandates — and not the other way around. Perhaps an example may prove helpful. The general biblical mandate to love, when kept nebulous and not informed by the content of specific love mandates, becomes malleable and prone to situationalism.[101] If this conception is then allowed to migrate its presumed content down to the specific mandate level it can override the meaning of any concrete prescription. Any concrete biblical mandate involving consequences, such as "if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either" (2 Thess 3:10), can be overridden by a top-down concept oflove or mercy. Only a bottom-up-the specific informing the general-approach to concept formation avoids such overriding. Maintaining this concrete to broad direction within concept formation may be referred to as applying the 'resolution principle.'

Resolution Principle

The resolution principle- the higher resolution (in the detail sense) mandate informs the lower resolution mandate provided the two mandates are parallel in the sense that integrating the high resolution data does not contradict aspects already present within the lower resolution mandate.

Resolution Principle Considerations

The resolution principle allots content priority to higher resolution mandate data-data which is more specific and detailed. Nevertheless, this finer grained data is only integrateable with lower resolution data if such integration does not entail data

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[101] 1t may even become as utilitarian as Joseph Fletcher's conception: Fletcher, *Situation Ethics*, 95-97, llS, 119.

contradictions. In other words, legitimate integration requires that the lower resolution data conceptually overlap the higher resolution data. This insures that no data is lost and that differing concepts are kept separate.

The aspects that must be kept from contradicting in pursuing concept integration via the resolution principle are such things as the obligation level of the mandate, the main cause of the poverty, the obligator set and the recipient set.[102] Non-contradicting overlaps are welcome and expected.

The resolution principle is compatible with the generally recommended approach of pursuing parallel mandate integration first at the textual immediacy level, then the biblical book level, then possibly at the author level and finally at the NT level. This procedure allows for authorially related material to maintain its elucidating priority within the mandate clarification process.[103]

Summary

The first goal of this chapter was to summarize the extra-hermeneutical preconceptions which act to make evangelical understan4ings of biblical justice dissonant. These variously conditioned preconceptions demonstrate the acute need for the development of a hermeneutical methodology proposal which incorporates a textual *discrimen* that can assist the interpreter in arbitrating between all these cacophonic preconception possibilities. The consideration of these variously conditioned preconceptions also allowed for the solidification of a set of necessary requirements which must be fulfilled by a successful textual resolution proposal. These observed requirements will serve as the integral ingredients for the hermeneutical methodology developed in chapter 4.

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[102] These latter aspects, the main cause of the poverty, the obligator set and the recipient set, are further developed in the Data Differentiation section of chapter 3 (beginning on page 61).

[103] Further discussion of the application of the resolution principle is undertaken in the Main Resolution Levels section of chapter 3 (beginning on page 62).

The second aim of this chapter was to outline the hermeneutical disagreements that make seeking and approximating the domain of biblical justice and mercy difficult and contentious even from within a hermeneutic of trust. Some of these divergences, such as variance over the continued applicability of OT mandates as well as the possible cultural containment of the mandates concerning helping the poor, prove to be irrelevant for the present concern. The hermeneutical navigation of the human/divine disjunction was also deemed to be inconsequential, but not in a logically *a priori* manner. This hermeneutical contention is immaterial only because adding a consideration of divine action and modeling does not expand the content of the data set presented in the NT. In the case of divergences over the proper modes of appropriation and data post- processing, the author has argued that avoiding greater indeterminism requires adopting the approach that leads to the least data loss and, consequently, best maintains the breadth of the biblical voice.

Thus, in sum, the aim of this chapter was to briefly concretize the necessity of the methodology to be proposed and to begin to establish its hermeneutical parameters.

CHAPTER3

PRELIMINARY DELINEATIONS

This chapter aims to present the preliminary definitions and delineations that prepare the way for, and will be employed within, the case study data analysis of chapter 5. Six delineations will be discussed: the identification of the domain of poverty, the disassociation of preceptive justice from remedial justice, the delimitation of the main resolution levels entailed by the resolution principle, the delineation of the main causes of poverty, the delimiting of recipient breadth and the demarcation of the main obligator.

The first demarcation to be addressed will be the NT domain of poverty. The linguistic entailments of the original language terminology will be analyzed, in conjunction with textual notions of need, in order to develop and define the following related notions: sustenance needs, immediate poverty and potential poverty.

The second differentiation entails the disasso iation of the main subcategories of justice —its preceptive and remedial components. This differentiation will narrow the scope of the justice obligations being pursued in this dissertation to those which entail preceptive justice.

The third axis of delineation concerns the outlining of the main resolution levels that are entailed by the resolution principle presented in chapter 2. These categories permit mandates to be categorized in terms of their 'moral impetus,' 'general,' 'principle,' 'concrete' or 'specific' resolution levels.

The fourth differentiation concerns the categorization of the main causes of poverty. These main causes are identified as injustice, calamity and personal sin.

The fifth delimitation categorizes the recipient breadth that a mandate may entail. This breadth is delineated into the following four categories: people in general,

believers that are located locally, believers that are remote and believers whose location, with respect to the obligator, is unspecified.

The final demarcation serves to categorize the biblical mandates in terms of whom they aim to obligate. This differentiation identifies rulers, the church corporate, individuals generally and Jesus' immediate disciples as the four main parties obligated by the NT mandates.

Defming Poverty

As noted in the Justice and Defining Poverty section of Chapter 2,[1] an interpreter's conception of poverty affects her notions of the domain of justice and mercy. Consequently it becomes important for the present concern to discern the NT domain of the poor.

Textual Usage

Some theologians have argued that since certain sections of the NT do not articulate distinctions regarding the nature of the poor, it is therefore God's intent that such delineation be avoided.[2] Nevertheless the semantic nd contextual identification of the poor in the NT provides a significant level of detail concerning the plight of those it identifies as among the poor. The clarification of this domain will be pursued below.

The key terms for the poor in the NT are rr£vT)c;, rrevLxpoc; and rrTwx6c; of which the latter is, by far, the most attested.[3] The terms for identifying poverty are rrTwx£La and ucrTep£w (impoverishment or need) along with additional cognates for need.

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[1] This section begins on page 29.

[2] Mark Charlton, "Sharing Food: Charity or Justice?" (paper presented at the conference of Gifts of the Earth: An Ecumenical Forum, Winnipeg, MB., November 2000), 2.

[3] The only NT occurrence of TIEVTjc; is found in 2 Cor 9:9 where it addresses the Corinthians who possessed limited means. The sole occurrence of nEV1)(P6c; in Luke 21:2 is related to mwxoc; level poverty both semantically, via the parallel in Mark12:42, and explicitly within both passages.

The term rr-rwxoc; refers, in common Greek usage, to those who are completely dependant on others for their survival — such are variously known as paupers, mendicants or beggars.[4] These destitute were the natural recipients of alms.[5] By contrast, ITEVT]c; commonly refers to those that are relatively poor and live "from hand to mouth" while earning "a bare and scant livelihood."[6] While this differentiation has been somewhat obscured in the Septuagint translation of the OT terms for poor/ it remains in effect in other contemporaneous material such as the Greek translation of Sirach.[8] The NT is recognized to follow the OT conceptual usage — in contrast to the LXX — in affirming that rr-rwxoc;[9] represents the poor who have "nothing to bring" either materially or

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[4] Hans-Helmut Esser and Colin Brown, "n•mxo ;," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); Ernst Bammel, "mwx6 ;, mwxda, mwxeuw," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), in *PC Study Bible* 4.3 (Seattle: Biblesoft, 2006).

[5] Lothar Coenen affirms this 'recipienthood' in his contrasting of mwxo; with TIEV'l<;: Lothar Coenen, "nev'l<;," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapid: Zondervan, 2007).

[6] William Evans, "Poverty," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. James Orr, in *BibleWorks* 4.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 1998). See also: Coenen, "nev'l<;."

7c oenen, " TIEV'l<;. "

[8] Note, for example, Sirach 4:1-3. The Greek translation ofSirach is thought to herald from approximately 132 BC: Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 71.

[9] For the sake of greater accessibility, the lexical form of the original language terms will be provided throughout this dissertation in all places except where the original language text is being directly quoted.

spiritually (when employed in the metaphorical sense).[10]

Bruce Malina, taking a broader anthropological perspective, initially contends that NT passages which do not provide additional clarification of the state of the poor, beyond identifying them as 7tTwx6c;, are open to interpretation.[11] He nevertheless goes on to assert that the label of poor, when it receives clarification, is connected to the blind, lame, crippled, diseased, leprous, deaf, hungry, thirsty, naked, shabbily clothed, widowed and imprisoned.[12] Despite this correlation, Malina nevertheless asserts that the poor label "would most certainly not be an economic designation" but rather an indication of a loss of"inherited status."[13] Nevertheless, the conceded relation between 7tTwx£La (indigent poverty) and not being able-bodied or experiencing hunger and thirst makes Malina's extra-textual contention unconvincing.

In order to further address Malina's contention, and to verify the semantic content of 7tTwx6c;, a brief biblical investigation of the NT textual indicators of poverty and need will be presently provided. As noted earlier, even Malina concedes that the term TITwxoc; is textually related to being non-able-bodied or unable to provide for oneself due to imprisonment or somehow finding oneself in need of ustenance. Such predicaments entail dependence upon others to provide for one's sustenance-for, in the first century context, an inability to work entailed experiel!cing such need. The sickly and non-able-

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[10] Coenen, "n:£vTjc;." See also: Evans, "Poverty;" R. E. Nixon, "Poverty," *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1982), 955-956; W. L. Walker, "Poor," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* ed. James Orr, in *BibleWorks* 4.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 1998); Robert D. Spender, "Theology of Poor and Poverty," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology;* available from http:/ /www.biblestudytools.net/Dictionaries/ BakerEvangelicalDictionary/bed.cgi?number =T557; Internet; accessed 23 November 2000; John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 64; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 566-568.

[11] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology,* revised ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 105.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

bodied are described as the physically "weak" that ought to be helped via giving in Acts 20:35.[14] Luke 14:12-14 similarly identifies the TITWXO<; with the disabled as those who do not have the means to repay a dinner invitation. This clarification provides strong affirmation of the semantic identification of TITWXO<; as indeed referring to the indigent — those that lack even the means to return an invite to a meal. The domain of poverty is also demarcated, via implication, by the content of the provision which is intended to be given to the poor. Revealingly, Luke 3:11 mandates the sharing of clothes or food with "him who has none"-someone who is indigent. Similarly, Jas 2:15 concerns the provision of "what is necessary for their body" to "a brother or sister ... without clothing and in need of daily food." Such poverty, which entails not even being able to provide for one's nakedness and daily sustenance, is a matter of immediate indigence. The parable of the sheep and the goats in Matt 25:31-46likewise describes the needy as those that are dependant upon the provision of sustenance and sustaining assistance. Thus it is not surprising that Jesus consoles the disciples, in Matt 6:25-32, concerning God's promise to provide them with food and clothing. In this !egard, 1 Tim 6:8 also asserts that "if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content." Corrcispondingly, meeting needs also involves providing food or drink to an indigent enemy who is experiencing hunger or thirst (Rom 12:20). These considerations concerning the clarification of TITWXO<; and the needs which are to be met affirm that poverty, whenever it is further specified in the NT, is consistently connected to its expected semantic meaning.

The above considerations serve to enable the subsequent articulation of the NT delineations of sustenance needs and poverty. Of the definition options considered in the Justice and Defining Poverty section of chapter 2,[15] the below provided definitions are

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[14] This connection is likewise affirmed extra-canonically in *1 Clement* 38:2.

[15] This section begins on page 29.

most analogous to those that are implicitly provided by Nicholas Wolterstorff [16] — though somewhat more limited by the data of the NT.

Sustenance Needs

Sustenance Needs- the bodily needs that a person in a particular location must have met so as to remain relatively physically healthy.

Immediately Poor

Immediately Poor- a person who is unable to provide for all of his sustenance needs by his own legitimate industry.

Potentially Poor

Potentially Poor- a person that is in d rect danger of becoming immediately poor if she encounters even commonly experienced, comparatively small-scale financial setbacks.

In this way the immediately poor definition mirrors the domain of 7rtwx6c; while the potentially poor definition subsumes 7tEVf]<:; -,this latter category of poverty receives greater attention, both semantically and in terms of occurrence, within the OT. The above definitions will be employed within the remainder of the dissertation and particularly in the data presentation of chapter 5.

Main Justice Subcategories

Because justice is a multifaceted conception, some focus is required. For the sake of conceptual clarity, the main subcategories of justice, its preceptive and remedial components, need to be differentiated. At a foundational level justice divides into precepts and remedies. Justice precepts are binding, all things being equal, on everyone in their intended obligator category. Justice remedies are the sanctions that entail when the justice precepts are transgressed. Said another way, preceptive justice enfolds the biblical

[16] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 85.

prescriptions that pertain to the non-remedial aspects of justice-components commonly referred to as communative, distributive and human rights within the philosophical realm. Because, unlike biblical Israel(elievers no longer constitute a national entity, the remedial component of justice is more open to adjustment via local convention.[17] In any case, it is the domain of preceptive justice that establishes whether a particular non-judicial interhuman treatment is a genuine occurrence of injustice or not. [18]

It is this domain which justifies or refutes any claim of unjust treatment, and due to its inherent 'conventionlessness,' is the aspect of justice obligation which constitutes the present concern. Correspondingly, the term 'justice' as used throughout the remainder of this dissertation will be employed as a synonym for what has been, in the above, identified as preceptive justice.

This focus is particularly appropriate as no instances of remedial justice, with respect to the treatment of the poor, are to be found within the NT. While consequences are noted in this regard within the NT, they nevertheless do not possess the nature of judicial remedy.

Data Differentiation

One final set of differentiations will serve to complete the preliminary delineations presented within this chapter. The following set of differentiations address the main axes of dissimilarity that are evident within the biblical data pertaining to the moral treatment of the poor. The main resolution levels entailed by the resolution principle will be identified first, followed by a delimiting of the main causes of poverty, the delineation of recipient breadth and the delimiting of the main obligator.

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[17] While adherents of the Theonomic Reformed view of Law and Gospel, such as Greg Bahnsen, may differ in this regard, the continued applicability of OT civil sanctions is certainly open to contention.

[18] Technically, preceptive justice also extends its reach into regulating the judicial process of arriving at remedial justice.

Main Resolution Levels

As noted in the previous discussion of the resolution principle,[19] the degree of specificity or resolution that is provided by the biblical data varies from text to text. The main levels of resolution, as they pertain to the interhuman treatment of the poor, may be helpfully labeled as entailing 'moral impetus,' 'general,' 'principle,' 'concrete' or 'specific' resolution levels. These resolution levels are differentiated by their degree of specificity and by their degree of focus. By specificity, these levels are divided into those which entail broad ethical impetuses (such as "be merciful" in Luke 6:36), principles (such as "be on your guard against every form of greed" in Luke 12:15) and specifics (such as "sell all you possess and give to the poor" in Mark 10:21). By focus, these levels are divided into those which address interhuman treatment generally and those which address interhuman treatment as it pertains to the poor in particular. Figure 3 presents these main resolution levels along with their respective abbreviations -which will be employed in chapter 5.

Figure 3: Main Resolution Levels

		Focus	
		Universal Treatments	Treatments of the Poor
Specificity	Impetus	I = Moral Impetus	-
	Principle	G= General	P = Principle
	Specific	C =Concrete	S =Specific

As noted in Figure 3, the 'general' resolution level encompasses prescriptions possessing a principle level of specificity though they are aimed universally at humankind in general. Similarly, the 'concrete' resolution level encompasses prescriptions possessing a specific level of specificity while being aimed, in a non-focused manner, at humankind

[19] This principle is presented in the Resolution Principle and Resolution Principle Considerations sections of chapter 2 (beginning on page 52).

in general. Moral impetuses possess no poor focused equivalent for, by their very nature, they are needfully broadly reaching.

In concert with the resolution principle, the ordering of these resolution levels in terms of decreasing resolution, is as follows: 'specific,' 'concrete,' 'principle,' 'general,' and finally, 'moral impetus.'

Main Causes of Poverty

The main causes of a person's poverty may be utilitariously divided into three categories: injustice, calamity and personal sin. The category of injustice includes injustice generally as well as oppression —which is the use of entrusted or financial power to perpetrate injustice with significant immunity upon those with less influence. The category of calamity subsumes both personal calamity, such as disability or disease, and general calamity such as famine or the destructiveness of war. The personal category subsumes both personal sin and personal weakness on the part of the poor.

Recipient Breadth

Two broad categories of recipients are identified within the NT data set concerning the treatment of the materially poor: believers and people in general. The former recipient category may be further subdivided into local believers (such as the widows within one's local assembly), remote believers (such as those to whom the Jerusalem collection was sent), and believers generally (in an unspecified manner).

Main Obligator

Biblical mandates can also be differentiated in terms of whom they aim to obligate: whether rulers, the church corporate, individuals generally or the immediate disciples ofJesus during His earthly ministry. The ruler category subsumes political, government and judicial leaders as well as others fulfilling positions of societal responsibility. Because contemporary democratic societies enable citizens to affect, to some degree, the leadership of the societal rulers, this obligator category becomes the closest analogue to modern notions of societal responsibility. The church category

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subsumes the mandates that are to be accomplished by local assemblies of believers. The individual category pertains to mandates which obligate the believer on an individualistic level.

The delineations introduced within this chapter prepare the way for the case study of chapter 5 and, as such, furnish the terminology and categorizations that will be employed throughout the remainder of this study.

CHAPTER4

HERMENEUTICAL METHODOLOGY

The focused hermeneutical approach proposed in this dissertation incorporates two aspects: the delimitation of the relevant data set and the proposal of a textual *discrimen.* Correspondingly, the first goal of this chapter is to delineate which texts are relevant to ascertaining believer obligations unto the poor. These relevant texts will be identified as those which contain interhuman mandates concerning the treatment of the poor.

The second goal is to present the proposed textual *discrimen.* The latter part of this chapter seeks to delineate this alternative, heuristic approach to identifying the differing obligation structures of biblical justice and mercy at the textual level. The procedure is heuristic in the sense that it utilizes a general formulation derived from and dependant upon a set of textual patterns. This hermeneutical approach uses the co111municated sinfulness of transgressing certain biblical prescriptions as the textual di erentiation criteria.[1] The ultimate aim ofthe proposed hermeneutical approach is to identify a methodology which would allow those utilizing a hermeneutic of trust to asymptotically approximate the domain of biblical justice with greater consistency.

The proposed *discrimen* meets the set of necessary criteria identified in the Necessary Characteristics of a Textual Resolution section of chapter 2. Correspondingly, the discrimen is derived and articulated in such a way as to apply to the whole of Scripture — for it is designed to be broad enough to be applicable to the OT data as well.

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[1] Some biblical theologians may object that no such trans-human author continuity may be pursued on principle. Nevertheless, the author would invite such to suspend their judgment until after having assessed the textual data. Sin and God's ethical evaluation of human behavior is a concern apparent throughout Scripture and it is, at minimum, theoretically possible for a consistent pattern to emerge.

Mandates

Pursing the domain of biblical justice and mercy obligations necessarily begets some initial considerations regarding the delimitation of the relevant biblical data set. This set consists of divinely evaluated interhuman treatments. Such biblical prescriptions come in the form of 'mandates.' Mandates are textual expressions of God's ethical evaluation: what He deems culpable and what He commends. As such, mandates subsume both justice and mercy. But they also subsume more than justice and mercy as each relates to human treatment one of another. Biblical mandates also address the 'internal' willing and desiring of sin or righteousness. These prescriptions for the heart spill over into the classical (and contemporary) discussion of virtues.[2] As important as these internal mandates are, at the ethical claims level it is those that address 'external' interhuman treatment that are relevant for justice and mercy among people. And it is the content of this justice and mercy which is in question. This focus on external interhuman mandates also means that purely divine treatments of a situation need not be considered.[3]

Speaking of the biblical text: how do external interhuman mandates give themselves away? The scanning criteria for mandates involves locating all divine 'commands,' 'instructions,' 'valuations' and 'implied valuations.' When wedded to an exclusive focus on treatments which affect the poor, these categories serve to delineate the biblical data set that is relevant for the present concern.

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[2] Some mandates may exist outside of the categories pursued here. Nevertheless, a thorough conceptualization is beyond the scope of the present concern.

[3] The reasoning and purpose for this delimitation is provided in the Human/Divine Disjunction section of chapter 2 (beginning on page 47).

Commands

Commands are grammatically revealed imperatives and appear in two forms within English translation. Expressions which inform the addressee that she 'shall,' 'will' or 'must' do or not do something are commands.[4] Deuteronomy 15:11 illustrates this command relation to translated 'shall' terminology, "For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'" Translated imperative mood expressions, which do not possess the above 'shall' terminology but merely assert what must or must not be done, are also commands. An example is Isa 1:17 which mandates, "Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow." Thus imperative mood commands are recognizable to the interpreter as abbreviated forms of the 'shall'-type translations.[5] Correspondingly, mentally appending the 'you shall' onto a translated imperative mood command does not, in any way, vary its intent or meaning. If God commands that something be done it is logical to presume that He likewise approves of it being done and that God's command is therefore also His endorsement.[6]

Commands can also be helpfully divided into ithree general categories by their textual form. Like the apodictic laws they subsume, apodictic commands can be defined as those without an if/then case structure. Casuistic commands, like their casuistic law

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[4] This categorization applies unless the 'shall' or 'will' refers to a consequence or an outcome rather than a command, such as in Exod 22:24: "...your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless." Said another way, future indicatives are pertinent only if they possess imperative overtones.

[5] While much of this methodology is accessible to those without original language competency, when ambiguous wordings (which could reference a mandate) are perceived in the translation, the original language texts must be pursued for the purpose of additional clarification. Accordingly, clearer grammatical constructions such as jussives need to be identified in tandem with the more ambiguous constructions —such as future indicatives with possible imperative overtones.

[6] Worthy of not_e_is the evangelical affirmation that the entire Bii:Jle.! <t_p_rofitable reyelation . concerning the mind of God. Consequently, hermeneutical disassociations of God's direct 'speech acts' from His indirect communication via the biblical writers need not complicate the heuristic as all of God's bequeathed mandates will be regarded to be relevant.

subset, include an if/then structuring and appear in two distinguishable forms. Casuistic commands subdivide into the sanctional ones which prescribe sanctions and the non-sanctional ones which do not. Leviticus 25:25 is an example of the latter: "If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part ofhis property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold."

Instructions

Instructions are information or guidelines concerning how to do something — such as how to concretely fulfil a command. Biblical probing reveals that instructions are often entwined with commands. One example is 1 Tim 5:3-16 where instructions are provided concerning how local churches are to take care of widows. Here the instructions themselves are commanded. Since this intertwining is quite common, the instruction category is revealed to be closely related to the command category.

Valuations

Valuations are approvals or disapprovals of an action or a volitional inclination.[7] Valuations can be subdivided into those which express God's description or categorization of something, His affective response to something and His treatment of something. This subdivision is heuristically helpful even though valuations do sometimes overlap and intertwine within a given passage.

Descriptive Valuations

God's descriptive valuations are concerned with His moral descriptions and categorizations. What matters is God's description or categorization of an interhuman treatment as either a sin or an act of righteousness. This requires detecting God's identification of something as sinful, evil, wicked, a deed of the flesh, worldly, not good (in the Prov 28:21, 24:23 sense), an abomination or a disobedience. By extension,

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[7] Nevertheless, only actions are relevant for interhuman ethics.

detecting an act of righteousness, obedience or good is also relevant. Texts which claim that sinners, the unrighteous, the wicked and those who practice iniquity 'do this' as well as passages which communicate a notion tantamount to 'a righteous person does this' are also of relevance. An example is Prov 29:7 which reads, "The righteous is concerned for the rights [r':l'] of the poor, The wicked does not understand such concern."[8] The wisdom literature deserves special attention here. God's description of something as an act of righteousness or sin is connected to the notions of wisdom and folly in the wisdom literature — particularly in the book of Proverbs.[9] Detecting acts of wisdom and what a wise person 'does,' in the non-worldly sense, is highly applicable. Equally relevant are passages concerning acts of folly and what a fool 'does,' in the *non-nai"ve* sense. The Hebrew terminology and context are helpful in distinguishing *nai"vete* and sinful folly in OT wisdom literature.[10] The term ,D identifies a *nai"ve* fool, ?:t u the unrighteous fool while ?,t;q, ? Q or ? 9 and ?,1 must be contextually distinguished.[12] Correspondingly, ,D also signifies *nai·ve* folly, :l?:t unrighteousness folly while the import of rn?,of or

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[8] Arguably "judicial justice" is a better translation of PJ than "rights" in this passage. See for example: Rowland E. Murphy, *Word Biblical Commentary: Proverbs,* vol. 22 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 221.

[9] Carl Schultz, "Fool, Foolishness, Folly," *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology,* ed. Walter Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 264-265; WilliamS. Lasor, David A. Hubbard and Frederic W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 461-462; Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., "The Sinner and the Fool," *First Things* 46 (October 1994): 24-29.

[10] A helpful resource, in this regard, is: Trevor Donald, "Semantic Field of'Folly' in Proverbs, Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes," *Vetus Testamentum* 13:3 (July 1963): 285-292.

[11] For additional information regarding?*see:* Annie Kraus, "The Sin of Folly," in *Standing before God* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1981), 289-300.

[12] Schultz, "Fool, Foolishness, Folly," 264-265; Donald, "Semantic Field of'Folly' in Proverbs, Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes," 289-292.

?Q,m? Qor m? W and n7 must needfully be determined by their context.[13] The moral weight of the NT terms for fool and foolish — licppwv, f!Wp6c:; and av6T]TO<;-along with their folly derivatives, must be determined from their context.

Affective Valuations

God's affective response to interhuman treatments reveals what God loves and hates. If God discloses that He loves, desires, is pleased by or delights in something then such treatments possess His approval. Conversely, when God reveals that He hates, loathes or is displeased by something then these very treatments possess His affective disapproval. An example of an affective valuation is "God loves a cheerful giver" — which, in its 2 Cor 9:7 context, is combined with the command to give only as one has "purposed in his heart" and "not grudgingly."

Treatment Valuations

God's treatment of interhuman actions ties into His role as Creator, Sustainer and Judge. Thus passages which identify what God will judge or punish, as well as what He commends, are relevant. Actions which God consides worthy of curse or blessing as well as those which He warns consequences over are likewise pertinent. Consequences come in two forms: 'direct' ones which God applies personally and 'indirect' ones which God has built into His moral order. The book of Proverbs is full of warnings concerning 'indirect' consequences. Exodus 22:22-24 is an example of a command coupled with a treatment valuation: "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children

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[13] Ibid. See also: Kraus, "The Sin of Folly," 289-300. Additional lexical background on these terms is also efficiently accessible via: "Folly, Fool, Madness, Shameless," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis,* ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

fatherless." God's promises of reward for various interhuman treatments likewise constitute a part of His treatment valuations.

Implied Valuations

Implied valuations are implied approvals or disapprovals of an action or a volitional inclination.[14] Some passages presume God's disapproval or approval of something in such a way as to imply that this presumption is indeed accurate and not simply human wish-fulfillment. Implied valuations are present whenever legitimate accusations of others or legitimate personal defense is laid out before God. In these cases God is also often requested to take action as His concurrence on the issue is assumed. An example is Job's statement of defense in Job 29:11-12, where he claims that "...when the ear heard, it called me blessed, And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me, Because I delivered the poor who cried for help, And the orphan who had no helper." An expectation of fault or blessing for something before God similarly indicates God's implied valuation in texts which reveal that this expectation is indeed divinely affirmed (such as in, for example, Job 31:16-22). Implied valuations require very careful heuristic investigation as many of the indictments and defenses recorded in the Scriptures do not clearly bear God's affirmation. By way of additional clarification, this requirement entails that the generalizing implications of genre[15] or the implied approval of positive narrative (as instanced in Acts 2:43-47) does not constitute an implied valuation-as it is here defined.

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[14] Here again: actions alone are relevant for interhuman ethical claims.

[15] Contra Richard Burridge who argues that the bibliographic genre of the gospels entails that every act of Jesus is a mandate via implied valuation: Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 23-31.

Summarized another way, biblical mandates are present throughout the range of speech act theory categories advocated by Finegan and Besnier.[16] Not only are directives (imperatives and spurrings) and verdictives (assessments) capable of containing mandate speech acts, but likewise representatives (descriptions), commissives (promises and threats), declarations (blessings and curses) and expressives (attitude expressions).

Hamartiological *Discrimen*

Detecting mandates is not enough. What are the heuristic indicators of the sinfulness of a mandate's transgression? The domain of sin is broad. Sin also incorporates an inherent condition, an inner force, a controlling resonance and a noetic blindness.[17] External interhuman justice is more concerned with 'sins' than 'sin.' Perhaps some brief thoughts on the generation of a biblical relation between justice and sin are relevant here. The term "justice" is often used to reference judicial justice in the Bible. Judicial justice is concerned with rectifying transgressions to mandates the non-transgression of which is, by implication, just. Similarly, 'overlapping' apodictic laws are related to their parallel sanctional casuistic laws in that they proscribe actions thr.t the sanctional casuistic laws identify rectifying sanctions for. Some apodictic and casuistic laws (for example Deut 24:14-15 and Deut 19:11-15 respectively) explicitly identify the justice mandate transgression as sin. By contrast, passages referencing "mercy" and its synonyms [18] never denote transgressing the described mercies as sin. Neither are any of sin's textual indicators, as further developed in the following two subsections, present in such passages. Extensive biblical investigation allows for extrapolation based upon a consistent

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[16] Edward Finegan and Niko Besnier, *Language: Its Structure and Use* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), 329.

[17] For additional discussion concerning these common reformation emphases see for example: Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 582.

[18] Mercy's synonyms include, at minimum, treatments labeled as sympathy, compassion, a gift or kind favor (xaptc;- excluding the Luke 6:32-34 and 1 Pet 2:19-20 reward sense).

pattern. The unwavering pattern of explicit mercy mandates never being related to sin and explicit justice mandates being so related permits sin to become the distinguishing trait between justice and mercy. As a result, contexts which identify the transgression of a particular mandate as wickedness, evil, iniquity, wrongdoing, an abomination, being counted amongst the transgressors, fleshly or sin disclose the justice obligation level of the mandate. If a particular treatment justifies its recipient to cry out unto God against the perpetrating party then such treatment is likewise a transgression of justice (such as in Deut 15:9 and 24:15). Treatments entailing a textually legitimatized expectation of guilt before God are similarly matters of justice.[19]

Interestingly, this relation between justice and sin is correctly sensed in liberation theology and the social gospel. Nicholas Wolterstorff proposes that forgiveness, when it is deemed an appropriate response to a particular transgression, may constitute the necessary demarcation between justice and mercy.[20] While Wolterstorffs "forgiveness language"[21] possesses a reduced level of utility (in comparison to the proposed hamartiological *discrimen)* due to the significantly smaller textual attestation that forgiveness receives, his proposal is nevertheless engaged upon a parallel trajectory-for it is interhuman sin that needs to be forgiven.

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[19] It may be helpful at this point to briefly affirm that not all instances of injustice possess equal weight. Some transgression instances, while nevertheless unjust, are not claim-worthy because they entail very limited effects and thus possess limited significance in this world.

[20] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "How Social Justice Got to Me, and Why It Never Left" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA., 18 November 2007).

[21] Ibid.

Discriminate and Indiscriminate Mandates

Biblical mandates address people discriminately and as they participate in three general obligator categories: individuals, the church and rulers.[22] Discriminately applied mandates subsume God's 'personal' directives to particular persons. Personal mandates do not apply to everyone and therefore are not part of interhuman justice. Thus, failing to lead the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt would not be a sin for Jethro since God did not call him to do it. But Moses, unlike everyone else, is constrained by God's personal mandate to obey or sin. All mandates which appear solely in the discriminate and lack explicit role dependence have no claim on indiscriminateness — indeed, the reader makes this distinction quite naturally in most instances.[23]

These qualifications permit us to heuristically identify (].justice mandate as one whose transgression is semantically or contextually identified as sinful for everyone within the intended obligator category. Such mandates are universal and indiscriminate in their application within their obligator category. Reciprocally, any transgressions which are semantically identified as not entailing sin for those in the intended obligator category betray mercy mandates.

A few more considerations regarding discriminate mandates are in order. When a mandate is given in such a way that it is not applied to peers in the same obligator category, it is given as a discriminate mandate (even though it may be broader than a 'personal' mandate). If a mandate's aim is to accomplish a specific time-bound, localized

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[22] As noted in the Main Obligator section of chapter 3, rulers would include political, government and judicial leaders as well as others in positions of societal responsibility. In contemporary democratic societies, citizens can affect, to some degree, the leadership of the societal rulers. As a result, this obligator category is closest to modern notions of societal responsibility.

[23] The troublesome instances involve discriminate mandates which conceptually overlap with indiscriminate ones and hence appear to imply obligation via their parasitical importing of the indiscriminate mandate's obligation status. Were they solitary, such discriminate mandates would have nothing to import. Conversely, mandates possessing explicit role dependence, such as those given to Timothy on the basis of his ministry, apply indiscriminately to those possessing the same role by virtue of the explicit association.

purpose such a mandate is likewise discriminate because of its 'localized' nature. These localized discriminates are identified by being aimed at an obligator subset while entailing an intent which expires when the mandate is fulfilled. Nevertheless, some of the mandates that are given to an obligator subset are not ultimately discriminate because an indiscriminate mandate overlaps with their localized intent at the same resolution level. This latter requirement of the same content resolution level is crucial because only such overlap —rather than a general moral impetus overlap —assures that the mandate is indiscriminate. It is precisely this parasitic overlap with an indiscriminate mandate that endows such apparently discriminate mandates with broader pertinence. As such, these discriminate mandates do not extend the domain of indiscriminate obligation though they sometimes, by way of parasitic overlap, participate in it.

Some localized mandates are very straightforward to identify as their range of applicability is completely exhausted-they cannot be presently applied. The Bible incorporates many such mandates as given by the apostles, the prophets, Jesus and even the Father. Such mandates are often reflexive and so constrained to the presence of their mandator. They may also be tied to something which no longer exists. Thus, Jesus' command, "Bring Me a denarius to look at" in Mark 12:15 cannot be obeyed because Jesus is no longer physically present. Similar examples include Paul's command regarding the cloak and books (2 Tim 4:13), Elijah's mandate to the widow of Zarephath to "give me your son" (1 Kgs 17:19) and God's instructions concerning the capturing of Jericho (Josh 6).

Hamartiological Corollaries

Two important corollaries increase the differentiation range of the sin heuristic —these concern divine punishment and divine reward. Sin incites a particular response from God. God cannot reward, in the positive-connotation sense, sin. Rather, He judges and punishes it (as seen in texts such as Rom 2:6-8). Consequently, any interhuman treatment which God punishes or prescribes human punishment for is an instance of justice. This frrst corollary envelops sanctional casuistic commands,

transgressions which receive warnings of curses, punishment or direct negative consequences (which are intended as punishment). Correspondingly, texts which explicitly reveal that a particular transgression does not receive punishment are promulgating mercy mandates.

By way of clarification, a few passages, such as Matt 25:31-46, require careful contextual and perhaps even systematic evaluation. Upon first glance eternal punishment (in Matt 25:31-46) appears to be connected to transgressing mandates which are elsewhere referred to as instances of mercy. The parable of the Good Samaritan reveals that providing food, drink, clothing and shelter in order to care for a sick stranger (as implied in Luke 10:30, 34, 35) are mercy treatments (Luke 10:37). While not much biblical data is extant on the obligation level of visiting prisoners so as to assist them, Heb 10:34 connects it to "sympathy" and Phil4:17-18 refers to such assistance as a "gift" to Paul during his imprisonment.[24] Such terminology intimates that a mercy obligation is in view. This apparent contradiction is generally ameliorated as Evangelicals do not understand Matt 25:31-46 to be claiming that salvation or damnation is a function of the good deeds described.[25] Rather, this passage is generally understood as Jesus' annunciation of another distinguishing feature between the righteous and the unrighteous —functioning akin to preparedness for His coming and the faithful use of talents in the previous parables of Matt 25. Thus the condemned are considered damned on the basis of both a lack of faith and its accompanying works —entailing that the works are not necessarily matters of justice.

Some mercy mandates also require special attention in that they are recursive. Their transgression results in a corresponding loss of a significant mercy benefit. If

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[24] Paul's imprisonment is generally acknowledged: Moises Silva, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Philippians*, 2nd ed., eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 1.

[25] See for example: Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 14-28,* val. 33B (Dallas: Word, 2002), 746-747.

believers fail to forgive or refuse a particular mercy while expecting a similar forgiveness or mercy from God, they act hypocritically and God opts not to show them a transposed degree of mercy (Lulce 6:37, Jas 2:13) or to forgive them (Matt 6:15, 18:35). Nonetheless, these special recursive mandates remain instances of mercy — for they are labeled as such — but with a particularly elevated obligation level. The transgression of such mercy mandates, though it entails very significant consequences, is not referred to as a sin — for such transgression only functions to hinder or prevent the application of divine forgiveness and mercy to the transgressor's *bona fide* sins.

The second corollary which increases the precision of the hamartiological *discrimen* concerns the textual intimation of rewards. A Scriptural pattern emerges with respect to God not specifically rewarding the avoidance of sin. Thus failing to murder, steal or bear false witness does not entail specific divine reward. Consequently, any interhuman treatment which God specifically rewards is apparently an instance of mercy. This differentiation does not include rewards, such as those of Deut 28, which are generated by a broad or general set of obediences.[26] In other words, the general eudaemonistic consequences of walking in obedience before God are extraneous here.[27] The relevant rewards are produced by a specific obedience, the transgression of which entails no corresponding curses. Thus, in Kantian terms, biblical ethics is heteronomous while biblical justice, beyond general eudaemonia, is not.

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[26] The general eudaemonism of Deut 28 is attributed to the broad obedience of God's commands: "Now it shall be, **if** you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today … All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you **if** you obey the LORD your God" (Deut 28:28:1-2). The curses for disobedience entail similar breadth: "**if** you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you" (Deut 28: 15).

[27] For additional discussion see: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 301-304.

An Objection Considered

One objection remains. Several biblical texts appear to blur the boundary line between sin and non-sin. Whereas some biblical mandates are semantically branded as mercy concerns within Scripture, the following two passages would initially seem to reclaim even this domain for justice (as per the proposed heuristic). James 4:17 asserts, "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." The "right thing" or "good" (KaA.6c;) referred to within this verse likely pertains to the avoidance of committing the particular arrogance that is decried within the immediately preceding verses (Jas 4:13-16). The "right thing" may also extend to not speaking against "one another" among the brethren (Jas 4:11) or even further to not submitting to worldliness (Jas 4:4). Arrogance, speaking against one's brother as well as worldliness are themselves branded as sins in other passages.

A focalized and contextual interpretation would perceive James to be saying, "Now that I've taught you what is right, not doing what you now know to be right would be a sin." Collaboratively, the "therefore" at the beginning ofJas 4:17 appears to connect this verse to the previously outlined sins ofJas 4 and, in particular, to arrogance concerning future endeavors.

A more individually 'principlizing' and subjective interpretation would endeavor to perceive a general principle within this verse. James would be understood to be saying, "If you realize that something is good, choosing not to do it is a sin." If the "something" within the previous paraphrase were a treatment extraneous to the biblical justice mandates, then this text would concern 'personal' sins —something which is not sinful for everyone. Consequently, such discriminate, 'personal' sin realizations remain outside the domain of interhuman justice —as do all similarly indiscriminate discriminates.

The second passage is Rom 14:23: "But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin." Here the question revolves around how broadly the term "whatever" or "everything," "miv ... 0,"

extends. The same contextual and subjective interpretive options are extant here as in Jas 4:17. If "m1v … 0" is limited to the issues Paul is discussing, such as the eating of meat or the drinking of wine, then the verse states that the believer should do what she believes God wants her to do in these instances.[28] Failing to obey what one is "fully convinced" of (Rom 14:5) with respect to these issues would be sinful for one obeys it "for the Lord" (Rom 14:6).[29]

The subjective interpretation would go beyond the context in emphasizing the general principle that the "violation of the dictates of conscience, even when the conscience does not conform perfectly to God's will, is sinful."[30] Even providing that this broader interpretation somehow proves preferable, its particular applications would once more prove non-universal, 'personal' and discriminately perceived. As a result, Rom 14:23, like Jas 4:17, would be placed outside of our concern: the realm of interhuman justice.

Methodological Summary

The hermeneutical methodology proposed in this chapter, and employed in the next, will be summarized below for the sake of methodological clarity. The textual *discrimen* serves to augment the semantic identification of justice and mercy at the textual leveV[1]

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[28] Provided that doing this does not "tear down the work of God for the sake of food" for even though "all things indeed are clean" such tearing down is unjust (Rom 14:20).

[29] Such an interpretation correlates well with Rom 14:14 where Paul clarifies that he knows and is "convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

[30] Douglas J. Moo, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans,* ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 863-864.

[31] For the sake of brevity and present utility, only NT semanticallabeling will be noted here.

justice Mandates

The justice level obligation of a mandate is disclosed upon the occurrence of any of the following three textual indicators: the mandate's transgression is revealed to be a matter of sin or as a matter which entails divine or divinely sanctioned punishment or the mandate possess the semantic labeling of justice.

Sin

A mandate's transgression is revealed to be a matter of sin in instances where it is textually labeled as sin (cq.tapT(a and cognates), sinful, wicked, evil (KaK6c;, 7tOVflp6c; and cognates), iniquity, wrongdoing, an abomination, wickedness, being counted amongst the transgressors, fleshly, and as what defiles. The mandate is likewise a sin if its transgression is something which God hates or loathes. Similarly, any mandate which reveals that 'sinners' or its synonyms — such as the wicked, the unrighteous and those who practice iniquity-"do this," reveals the sin nature of its transgression. If some treatment justifies its recipient to cry out to God, such treatment is a sin. A textually legitimatized expectation of guilt before God is also a ma ter of sin.

Punishment

Interhuman mandates which entail divine or divinely sanctioned punishment are also instances of justice. This subsumes all of the Sanctional Casuistic commands — the transgressions which remedial justice seeks to remedy. It also includes interhuman treatments which God curses or punishes and those treatments for which God provides warnings of direct negative consequences (which are intended as punishment).

Semantic Label

Mandates that are semantically labeled as being associated with the OLKTJ word group may be contextually disclosed to be matters of justice.[32] This semantic connection overlaps with the hamartiological because OLKTJ is concerned with punishment and legal penalty. Justice or righteousness, OLKULOaUVfJ, must also be contextually distinguished.[33] Injustice, aOLK(a, a cognate of sin/[4] is translated variously throughout the NT but refers, along with its immediate semantic relatives (aOLKEW, aO(KfJf.I.U, liOLKOc;, aO(Kwc;), to the justice level of obligation.[35] Another common NT term for justice or judgment is Kp(mc;.

Mercy Mandates

The mercy level obligation of a mandate is revealed upon the occurrence of any of the following four textual indicators: the mandate's transgression is explicitly revealed as not a matter of sin or is explicitly identified as not entailing divine punishment or is disclosed to specifically entail divine reward or the mandate possess the semantic labeling of mercy.

Explicit Non-sin

When a mandate is explicitly described, at the textual level, as not entailing sin or its synonyms (as outlined above) it is a mercy mandate.

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[32] For additional information see: Ulrich Falkenroth, "cStKT]," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); "cStKT]," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* eds. Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich *[BDAG],* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), in *BibleW arks* 7.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 2004).

[33] Colin Brown and Horst Seebass, "cStKatOoUVT]," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

[34] Ibid.

[35] Walther Giinther, "clcStK(a," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

Explicit Non-punishment

Similarly, texts which explicitly reveal that the transgression of their enclosed mandate does not receive divine punishment are promulgating mercy mandates.

Specifically Entailed Reward

Any interhuman treatment which God specifically rewards — rather than eudaemonistically as part of a broader set of obediences — is an instance of mercy. Such rewards are produced by a specific obedience, the transgression of which possesses no corresponding sin indicators.

Semantic Label

Mandates that are semantically labeled as being associated with having pity are mercy mandates. Being motivated by pity is opposite to being motivated by the comprehensive constraint of justice.[36] The main NT cognates of pity include: £A.wc; (mercy), oiKTLpf16c; (compassion), crrrA.ayxv((OflUL (compassion) and OUf!rra8£w (sympathy). [37] These cognates, and their semantic relatives, entail a mercy obligation level analogous to the graciousness and kindness communicatd by xapLc;. The Jerusalem collection, for example, is explicitly identified as a mercy endeavor in 2 Cor 9:7 (as collaborated by 2 Cor 8:8) and is likewise connected to mercy terminology elsewhere

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[36] If £Awe; and its cognates were somehow to be considered to be merely semantically camouflaged responses to justice obligation, all biblical notions of mercy would disintegrate. In Rom 9:14-16, for example, the defense of God's justice (v. 14) requires that God's mercy (£A££w, vv. 15, 16) and compassion (oiKTipw, v. 15) be, at least to some degree, voluntary-and certainly not constrained by a justice level of obligation. Erasing the semantic divide would make passages such as this altogether self-contradictory. The biblical texts demonstrate significant resistance to such an amalgamation –for they often contrast mercy with just deserts (as seen, for example, in Matt 18:23-34, Rom 4:4 and Eph 2:8-9).

[37] Hans-Helmut Esser, "£Awe;, oiKTLpf16c;, arrA.ayxvl<of!UL, arrMyxva, arrA.ayxvov," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); "auf1rraEl£w, UUf!rraEl c;," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, eds. Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich *[BDAG]*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), in *BibleWorks* 7.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 2004).

(xaptc; in 2 Cor 8:6-7, EAETJ!lOmJVTJ in Acts 24:17). This same collection also collaborates that the OtaKov(a (service, ministry) word group is similarly related to mercy {2 Cor 9:1).[38]

Mandates of Uncertain Obligation

Under certain conditions the justice or mercy status of a mandate remains uncertain. This occurs when the following conditions converge: it is unclear whether the transgression of the mandate is a sin or not, thus it does not entail punishment for its transgression (nor explicit non-punishment for its transgression), it does not specifically entail reward and it is not semantically labeled as denoting 'mercy' or 'justice' (or their synonyms).

These considerations conclude the presentation of the focused hermeneutical methodology proposed in this dissertation. This methodology will be utilized in the following chapter to analyze the NT data concerning the moral treatment of the poor and to enable the preliminary evaluation of the core contention concerning the domain of justice — whether justice is ultimately needs or ownership based.

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[38] Such service, cStaKov[a, unto others is also revealed as being divinely rewarded in a multitude of passages and this hamartiological correlation affirms its mercy status.

CHAPTERS

BIBLICAL DATA AND ANALYSIS

The NT data concerning helping the poor may be subdivided into 114 mandate passages and an additional 52 clarifier passages. These numbers represent verse groupings which are, to some extent,_ g _abl: The methodology and analysis does not depend, in any way, upon this pragmatic enumeration. Additional passages also appear, upon first glance, to be of possible relevance. Only a selection of these —specifically those which commonly receive treatment in scholarly literature concerning Christian obligations to the poor —will be noted and addressed within this chapter. [1]

The mandate passages enclose biblical mandates while the clarifier passages subsume clarifiers which serve to elucidate the components and contours of these mandates. The content of the textual mandates may, in turn, be collocated into 23 pragmatically chosen obligation 'aspects.' These aspects serve to group the biblical data by the common goal or specific issue that the mandates aim to address. These aspects merely function to enable an orderly presentation of the biblical data. Some of the passages address several aspects and thus will necessarily recur within the data presentation and analysis.

The data aspects will be presented in the order of their resolution, from highest to lowest (primary sorting), coupled with the order of their attestation, also from high to low (secondary sorting). Lower resolution aspects, save the moral impetus level, will be integrated into this order at the first instance of their overlap with a higher resolution

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[1] The Appendix (beginning on page 191) itemizes the references of the minimal set of biblical mandate, clarifier and possibly relevant passages (including those not addressed in this chapter) which are pertinent to any NT study of the moral treatment of the poor.

aspect. Consequently, the first aspect of helping the poor to be addressed will be almsgiving as this aspect, from among the specific poverty level resolution mandates, possesses the widest attestation within the NT biblical data. The lowest resolution mandates, those at the moral impetus level, will receive concise summary after all the other (higher resolution) aspects have been considered. Thus the data will be presented in an ordering consonant with the author's resolution principle.

The biblical data will be tabulated in figures, by aspect, and followed by a discussion of the interpretive considerations relevant to discerning the mandate content and the content analysis itself. The communicated level of obligation, whether justice or mercy, will receive primary interest. The latter part of the chapter will provide a cumulative contour summary of the data in conjunction with a proposed evaluation of the core contention and the extant theological dissonance.

Data Aspects

The main pragmatically chosen aspect categories concern: almsgiving, the Jerusalem collection, sharing, working, good works, poss ssions, wealth, covetousness, generosity, giving and lending, being first or last, receiving the least, widows, gleaning, partiality and oppression. A brief and selective representation of the moral impetuses unto love, justice and mercy will also be tabulated. Data of auxiliary importance will also be noted but not tabulated. Both via semantic and conceptual linkage, the provision of alms receives, by far, the greatest NT textual attestation. The following figure (Figure 4) will function as a legend for the remaining figures in this chapter and outline the abbreviations that will be employed. The delineations utilized here were developed within chapters 3 and 4. Of these, the resolution level, the level of obligation, the means of obligation disclosure and the text's poverty focus will receive tabulation.

Figure 4: Data Presentation Legend

			S/H	
Verses	Resolution :	Obligation Level	Obligation Disclosure	Poverty Focus
	I Moral Impetus G = General, P =Principle (P()or) ;>• .s: g .i te S Specifk (Poor) I= imcertam	J =Justice M=Mercy *blank* = uncertain	S = Semantically H = Hamartiologically *blank* = undisclosed	I= Immediately Poor P = Potentially Poor *blank*= beyond Poor

The clarifier figures will only tabulate resolution and poverty focus as mandate related columns are irrelevant for clarifiers. The passages in each aspect will be ordered canonically with the exception of parallels which will be grouped together with their first representative. The biblical text will be presented in the *NASB Update*[2] translation but without its original italics as italics will be employed to highlight sections of particular importance.

Alms

Providing alms, EAET]!lOmJVT], is semantically related to acting out of mercy, £A.eo<;. This connection in obligation level is affirmed in Acts 24:17, where Paul is recorded as referring to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem as "£A.ET]llOmJVa<; 7tot awv"[3] (bringing alms). Paul asserts that this same collection is fully voluntary in 2 Cor 9:7: "Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." The additional mercy terminology attached to this collection, such as OtaKov[a (service) and xapt<; (gracious gift), further confirms the

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[2] *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [NAU]* (La Habra: Lockman Foundation, 1995).

[3] The Greek text used throughout is: Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece,* Nestle-Aland 27th ed. *[NA27]* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993). As previously noted, the lexical form of the original language terms will be provided throughout this dissertation in all instances except where the original language text is being directly quoted.

linguistic contention that almsgiving is an act of mercy obligation.[4] This contention, that the semantic overlap between alms and mercy parallels an equivalent obligation level overlap, is also, as shall be seen, affirmed by the *discrimen.* This affirmation occurs within the broader range of almsgiving mandates —thus revealing that the collection for Jerusalem is not an isolated mercy subset.

Figure 5: Alms Mandates

	Res.	I/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 6:1-4 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2 "So when you *give to the poor* [EAET]flOmlVT]], do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3 "But when you *give to the poor* [EAET]flOoUVT]], do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your *giving* [EAET]flOmlVT]] will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.	S	M	S	I/p
Matt 19:21-24 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and *sell your possessions* and *give* [o[OWflL] *to the poor,* and you will have *treasure in heaven;* and *come,follow Me."* 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. 23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, *it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.* 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."	S	M	H	

[4] While RudolfBultmann notes, on the basis of Tobit 2:14, 12:9, 14:11 and Baruch 5:9, that Hellenistic Jews could use OLKULOmJVT] (righteousness) to subsume almsgiving, such references are always combined with EAET]flOmlVT] akin to Matt 6:1-4: RudolfK. Bultmann, "£AET]flOmlVT]," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), in *PC Study Bible* 4.3 (Seattle: Biblesoft, 2006). As such, this observation merely restates that the O[Kmoc; word group is not always related to justice but envelopes the broader notion of righteousness: "O[Kmoc;, OLKULOmJVT]," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* eds. Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich *[BDAG],* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), in *BibleWorks* 7.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 2004). See also: Hans-Helmut Esser, "Mercy, Compassion," *New International Dictionary ofNew Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

II Mark 10:19-23 "You know the commandments, 'DO NO:r MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" 20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." 21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and *sell all you possess and give* [oiow1-u] *to the poor,* and you will have *treasure in heaven;* and *come,follow Me."* 22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. 23 ,-And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, *"How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"*	.S	M	HI	
II Luke 18:22 When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; *sell all that you possess and distribute* [otaoiow!lt] *it to the poor,* and you shall have *treasure in heaven;* and come, *follow Me."*	S	M	H	I
Luke 12:22-34 And *He said to* His *disciples, "For this reason I say to you,* do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. 23 "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 "And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? 26 "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 "And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 ,- "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 *"Sell your possessions* and *give to charity* [EAET]llOaUVTj]; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, 'an unfailing *treasure in heaven,* where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.	S	M	H S	I/ P
Acts 10:2,4, 31 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms [EAET]!lOaUVT]] to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. 4 And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and *alms* [EAET]!lOaUVT]] have ascended as a *memorial* before God. 31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your *alms* [EAET]!lOaUVT]] have been remembered before God.	S	M	S	I/ P

In Matt 6:1-4 Jesus provides instructions concerning the 'how' of almsgiving -**that** alms should be given without fanfare (vv. 2-3). Commands to give alms, the 'do' rather than the 'when,' appear in later passages. The fact that one's left hand should not know what the right hand is doing is most likely a reference to how secretive this

almsgiving should be rather than an indication of the extent of its generosity.[5] The mercy obligation level of this mandate is affirmed by the offer of reward (!.ucr86c:;, vv. 1-2) and divine recompense (cmooiowf.H, v. 4). Bultmann contends that, in the NT, eAETJflOaUVTJ is "always to the poor,"[6] and this affirmation accounts for the translation in Figure 5. This observation likewise accounts for the poverty focus levels assigned to Luke 12:22-34 and Acts 10:2, 4, 31. Because eAETJflOaUVTJ is semantically revealed to be pity-driven, in the empathetic sense, it makes sense that alms would be given to objects of sympathy — the needy poor.

Jesus tells the rich young ruler of Matt 19:21-24, Mark 10:19-23 and Luke 18:22 to sell all of his possessions and give the proceeds to the immediately poor (7nwx6c:;). Jesus' mandate offers a reward for its accomplishment-"treasure in heaven" (8Tjcraupov t.v oupavoic:;) — as likewise promised, particularly to His disciples, in Matt 6:20. The mandate to give up one's possessions will receive attention in the Possessions section below/ important at present is that the giving of alms is revealed to be an issue of mercy.

Luke 12:22-34 merges the semantic and hamartiological indicators together in explicitly clarifying that Jesus' call to His disciples (v. 22) -to sell their possessions for the purpose of giving the proceeds away — is an act of almsgiving that shall be divinely rewarded. Thus almsgiving, a giving to the poor out of pity for their needy condition, is affirmed to be an act of mercy obligation.

God's approval of Cornelius' almsgiving in Acts 10:2, 4, 31 is described as a "memorial" (v. 4) which has attracted God's favor. As with Tabitha in Acts 9:36, 39-41, a commitment to almsgiving receives divine favor — even miracles. Such approval serves to encourage emulation.

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[5] Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13,* vol. 33A (Dallas: Word, 2002), 140.

[6] Bultmann, "£AET]f.LOaUVf]."

[7] This section begins on page 113.

Figure 6: Alms Clarifiers

Matt 26:6-13 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at the table. 8 But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste? 9 "For this perfume might have been sold for a high price and the *money given to the poor."* 10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a *good deed* to Me. 11 "For you always have the poor with you; but you do not always have Me. 12 "For when she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. 13 "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."	S	I
// Mark 14:3-9 While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head. 4 But some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted? 5 "For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and the *money given to the poor."* And they were scolding her. 6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a *good deed* to Me. 7 "For you always have the *poor* with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me. 8 "She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. 9 "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."	S	I
// John 12:3-8 Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray ;Him, said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and *given to poor people?"* 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it. 7 Therefore Jesus said, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. 8 "For you always have the *poor* with you, but you do not always have Me."		I
John 13:29 For some were supposing, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus was saying to him, "Buy the things we have need of for the feast"; or else, that he should *give something to the poor.*		I
Acts 9:36,39-41 Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with *deeds of kindness and charity* [£pywv aya8wv Kal EAET]flOOUvwv] which she continually did. 39 So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the *tunics and garments* that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. 40 But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.	S	I/ P

Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9 and John 12:3-8 reveal that the disciples were sensitive to the need to give alms, though Judas is said to have mixed this concern with selfish motives. This fits well with Jesus' call to His disciples to give the proceeds of their

possessions to the poor. Jesus' acceptance of this costly "good deed" ("KaA.ov pyacra-ro," Matt 26:10) confirms that He counted almsgiving as a mercy level obligation. Only at such a level is His acceptance of the perfume morally acceptable rather than a condoning of sinful injustice. If the very poor were to possess Wolterstorffs sustenance rights, Jesus' acceptance would prove unjust —a trampling of their rights. The disciples' reaction affirms that there were immediately poor people within reach. These could have been assisted with the perfume's proceeds. Jesus' defense of this action as a "good deed" ascribes to almsgiving, even in the face of immediate poverty, a mercy status.

John 13:29 affirms that Jesus and the disciples often gave alms from out of their support (Luke 8:1-3). For this reason Judas' suspicious exit did not garner the attention that it would have otherwise.

Tabitha's "deeds ofkindness and charity," "£pywv aya8wv Kal EAE'lflOO"UVWV" (Acts 9:36) reveal that good works and alms are related. Tabitha's example reveals that the giving of clothing, and not just the donation of funds, is a legitimate component of almsgiving (v. 39). Tabitha's alms appear to have been focused on widows, women who find themselves in immediate or potential poverty by way of calamity.

In summary, the almsgiving mandates are all aimed at individuals and possess a broad recipient range which extends beyond needy believers to the poor generally. Almsgiving, which is the giving of sustenance aid to the poor, is semantically and hamartiologically identified as an act of mercy in the text.

Jerusalem Collection

As noted earlier, the collection for the believing poor in Jerusalem is also identified as a form of almsgiving in Acts 24:17. This provision of alms is unique in the NT because its purpose is to alleviate the poverty of believer's who are remote from the donors. While most alms were given locally, this collection was taken for remote believers who were, for the most part, of a different nationality and descent. This latter aspect also plays a role in this collection because "the Gentiles have shared in their [Jewish believers'] spiritual things" and thus "they are indebted to minister to them also in material things"

(Rom 15:27). Paul's concern that "service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints" (Rom 15:31) reveals that the goals of the collection encompass a desire for unity among Jewish and Gentile Christians. Paul's desire is that, as a result of the "proof given by this ministry, they [Jewish believers] will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ" (2 Cor 9:13).[8]

Figure 7: Jerusalem Collection Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
1 Cor 16:1-3 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, *as he may prosper,* so that no collections be made when I come. 3 When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your *gift* to Jerusalem;	S	M	S	
2 Cor 8:6-8 So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this *gracious work* as well. 7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. 8 ,- *I am not speaking this as a command,* but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also.	S	M	S	
2 Cor 8:11-12 But now finish doing it also, so that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so there may be also the completion of it *by your ability.* 12 For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable *according to what a person has,* not according to what he does not have.	S			
2 Cor 8:13-15 For this is not for the ease of others and for your affiiction, but by way of equality-- 14 at this present time your abundance [m:p[am:ufla] being a supply for *their need* [uaTEPTJflU], so that their abundance also may become a supply for your need, that there may be equality; 15 as it is written, "HE WHO gathered MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO gathered LITTLE HAD NO LACK."	S			
2 Cor 8:24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.	S			
2 Cor 9:5-6 So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful *gift,* so that the same would be ready as a bountiful *gift* and not affected by *covetousness.* 6 ,- Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.	S	M	S	
2 Cor 9:7 Each one must do just as he has *purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion,* for God loves a cheerful giver.	S	M		

[8] James D. G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans 9-16,* vol. 38B (Dallas: Word, 2002), 879.

In 1 Cor 16:1-3, Paul mandates that the collection be carried out on a weekly basis and that all believers, likely as believing households, are to participate. The donation is to be given in accordance to the prosperity (Euoo6w) which each one experiences. Prospering, here as in 3 John 1:2, is seen as a positive occurrence which enables this contribution to the needs of the Jerusalem saints. The collection is described as a gift, xapLc;,, a grace or compassionate kindness. This description identifies the collection as an instance of mercy.

This collection for Jerusalem receives the most attention in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians — particularly in chapters eight and nine. Paul affirms that the collection is a xapLc; in 2 Cor 8:6-8. He further clarifies that this collection is not something commanded and, consequently, is driven by love in a voluntary fashion (v. 8). The earnestness of the churches of Macedonia is to prove an inspiration to them (2 Cor 8:1-5).[9]

2 Corinthians 8:11-12 reaffirms that the collection is to be done in accordance with each one's ability and not so as to drive one to poverty-for "it is acceptable according to what a person has" (v. 12).

In the following verses, 2 Cor 8:13-15, Paul clarifies that the example of the Macedonians, in giving "beyond their ability" (2 Cor 8:3), is not normative. The collection is not intended to result in the distress (8A'hj!Lc;) of poverty for them (v. 13). The commended equality is not communist in the commonly perceived sense of aiming towards an equal distribution of goods — and it is certainly, as noted earlier, voluntary. The Corinthians are told not to distribute so as to themselves become afflicted with poverty. Similarly, the collection is intended to meet the need (ucrTEP'l!la) among the Jerusalem saints rather than establish an economic equilibrium or parity. This is reasserted by Paul's quotation ofExod 16:18 which affirms the gathering of as much

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[9] Ralph P. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Corinthians,* vol. 40 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 262.

manna as each household needed (Exod 16:16). In 2 Cor 8:15, this proportional-to-need gathering of manna becomes a model for those with abundance to "not have too much" and for those with need to have "no lack." The sharing of the collection is thus intended to voluntarily 'shave off the Corinthian's surplus for the sake of alleviating the immediate poverty among some of the Jerusalem saints (the rrTwxoc; in Rom 15:26).[10] Paul explains that a reverse flow of abundance (v. 14) may come, as a reciprocity, at some future time.[11] These considerations help to clarify the extent and assistance goals of this almsgiving collection. The sharing is need-based.

Paul connects participation in the collection with love in the mandate of 2 Cor 8:24. Thus love explicitly provides the overarching moral impetus behind the collection.

The collection is also referred to as a gift in 2 Cor 9:5. The term employed, euA.oy(a, refers to a blessing or thank offering and is thus analogous to the "acceptable sacrifice" of meeting Paul's own needs in Phil4:18.[12] Paul's desire that covetousness, rrA.eove (a, not affect the contribution identifies avarice, which is the desire for wealth and the love of money, as something which would make for an unbountiful gift.[13] In this manner covetousness is related to almsgiving as its neme is. The notion of reward in 2 Cor 9:6 may not be strong enough to provide a hamartiological *discrimen* but proves suggestive.

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[10] Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, trans. John H. Schutz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 99-110. This understanding is contra Ralph Martin who sees the abundance as spiritual rather than material: Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Corinthians*, 267. Interestingly, Martin concedes that the reciprocity described in the latter half of verse 14 is likely material: Ibid., 266.

[11] The future view of this reciprocity makes it difficult to conceive of it in spiritual terms akin to the past spiritual sharing of Rom 15:27-a sharing which occurred for these Gentiles when they were grafted into the faith. See also: J. H. Bernard, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 3, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Armstrong, 1903), 88.

[12] Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Corinthians*, 285.

[13] The possibility that TIAEOVE [a refers to extortion in 2 Cor 9:5 is unlikely: Ibid., 286.

The next verse, 2 Cor 9:7, explicitly clarifies that the contribution, even though it is for poor believers to which the Corinthians are spiritually indebted (Rom 15:27), is a matter of mercy obligation. Each person must decide how to give so that the giving is cheerful and ungrudging. The provision of the gift is without compulsion (avayKll) and thus the opposite of fulfilling a sustenance right.

Figure 8: Jerusalem Collection Clarifiers

Vv.	Res.	Poor
Acts 11:28-30 One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. 29 And in *the proportion that any of the disciples had means,* each of them determined to send a contribution for the *relief* [OtaKov[a] of the brethren living in Judea. 30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.	S	
Acts 24:17 "Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings;	S	I/P
Rom 15:25-27 but now, I am going to Jerusalem *serving* [OtaKov£w] the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a *contribution* [Kmvwv[a] for the *poor* [7nwx6<;] among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.	S	I
2 Cor 8:2-5 that in a great ordeal of *affliction* [9A.iljlt<;] their abundance of joy and their *deep* [paSo<;] *poverty* [TITWX£La] overflowed in the wealth of their *liberality* [cmA6T'l<;]. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the *support* [OtaKov[a] of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.	S	I
2 Cor 8:9 For you know the *grace* [xapt<;] of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.	S	I
2 Cor 8:19-20 and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this *gracious work* [xapt<;], which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, 20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;	S	
2 Cor 9:1 For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this *ministry* [OtaKov[a] to the saints;	S	
2 Cor 9:8-11 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having *all sufficiency* in everything, you may have an abundance for every *good deed;* 9 as it is written, "HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER." 10 "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; 11 you will be enriched in everything for *all liberality,* which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.	S	

2 Cor 9:12-13 For the *ministry* [OtuKov(u] *of this service* is not only fully supplying the *needs* of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. 13 Because of the proof given by this *ministry* [OtuKov(u], they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the *liberality* [unA.6-r'll of your *contribution* [Kotvwvlu] to them and to all,	.S

Acts 11:28-30 confirms that the recipients of the collection were Christian believers living in Judea. The givers gave in proportion to their financial means or prosperity (eimop£w). Their contribution is referred to as a service or ministry (OLaKov(a) and hence re-identifies the collection as an act of mercy.

As previously mentioned, Acts 24:17 is important because it relates the collection to almsgiving.

Paul also identifies the collection as serving (OLaKov£w) the Judean saints in Rom 15:25-27. This service is recognized as an expression of fellowship — a participatory sharing (Kmvwv(a) -**with** the immediately poor in Jerusalem. Consequently, such almsgiving to needy believers, even when remote, is an expression of the fellowship and unity of the body of Christ. Paul also affirms that this expression of fellowship is particularly fitting because as "the Gentiles have shared ii;l their [Jewish believers'] spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things" (v. 27).

The Macedonian believers referred to in 2 Cor 8:2-5 were exemplary, though not normative, because they contributed out of their financial distress (8A.T'l'Lc;) and their deep poverty ("pa8ouc; 7rrwxe(a"). Their contribution was generous (arr:\.6-r'lc;) and it appears they may have had to convince Paul to accept their merciful OLaKov(a to the saints (on account of their poverty). Paul explains that the Macedonians "first gave themselves to the Lord" (v. 5) and this trusting entrusting appears analogous to the trust required to not worry in fashion akin to the Sermon on the Mount {Matt 6:25-34). Trusting God's provision and acknowledging His Lordship appears to have been an important part of their contribution. The poor in Jerusalem appear to have been, by implication of Paul's desire to not alleviate the needs of one group at the expense of the distress of another (2 Cor 8:13-15), very poor.

Jesus' merciful and gracious (xapLc;) example, ofbecoming poorer in order to make others richer, is held up as a model in 2 Cor 8:9. As already noted, this mimetic application to the collection is mandated in other passages. The extent of the mimesis is narrowed in the verses that follow (2 Cor 8:13-15).

2 Corinthians 8:19-20 likewise reaffirms that the contribution is an instance of xapLc; and hence mercy obligation. Similarly, the collection is also referred to as a service (oLaKov(a) in 2 Cor 9:1.

In 2 Cor 9:8-11, Paul asserts that God is able to provide the Corinthians with self-sufficiency (a\rrapKELa) so that they do not need to fear becoming immediately poor and beggarly themselves as a result of donating their current excess. God is also able to give them an abundance for enabling every good work "nav fpyov aya86v" (v. 8). As a result, self-sufficiency is affirmed as a legitimate value along with the close relationship of almsgiving to good works.

The use of JtEVfJc; for poor in 2 Cor 9:9 follows the Septuagint translation of Ps 112:9. This is the only occurrence of this form of poverty in the NT except for the reference to the poor widow in Luke 21:2. This widow is nevertheless immediately poor for she donates "all that she had to live on" (Luke 21:4 //Mark 12:44) and is thus called n-rwxoc; in the parallel passage (Mark 12:42). The use of JtEVfJc; is consistent with Paul's intent to console the Corinthians that their giving, even if it was to bring them into the potential poverty of the working poor who have no rainy day fund, will receive God's supply (v. 10). This supply will enrich (nA.ou-r(w) them and thus enable all their engagements in generosity (cmA.6TfJc;).[14] These verses also serve to highlight the connection between good works, almsgiving, and "all" generosity ("nacrav cmA.6TfJTa," v. 11) -which is here suggestively connected to helping the poor.

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[14] Ralph Martin translation of 2 Cor 9:11, that "you will be made rich in every way so that you can always be generous" captures the thought well: Ibid., 292.

The immediately following verses, 2 Cor 9:12-13, reinforce the mercy character of the collection which is referred to as a ministry of sacred service,[15] "oLaKov(a T c; A£LToupy1ac;" in verse 12 and again as a service (OLaKov[a) in verse 13. The participatory sharing of fellowship (KoLvwv(a) is connected to alleviating the needs (uoT£prut.a) of the Judean believers.

Perhaps Gal6:2, which mandates that Christians "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ," also deserves a brief note. Some, such as John Strelan, have argued that the burdens mentioned here are a reference to the financial support of the Jerusalem church.[16] It is nevertheless more likely that the burdens of Gal 6:2 relate to the temptations of Gal 6:1 and, by extension, to other heavy burdens that a believer may face.[17]

The collection for Jerusalem obligated believers, who gave as members of their local churches (2 Cor 8:1), to provide alms to their remote brethren in Judea. The cause of the Judean poverty is revealed to be calamity, the "great famine" during "the *reign* of Claudius" (Acts 11:28).[18] The collection is need-focused, just like the almsgiving of which it is a subset, and its recipients are identified as the immediately poor. This contribution, despite the extra additive of its obligators' spiritual indebtedness, is both semantically and explicitly identified as possessing a mercy level obligation. The maintaining of this mercy

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15 "A.srroupy6c;" *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature [BDAG]*.

16 John G. Strelan, "Burden-Bearing and the Law of Christ: A Re-Examination of Galatians 6.2," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975): 266-76.

17 E. M. Young, "'Fulfil the Law of Christ': An Examination of Galatians 6.2," *Studia biblica et theologica* 7 (1977): 31-42; Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians*, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 274.

18 R. J. Knowling, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Armstrong, 1903), 270.

status, particularly in the face of a famine, contradicts the claimed justice status of Wolterstorff s third duty-to sustain the victims of sustenance deprivation.

Share

The giving of alms is conceptually related to beneficent sharing and to providing for sustenance needs. Such assistance is part of "remembering the poor" (Gal 2:10)-something which both Paul and the other apostles were eager to do.

Figure 9: Share Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 25:31-46 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; 33 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 *'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'* 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? i38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "The King will answer and say to them, *'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'* 41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not *visit* [tmoxtmOf..!UL] Me.' 44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not *take care of* [OtaKov£w] You?' 45 "Then He will answer them, *'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'* 46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."	S	M	S	I
Luke 3:11 And he would answer and say to them, "The man who has *two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise."*	S			

	S	M	S	I
Luke 10:27-37 And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my *neighbor?"* 30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt *compassion,* 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed *mercy* toward him." Then Jesus said to him, *"Go and do the same."*	P I			
Luke 14:12-14 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. 13 "But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,* 14 and you will be *blessed,* since *they do not have the means to repay you;* for you will be *repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*	S	M	H	I
Rom 12:20-21 "BUT IF YOUR *ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK;* FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.	S	M	H	I
Heb 13:16 And do not neglect *doing good* and *sharing* [Kmvwv[a], f6r with such sacrifices God is pleased.	P			I/ P
Jas 2:14-17 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is *without clothing and* in *need of daily food,* 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them *what* is *necessary for their body,* what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.	S			I
1 John 3:16-18 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the *world's goods,* and sees his brother in *need* [xpda] and closes his heart [crrrMyxvov] against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in *deed* and truth.	S G I			I

The parable of the sheep and the goats in Matt 25:31-46 is perhaps the most famous mandate passage concerning helping the poor. As previously noted in the Hamartiological Corollaries section of chapter4 (beginning on page 75), this passage initially appears to assume a justice obligation status for its mandates. Nevertheless, just as the general reward of eternal life is not specific enough to classify these mandates as issues

of mercy, the warning of eternal punishment is commonly understood, among evangelicals, to extend to the broader righteousness of being a genuinely believing follower of the Messiah. In this way, this passage's obedience is seen as analogous to possessing the living faith ofJas 2:14-17 and having the love of God abide in the believer in a 1 John 3:16-18 manner. The fact that most of the components of verse 35 are explicitly labeled as matters of mercy in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) prepares the reader for the labeling of all of these instances of care as DLaKovew in verse 44. This service terminology semantically identifies these specific mandates as issues of mercy. As a result, in terms of needy believers (v. 40),[19] feeding the hungry, providing drink to the thirsty, showing hospitality to strangers, clothing the naked and caring for the sick and imprisoned are acts of mercy. Such needs are characteristic of those in immediate poverty. The imprisoned were often dependant on those outside to provide for their sustenance needs and the acr8ev£w, whether sick, disabled or physically feeble, were similarly in need of external assistance.

While not the objects of this mandate, it is not an unfounded extrapolation to presume that doing such service to unbelievers would alsb constitute mercy. Because believers have a higher obligation to "do good" to "those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal6:10) it is indeed hard to conceive that providing such assistance to unbelievers would be an issue of justice.[20] Jesus' mention of"the least of these" (Matt 25:40, 45) appears to the author as a vehicle for affirming that providing such care even to the least socially or spiritually significant believer is nevertheless rendered unto the lofty King (vv.

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[19] Within the remainder of Matthew, all of referents to Jesus' "my brothers" statements are his followers (Matt 12:48-49, 28:10, 23:8). It is therefore unlikely that humankind generally is intended here. This consistent pattern is maintained even outside of Matthew (John 20:17, Rom 8:29, Heb 2:11-12). For additional argumentation see: Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 14-28,* vol. 33B (Dallas: Word, 2002), 744.

[20] For gospel parallels concerning this higher obligation to believers see the Receive section (beginning on page 141).

31, 34).[21] From a sociological point of view, such 'least significant' were, in Jesus' day, the young and the low class poor. Nevertheless, Jesus may have had spiritual 'worthiness' in view as in Matt 5:19 which constitutes the only other use of EA.axtcrTo<;, as it refers to people, in Matthew. While going (£pxo!lat, vv. 36, 39) to the sick and imprisoned is initially left unspecified, the later clarification that this going constitutes visiting (£mcrKETITO!laL, v. 43) these recipients strongly suggests that the provision of aid is intended.[22]

In Luke 3:11, John the Baptist mandates that anyone possessing two or more sets of clothes ought to share with the immediately poor person who has none. Similarly if one has sufficient food he is to share with the immediately poor person who has none. The obligation status of such sharing is not clarified in this passage nor in the analogous Jas 2:14-17 and 1 John 3:16-18 passages.

Luke 10:27, 33, 36-37 clarifies that part of the content of the command to love one's neighbor is to have mercy on the immediately poor person who has come to this state as a result of injustice. Providing shelter, care and medical care to a half dead (!lLSav <;) crime victim is nevertheless related to taking pity on such a victim. This passage affirms that acting out of compassion (crnA.ayxv((o!lat, v. 33) and showing mercy (£A.wc;, v. 37) is indeed synonymous. The Samaritan provided his aid to someone who would have looked down upon him and extended his aid to allow for the victim's recovery. Jesus command to go and do likewise (v. 37) extends the specific nature of this mandate to the principle resolution level and as far as the impetus resolution level oflove (v. 27). Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan lil<ewise controverts Wolterstorffs third duty.

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[21] Donald Hagner's contention that EACtXL0"TOt; is a superlative that refers "to disciples generally" makes its presence redundant in the present passage and is therefore unconvincing: Ibid., 744-745.

[22] This 'looking after,' communicated through the language of'visiting,' is also mandated in Jas 1:27. Ibid., 745.

In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus commands His hearers to invite the immediately poor to their receptions and feasts. His intent is not that they never invite their relatives but that such generosity is likely to be repaid (v. 12) and is therefore not meritorious before God. The recipients are revealed to be immediately poor (nTwxoc;) both semantically and by the fact that they cannot repay the invite (v. 14). It is both revealing and logical that this category of poor would readily enfold the disabled —"the crippled, the lame, the blind" (v. 13). The disabled ofJesus' day would have had virtually insurmountable difficulties in finding employment and were commonly among the beggarly poor due to this personal calamity. Jesus' offer of reward identifies this hospitable sharing as an issue of mercy even when extended to those who could not provide for themselves because they were not able-bodied.

Paul's command in Rom 12:20-21, to provide for the sustenance needs of one's enemy if given the opportunity, reveals that doing good (v. 21) is accomplished even in such 'basic' immediate poverty alleviation. This command is quoted from Prov 25:21-22, which reveals that God explicitly rewards such treatment (v. 22).

The principle level command ofHeb 13:16 relates doing good to sharing, KOLvwv(a, in the intended sense of assisting in the support of other believers.[23] The recipients of this sharing are immediately or potentially poor believers, for which other believers would need to be shared with as a matter of doing good?

The remaining two mandate passages are analogous to the parable of the sheep and the goats. James 2:14-17 affirms that saving faith entails works. The works specified are those which also drew a mandate from John the Baptist (Luke 3:11) namely the provision of clothing and food. The recipients are implied to be immediately poor because they are in need of"daily food" (v. 15). Providing "what is necessary for their body" (v.

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[23] J. Y. Campbell, "KOINONIA and Its Cognates in the New Testament," in *Three New Testament Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 21-22; J. Thuren, *Das Lobopfer der Hebriier: Studien zum Aufbau undAnliegen von Hebriierbrief13* (Abo: Acedemiae Aboensis, 1973), 177; William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 9-13*, vol. 47B (Dallas: Word, 2002), 552.

16), likewise implies meeting immediate sustenance needs. Such specific sharing possesses the significant obligation of a useful and living faith. Nevertheless, its exact status is uncertain here.

1 John 3:16-18 continues in this train of thought by asserting that having the love of God abide in a believer entails that she, provided she has the "world's goods" (v. 17), use this means to help believers who are in need (xpe(a). Such assistance is a deed of love (v. 18). The reference to closing one's inward parts (arrA.ayxvov) may imply that this mandate is related to being moved by mercy.[24] As in Jas 2:14-17, this provision is related content-wise to the giving of alms.

Figure 10: Share Clarifiers

Vv.	Res.	Poor
Acts 2:44-46 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have *need* [XPE[a]. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and *sincerity* [acpEAOTT]<;] of heart,	S	I
Acts 6:I ,-Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their *widows* were being overlooked in the *daily serving of food.*	S	I/ P
1 Cor II:2I-22, 33-34 for in your eating each one *takes his own supper first;* and one is *hungry* and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame *those who have nothing?* What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you. 33 ,- So then, my brethren, *when you come together to eat, wait for one another.* 34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for jud{;u«ouL. The remaining matters I will arrange when I come.	S	I
Gal 2:10 They only asked us to *remember the poor*-- the very thing I also was eager to do.	P	I
Jude I:12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your *love feasts* [m'l<; ayanm<;] when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;	S	

[24] "crnA.ayxvov," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature [BDAG].*

The sharing of Acts 2:44-46 involved the perspective that a believer's possessions were intended to meet the needs of other believers. The distribution (OLUflEp((w) of the proceeds was done to those in need. The believers' practice of "taking their meals together" (v. 46) also involved sharing for they "shared their meals with great joy and generosity." [25] The generosity mentioned here is acpeA.6-tfJc;, a NT *hapax legomenon* which likewise does not occur in the LXX, but is nevertheless considered to be equivalent to cmA.6tf]c; (generosity).[26] These meals are "regular meals" but carried out in a "generous" manner.[27] The generous sharing that occurred when they ate together is thus similar to the love feast mentioned in Jude 1:12 and would have benefited "those who have nothing" (1 Cor 11:22).

A concern for providing "daily food" to immediately poor widows is revealed in Acts 6:1. The overlooking of the Hellenistic widows prompted the selection of apparently Hellenistic deacons (Acts 6:5)[28] who were to make sure that this merciful service (otaKov(a) was provided to all the believing widows.

Paul's instructions concerning the common meal connected with the taking of communion appear in 1 Cor 11:21-22, 33-34. Sharing with the hungry is an aspect of not shaming "those who have nothing" (v. 22).[29] Thus the immediately poor are to benefit

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[25] *Holy Bible: New Living Translation,* 2nd ed. *[NLT]* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 2004)

[26] Knowling, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Acts of the Apostles,* 7.

[27] Darrell L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Acts,* eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 154.

[28] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 230.

[29] Wolfgang Schrage, *Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament: Der erste Brief an die Korinther (1 Kor 11,17-14, 40),* vol. 7 (Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1999), 24-26; David E. Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians,* eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 533, 539-542.

from this common meal. This instance of sharing is likewise confined to believers (1 Cor 11:26-27, 29)–the brethren of the church (v. 22, 33).

The concern to remember the immediately poor (rrnoxoc;) in Gal2:10 refers to the breadth of almsgiving support.[30] Some, such as Richard Longenecker, perceive a connection with the collection for the Jerusalem church, nonetheless this extrapolation is speculative beyond the general conceptual overlap of providing alms.[31]

Jude 1:12 contains the only explicit NT mention of the believers' love feasts, "TaTe; aycmmc;," but provides support for seeing echoes of these common meals in Acts 2:44-46 and 1 Cor 11:21-22, 33-34.

In summary, sharing in the NT is consistently concerned with alleviating the sustenance needs of the immediately poor. Whenever the obligation level is communicated, this sharing is semantically or hamartiologically identified as an act of mercy. Even when the cause of the immediate poverty is the calamity of disability or the injustice of violent robbery, the provision of food, clothing, shelter and medical assistance is a mercy. The specific forms of sharing addressed in Matt 25:31-46, Jas 2:14-17 and 1 John 3:16-18 are, with the exception of caring for the imprisoned, explicitly identified as issues of mercy in the parable of the good Samaritan (which extends the mercy mandates of Matt 25:31-46 to strangers). Caring for the imprisoned is identified as a mercy in Heb 10:34.

Sharing naturally connects to generosity —a forthcoming aspect. Many additional instances of sharing occur in the NT including the cruyKoLvwvew of pastoral and missionary provision for Paul during his distress (SAT'i'Lc;) as noted in Phil4:14-17. Similarly, the generosity and readiness to share (KOLVWVLK6c;) of 1 Tim 6:17-19 is an

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[30] Understanding TITWXOin a spiritual sense would make the content of the verse redundant to Gal2:9. For additional argumentation for the almsgiving nature of this clarifier see for example: Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians,* 60.

[31] Ibid.

example of a principle level mandate to share. Acts 20:35 and Eph 4:28, in turn, affirm that the ability to engage in such sharing is one of the moral impetuses to work.

Work

Mandates concerning helping the poor expectedly enfold mandates concerning the securing of the provision necessary to enable such helping. These mandates also clarify who is to be helped and what limits, if any, are to be placed upon this helping.

Figure 11: Work Mandates

Vv.	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
John 6:27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.	C			
Acts 20:33-35 "I have *coveted* no one's silver or gold or clothes. 34 "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to *my own needs and to the men* who were with me. 35 In everything I showed you that by *working hard* in this manner you must *help the weak* [aa8Ev£w] and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to *give* than to receive.'"	S			I/P
Rom 12:11 not *lagging behind* [ὀκνηρός] in *diligence*, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;	G			
Eph 4:28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather *he must labor*, performing with his own hands what is good, *so that he will have something to share with one who has need.*	S C			I
1 Thess 4:11-12 and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to *your own business and work with your hands*, just as we *commanded* you, 12 so that you will *behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.*	C			
1 Thess 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly [aTUKToc;], encourage the fainthearted, *help the weak* [aa8Ev c;], be patient with everyone.	S/P			I/P
2 Thess 3:6-13 Now we *command* you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly [aniKTwc;]life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to *follow our example*, because we did not act in an undisciplined [aTaKTEW] manner among you, 8 *nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it*, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a *burden* to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a *model* for you, so that you would *follow our example.* 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this *order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.* 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an *undisciplined life* [aTUKTwc;], doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we *command and exhort* in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 *But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.*	S			

Titus I:12-13 One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, *lazy* gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. For this reason *reprove them severely* so that they may be sound in the faith,	C		∴

Jesus' command in John 6:27 to "not work for the food which perishes" is intended to stimulate those seeking Him to do so for more than the feeding He had miraculously supplied (John 6:26). Consequently, this mandate is not intended to forbid work but to invite those seeking Him to believe that He is the Messiah (John 6:28-29). As such, this mandate proves irrelevant to the present concern.

Acts 20:33-35 records how Paul, in speaking to the elders at Miletus, reminds them of his own conduct and mandates that they work hard (Konuiw) in order to help the weak. Paul connects his own hard work for the purpose of meeting his own as well as his companions' needs (v. 34) to not coveting (£m8u11£w) other people's "silver or gold or clothes" (v. 35). Paul thus implies that not working entails inappropriately desiring the belongings of others. Paul's example of working hard is to be mimicked for the purpose of helping the aa8ev£w —those who are not able-bodied so as to be able to work to provide for themselves (and others).[32] Paul's example, the one to be mimicked, concerns meeting his physical needs (xpe(a) and those of his missionary coworkers. For how could working hard serve to meet the needs of the spiritually weak? Any notion of understanding aa8ev£w as referring to spiritual weakness is further ruled out by the presented reminder ofJesus' mandate to give (v. 35). While Gustav Stahlin suggests that aa8£veLa can mean "economic weakness" or "poverty,"[33] it is more probable that this inference is merely the

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[32] Bodily weakness, the feeble lack of strength, disease and sickness are the natural referent of aaSEvEw and thus Paul's occasioned spiritual use is dependant upon this literal meaning: Hans-Georg Link, "aaSEvEw," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

[33] Gustav Stahlin, "aa8Ev c;,aa8EVELU, aa8EVEW,aaSEVT]flU," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), in *PC Study Bible* 4.3 (Seattle: Biblesoft, 2006).

logically implied result of being physically powerless and feeble.[34] Consequently, the logic of Acts 20:33-35 is preserved and those able to work are to help the non-able-bodied who are impotent to do so. Thus the proceeds of a believer's diligent work are to be shared with the feeble, handicapped and diseased. Such sharing is blessed (!laKapLo<;) — implying, even in this text, that it may be an instance of mercy.[35]

Paul's mandate in Rom 12:11 to not be indolent (6KVflp6<;) in diligence may have the wisdom literature in mind and therefore imply diligence in 'secular' endeavors in addition to spiritual endeavors.[36]

The mandate in Eph 4:28, that those who used to be thieves must now labor so that they "will have something to share with one who has need," echoes the concerns of Acts 20:33-35. The injustice of stealing is forbidden and hard work (Komaw) mandated.[37] The proceeds of the hard work are to be shared (!lETaO(OW!lL) with those who experience need Cxp£La). The emphasis on working with one's own hands reinforces the need to provide for oneself by means oflegitimate work.

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[34] The apposition of the physically strong and healthy (lax_upo<;) with the physically weak, feeble or sickly (aa9£v <;) in *1 Clement* 38:2 both affirms this literal usage and differentiates it from the resulting poverty itself: "The strong must take care of the weak; the weak must look up to the strong. The rich must provide for the poor; the poor must thank God for giving him someone to meet his needs:" Cyril C. Richardson, *The Library of Christian Classics Volume 1: Early Christian Fathers* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 61.

[35] This saying ofJesus is not found in the gospels and thus Paul's admonishment to remember it (Acts 20:35) attests to it being a familiar and influential tradition: Knowling, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Acts of the Apostles*, 440.

[36] Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans 9-16*, 741; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 665.

[37] Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 303.

In 1 Thess 4:11-12, believers are also commanded to engage in legitimate, self-supporting labor. Behaving "properly toward outsiders" entails not being "in any need" (v. 12) as a result of the provision of one's own industry.[38]

1 Thessalonians 5:14 parallels Acts 20:33-35 in mandating believers to help the weak: "av-r£xw8e nov aa8evwv." Due to the terminological similarities it is highly probable that this mandate enjoins the support of the non-able-bodied.[39] Furthermore, the immediately preceding mandate, to "encourage the fainthearted," would become redundantly superfluous if aa8ev <; was to denote spiritual weakness. The admonition of the disorderly (a-raK-ro<;) is lilcely aimed at the indolent-those who F. F. Bruce, following James Moffat, identifies as "loafers."[40] This identification correlates well with the subsequent command to help those who are not able-bodied.

Greater resolution is provided in 2 Thess 3:6-13. Those who are indolent (a-r6.K-rw<;) are to be shunned by believers (v. 6). Paul, the implied author, mandates that his example of not living in indolence (a-raK-r£w) is to be mimicked (v. 7). This example included not living off of others, so as to receive their bread (v. 8), but rather successfully avoiding being a burden (£m ap£w) to anyone by means of working hard —even in hardship. This model was provided even though pastors and missionaries have a right to be sustained in their ministry (v. 9). Consequently, "if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either" (v. 10). This mandate, when coupled with the mandates to not associate with any indolent believer (2 Thess 3:6, 14), meant that such a brother would not

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[38] For additional discussion of this warning against indolent dependence see: Frederick F. Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians,* vol. 45 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 91.

[39] Knowling, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: The Acts of the Apostles,* 440.

[40] Bruce, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 and 2 Thessalonians,* 122-123.

receive any sustenance aid to enable his indolence.[41] Those living an indolent (cnaK-rw) life, "doing no work at all," are commanded and exhorted "in the Lord Jesus Christ" to work (vv. 11-12). Their utilitarious industry, rather than their 'busybody-ness' (m:pLcpya(oflm), is to provide for their needs so that they may "eat their own bread" (v. 12). Thus the indolent believer in immediate poverty is to receive no sustenance support from other believers. The mandated consequence of not associating with such a brother may imply that such indolence, particularly when it desires to be sustained from the alms and sharing of other believers, is sinful (akin to sins of 1 Cor 5:9-11). This passage ends with an additional mandate to reaffirm the non-indolent brethren in their desire to do good and share with those in need not brought on by indolence.[42] This additional resolution clarifies that giving one's 'bread' to those needing sustenance, specifically other Christians, is something believers are not to grow weary of doing. Consequently, this text encompasses mandates to help the poor and mandates concerning how this help is to be limited.

Titus 1:12-13 contains a mandate, via a severe (cmo-r6flw) reproval, against idle laziness (apy6) among believers. [43] This cross-cultural mandate is intended to produce soundness of faith in its final recipients. The inclusion oflaziness amongst the sins oflying, evil viciousness and gluttony suggests that it is also likely a sin.

The mandates unto work reveal that the indigent who are to receive aid are the non-able-bodied poor. This requirement prevents the work mandates from undermining themselves in their aim to aid those with sustenance needs. Sustenance needs which arise

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[41] John Calvin asserts that this exactly was the writer's purpose: "11 defend aux Thessaloniciens d'entretenir par leur liberalite ou dissimulation l'oisiuete de telles gens:" John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians,* trans. John Pringle (Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1851), 352.

[42] Ibid., 356, 358.

[43] Believers rather than false teachers are here in view for the latter are unlikely to become sound in the faith: George W. Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 298-300.

from indolence, even when they occur among the brethren, are not to be alleviated. If even the participatory fellowship that is mandated among the brethren does not extend to an indolent brother (who is to be shunned), it is logical that aiding the poor who are outside the church, and to whom believers possess less responsibility, will not be more lenient. These mandates, like the mandates to share, also reveal that meeting the needs of other believers is of repeated and primary concern.

Good Worlcs

Mandates to engage in good works are found throughout the NT. Believers are saved unto good works (Eph 2:10), are to be careful to engage in them (Titus 3:8) and are to be a people zealous to do them (Titus 2:14). While mandates to 'do good' and participate in 'good works' may be widely encompassing (Rom 2:7, 10), they are also often focused and connected to helping the poor.

Some of these mandates and clarifiers have already been encountered. Tabitha's "£pywv aya8wv Kal EAEf1flOO'UVWV" (v. 36), works of goodness and almsgiving, were manifested in the making of clothes for poor widows (Acts 9:36, 39-41). The collection for Jerusalem is subsumed under God's promised provision of sufficiency and abundance for every good work, "miv £pyov aya86v" (v. 8 of 2 Cor 9:8-11). The provision of food to the indigent poor is related to doing good, KaA07tOLEW (v. 13), in 2 Thess 3:6-13. Similarly, doing good and sharing with the needy believers, *"eimo(fac:;* Kal Kmvwv(ac:;," are sacrifices which please God (Heb 13:16).

Mandates not yet encountered include the requirements for widows who are to be placed on the local church's support list (1 Tim 5:3-16). These requirements include having often participated in good works, "£pymc:; KaA.oTc:;," such as having "shown hospitality to strangers," having served the church by "washed the saints' feet" and by herselfhaving "assisted those in distress [8A.L w]" (v. 10). These specifics are all part of having been devoted to every good work, "navTl £py(JJ aya8(il" (v. 10). The instructions, in 1 Tim 6:17-19, to the "rich in this present world" (v. 17) relate being rich in good works, "£pymc:; KaAoTc:;," to being generous (EUflETaOoToc:;) and being ready to share (KOLVWVLK6c:;)

with the needy (v. 18). Such good works are matters of mercy for they store up future reward (v. 19). Titus 3:13-14 mandates providing hospitality and travel assistance to Christian missionaries such as Zenas and Apollos in order to meet their needs (v. 13). Such assistance is described as engaging in good deeds, "KaA.wv £pywv," that are intended to meet pressing needs, "avayKa(ac:; xpdac:;" (v.14). The description of "the wisdom from above" in Jas 3:17 relates, in this case, good fruits with mercy (EA.wc:;).[44]

The general mandate of Gal 6:9-10 has received previous mention. This mandate promises reward for doing good, "KaA.ov nmouvn:c:;" (v. 9), and instructs believers, as they have opportunity, to work good, "£pya(wl..le8a n'> aya8ov," to "all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (v. 10). This prioritization of good works towards believers is consonant with the expressed concern for the mutual participation of fellowship and the many mandates which explicitly name co-believers as their recipients.

Possessions

The possession mandates can be helpfully subdivided into those which were given as a part of Jesus' earthly ministry and those which were asserted after this ministry was completed. Jesus' mandate to His disciples to sell their possessions gains relevance because the proceeds of this sale are to be given as alms to the poor.

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[44] Ralph Martin asserts that this mercy mandate refers to helping the poor: Ralph P. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: James,* vol. 48 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 134.

Figure 12: Possessions Mandates During Jesus' Ministry

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 6:19-21,24-34 "Do *not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,* where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 *"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,* where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and wealth.* 25 *"For this reason I say to you,* do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they *do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns,* and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? 28 "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30 "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You oflittle faith! 31 *"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'* 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.	C G	M	H	
// Luke 12:22-34 And *He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you,* do not worry about your *life,* as to what you will *eat;* nor for your *body,* as to what you will *put on.* 23 "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 "Consider the ravens, for they *neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn,* and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 "And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? 26 "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 "And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 "Do not be afraid, *little flock,* for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 *"Sell your possessions* and *give to charity* [£A£T]flO0UVT]]; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing *treasure in heaven,* where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.	S	M	H S	I/ P
Matt **10:9-10** "Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, 10 or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the *worker is worthy of his support.*	C			
// Mark 6:8-9 and He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff-- no bread, no bag, no money in their belt-- 9 but to wear sandals; and He added, "Do not put on two tunics."	C			
// Luke 9:3 And He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not even have two tunics apiece.	C			

-// **Luke 10:4** "Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way.	C			
Matt 19:21-25 Jesus said to him, **"If** you wish to be complete, go and *sell your possessions* and *give* [O[Owf.u] *to the poor,* and you will have *treasure* in *heaven;* and *come,follow Me."* 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. 23 **And** Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, *it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.* 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"	S	M	H	I
// **Mark 10:19-26** "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" 20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." 21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and *sell all you possess and give* [OtOWflL] *to the poor,* and you will have *treasure* in *heaven;* and *come,follow Me."* 22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. 23 And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, *"How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"* 24 The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 **"It** is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the ldngdom of God." 26 They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"	S	M	H	I
II **Luke 18:22-26** When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; *sell all that you possess and distribute* [&aO[OwflL] *it to the poor,* and you shall have *treasure in heaven;* and *come,follow Me."* 23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. 24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They ""\ho heard it said, "Then who can be saved?"	S	M	H	I
Matt 19:27-30 Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" 28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, *will receive many times as much,* and will inherit eternal life. 30 "But many who are *first will be last;* and the *last, first.*	S	M	H	
// **Mark 10:28-31** Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he will receive a *hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms,* along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 "But many who are *first will be last,* and the *last, first."*	S	M	H	
// **Luke 18:28-30** Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes and followed You." 29 And He said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not *receive many times as much* at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."	S	M	H	
Matt 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	G			
// **Luke 6:20** And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are *poor,* for yours is the kingdom of God.	P			I

Luke 6:24 "But woe to you who are *rich,* for you are receiving your comfort in full.	P
Luke 12:13-21 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 Then He said to them, *"Beware, and be on your guard against every lform of greed;* for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my cross?' 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."' 20 "But God said to him, *'You fool!* This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not *rich toward God."*	G
Luke 14:33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not *give up all his own possessions.*	S
Luke 21:34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the *worries of life,* and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;	G

Both the Sermon on the Mount and its counterpart, the Sermon on the Plain, were primarily addressed to Jesus' disciples (Matt 5:1, Luke 6:20).[45] In Luke, this group is identified as being larger than the twelve apostles for both the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17) and for the mandates concerning worry (Luke 12:32).[46] Both Sermons are also given in the presence of a larger crowd (Matt 7:28-29, Luke 6:17, 7:1).[47]

The mandate to not store up treasure on earth but rather in heaven entails not worrying about one's sustenance needs (Matt 6:19-21, 24-34 // Luke 12:22-34). Because the disciple cannot serve both "God and wealth" (Matt 6:24 // Luke 16:13), this failure to store up treasures on earth necessarily entails trusting in God for his food and clothing. Jesus highlights that these mandates concerning sustenance trust are "for this reason"-

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[45] Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13,* 85; John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:20,* val. 35A (Dallas: Word, 2002), 281. Darrell L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 570.

[46] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1159.

[47] Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13,* 85; John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 9:21-18:34,* val. 35B (Dallas: Word, 2002), 690.

that the disciples cannot serve wealth in being rich toward God {Matt 6:25, Luke 12:21). Luke 12:33 makes explicit that which is implied in Matt 6:19-34, that the disciples are to sell their possessions and give the proceeds as alms (EAEflflOcrUVfl). Following Jesus during His earthly ministry as an immediate disciple entailed immediate poverty. This poverty was not acutely immediate because the ministry and its workers were supported by others (Luke 8:1-3, Matt 10:9-10). Jesus affirms that maintaining neither a "storeroom nor barn" in addition to not being 'secularly' employed in 'sowing' and 'reaping' (Luke 12:24 // Matt 6:26) was a part of participating in the kingdom work. Thus Jesus' disciples are commanded to not "seek" ((flTEW) what they "will eat and … drink" in addition to not worrying (Lulce 12:29). This selling of one's possessions as a means for the provision of alms to the poor is an act of mercy that is divinely rewarded (Luke 12:33-34).

When the apostles and disciples are sent out as missionaries in Matt 10:9-10, Mark 6:8-9, Luke 9:3 and Luke 10:4, they are sent out as immediately poor pastoral workers who are to be sustained by those to whom they minister (Matt 10:10). This requires that those who favorably receive them have the possessions (Matt 10:12-14 // Mark 6:10 // Luke 9:4 // Luke 10:5) necessary to provide for these missionaries.

Jesus' interaction with the rich young ruler in Matt 19:21-25, Mark 10:19-23, 26 and Luke 18:22-26 confirms His requirements for His immediate disciples during His ministry. All three gospels record that Jesus attaches this mandate to an invitation to become His disciple. The present call to "follow Me" echoes Jesus' call to the apostles in Matt 4:19, 9:9, Mark 1:19, Luke 5:27, John 1:43 and elsewhere. The mandate to sell one's possessions for the sake of distributing the proceeds as alms to the poor is attached to the promise of divine reward. This mandate is subsequently a mercy mandate. Jesus relates the rich young ruler's refusal to failing to enter the kingdom of heaven. Because the rich were considered to be blessed of God, the disciples wonder who then can be saved.[48] Entering the kingdom required of this young ruler the complete disposal of his

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[48] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 148,61 : •:;'.y.;

possessions and the direct following ofJesus. Other passages such as Luke 8:1-3, 19:2, 8-9, and John 19:38 clarify that not all those that are saved (Zaccheus) nor those that are broadly referred to as Jesus' disciples (Joseph of Arimathea) nor those who are among the many who support Jesus' ministry are similarly commanded to sell all their possessions. Similarly, while Martha, Mary and Lazarus were beloved friends ofJesus (John 1:5, 11) they were not required to dispose of their home (Luke 10:38, John 11:31). The demoniac of the country of the Gerasenes was similarly sent back to his house (oLKoc;), despite having pled to be allowed to become Jesus' immediate disciple (Luke 8:38). Such considerations suggest that extrapolating Jesus' mandate to the rich young ruler into a prerequisite for anyone's salvation is not correlative to Jesus' intent. The form ofldngdom participation that Jesus required of the rich young rulers was that which He required of all His immediate disciples. Nevertheless the domain of those who could be saved was wider.

This contention is confirmed in Matt 19:27-30, Mark 10:28-31 and Luke 18:28-30 where Jesus approves of forsaldng everything, "a<p KU!lEV ml.vTa," (Matt 19:27 // Mark 10:28) and promises to reward the apostles (Matt 19:28) and the broader group of disciples ("everyone" in Luke 18:29 // Mark 10:29) for their following ofHim. Their forsaldng of their houses and relations will be rewarded not only in the life to come but also in this life where they will gain many times as many "houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms" (Mark 10:30). Gaining so many brothers and mothers along with the hospitality of their houses and farms requires that some of those who "do the will of My [Jesus'] Father" (Matt 12:50 // Mark 3:35 // Luke 8: 21) do not sell and give away all of their possessions (Matt 12:46-50 // Mark 3:31-35 // Luke 8:19-21). Thus the disciples that have become immediately poor in order to physically follow Jesus during His earthly ministry, though they be last in the eyes of the world, become the first "in the regeneration" (Matt. 19:28). Consequently such renunciation is an issue of mercy.

The disciples' blessing in Matt 5:3 and Luke 6:20 is for their immediate poverty and their spiritual humility, for Jesus' immediate disciples were indeed immediately poor and needfully poor in spirit. They experienced hunger (Luke 6:21) and

persecution (Matt 5:10-11 // Luke 6:22-23) in the present but justice was coming in the *eschaton* (Mat 5:6).[49]

The warning and pronunciation of woe unto the rich in Luke 6:24 echoes the story of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) whereby the uncaring rich enjoy their good things and comfort in this life only to fmd they are to suffer (6ouvaw, Luke 16:25) in the next.[50]

Luke 12:13-21 contains Jesus' mandate to "beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed" (v. 15). The rich man who stored up only for himself is morally evaluated as a "fool" (v. 20). His greed is a sin before God. This passage leads into and informs the 'do not worry' and 'give alms' mandates of Luke 12:22-34. Luke 12:13-21 also intimates that the disciples are a separate group as far as Jesus' mandates are concerned, for those from the crowd (Luke 12:13) are only warned against greed while the disciples are commanded to sell their possessions (Luke 12:33).

Luke 14:33 makes explicit what has been previously noted and deduced, that no one can be Jesus' immediate disciple unless he forsakes (cmo-raaaw) "all his own possessions."

In Luke 21:34 Jesus reaffirms His mandate against being weighed down with "the worries of life."

Figure 13: Possessions Clarifiers During Jesus' Ministry

Matt 8:20 Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has *nowhere to lay His head."*		
// Luke 9:58 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has *nowhere to lay His head."*		

[49] Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13,93.* It is best, on the author's view, to perceive the Beatitudes as a unit which describes those who are the blessed and what their blessing entails.

[50] Darrell L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 1:1-9:50,* eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 583.

Matt 27:57 When it was evening, there came a *rich man* from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a *disciple of Jesus.*	'()	
II Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, *who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God;* and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body ofJesus.	G	
II Luke 23:50-51 And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, *a good and righteous man* 51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, *who was waiting for the kingdom of God;*	G	
II John 19:38 ▾After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a *disciple* of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body ofJesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.	G	
Mark 12:41-44 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began observing how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many *rich* people were putting in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. 43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this *poor widow* put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their *surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on."*	G	I
II Luke 21:1-4 ▾And He looked up and saw the *rich* putting their gifts into the treasury. 2 And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. 3 And He said, "Truly I say to you, this *poor widow* put in more than all of them; 4 for they all out of their *surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."*	G	I
Luke 8:1-3 'Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and *many others* who were *contributing to their support out of their private means.*	S	
Luke 19:2, 8-9 And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was *rich.* 8 Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, *half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."* 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today *salvation* has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.	S	I
Luke 22:35-36 ▾And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." 36 And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one	C	

In Matt 8:20 and Luke 9:58 Jesus confirms that He and, by extension, His disciples live a semi-homeless existence which involves a renunciation of possessions.

As noted earlier, Luke 23:50, Mark 15:43, Luke 23:50-51 and John 19:38 confirm that Joseph of Arimathea was "a good and righteous man" (Luke 23:50) who was a "disciple ofJesus" but was nevertheless rich (Matt 27:57).

Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4 relate Jesus' approval of the poor widow who out ofher immediate poverty gave "all she owned, all she had to live on" (Mark 12: 44 // Luke 21: 4). While this approval appears too 'weak' to be considered a mandate, Jesus' commendation affirms the widow's trust in God for her sustenance needs.

The source of Jesus and the disciples' ministry support is revealed in Luke 8:1-3. This passage reveals that many women (ahtvE<; is a feminine relative pronoun) were contributing to their [mhoic;] support out of their private means" (v. 3). Joanna, being the wife of Herod's steward would have been 'well to do.' Nevertheless, she and the other contributors mentioned here were not disciples in the immediate sense as they were not called to give up all of their "private means" (v. 3).

The salvation of Zaccheus, who was rich, involved his own conviction to donate half of his possessions to the immediately poor in addition to providing remedial compensation of those whom he had defrauded (Luke 19:2, 8-9).

In Luke 22:35-36 Jesus recalls the missionary trip that He had sent His apostles upon, apparently as part of the seventy, and contrasts it with the present circumstance. The present reality demanded that the immediate poverty of the missionary journeys be eschewed and the disciples were to prepare to provide for and defend themselves. This transition is very suggestive and implies that the possession-free character of the earthly ministry was coming to a close — at the direct command of Jesus.

To sum, Jesus' mandate to His immediate disciples to sell their possessions and give the resulting proceeds as alms to the poor did not extend to all believers — even during His ministry. Nevertheless, these mercy mandates served to benefit the immediately poor. On a final note, the disciples' prayer in Matt 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4 includes the petition to "give us this day our daily bread" (Matt 6:11 // Luke 11:3) – a petition which, by emphasizing daily sustenance (compare: Jas 2:15), correlates well with the immediate poverty in which they followed Jesus.

Figure 14: Possessions Mandates Post Jesus' Ministry

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
I Cor 7:29-31 But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; 30 and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and *those who buy, as though they did not possess;* 31 and *those who use the world, as though they did not make ll use of it;* for the form of this world is passing away.	G			

The general mandate found in 1 Cor 7:29-31 is the sole distinctly possessions-related mandate given after Jesus' earthly ministry. It affirms that in this present 'between the times' context, "those who buy" should act "as though they did not possess" (v. 30).[51] This mandate affirms that believers may buy and own goods but that their possession of these goods should not be grasped.[52] This practical sense of detachment is reaffirmed in the mandate to use the things of the world but not as one making "full use of' them (v. 31).[53]

Figure 15: Possessions Clarifiers Post Jesus' Ministry

	Res.	Poor
Acts 2:44-46 And all those who had believed were together and had *all things in common;* 45 and they began *selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.* 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were *taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,*	S	I

[51] Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians,* 328.

[52] Ibid., 330.

[53] Ibid., 330-331.

	S	I
Acts 4:32-37 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and *not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.* 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was *not a needy person among them,* for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any *had need.* 36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), 37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.		
Acts 5:1-11 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 *"While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control?* Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." 5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. 6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. 7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." 9 Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." 10 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.	S	
Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a *seller of purple fabrics,* a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.	G	
1 Cor 13:3 And if *I give all my possessions to feed the poor,* and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.	S	I/P
2 Cor 12:14 'Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a *burden* to you; for I do not seek *what is yours,* but you; for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.	G	
Phil4:11-13 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 *I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity;* in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of *being filled and going hungry,* both of *having abundance and suffering need.* 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.	G	
3 John 1:2 Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may *prosper* and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.	G	

Acts 2:44-46, a passage noted earlier, describes how the wealthier members of the nascent church sold their properties and possessions in order to alleviate the needs of other believers. Unlike Jesus' immediate disciples during His ministry, the believers owned houses — houses in which they generously shared their meals.

This same attitude of not considering one's possessions as meant purely for one's own benefit is described in Acts 4:32-37. Though it was not mandated, the wealthy, who were owners of "land or houses" (v. 34), would sell them and give the proceeds to the apostles to distribute to believers who had need (v. 35). Thus, there was "not a needy person among them"-an allusion to the blessing described in Deut 15:4 (via the LXX). Joseph, called Barnabas, was one of those who owned "a tract ofland" and sold it for the purpose of providing alms to the believing needy. As in Acts 2:44-46, this passage describes a partial selling of one's possessions for the benefit of immediately poor brethren.

The attempted deception of Ananias and Sapphira is recorded in Acts 5:1-11. This passage clarifies that the partial selling of one's possessions, as described in the early chapters of Acts, was voluntary and a matter of mercy obligation. A believer's property remained their own-just as the proceeds of any such property were the believer's to control (v. 4). Ananias and Sapphira's sin was that they lied about the total proceeds of the sale (v. 4) in order to gain for themselves the esteem rightfully deemed to believers such as Joseph who was called Barnabas.

Acts 16:14 adds Lydia, "a seller of purple fabrics," to the list of wealthy believers who owned houses and could thus practice hospitality to the saints —including missionary saints such as Paul and his companions (Acts 16:15).

In 1 Cor 13:3 Paul clarifies that donating all of one's "possessions to feed the poor" is still considered commendable, even profitable, if it is done in love. Paul's argument style in 1 Cor 13:1-3 is to appose the heights of gifting, faith and selflessness with the necessity oflove. This affirms that donating all of one's possessions to the poor is now no longer a normative component of 'discipleship' -though it remains deeply commendable.

Paul's concern in 2 Cor 12:14 to not "be a burden" to the Corinthians is consonant with his choice to not seek what is theirs. This affirmation of ownership also leads Paul to affirm the general principle that "children are not responsible to save up for

their parents, but parents for their children." This affirmation, though its primary referent here is spiritual parenting, entails that the saving up of possessions is not forbidden to believers — for this is precisely what Paul intends to preserve for the Corinthians by not seeking what is theirs.

In Phil4:11-13 Paul clarifies that, as a believer strengthened by God (v. 13), he can get along in both poverty and prosperity, hunger and satiation, abundance and need. This clarifier affirms that experiencing prosperity is not forbidden to the believer.

Along these same lines, 3 John 1:2 contains the record of a prayer for another believer's material prosperity. Furthermore, it was out of such prospering (Euooow) that the Corinthian believers were to contribute to the Jerusalem collection (1 Cor 16:1-3).

In summary, no mandates to sell all of one's possessions occur after the completing of Jesus' earthly ministry. The partial selling of one's possessions for the sal<e of alleviating the plight of needy brethren is manifested in Acts, but never mandated. The commendation in 1 Cor 13 is presented as superlative rather than normative. In fact, as previously noted, 2 Cor 8:11-13 mandates that the Jerusalem collection is to be carried out in such a way that the donors are not themselves ushered into poverty.

Wealth

The NT witness concerning wealth is inextricably connected to its mandates toward the rich. These possessions-related mandates also include consideration of the believer's relation to 'the world.'

Figure 16: Wealth Mandates

Vv.	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 16:24-27 ,-Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what will it profit a man if he *gains the whole world* and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.	G			

II Mark 8:34-37 And He summoned *the crowd with His disciples,* and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 35 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "For what does it profit a man to *gain the whale world,* and forfeit his soul? 37 "For what will a man give in exchange for his soul?	G			
II Luke 9:23-25 And He was saying to them *all,* "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. 24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 "For what is a man profited if he *gains the whole world,* and loses or forfeits himself?	G			
Luke 16:1-13 Now He *was also saying to the disciples,* "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. 2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your stewardship, for you can no longer be manager.' 3 "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the people will welcome me into their homes.' 5 "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. 9 "And I say to you, *make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.* 10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. 11 "Therefore if you have not been *faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth,* who will entrust the true riches to you? 12 "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and wealth."*	G /S	M	H	
Luke 16:19-31 "Now there was a *rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, living in splendor every day.* 20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 *and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table;* besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.' 25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' 27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house-- 28 for I have five brothers-- in order that he may *warn them,* so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will *repent!'* 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"	S	J	H	I

1 Tim 6:17-19 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to *fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches,* but on God, who richly supplies us with *all things to enjoy.* 18 Instruct them to do good [aya8oEpy£w], to be rich in *good works* [epymc; Ka.AoTc;], to be *generous* and ready to *share* [KOLVWVLK6c;], 19 *storing up for themselves the treasure* of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.	P/G	M	H	1/p
Jas 1:9-11 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; 10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. 11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.	G			
Jas 5:1-6 Come now, you rich, *weep and howl* for your *miseries which are corning upon you.* 2 Your riches have rotted and your *garments have become moth-eaten.* 3 *Your gold and your silver have rusted;* and their rust will be a witness against you and will *consume your flesh like re.* It is in the last days that you have *stored up your treasure!* 4 Behold, the *pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you,* cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the *Lord of Sabaoth.* 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a *day of slaughter.* 6 You have *condemned and put to death the righteous man* [cSiKmoc;]; he does not resist you.	C	J	H	

Matthew 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-37 and Luke 9:23-25 follow, in all three gospels, Jesus' warning that He will be rejected and killed. Matthew and Mark also precede this mandate with the counter-rebuke of Peter (Matt 16:23 // Mark 8:33). Mark and Luke connect this mandate, to be careful not to forfeit one's own soul, to being ashamed of the Son of Man (Mark 8:38 // Luke 9:26) — a mandate which, especially in this context, refers to the denial ofJesus in order to escape persecution (even if the persecution be lethal). Jesus asserts here, to a broad audience, that gaining the whole world at the cost of one's soul is a bad exchange. Whether gaining the whole world is a superlative for the life kept in safety or a reference to the protection and power of wealth and authority, is uncertain. In any case, "it is hard to imagine a more powerful polemic against wealth"[54] — at least choosing wealth over obedience, be it ever so costly, to the Messiah.

The parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-13 is difficult to place. While directed to "the disciples," this mandate does not include an explicit command to sell all

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[54] Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 14-28,* 484.

one's possessions (v. 13). It does mandate that they make friends for themselves "by means of the wealth of unrighteousness" (v. 9) by way of being faithful in its use (v. 11). The promise of reward suggests that a mercy mandate is in view (vv. 9, 11-12). The broader and more general principle, that one "cannot serve God and wealth" (v. 13), parallels Matthew's discussion of generosity (Matt 6:22-24). Because the context of this parallel in Matthew reveals that Matthew is guided to express the Lucan mandate to the disciples — that they should sell their possessions and give alms — in broader terms, it appears appropriate to understand Luke 16:1-13 within the broader context of a general wealth mandate. Thus, while it may have originally been a call to Jesus' immediate disciples to sell all their possessions in order to give alms, the broader mandate, which extends beyond the confines ofJesus' ministry, is to be generous with God's money in such a way as to benefit others. Whether the forgiving of loans is the specific in view (unlikely due to the disciples' situation) or the generous giving of alms or even generally being generous with money, [55] is ultimately similar and subsumed under the broader mandate to do God's will with His money.

Luke 16:19-31 describes the unfavorable fate of a rich man who "habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day" (v. 19) while ignoring the immediately poor (1rrwx6<;, v. 20) and sickly man at his gate who longed "to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table" (v. 21). The mentioning of the dogs is difficult to render. Perhaps even the dogs showed more compassion than this rich man (v. 21).[56] Contrariwise it is possible that the rich man even

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[55] The latter view is advocated by Darrell Bock: Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1337.

[56] Theodor Zahn supports this interpretation: Theodor von Zahn, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament: Das Evangelium des Lukas,* vol. 3, 4th ed. (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1988), 585. These dogs may perhaps have belonged to the rich man, for domesticated dogs were kept as household pets (Matt 15:26-27 *ll* Mark 7:27-28). John Nolland advocates this possibility contra Darrell Bock: Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 9:21-18:34,* 828-829; Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1367.

allowed his dogs to further humiliate Lazarus in his defenseless state.[57] After his death the rich man finds himself in torment, agony and flame (vv. 23-25, 28). Such rich are to repent (v. 30) and "listen to Moses and the Prophets" (v. 31). Whether this listening is to result in their acceptance of the Messiah and His mandates to have mercy on the poor or merely involves listening to the concern for the poor expressed in the OT, is contestable. Nevertheless, the content of the immediately preceding verses, Luke 16:16-18, suggests the latter. If this mandate is intended to address the Pharisees ofLuke 16:14,[58] then it serves as a graphic illustration of the love of money (Luke 16:14) which is detestable (0£A.uy11a) in the sight of God (Luke 16:15). Such callousness is, in this passage, identified as leading into torment and therefore unjust. This hamartiologically communicated obligation level, which is at variance with the general proclivity of the NT (as it has been observed), might possibly be considered as conceptually analogous to the parable of the sheep and the goats —a passage which also warns of punishment in the life to come for failing to help the immediately poor. Perhaps it may be that faith in Christ produces works which would help the immediately poor in such a situation, and that the rich man is here condemned on the basis of a lack of both (being analogous to the Pha.hsees which likewise lacked both). Nevertheless, such possibilities are suppositional, highly tenuous and textually unsubstantiated. By comparison, the parable of the sheep and the goats does not, unlike the present passage, assert that failure to provide for the sustenance needs of the immediately poor is a matter of sin for its obligators. Luke 16:30, however, maintains that the present treatment deserves repentance, !1ETavo£w, and is therefore indicated as

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[57] John Nolland supports this latter interpretation on the basis of "syntax and flow" and argues that the rich man's dogs not only received the scraps from his table but were also subsequently permitted to lick Lazarus as well: Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 9:21-18:34,* 829. Darrell Bock similarly asserts that the attention of the dogs was insulting and embarrassing rather than positive: Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1367.

[58] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1377.

entailing sin.[59] Luke 16:19-31, for its part, certainly asserts that being rich and using one's surplus solely for the purpose of self-indulgence in the face of immediate, calamity- caused, non-able-bodied[60] poverty is gravely precarious before God. Despite the possible aforementioned integration of faith and works, a careful textual weighing affirms that this treatment valuation mandate possesses a justice obligation level. The special character of this mandate insures that it will receive additional attention and analysis in the forthcoming integration stage.

The instructions in 1 Tim 6:17-19 command the rich to not "fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God" who supplies people with "things to enjoy" (v. 17). They are thus permitted to own and enjoy possessions provided that they do good (aya8oepyew), richly abound in good works ("nA.ou-r£1v £v £pymc; KaA.o'Lc;"), are "generous and ready to share [KOLVWVLK6c;]" (v. 18). Such commitments to the "good works" of partial sharing, which are consonant with the generosity exhibited within the nascent church of Acts, are mercy commitments for they store up treasure in a manner that echoes the Sermon on the Mount. This echo reaffirms that, post Jesus' earthly ministry, His followers are not called to forsake all but rather to maintain the same attitude of being generous in almsgiving (Luke 12:33).

James burns with the passion of an OT prophet. In Jas 1:9-11, he commands the rich believer "to glory in his humiliation" by being well cognizant of the transience of

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[59] Luke's use of JlETavo£w (which is itself consonant with the remainder of NT usage) reveals that, whenever it is further specified, repentance entails turning away from sin (Luke 5:32, 13:2-5, 15:7, 10, 17:3-4,24:47, Acts 2:38,3:19,5:31, 8:22).

[60] Luke 16:20 reveals that the poor man had to be "laid," "e E A'lTO," at the rich man's gate.

riches (v. 11).[61] This mandate thus serves to prepare the way for the partiality mandates of Jas 2:1-12.[62]

In Jas 5:1-6 the unjust rich are treated to woes reminiscent of the mourning and weeping of Luke 6:24-25. These rich have pursued storing up their treasure on earth in diametrical opposition to Jesus' treasure mandates in the Sermon on the Mount and thus, in God's estimation, their "garments have become moth-eaten" (v. 2) and their "gold and … silver have rusted" (v.3). Their sin, which will consume their "flesh like fire" (v. 3), involves the injustice of defrauding the "pay of the laborers" who harvested (cq.taw) their fields and the condemnation unto death of those, who unlike them, are just and righteous (o(Kmoc;, v. 6). James is thus attacking the rich which are unjust in storing up their treasure at the immoral expense of the laborers that have worked for them and which are very likely to be potentially poor.[63] Their murders are equally heinous. These rich act in a way that is diametrically opposed to the mandates of 1 Tim 6:17-19.

Figure 17: Wealth Clarifiers

	Res.	Poor
Matt 13:22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the *worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth* choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.	G	
// Mark 4:18-19 "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, 19 but the *worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things* enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.	G	

[61] While scholars are divided on the identity of the rich person in Jas 1:10, an immediately contextual reading favors the rich person's identification as a believer: Kauxcw9w 8£ *0 a&A.qJ11c;* 6 Tam:tvot; EV Tqi ihj!EL mhoii, *0 8£ nA.ovawc;* EV Tft TUTIELVWOEL mhoii, (ht Wt; liv9ot; xopTOU rrapEAEUOETUL {Jas 1:9-10, italics added). In addition, Jas 2:4 and Jas 4:13-17 confirm that rich believers were among the recipients of this letter. These rich believers have business pursuits (EflTIOpeuOflUL, Jas 4:13) which resemble the pursuits (rrope[a) described in Jas 1:11. For further discussion from a neutral source see: Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: James*, 25-26.

[62] These mandates will be discussed in the Partiality section (beginning on page 151).

[63] Ibid., 179.

// Luke 8:14 "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with *worries and riches and pleasures* [oov] *of this life,* and bring no fruit to maturity.	G.	
Rev 3:17-18 Because you say, "I am *rich,* and have become *wealthy,* and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.	G	I

Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:18-19 and Luke 8:14, because they are addressed to the crowd (though the disciples receive the explanation), appear to provide a general warning against the deceitfulness of riches. Such people "bring no fruit to maturity" (Luke 8:14). The "worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth" (Matt 3:22) causes them to pursue other desires (Mark 4:19) such as the "pleasures [6ov] of this life" (Luke 8:14). [64]

The blinding of wealth also receives attention in the clarifier of Rev 3:17-18.

In summary, Luke 16:19-31 attributes a justice level of obligation to helping the calamity-caused, non-able-bodied, immediately poor when one possesses a surplus of wealth and opportunity. This conceptual *hapax* will receive further attention during the concept integration stage.

The rich person's difficult entry into the kingdom (Matt 19:21-25, Mark 10:19-23, 26 and Luke 18:22-26) is related to this section's mandates but has received prior attention. Mary's *Magnificat* affirms that God has "FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed" (Luke 1:53), but this general clarifier does not provide any needed detail.

The wealth mandates and clarifiers warn that riches are deceitful and that the wealthy must be careful to share with those in need — particularly with needy believers.

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[64] This worry of the world may be analogous to the worries that accompany seeking the "things the nations of the world eagerly seek" (Luke 12:30 // Matt 6:32) but in a broader, extra-disciple sense. Analogous language is also found in Luke 21:34. This warning against friendship with the world and its pleasures is also reiterated in Jas 4:1-5 (which will receive subsequent attention).

Covetousness

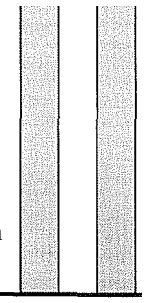
Covetousness is a sin which impinges on helping the poor because it acts in the opposite direction of generosity. Elders and deacons, in particular, must be free of the love of money for they were responsible for the church's corporate sharing and almsgiving (Titus 1:7). Because these coveting mandates impinge on helping the poor only via implication, they will be discussed only briefly.

Figure 18: Covetousness Mandates

	G	J	H
1 Cor 5:9-11 4J I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the *covetous* and *swindlers,* or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you *not to associate* with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or *covetous,* or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a *swindler-- not even to eat with such a one.*	G	J	H
1 Cor 6:7-10 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have *lawsuits* with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 On the contrary, you yourselves *wrong and defraud.* You do this even to your brethren. 9 4J Or do you not know that the *unrighteous* [iicSLKo<;] *will not inherit the kingdom of God?* Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor *thieves,* nor the *covetous,* nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor *swindlers,* will *inherit the kingdom of God.*	G	J	H S
Col3:5-6 4J Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and *greed, which amounts to idolatry.* 6 For it is because of these things that the *wrath of God* will come upon the sons of disobedience	G	J	H
1 Tim 6:5-11 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that *godliness is a means of gain.* 6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have *food and covering, with these we shall be content.* 9 But those who *want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.* 10 For the *love of money is a root of all sorts of evil,* and some *by longing for it have wandered away from the faith* and pierced themselves with many *griefs.* 11 4J But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.	G	J	H
Heb 13:5-6 Make sure that your character is free from the *love of money,* being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," 6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"	G		

Jas 4:1-5 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your *pleasures* [8ov] that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are *envious* and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with *wrong* [KaKw<;] *motives,* so that you may spend it on your *pleasures* [8ov]. 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that *friendship with the world* is *hostility toward God?* Therefore whoever wishes to be a *friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.* 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"*?*

GJH



1 Corinthians 5:9-11 identifies coveting (nA.wveKTT]c:;) and rapacious swindling (apna) as grounds for shunning another believer. Coveting, or greed, is here connected to its manifestation in predatory defrauding and both assume their place in the present sin list.[65] Rapaciousness, the interhuman manifestation of coveting, is thus identified as an injustice.

In 1 Cor 6:7-10 Paul mandates that believers should rather be defrauded than pursue lawsuits with other believers. Such defrauding is unjust (aOLKoc:;, v. 9) and those who practice it or theft or rapaciousness will not "inherit the kingdom of God" (vv. 9-10).

Because coveting (nA.wv #a) "amounts to idolatry" (Col3:5), the "wrath of God" (Col 3:6) is upon this significant sin.

1 Timothy 6:5-11 mandates that believers are to be content if they "have food and covering" (v. 7). Because the "love of money is a root of all sorts of evil" (v. 10), those who "want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction" (v. 9). Thus covetousness is again affirmed to be unjust and a source of apostasy (v. 10).[66]

The mandate to be content rather than money-loving is re.affirmed in Heb 13:5-6.

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[65] Garland, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: 1 Corinthians,* 185-186.

[66] William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles,* vol. 46 (Dallas: Word, 2002), 347-348.

Seeking wealth in order to be able to spend it on one's pleasures (i]oov) is condemned as enmity (£x8pa) with God in Jas 4:1-5. This "friendship with the world" is a form of adulterous idolatry that makes oneself an enemy (£x8p6<;) of God (v. 4). By implication, asking so as to receive involves having the right motives (v. 3)–motives which involve spending one's wealth on things other than one's pleasures. Such spending would include helping the poor. This mandate also explicitly condemns lusting for that which one does not have (v. 2).

Figure 19: Covetousness Clarifier

	Res.	Poor
1 Tim 3:2-3 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, *hospitable,* able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, *free from the love of money.*	C	
1 Tim 3:8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or *fond of sordid gain,*	C	
Titus 1:7-8 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, *not fond of sordid gain,* 8 but *hospitable,* loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,	C	

1 Timothy 3:2-3, 1 Tim 3:8 and Titus 1:7-8 affirm that elders and deacons must be free from the love of money and sordid gain.[67] In contrast they are to be hospitable by sharing their homes and meals. The overseer, a "functional title,"[68] appears

[67] For seeking such gain is what those of a "depraved mind" seek (1 Tim 5:6).

[68] George W. Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text,* 290; Newport J.D. White, *The Expositor's Greek Testament: Titus,* vol. 4, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Armstrong, 1903), 187.

to have been responsible for the distributions to the poor akin to the apostles in Acts — at least in the context of the early church fathers.[69]

In summary, coveting is identified as a sin in the Decalogue and thus is forbidden in Rom 13:9 and explicitly mentioned as a sin in Rom 7:7-11. To the extent that it affects interhuman action it results in injustice for it seeks to secure that which does not rightfully belong to it. In this sense, social gospel and liberation theology advocates are astute in recognizing that the alienation of greed is a sin.

Generosity

Generosity is an indispensable component of helping the poor. As has already been noted in the discussions of Luke 16:1-13, 2 Cor 9:8-11 and 1 Tim 6:17-19, generosity is a common component of Christian obligation. Two camouflaged but parallel generosity mandates will receive attention here.

Figure 20: Generosity Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 6:22-23 ,- "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your *eye* is *clear* [cmA.ouc;], your whole body will be full of light. 23 "But if your *eye* is *bad* [1tOVT]p6c;], your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!	P			
Il Luke **II**:34-36 "The eye is the lamp of your body; when your *eye* is *clear* [cmA.ouc;], your whole body also is full of light; but when it is *bad* [rrovT]p6c;], your body also is full of darkness. 35 "Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness. 36 "If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it will be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays."	P			

The reference to the good (anA.ouc;) and evil (novT)p6c;) eye in Matt 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-36 is a mandate to generosity. Alan M'Neile concludes, perhaps too strongly,

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[69] By way of example note Ignatius' command to Polycarp to "vindicate your [Polycarp's] position by giving your whole attention to its material and spiritual sides" (Ignatius, *To Polycarp,* 1:2): Richardson, *The Library of Christian Classics Volume 1: Early Christian Fathers,* 118.

that, in the NT, TlOVflp6c; is "nowhere found strictly of physical soundness."[70] Biblical usage however supports the connection between an evil eye and covetousness, envy, or even maliciousness.[71] It is indeed difficult to overlook the evidence for this connection as found in Deut 15:9,28:54-58, Prov 23:6,28:22, Matt 20:15 and Mark 7:22.[72] Singleness or simplicity (cmA6Tflc;) is used throughout the NT to refer to generosity and, correspondingly, the single or simple (cmA.ouc;) eye refers to being generous and provides Matt 6:22-23 with an amiable fit within its Sermon on the Mount context.

Contextually, by way of Matthew, these generosity mandates have the poor as their recipients. Such mandates naturally flow into commands to give generously-such as those found in Mark 4:24 and Luke 6:38.

Give and Lend

Mandates concerning giving and lending will naturally benefit those who have need of asking and borrowing. Thus the poor become the primary candidates for being the recipients of such mandates.

Figure 21: Give and Lend Mandates

t				
Matt 5:42 *"Give* to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to *borrow* from you.				
l l Luke 6:29-30 "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever *takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.* 30 *"Give* to everyone who asks of you, and whoever *takes away what* is *yours, do not demand* it *back.*		*M*		

[70] Alan H. M'Neile, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (London: MacMillan, 1915), 85.

[71] John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew -1 Corinthians,* vol. 3 (Peabody: Henderson, 1859), 118.

[72] Extracanonical support is found in, for example, Sirach 14:3-10, Tobit 4:7-10 and Wisdom 4:12. For additional usage see: Dale C. Allison, Jr., "The Eye is the Lamp of the Body (Matthew 6:22-23 = Luke 11:34-36)." *New Testament Studies* 33:1 (1987}: 61-83.

II Luke 6:34-36 "If you *lend* to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. 35 "But *love* your *enemies,* and *do good,* and *lend,* expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 "Be *merciful* [oiKTLPf!WV], just as your Father is *merciful* [oiKTtpf!WV].	S C	M	H S	1/ p
Matt 7:1-2 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and *by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.*	G:			
II Mark 4:24 And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. *By your standard of measure it will be measured to you;* and more will be given you besides.				
II Luke 6:38 *"Give,* and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure--pressed down, shaken together, and running over. *For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."*			me	
Rom 12:8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who *gives, with liberality* [cmA6TT]c;]; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows *mercy* [EA.E£w], with cheerfulness.	G			

Matthew 5:42, Luke 6:29-30 and Luke 6:34-36 contain Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and Sermon on the Plain mandates concerning giving and lending. Matthew 5:42 appears to imply that the immediately poor are in view as made explicit by the *NRSV* translation: "Give to everyone who begs from you.'m This almsgiving to the immediately poor is coupled with the mandate to lend to those who ask — as previously mandated in Deut 15:7-8.[74] In Luke 6:29-30 Jesus provides mandates concerning the treatment of enemies. When someone unjustly "takes away what is yours, do not demand it back" (v. 30). This general attitude, to not return in kind, likewise informs Jesus' instruction to turn the other cheek and thus serves as an antithesis to the exacting justice of the *lex talionis* (Matt 5:38). Jesus mandates that one go beyond not returning in kind by treating others as one wants to be treated (Luke 6:31) and, even beyond that, by doing good to others which will not be requited (Luke 6:32-35). Such mercies will receive a great reward (Luke 6:35). Luke 6:30 reaffirms the mandate to give to the indigent beggar as well as to lend.[75] Luke

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[73] *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989).

[74] Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary: Matthew 1-13,* 131.

[75] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 1:1-9:50,593-594.*

6:34-36 further develops the mandate theme oflending to those who will not be able to lend back in turn.[76] The mercy nature of the Lucan mandates is confirmed semantically by the summary mandate to be merciful (oiKTLp!lwv) unto one's enemies just like the Father (Luke 6:36).[77] The giving and lending mandates of Matt 5:42, Luke 6:29-30 and Luke 6:34-36 extend to Jesus' larger audience as His immediate disciples, after having forsaken their possessions, would not have that much of anything to give or lend.

Luke 6:38, and its analogous parallels Matt 7:1-2 and Mark 4:24, add to the mandate to give the promise of proportional reward: "For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return" (Luke 6:38). Mark 4:24 clarifies that this proportionality includes something akin to a multiplication factor.

In Rom 12:8 Paul mandates that believers who share (!lETa8(8w!lL) do so with generousity (arrA6TfJc;) and that cheerfulness accompany the doing of mercy (*tA.eiw*).[78]

First/Last

Jesus' mandates concerning becoming first and greatest concern participating in lowly service unto fellow believers.

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[76] John Nolland similarly argues that this is the only meaning of receiving back (Luke 6:34) which makes sense in this context: Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 1:1-9:20,299*.

[77] While Richard Burridge argues that the difference in terminology between Luke 6:36 and Matt 5:48 is redactional and aimed at the two poles of inclusive mercy and moral perfection, the author contends that in Matthew the perfection being referred to is the perfection of mercy previously described in Matt 5:45. This perfection of mercy mandates the hearer to move beyond living out of the 'tit-for-tat' perspective of common justice. See: Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 75-76.

[78] Thomas Schreiner argues that helping the poor is likewise envisioned in this mandate unto mercy: Schreiner, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans*, 660.

Figure 22: First/Last Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 19:27-30 Then Peter said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" 28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. 30 "But *many who are first will be last; and the last, first.*	S	M	H	
// Mark 10:28-31 Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he will receive a *hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms,* along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 "But *many who are first will be last, and the last, first."*	S	M	H	
Matt 23:11-12 "But *the greatest among you shall be your servant.* 12 "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever *humbles* himself shall be exalted.	G			
Mark 9:35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be *first,* he shall be *last* of all and *servant* of all."	G			
Mark 10:42-44 Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. 43 "But it is not this way among you, but *whoever wishes to become great among shall be your servant;* 44 and *whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.*	G			
Luke 9:48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name *receives* Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the *one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."*	G			
// Luke 22:24-27 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 "But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the *greatest among you must become like the youngest,* and the leader like the *servant.* 27 "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the *one who serves?* Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the *one who serves.*	G			
John 13:14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also *ought to wash one another's feet.*	G			

Aside from Matt 19:27-30 and Mark 10:28-31 which connect being truly first to forsaking one's possessions and relatives in order to directly follow Jesus, the remaining first/last mandates possess a general resolution level. These remaining passages mandate

humble servanthood (Matt 23:11-12, Mark 10:44, Luke 9:48, 22:26).[79] Jesus Himself models and mandates such servanthood during the Last Supper (Luke 22:27, John 13:14).[80] Being the "slave of all"(Mark 10:44) includes serving the poor among the brethren (Mark 10:43). The reward that is promised for such humble service is becoming the first or greatest — the most honored in the kingdom. Because the previously discussed passages provide only a general level of resolution — that believers are to pursue humble service — they will not receive more detailed discussion.

Receive

The following receive mandates entail providing hospitality to fellow believers. Such hospitality includes meeting their sustenance needs — and also entails doing this for those who are the socially least among the believers (Mark 9:36-37, Luke 9:48).

Figure 23: Receive Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 10:40-42 "He who *receives* you *receives* Me, and he who *receives* Me *receives* Him who sent Me. 41 "He who *receives* a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who *receives* a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a *cup of cold water to drink,* truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."	S G	M	H	
Mark 9:36-37 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, 37 "Whoever *receives* one child like this in My name *receives* Me; and whoever *receives* Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."	G	*M*		
Mark 9:41 "For whoever gives you a *cup of water to drink* because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.	S	M	H	
Luke 9:48 and said to them, "Whoever *receives* this child in My name *receives* Me, and whoever *receives* Me *receives* Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."	G			

[79] Matthew 18:1-4likewise mandates the humility of the social status of a child in order to be the "greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (vv. 1, 4).

[80] John 13:14, a mandate unto lowly service, appears to be a general mandate rather than a concrete one due to the reference to it in 1 Tim 5:10.

Rom 16:2 that you *receive* her in the Lord in a *manner worthy of the saints,* and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a *helper* [npocr-ranc;] of many, and of myself as well.	C G:		,:,
Heb 13:1-3 ,-Let *love* of the brethren continue. 2 Do not neglect to show *hospitality* to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember the *prisoners,* as though in *prison* with them, and those who are *ill-treated* [KaKouxew], since you yourselves also are in the body.	S C		.. | >: .:

Matthew 10:40-42, Mark 9:36-37 and Luke 9:48 echo the parable of the sheep and the goats in describing what receiving Jesus looks like. Receiving even the least and littlest believer so as to meet their sustenance needs entails receiving the Master. Mark 9:41 and Matt 10:40-42 concretize this receiving by revealing that providing even a cup of cold water, which entails the least costly and most effortless meeting of a sustenance need, will be rewarded. Thus all of Jesus' specific receive mandates are hamartiologically revealed to be issues of mercy.

The receiving of Phoebe in Rom 16:2 is described as helping and reveals that providing hospitality and assistance for foreign believers should be done in a "manner worthy of the saints."

Such hospitality to visiting believers is also mandated in Heb 13:1-3. The mandate to "remember the prisoners" (v. 3) is added as a component of loving the brethren.[81] This remembering is to be sympathetic (v. 3) and entails the 'visiting' described in the parable of the sheep and the goats — a visiting which provides sustenance care.[82] Consequently, such sympathetic care is an instance of mercy akin to the OU!lrra8£w shown in Heb 10:34. Believers who are persecuted and mistreated (KaKouxew), a category which subsumes those in prison, are to receive similar care — in accordance with their

[81] The love of the brethren subsumes both the mandates to hospitality and prisoner care: Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 9-13,* 511-513; Thun!n, *Das Lobopfer der Hebriier: Studien zum Aujbau und Anliegen von Hebriierbrief,* 209-210.

[82] Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 9-13,* 513.

needs.[83] This mistreatment appears to have had physical dimensions for the believers are mandated to remember "those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering bodily."[84]

In summary, receiving fellow believers in a hospitable manner so as to meet their sustenance needs, whenever it is elucidated, is identified as an issue of mercy. Caring for imprisoned and mistreated Christians is a related aspect of brotherly love (cpLA.a&A.cp(a, Heb 13:1). Hebrews 6:10 reveals that "God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints." Such service (OLaKovew) to the brethren, which is analogous to receiving, is also rewarded — affirming the relation between OLaKovew and mercy.

Feeding

Jesus' miraculous feedings were intended to meet the sustenance needs of the crowds .that were following Him. In Matt 14:15-22 and Mark 6:34-44 Jesus explicitly commands the disciples to meet these sustenance needs.

Figure 24: Feeding Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 14:15-22 When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; *you give them something to eat!"* 17 They said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." 18 And He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, 20 and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. 21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children. 22 ,- Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.	C			

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 507-508.

// Mark 6:34-44 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. 35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and it is already quite late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But He answered them, *"You give them something to eat!"* And they said to Him, "Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?" 38 And He said to "How many loaves do you have? Go look!" And when they found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass. 40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. 44 There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.	C		
// **John** 6:4-15 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, said to Philip, *"Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"* 6 This He was saying to test him, for *He Himself knew what He was intending to do.* 7 Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." 8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. 12 When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost." 13 So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 14 Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 'So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.	C		
Matt 15:32-38 And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel *compassion* [arrA.ayxvi Oflat] for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and *I do not want* [8£A.w] *to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."* 33 The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?" 34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." 35 And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; 36 and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. 38 And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.	C	M	S

Jesus' explicit commands in Matt 14:15-22 and Mark 6:34-44 as well as the implied mandates of John 6:4-15 and Matt 15:32-38 are localized mandates. They do not extend to everyone who would be able to accomplish them and, in addition, Jesus fully

intends to meet these sustenance needs Himself (John 6:6). John 6:4-15, a parallel to Matt 14:15-22 and Mark 6:34-44,[85] presents Philip as the spokesman and testee on behalf of the disciples. Jesus' question, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?" (John 6:5), appears to imply a delegation of responsibility analogous to Jesus' wanting (S£A.w), in Matt 15:32, to not send the crowd away hungry. Matthew 15:32 reveals that, in Jesus' eyes, providing for sustenance needs, even when He is in the role of an analogous host and the reason for the crowd's hunger, is a matter of compassionate empathy (crrrA.ayxv((o!J.at). Jesus thus does not consider His ability to provide for these sustenance needs, even when in their direct presence, as a matter of justice akin to Wolterstorffs sustenance rights. This lack of provision could have resulted in the collapsing of some of the crowd on the way (Matt 15:32)-the weak, elderly and young would have been particularly susceptible. This passage suggests that Wolterstorff s approach, at minimum, must adopt a very strong human/divine disjunction.

In sum, the localized nature ofJesus feeding mandates means that they are not pertinent to human obligation.

Widows

The concern to help and not harm widows and the fatherless, who are considered orphans, is amply manifest throughout both testaments. The biblical mandates concerning widows entail that they not be unjustly harmed (Exod 22:21-24, Deut 24:17-18,27:19, Job 24:3, 12,29:12-14, 16-17, Ps 94:3,6, Isa 1:23, 10:1-4, Jer 7:5-7, 22:2-5, Ezek 22:2,6-7, Zech 7:9-10, Mal3:5, Matt 23:14 // Mark 12:38-40 // Luke 20:46-47), that they receive judicial assistance and protection (Isa 1:17, 19-20), that special assistive measures be provided to them (Deut 14:28-29, 16:9-17,24:19, 20-22,26:12-13, 1 Tim 5:3-16) and that they generally receive assistance (Job 22:5, 9-11, 24:19-21, 31:16-17,

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[85] Andreas J. Kostenberger, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 203.

Jas 1:27). This well attested concern is thoroughly appropriate as defenselessness and poverty was the common plight of families that had lost their main provider.[86]

Figure 25: Widows Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 23:14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you *devour widows' houses,* and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater *condemnation.*	S	J	H	P
// Mark 12:38-40 ,- In His teaching He was saying: "Beware of the scribes who like to walk around in long robes, and like respectful greetings in the market places, 39 and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 40 who *devour widows' houses,* and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater *condemnation."*	S	J	H	P
// Luke 20:46-47 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love respectful greetings in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets, 47 who *devour widows' houses,* and for appearance's sake offer long prayers. These will receive greater *condemnation."*	S	J	H	P
1 Tim 5:3-16 Honor widows who are *widows indeed;* 4 but if any widow has children or grandchildren, *they must first learn to practice piety* in *regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this* is *acceptable* in *the sight of God.* 5 Now she who is a *widow indeed and who has been left alone,* has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. 6 But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. 7 Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. 8 *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and* is *worse than an unbeliever.* 9 ,- A widow is to be put on *the list* only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 having a reputation for *good works;* and **if** she has *brought up children,* if she has *shown hospitality to strangers,* **if** she has *washed the saints' feet,* if she has *assisted* [btapKew] *those* in *distress* [SA.[w], and **if** she has *devoted herself to every good work.* 11 But refuse to put younger widows on *the list,* for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they *want to get married,* 12 thus incurring condemnation, because they have *set aside their previous pledge.* 13 At the same time they also learn to be *idle,* as they go around from house to house; and not merely *idle,* but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. 14 Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; 15 for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. 16 If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist [btapKew] them and *the church must not be burdened,* so that it may assist [btapKEW] those who are *widows indeed.*	S			I

[86] This assumption of poverty is evident, for example, in the mandates concerning the Feast of Weeks (Deut 16:9-12, 16-17) and the Feast ofBooths (Deut 16:13-17).

Jas 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit [bncrKE1m:cr8aL] *orphans and widows* in their *distress* [SA.TlJILC;], and to keep oneself unstained by the world.	S			▮

Matthew 23:14, Mark 12:38-40 and Luke 20:46-47 are the only NT mandates against injustice to widows.[87] This injustice, which is hamartiologically indicated (being a specific source of condemnation), concerns devouring widows' houses. The means whereby this despoiling was accomplished is uncertain. Perhaps the property of widows that had been dedicated to the temple was being managed in such a way as to take advantage of the widows.[88] Perhaps an abuse of hospitality is intended[89] or the scribes provided the widows with unrepayable loans on the basis of the pledging of their houses.[90] It is also possible that they charged such high legal fees to widows that they became insolvent.[91] It is indeed difficult to discern whether an abuse of hospitality or some manner of defrauding is in view. As has been previously noted, defrauding is revealed to be a sin in the NT. Consequently, not much can be discerned from these passages except the tentative possibility that abusing the hospitality of the potentially poor[92] is an interhuman injustice.

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[87] The parable concerning how to pray without losing heart in Luke 18:1-5, while having a widow as its protagonist, provides no mandates.

[88] E. Earle Ellis, *The New Century Bible Commentary: The Gospel of Luke,* ed. Matthew Black, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 239

[89] Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem* in *the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period,* trans. F. H. Cave and C. H. Cave (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 114.

[90] A. R. C. Leaney, *Harper's New Testament Commentaries: A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* (New York: Harper, 1958), 256.

[91] Gustav Stahlin, "x pa," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), in *PC Study Bible* 4.3 (Seattle: Biblesoft, 2006).

[92] The widows in these passages are revealed to be potentially poor because they are susceptible to having their houses confiscated — such widows likely became immediately poor after they were despoiled.

1 Timothy 5:3-16 provides the most extensive NT treatment of mandates relating to the assistance of widows. This passage clarifies that the widows which should receive the corporate assistance of being put on "the list" (v. 9, 11) are those that are "widows indeed" (v. 3, 5, 16). This definition of widowhood, which frames the beginning and ending of this text, means that a woman who has lost her husband is not considered a 'widow' (in terms of church assistance) if she has any children or grandchildren that could provide for her (v. 4). Eligible widows are those which are "left alone" (v. 5) and not a part of any "household" (oiKe'Loc;, v. 8) and therefore have no extended family to help provide for their needs (v. 16). Such widows are likely to be immediately poor. In terms of receiving the support of being on 'the list,' such 'family-less' widows must also be God-trusting believers (v. 5) who have not given themselves "to wanton pleasure" (v. 6). The term translated "wanton pleasure," crrraTaA.aw, is a NT *dis legomenon* — appearing also in Jas 5:5 where it describes those who have "lived luxuriously on the earth." The term is also used to describe the arrogant pleasure seeking of Sodom which enjoyed an abundance of bread and wine (Ezek 16:49, LXX). In Sirach 21:15 it refers to an indulgent fool. William Mounce asserts that the basic meaning of crrraTaA.aw is to "live a luxurious, self-indulgent life, given to pleasure."[93] Because this term's economic meaning is unlikely to apply here, selfish pleasure rather than luxurious living appears to be in view.[94] Such 'service-less' (1 Tim 5:10) living would include being a busybody, engagement in gossiping and "talking about things not proper to mention" (v. 13). Furthermore, in order to qualify, eligible widows must be no younger than "sixty years old, having been the wife of one man" (v. 9). Eligible widows must also have a previous record of devotion to "every good work" including the showing of hospitality to strangers, the humble service of the saints, the aiding of those in distress (8:\.(w) and likewise having "brought up children" (v. 10). Thus

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[93] William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, 283.

[94] Ibid., 283.

an eligible widow was 'family-less,' not self-indulgent, sixty or older, undivorced and committed to serving other believers.[95]

One who was a 'widow indeed' appears to have become an intercessor or worker of the church-having taken a pledge of celibacy (vv. 11-12). [96] She may have been supported by living with other church members on a rotational basis (v. 13). Her support meant that she had to be careful to flee idleness (v. 13). The similarities between 1 Tim 5:13 and 2 Thess 3:11 are suggestive.

The term employed for the widow's church support, btapKEW, is an NT *tris legomenon*-appearing only in verse 10 and twice again in verse 16. This assistance is semantically identified as the provision of aid to someone.[97] The utilization of this term in verse 10 to describe the widow's own aid to those in distress connects btapKEW to good works ("£pymc:; KaA.oTc:;" and "£pyq> aya8(i>," v. 10). This relation suggests that a mercy level obligation is in view. The inclusion of this aid alongside hospitality and humble service, which are both matters of mercy (as indicated elsewhere), likewise suggests that tnapKEW is an issue of mercy.

1 Timothy 5:3-16 also clarifies a believer's obligations to her dependant parents-in the extended family sense. [98] Such care is a piety (v. 4) that is required of a

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[95] The requirement of motherhood (v. 10) may be intended as one exemplar of the manner of good works that such a widow is to have done.

[96] In *To the Smyrnaeans* 13:1, Ignatius extends his "greetings … to the virgins enrolled with the widows:" Richardson, *The Library of Christian Classics Volume 1: Early Christian Fathers,* 116. It appears that by Ignatius' time, the 'order of widows' which was provided for by the giving of the church had come to include virgins who had also committed themselves to celibacy.

[97] "£napK£w," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* eds. Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich *[BDAG],* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), in *BibleWarks* 7.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 2004); "£napK£w," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti,* ed. Joseph H. Thayer (New York: American Book, 1889), in *BibleWorks* 7.0 (Big Fork: Hermeneutika Computer Research Software, 2004).

[98] William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles,* 298.

believer (vv. 7, 16). The strong language of verse 7 suggests that such care is likely an issue of justice, for "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." This mandate also implies the need, for the able-bodied, to work in order to support one's own. The reason for these mandates is that "the church must not be burdened." This concern, which is analogous to that expressed in 2 Cor 11:9, 12:13-14, 16, 1 Thess 2:9 and 2 Thess 3:8, informs the strict guidelines for providing sustenance assistance. Such guidelines are dissonant with Wolterstorff s conception of sustenance rights.

James confirms that visiting (emcrKErrtO!J.aL) "orphans and widows in their distress" (8A.l\j1Lc;) is "pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father" {Jas 1:27).[99] This visiting, emcrKerr-rO!J.aL, entails taking care of those distressed so as to alleviate their distress (as in Matt 25:36).[100]

Figure 26: Widows Clarifiers

	Res.	Poor
Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their *widows* were being overlooked in the *daily serving of food.*	S	I/P
Acts 9:36, 39-41 Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with *deeds of kindness and charity* [epywv aya8wv Kal EAE'lfl OOUvwv] which she continually did. 39 So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the *tunics and garments* that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. 40 But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive.	S	I/P

[99] James contrasts the untainted (afl LUVTO<;) religion ofJas 1:27 with the vain and worthless (fl UTULo<;) religion described in Jas 1:26. This contrast, along with the subsumed mandate to "keep oneself unstained by the world" (Jas 1:27), indicates that this tainting does not needfully entail that caring for widows in their distress is a justice matter. For additional discussion, regarding this focus on religiosity, see: Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: James,* 51-52.

[100] Ibid., 44, 52.

Acts 6:1, a passage formerly discussed, describes another example of corporately dispensed sustenance assistance to widows. Acts 9:36, likewise formerly engaged, affirms the goodness of giving alms to widows.

Gleaning

The gleaning laws of the OT permit the satiation of one's hunger by partaking of a neighbor's produce: "When you enter your neighbor's vineyard, then you may eat grapes until you are fully satisfied, but you shall not put any in your basket. When you enter your neighbor's standing grain, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not wield a sickle in your neighbor's standing grain" (Deut 23:24-25). While not a mandated action, Jesus' approval and defense of this practice, even on a Sabbath, reveals that He believed that this pre-harvest meeting of sustenance needs is still permitted (Matt 12:7).

Figure 27: Gleaning Clarifiers

Matt 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became *hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.*		II p
// Mark 2:23 ,- And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.	S	I/ P
// Luke 6:1 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were *picking the heads of grain, rubbing them* in *their hands, and eating the grain.*	S	I/ P

Such labor intensive alleviation of hunger is most likely to benefit the poor at the outlay of wealthier landowners.

Partiality

The practice of partiality, the preferring of the high to the low and the rich to the poor, is forbidden in the NT.

Figure 28: Partiality Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Rom 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but *associate with the lowly.* Do not be wise in your own estimation.	C G			
Jas 2:1-7 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a *poor man in dirty clothes,* 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the *poor man,* "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with *evil* motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the *poor* of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the *poor man.* Is it not the *rich* who oppress [Kamouva<JTEUW] you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?	S P	J	S	I
Jas 2:8-12 ,-If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. 9 But if you show *partiality,* you are *committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.* 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now **if** you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.	S P I	J	H	I
Jas 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, *unwavering* [aotaKptTm;], without hypocrisy.	G			

Paul's mandate in Rom 12:16 asserts that believers must associate with the "lowly." While status is certainly in view, poor believers would naturally be included in this commanded association.[101]

In Jas 2:1-7 James identifies partiality to the rich as an evil (v. 4) – a dishonoring of the immediately poor (v. 6). Participating in this injustice is particularly ironic because it is the unbelieving (v. 7) "rich who oppress you and personally drag you

[101] While scholarly opinion is divided, the sense of associating with the lowly is to be preferred over the notion of engaging humble tasks: Schreiner, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans,* 668-669.

into court" (v. 6). The oppression spoken ofhere, KaTaouvacrn:uw, refers to the overpowering of those with less influence-even via the judicial system (v. 6).

The immediately following verses, Jas 2:8-12, assert that such partiality is a transgression of the command to love your neighbor as yourself. Such partiality is proscribed in Lev 19:15 which commands: "You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly." The prohibition of Lev 19:15 is found in very close textually proximity to Lev 19:18 -the source ofJames' 'love your neighbor' quotation in Jas 2:8.[102] Because such partiality is "committing sin" (v. 9), it is an instance of injustice.

General impartiality is also mandated in Jas 3:17 which asserts that "the wisdom from above" is aOLaKpLToc;.[103]

Oppression and High Resolution Justice

Oppression is the use of entrusted or financial power to perpetrate injustice with immunity. It refers to the injustice that one can get away with due to one's influence or occupation.

High resolution justice mandates are those which possess a 'concrete' or better resolution. Concrete mandates naturally affect interhuman obligations to the poor but also extend beyond them. A representative selection of such justice mandates will be discussed below.

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[102] The reference to becoming "judges with evil motives," in Jas 2:4, likewise appears to correlate this association.

[103] Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: fames,* 133.

Figure 29: Oppression and High Resolution Justice Mandates

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Mark 10:19 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT *STEAL,* DO NOT *BEAR FALSE WITNESS,* Do not *defraud,* HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.	C			
Luke 3:12-13 And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 And he said to them, *"Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."*	C			
Luke 3:14 Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, *"Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely,* and be content with your wages."	C			
Rom 13:8 *Owe nothing to anyone* except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.	C			
Rom 13:9-10 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT *STEAL,* YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 Love does no *wrong* [KaK6c;] to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.	C	J	S	
Jas 5:1-6 Come now, you rich, *weep and howl* for your *miseries which are coming upon you.* 2 Your riches have rotted and your *garments have become moth-eaten.* 3 *Your gold and your silver have rusted;* and their rust will be a witness against you and will *consume your flesh like re.* It is in the last days that you have *stored up your treasure!* 4 Behold, the *pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you,* cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the *Lord of Sabaoth.* 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a *day of slaughter.* 6 You have *condemned and put to death the righteous man* [8[Kmoc;]; he does not resist you.	C	J	H	

Mark 10:19 reiterates the Decalogue mandates against murder, adultery, theft, false witness as well as affirming the honoring of parents in addition to forbidding fraud. Of these, murder, theft, bearing false witness and defrauding are the most pertinent for the present purpose of identifying mandates which are most likely to be transgressed against the poor. These interhuman treatments are identified as issues of justice in other passages. Mark 7:21-23, for example, semantically identifies murder and theft as evil (TlOVflpoe;, v. 23). Romans 13:9-10 does the same by referring to these injustices as KaK6<; (evil, v. 10). 1 Corinthians 6:10 similarly identifies theft and swindling (which is analogous

to defrauding) as injustice, but does so hamartiologically on account of the consequences attached to them.

Luke 3:12-13 mandates that tax collectors do not misuse their position to defraud while Luke 3:14 mandates soldiers to not steal through extortion or to bear false witness. To take an OT example, Deut 19:18-19 confirms, both hamartiologically and semantically, that refraining from such false accusation is a matter of justice obligation.

The Rom 13:8 mandate to "owe nothing to anyone" entails the repayment of debts.[104] The parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:23-34) clarifies that forgiving a debt is a matter of mercy (crnA.ayxvt(OflaL, v. 27, £A.e£w, v. 33) while repaying it is a matter of justice (v. 25, 34).

The previously noted oppression by the rich in Jas 2:6-7 does not add any concrete resolution level information. James 5:1-6, lilcewise previously discussed, contributes concrete, justice level prohibitions against defrauding one's employees, in this case field harvesters, and committing murder. For clarification's sake, it may be worth noting that the causing of stumbling in Matt 18:6, Mark 9:42 and Luke 17:2 refers to tempting rather than wronging.[105]

Additional Related Data

Three areas of additional NT data overlap with the data already noted. These areas nevertheless do not add additional mandates or clarifiers to the data concerning helping the poor but are noteworthy because of the continuity they describe or the attention they receive in the theological material concerning poverty.

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[104] Douglas J. Moo, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans,* ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 812; Schreiner, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Romans,* 691.

[105] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1385-1386.

Pastoral

The pastoral and missionary support mandates found within the writings of Paul are a continuation ofJesus' affirmation that a worker is worthy ofhis support (Matt 10:10). These mandates entail a continuation of the support of those, who like Jesus and His band of disciples, engaged in pastoral and missionary ministry. This continuity is made explicit in 1 Cor 9:14 which affirms that "the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel." Sometimes, as in Paul's case, this missionary and pastoral support overlapped with helping the brethren poor, for Paul himself was experiencing potential and immediate poverty (Phil4:14-17). Paul identifies such sharing as ouyKmvwv£w (v. 14) and KOLVWVEW (v. 15) implying that he considered the alleviation ofhis distress (SA.h!JLc.;, v. 14) by a remote body ofbelievers as a gift (v. 17) and a mercy. In 1 Cor 9:4-18 Paul clarifies that pastoral and missionary workers have a right (E oucria, vv. 4, 6, 12, 18) to receive support.[106] This just support is also mandated in Gal 6:6, though its obligation level is not revealed there.

Healing

It is not uncommon to find that Jesus' healings of the beggarly disabled are held up as impetuses unto helping the poor. Nevertheless, Jesus' healings, even when they transform the non-able-bodied into the able-bodied, and thus enable a rise out of poverty, are not mandated. Jesus' healing of the leper in Mark 1:40-42 is semantically identified as an issue of mercy (crnA.ayxvi(o!laL, v. 41). Jesus is similarly "moved with compassion" (crnA.ayxvi(o!laL, v. 34) to act on behalf of the two blind men in Matt 20:30-34. The healing of the demoniac of the country of the Gerasenes is identified as an act of mercy (EAEEW) by Jesus. His healing of the woman who had hemorrhaged for twelve years (Mat 9:20-22 // Mar 5:25-34 // Luke 8:43-48) also provided economic relief-for her pursuit of

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[106] Paul, however, does not wish to take advantage of this right (vv. 15, 18) for the sake of being able to "offer the gospel without charge" (v. 18).

physicians had cost her "all that she had" (Mark 5:26). The raising of the widow's only son in Luke 7:12-13, which would have resulted in the alleviation ofher immediate or potential poverty, is identified as an act of mercy (crrrA.ayxv(OflaL, v. 13). Jesus' many healings (Mark 3:9-10) are related to doing good, euepye-r£w, in Acts 10:38. As in Jesus' case (Matt 9:2-12, 11:4-5, 15:30-31, Matt 21:14, Luke 5:18-26, 7:22, John 5:3-9), Peter's healing of the immediately poor lame man in Acts 3:2-8 would have enabled him to leave behind his dependence on begging.

In summary, when textually revealed, the healing and exorcism described in the healing passages, even when it helps alleviate immediate poverty, is categorized as a matter of mercy.

Jesus' Mission

Jesus' self-claimed mission also receives extensive scholarly attention with respect to its impact on Christian obligations to the poor. While noteworthy and informative, this mission is spoken of in terms of fulfillment rather than in terms of mandated obligation and thus will receive only brief attention.

Figure 30: Jesus' Mission Clarifiers

Matt 11:5 the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the *POOR HAVB THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.*
// Luke 7:22 And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the *POOR HAVB THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.*
Matt 12:18, 20 "BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL is WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM *JUSTICE* TO THE GENTILES. 20 "A *BATTERED REED* HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A *SMOLDERING WICK* HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS *JUSTICE* TO VICTORY.

Luke 4:18-21 "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO *PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR.* HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO *SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,* 19 TO PROCLAIM THE *FAVORABLE YEAR* OF THE LORD." 20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been *fulfilled* in your hearing."	S	I
Luke 13:19 "It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES."		

In appropriating Isa 61:1-2 in Luke 4:18-21 Jesus claims that the fulfillment of the year of Jubilee is connected to preaching to the poor, the release of captives and the setting free of the oppressed.[107] Because Jesus nowhere mandates the property-returning decree of the Jubilee provisions (Lev 25:10-15, 28-33, 40, 50-54, 27:17-24, Num 36:4) nor apparently engaged in the release of any prisoners or oppressed (including John the Baptist), it is helpful to understand this mission in terms of miracles and the "day of salvation" described in Isa 49:82 and 2 Cor 6:2.[108] Matthew 11:5 and Luke 7:22 affirm that the poor, if anyone, deserve to be given the good news. The justice and mercy of Matt 12:18 is of a low resolution akin to the apparent sheltering and shading nature of the kingdom (Luke 13:19).[109]

Impetuses

The extent to which a mandate is not 'specific' or 'concrete,' or even of 'principle' or 'general' resolution, is the extent to which it does not add to the domain of our obligations. Said another way, the lowest resolution level, the level of moral impetuses, does not serve to define the domain of believer obligation but rather merely reminds us of the necessity of pursuing these mandates. Consequently, the NT impetuses unto justice, mercy and love will receive only a representative tabulation below.

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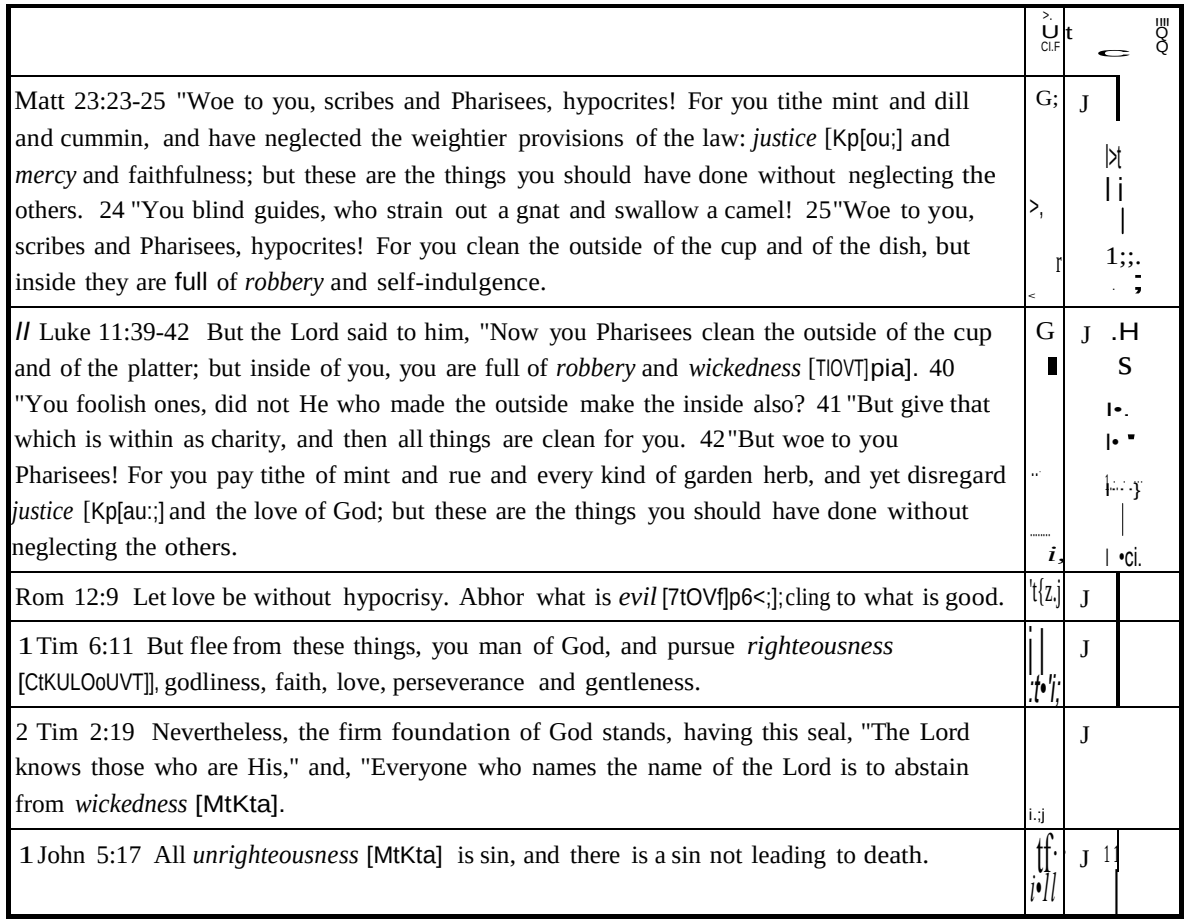
[107] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 1:1-9:50,410-411.*

[108] For more extensive argumentation see, for example: Ibid., 404-411.

[109] It is difficult to discern if sustenance provision is possibly intended: Ibid., 1225-1227.

Justice

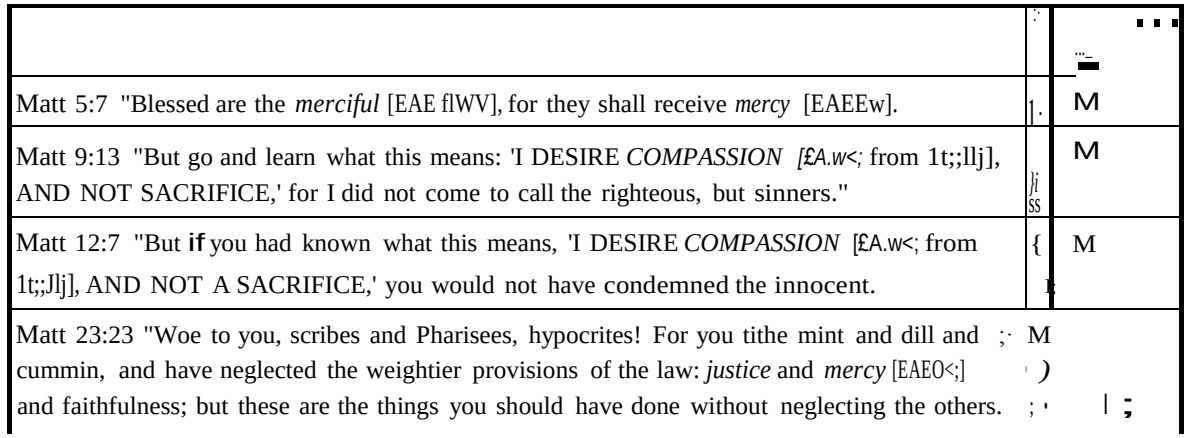
Figure 31: Impetuses to Justice



Matt 23:23-25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: *justice* [Kp[ou;] and *mercy* and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 24 "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of *robbery* and self-indulgence.	
// Luke 11:39-42 But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of *robbery* and *wickedness* [TlOVT]pia]. 40 "You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 "But give that which is within as charity, and then all things are clean for you. 42"But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard *justice* [Kp[au:;] and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.	
Rom 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is *evil* [7tOVf]p6<;]; cling to what is good.	
1 Tim 6:11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue *righteousness* [CtKULOoUVT]], godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.	
2 Tim 2:19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from *wickedness* [MtKta].	
1 John 5:17 All *unrighteousness* [MtKta] is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.	

Mercy

Figure 32: Impetuses to Mercy



Matt 5:7 "Blessed are the *merciful* [EAE flWV], for they shall receive *mercy* [EAEEw].	
Matt 9:13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE *COMPASSION [£A.w<;* from 1t;;llj], AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."	
Matt 12:7 "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE *COMPASSION* [£A.w<; from 1t;;Jlj], AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent.	
Matt 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: *justice* and *mercy* [EAEO<;] and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.	

Rom 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, *unmerciful* [aveAE flWV];	I.	M	S
Col3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of *compassion* [oiKTLpfl6], kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;		M	:S' ..
Jas 2:13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no *mercy* [eAeo]; *mercy* [eAeo] triumphs over judgment.	<	M	S ..

Love

Mandates to love one's neighbor span obligations unto both justice and mercy (Rom 13:8-10, Luke 10:27-37).uo Also noteworthy is that the love mandates of the NT connect love to seeking another's good (and benefit) in a manner analogous to Rom 15:2: "Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification."

Figure 33: Impetuses to Love

	Res.	J/M	S/H	Poor
Matt 5:44-48 "But I say to you, *love* your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 "For **if** you *love* those who *love* you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than other? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.	G I	M	H	
II Luke 6:27-28 "But I say to you who hear, *love* your enemies, do *good* to those who hate 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.	I			
I/Luke 6:32-33 "If you *love* those who *love* you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners *love* those who *love* them. 33 "If you do *good* to those who do *good* to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.	I	M	H	
John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you *love* one another, even as I have *loved* you, that you also *love* one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, **if** you have *love* for one another."	I			
Rom 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, *unloving* [aaTopyo], *unmerciful* [UVEAE flWV];	I			
Rom 12:9 Let *love* [aycirrfJ] be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is *evil* [rrovfJp6]; cling to what is good.	I			

no This plenteous mandate is also found in Matt 19:19, 22:39, Mark 12:31, Gal5:14 and Jas 2:8.

Rom 13:8-10 Owe nothing to anyone except to *love* one another; for he who *loves* his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL *LOVE* YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 *Love* does *no wrong* [KaK6<;] to a neighbor; therefore *love* is the fulfillment of the law.	
1 Cor 13:4-6 *Love* is patient, *love* is kind and is not jealous; *love* does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in *unrighteousness* [O.OtK(a], but rejoices with the truth;	
1 Cor 16:13-14 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in *love.*	
Gal5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through *love.*	
Gal5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through *love* [ayamJ] serve one another.	
Phil2:1-4 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of *love,* if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any *affection and compassion* [crrrA.ayxva Kal ointpf1ol], 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the *same love,* united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from *selfishness* or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*	

Data Integration

The conceptual integration of the data, which is to be presently engaged, will be guided by the resolution principle.[111] The observed NT data patterns will initially be conscripted to outline the contours of NT obligation. Subsequently, these data patterns will be employed to evaluate the core contention. Following this assessment, a preliminary evaluation of the recent theological influences upon evangelical understandings of the moral treatment of the poor will be likewise undertaken.

Contours of NT Obligation

It is helpful to divide the contours of NT obligation unto the poor into those treatments which are textually revealed as being a matter of mercy and those which

[111] This principle is developed in the Resolution Principle and Resolution Principle Considerations sections of chapter 2 (beginning on page 52).

communicate a justice status. The presentation of these contours entails the individual and mutual integration of the previously encountered data aspects. Correspondingly, this summary of the contours of NT obligation will generally engage the biblical data as grouped along the lines of the data aspects.

Domain of Mercy

The main concepts requiring integration within the NT mercy level obligations are the selling of possessions, the proper recipients and extent of giving, the support of widows and the helping of unbelievers.

Selling Possessions

Perhaps the most evident concern within the mercy domain revolves around whether Jesus' mandate to his immediate disciples-to sell their possessions and give the proceeds as alms to the poor —is universally applicable or localized. The data reveals that, even during His ministry, Jesus did not extend this mandate to all believers. Examples of the non-obligated include Zaccheus, Joseph of Arimathea, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, the demoniac of the country of the Gerasenes and those who supported Jesus' ministry.. These examples affirm that the domain of those who could be saved was wider than the domain of those obligated to sell their possessions and immediately follow Jesus. Jesus' mandate was aimed at His broader group of disciples and apparently subsumed the seventy of Luke 10:1-4. Correspondingly, Luke 12:13-21 intimates that the crowd and the disciples are differently obligated as Jesus merely warns the former against greed (v. 15) while commanding the latter to sell their possessions (Luke 12:33). This high resolution differentiation agrees with Jesus' affirmation that the "laborer is worthy of his wages" (Luke 10:7) and that, consequently, those participating-as pastoral and missionary workers —within His ministry are to be supported on the basis of their spiritual profession (as was Jesus Himself).

This mandate, which obligated Jesus' immediate disciples,[112] is hamartiologically identified as a matter of mercy. This obligation level is likewise attested by the resulting donation being referred to as almsgiving (Luke 12:33). The recipients of the benefits of this mandate are identified, whenever an identification is made, as the immediately poor.

This mandate, to sell all for the benefit of the poor, is not attested beyond the confines of Jesus' earthly ministry. While a practical perspective of detachment from possessions is mandated (1 Cor 7:29-31) along with a parallel mindfulness concerning their inherent transience (Jas 1:9-11), the selling of possessions within the nascent church of Acts is unmandated and partial. Correspondingly, Jesus' conjoined mandate to forsake family ties (Luke 18:29) in order to follow him is likewise understood by the disciples themselves to not apply beyond His ministry (1 Cor 9:5). The clarifiers of Acts reveal that the partial selling of one's possessions was voluntary (Acts 5:1-11) and hence a matter of mercy. This mercy is identified as intending to meet the needs of immediately poor brethren. Additionally, 1 Cor 13:3 affirms that the selling of one's possessions in order to provide for the sustenance needs of the poor is extraordirtarily worthy but no longer normative. A broad set of NT mandates affirms the ownership of possessions among believers including 2 Cor 12:14 which clarifies the propriety of parents engaging in saving up for their children. Additionally, living with abundance is affirmed in Phil 4:11-13 as well as 3 John 1:2. Revealingly, 2 Cor 8:11-13 mandates that participation in the Jerusalem collection ought not to usher the donors themselves into need. Thus 1 Tim 6:17-19 applies Jesus' mandate concerning storing up treasure in heaven to the rich so as to enjoin them unto generosity rather than the complete renunciation of their possessions.

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[112] Colin Brown agrees: Hans-Helmut Esser and Colin Brown, "n'troxoc;," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

Jesus presents three different notions of being genuinely first on the basis of being last. Of these, two notions impinge on the treatment of the poor.[113] The most common notion subsumes the general level mandates regarding humble service even unto the lowliest ofbelievers. The specific resolution notions, located in Matt 19:27-30 and Mark 10:28-31, are intertwined with Jesus' mandate to his disciples to forsake their possessions and relations in order to follow Him (Matt 19:27 // Mark 10:28). As such, these mandates are mercy mandates which benefited the immediately poor and were, unlike their aforementioned general resolution cousins, localized to the duration of Jesus' ministry.

The NT witness concerning pastoral and missionary support provides a continuation ofJesus and His disciples' acceptance of ministry provision (Luke 8:2-3). Because this provision is semantically identified as a matter of justice, it will receive further attention in the following Domain of Justice section.

In summary, the obligator set ofJesus' mercy mandate to sell all in order to become His immediate disciple envelopes only his immediate followers — and even these, apparently, solely for the duration of His earthly ministry. It is not surprising then that subsequent to Jesus' ministry, believers who are not pastoral or missionary workers are even commanded to be self-sufficient (1 Thess 4:11-12). As a result, this integration concerning the selling of one's possessions is accomplished on the basis of the textual delimitation of the domain of its proper obligators.

Proper Recipients and Extent of Giving

Almsgiving is both semantically and hamartiologically revealed to possess a mercy level of obligation. The recipients of alms are identified, whenever this

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[113] The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1-16) is not related to the treatment of the poor and thus will not receive attention.

identification is provided, as the immediately poor (Matt 19:21-24 // Mark 10:19-23 // Luke 18:22) and as immediately or potentially poor widows (Acts 9:36, 39-41).

Good works are at times related to specific acts of mercy such as almsgiving (Acts 9:36), the Jerusalem collection (2 Cor 9:8), the humble service of the brethren including showing hospitality to strangers and assisting those in distress (1 Tim 5:10), sharing with needy believers (1 Tim 6:18, Heb 13:16), providing hospitality and travel assistance to Christian missionaries (Titus 3:13-14) as well as the provision offood to non-indolent believers in 2 Thess 3:13. Galatians 6:9-10 prioritizes the doing of such good works to believing recipients. Jesus' healings, by way of comparison, were also classified as instances of mercy by Jesus Himself and were considered an aspect of His doing of good (Acts 10:38).

Doing good also subsumes the mercy oflending to the immediately or potentially poor who could not return the favor-including one's enemies who likely would not return the favor even if they could (Luke 6:34-36). Accepting the seizure of one's property by one's enemies is also a matter of mercy (Luke 6:29-30, 36, Heb 10:34). Giving to the immediately poor is also subsumed under mercy in Luke 6:30, 35-36 and similarly mandated in Matt 5:42.

Such giving is divinely rewarded in accordance with the donor's own generosity (Matt 7:2, Mark 4:24, Luke 6:38). Generosity is likewise mandated in Luke 16:1-13,2 Cor 9:8-11 and 1 Tim 6:17-19 where it is similarly revealed to be an instance of mercy. Matthew 6:22-23 and Luke 11:34-36 also mandate generosity and, by way of the Luke-paralleled context of the Matthew passage, connect it to giving alms to the immediately poor. The parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13) also mandates generosity with one's possessions and wealth-which are properly understood to belong to God —and hamartiologically reveals that such generosity is a matter of mercy.

The Jerusalem collection is explicitly (2 Cor 9:7) and semantically (Acts 24:17) identified as a matter of mercy and a form of almsgiving. The recipients of this gracious sharing and generosity are the immediately poor (Rom 15:25-27) among the remote

believers ofJudea. This contribution affirms that when the cause of believers' immediate poverty is general calamity (the famine of Acts 11:28-30) even remote believers are to participate in the alleviation of these needs. This extension of obligation to remote believers is logical because, under such calamity, it is unlikely that local believers would be adequately well off in sufficient numbers to assist their local needy brethren without themselves becoming immediately poor. Thus the surplus of the remote believers is to mercifully provide for the lack among the immediately poor ofJudea during the calamity of the famine.

The mandates concerning receiving and hospitality include providing for the needs of visiting believers (Rom 16:2, Heb 13:2). Matthew 10:40-42 and Mark 9:41 reveal that even the least troublesome and most basic of sustenance provision, the providing of a cup of water to drink, is an instance of mercy. The hospitable provision of shelter and more so sustenance is to be extended to brethren who are imprisoned or experiencing injustice and persecution (Heb 13:1-3). While the needs which are to be met by such receiving are not fully specified, the provision of sustenance is mandated along with the expected provision of shelter which is part of hospitality.

The NT mandates concerning sharing are focused on KOLvwv(a among the brethren but, particularly within the gospel of Luke, include all the immediately needy among the intended recipients (Luke 3:11, Luke 10:27-37, Luke 14:12-14). Romans 12:20-21 even extends the sustenance provision offood and drink to one's enemies. Both the wider reaching and brethren focused mandates are textually revealed to be instances of mercy whenever obligation indicators are present. The parable of the Good Samaritan mandates mercy unto someone who is even a partial enemy when he is befallen by injustice. The meeting of such a victim's sustenance and medical needs is identified as an act of mercy upon his immediately poor condition. The focus on the provision of sustenance to the immediately needy is echoed in Luke 3:11 which mandates the sharing of clothes or food with "him who has none." Correspondingly, Luke 14:12-14 mandates the merciful inviting to dinner of the non-able-bodied who "do not have the means to

repay you" (v. 14) rather than those who have the means to return the invitation. This focus on the immediately poor as the proper recipients of sharing is affirmed in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46) which identifies the needy as those who are dependant upon the provision of sustenance and sustaining assistance. In this way the rnwxo<; are connected to those possessing the sustenance needs entailed in hunger, thirst, being an alien, being sick, diseased or feeble and experiencing nakedness or imprisonment. The sharing mandated in Jas 2:15likewise concerns the sustenance provision of"what is necessary for their body" unto "a brother or sister ... without clothing and in need of daily food."

James 2:14-15 and 1 John 3:16-18, along with Matt 25:31-46, reveal that helping an immediately accessible and immediately poor believer with his or her immediate sustenance needs, particularly in terms of food and clothing, is a matter of very high obligation. While this obligation is of a mercy level (Matt 25: 44), it is nevertheless a normative manifestation (Matt 25:31-46) of a living faith {Jas 2:14-15) and having the "love of God abide" in oneself (1 John 3:16-18). This mercy obligation to provide for the immediate sustenance needs of an immediately poor "brother or sister" {Jas 2:15), while not a matter of justice, is a natural and inalienable part of genuine faith and Christian love (1 John 3:16-18).

The sharing entailed in the "love feasts" {Jude 1:12) is also intended to benefit the immediately poor who had nothing to contribute to the common meals (see also 1 Cor 11:21-22, 33-34, Acts 2:44-46). Accordingly, the NT data reveals that sharing is bound up with alleviating the sustenance needs of the immediately poor. Whenever its obligation level is communicated, sharing is semantically or hamartiologically identified as a matter of mercy.

The aforementioned provision of pastoral support and a continuing involvement in sharing and almsgiving logically requires that non-pastoral believers engage in 'secular' work. This implication is confirmed in the NT mandates concerning participation in legitimate employment. Acts 20:33-35 connects not working for one's

living to coveting another's possessions and reveals that the indigent which are to be given aid are the non-able-bodied poor. This category of the weak includes the disabled, the diseased and the feeble —all those who are impotent to work on physical grounds. This constraint, which is also echoed in 1 Thess 5:14, prevents the work mandates from undermining themselves in their aim to aid those with sustenance needs. This category of weak is parallel to many of the immediately poor which are contextually related to rrrwxo<; in the gospels: the blind, the lame, the crippled, the diseased, the leprous and the deaf. Able-bodied believers are to give to (Acts 22:35) and share with (Eph 4:28) such non-able-bodied brethren out of what the able-bodied earn from their hard work (Acts 22:35). Ephesians 4:28 asserts that this sharing is to be based on need and thus affirms that alleviating immediate poverty is in view. These passages mandate providing for the immediately poor that are in need due to personal calamity. Seeking to work so as to be independent is likewise part of"behaving properly" (I Thess 4:12) and not burdening others (2 Thess 3:8).

Additional resolution is provided in 2 Thess 3:6-16 which mandates that only the non-indolent ought to have their sustenance needs met by other believers. When work is available, those "not willing to work" (v. 10) are not to have their immediate sustenance needs met by brethren seeking to do good (v. 13). Correspondingly, the sharing of sustenance with needy brethren is suggested to be of a mercy obligation level even within Acts 20:33-35 where it is related to blessing and in 2 Thess 3:16 where it is subsumed under doing good. Indolence even appears to be understood as an injustice towards others as it results in being disassociated (2 Thess 3:6) and is likewise included within what is apparently a sin list in Titus 1:12-13. Applying the resolution principle entails that this high resolution mandate, to provide sustenance aid to only the non-indolent needy-those who cannot work so as to eat their own bread (vv. 8, 12) -is to inform the lower resolution mandates concerning providing for the immediately poor. This delimiting integration is not only driven by the entailments of the resolution principle but is likewise required to avoid contradiction. This passage, along with the parallel trajectories entailed

in the mandates to work so as to provide aid to the physically weak, prescribes that only the non-indolent believer receive sustenance provision. If the lower resolution mandates to give to believers experiencing sustenance needs were to be considered all encomp ssing and unqualifiable, a contradiction would arise. Correspondingly, delimiting texts, such as 2 Thess 3:6-16, are the most apparent candidates for the application of the resolution principle.

Integrating the NT data concerning giving to the poor results in the following set of contours. Giving alms and sharing is identified as a matter of mercy which consistently aims to alleviate the sustenance needs of those who are experiencing immediate poverty due to causes other than their own indolence. Helping indolent believers is explicitly forbidden. The recipients of giving are those who are non-able-bodied due to personal calamity, those who are in immediate poverty as a result of natural calamity (such as a famine) and those who are in immediate need due to injustice (such as in the parable of the Good Samaritan). Immediately poor brethren such as widows, aliens and the imprisoned are likewise to be aided as widows were unlikely to be able to provide for themselves in a manner analogous to the plight of the alien and the imprisoned. No mandates are provided unto the aiding of those, believing or otherwise, who are not experiencing immediate poverty. Believers experience a particularly high mercy obligation to aid other immediately accessible believers who are in immediate physical need of food and clothing (and possibly shelter). The resolution principle entails that this high obligation level does not extend to the indolent. Because believers have a higher obligation to the "household of faith" (Gal 6:10), if even fellow believers, those with whom believers are "members of one another" (Eph 4:25, Rom12:5) and to whom they have the highest levels of mercy obligation (Matt 25:31-46, Jas 2:14-15, 1 John 3:16-18), are not to be aided in their indolence, it is enormously improbable that indolent unbelievers are intended to receive such sustenance aid.

Support of Widows

The daily provision of food to believing widows (Acts 6:1) was the only other corporate ministry unto the poor in which the nascent church engaged beyond the distribution of proceeds to needy brethren.[114] 1 Timothy 5:3-16 provides greater resolution regarding the delimiting of those widows which are to receive the church's systematic corporate aid. An eligible widow had to be believing, 'family-less,' not self- indulgent, sixty or older, undivorced and committed to serving other believers. Such a resourceless widow was a 'widow indeed' and apparently became an intercessor or worker of the church- having taken a lifelong pledge of celibacy (vv. 11-12). It appears that she may have been supported by living with other church members on a rotational basis (v. 13). In conceptual agreement with 2 Thess 3:11, such supported widows had to be careful to flee idleness (1 Tim 5:13). Only believing widows without other means of support were to receive this corporate aid as, whenever possible, "the church must not be burdened" (1 Tim 5:16). Consequently, the resolution principle affirms that the corporate church support of widows was intended to be significantly delimited to meeting the sustenance needs of resourceless widows who were known for service. Widows not fulfilling the stipulated requirements were not to be helped in this corporate church manner — a helping which is implied to be a matter of mercy.

Aside from this corporate support, Jas 1:27 mandates individual assistance to widows and orphans in their distress — this assistance certainly entailed meeting immediate needs and perhaps implied the meeting of their protection needs. The provision of clothing, as exemplified by Tabitha (Acts 9:36, 39-41), similarly appears to have been of individual persuasion as no corporate delegation is intimated in the text. Such aid on Tabitha's part is semantically identified as an act of mercy.

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[114] The support of pastoral and missionary workers was not seen on the same terms for it was understood as wages due for services rendered. As such, this support was not identified as a component of providing for the immediately poor. For further discussion see the Pastoral Support section (beginning on page 171).

Helping Unbelievers

The NT data mandates the doing of good to both believers and unbelievers (Gal6:10). This includes giving to those who beg and lending to the immediately poor who cannot return the favor (Matt 5:42, Luke 6:30, 34-35). It also includes providing food and clothing to those who have none (Luke 3:11). Even enemies are to receive sustenance provision when in immediate need of food and drink (Rom 12:20). These mandates, which have unbelievers as part of their recipient set, are identified as matters of mercy whenever their obligation level is specified. Furthermore, the application of the resolution principle suggests that such immediately poor are not to be helped if their poverty arises out of their own unwillingness to participate in work.

Domain of Justice

The domain of the NT justice mandates concerning the moral treatment of the immediately and potentially poor encompasses four areas of emphasis. These areas are the provision of pastoral support, familial responsibility towards widows, general justice and oppression as well as the sub-domain of needs based justice. Of these, only the latter two require integration considerations.

Pastoral Support

Pastoral and missionary support continues throughout the NT on the basis of Jesus' assertion that His ministry workers are worthy of their support (Tpo<p, Matt 10:10). Thus 1 Cor 9:14 affirms that "the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel." Paul further identifies such support as a matter of justice in 1 Cor 9:4-18 for pastoral and missionary workers have a right (£ ouaia, vv. 4, 6, 12, 18) to their support. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 asserts that, while those who are widows indeed are to be honored with church support, the elders "who rule well" and "who work hard at preaching and teaching" are "worthy of double honor" (v. 17). This mandate unto pastoral support is likewise framed out ofJesus' assertion that "the laborer is worthy of his wages" and additionally supported by the OT mandate against muzzling a threshing ox (v.

18).[115] The recipients of this corporate support are the ruling elders, especially those engaged in preaching and teaching, and non-tent-making itinerants and missionaries (1 Cor 9:5). The extent of the support is not clarified except that it should provide for the worker's sustenance needs (Tpo<p, Matt 10:10) to the extent that he may "refrain from working" in additional employment (1 Cor 9:6) and still be able to support his family (1 Cor 9:5).

Family Responsibility

Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees and scribes in Matt 15:3-9 and Mark 7:9-13 asserted that honoring one's parents involved helping to take care of them, provided they needed such care, presumably when they are older. Failing to provide such assistance is identified as a transgression, rrapa a(vw, of the law (Matt 15:3). 1 Timothy 5:4 subsumes taking care of one's widowed mother and grandmother under the mandate to make some return to one's parents. 1 Timothy 5:8 clarifies that failing to provide for one's own, especially for those of one's own extended household, constitutes denying the faith and being "worse than an unbeliever." 1 Timothy 5:15 reaffirms that even daughters, rather than merely sons, were responsible for assisting any widows which were dependant upon them. Consequently, providing for the immediately and possibly potentially poor dependants in one's extended family is identified as a matter of justice. This mandate explicitly subsumes widows and dependant parents.

General Justice and Oppression

The NT texts affirm that general justice, the keeping of which benefits all persons, is to be kept for the sake of the poor and non-poor alike. This includes the proscription of theft, defrauding, swindling, not repaying debts, bearing false witness,

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[115] This OT mandate, likewise appearing in 1 Cor 9:9, is connected to the benefit that the ox's owner receives when it is lent out to others in order to thresh their grain: Jan L. Verbruggen, "Of Muzzles and Oxen: Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Corinthians 9:9," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49:4 (December 2006): 699-711.

failing to pay employees and committing murder (Jas 5:1-6). These injustices can be summarized under the notions of murder, defrauding theft and the false accusation of bearing a false witness. All of these may be transgressed against the poor —often with greater ease due to their vulnerability.

All of these general injustices can become matters of oppression in instances where one party is placed into a position of relative power whereby it can expect to overpower another party so as to prevent the securing of remedial justice for the former party's preceptive injustices. Oppression may thus be helpfully conceptualized as the use of entrusted or financial power to perpetrate injustice with virtual immunity. It refers to the injustice that one party can get away with due to its influence or occupation.

Within the NT, oppression (Ka-raouvacrn:uw) is mentioned by name, as it relates to interhuman treatment, only in Jas 2:6. In this verse the unbelieving rich are identified as those who have the power to oppress believers and personally drag them into courts where the oppressors will prevail. The withholding of pay from the hired workers ofJas 5:1-6 also appears to be an instance of oppression because the workers appear to have no recourse but to cry out to "the Lord of Sabaoth" (Jas 5:4). The judicially enabled murder of the righteous man by the unjust rich in Jas 5:6 also bears the markings of oppression because the courts have permitted his condemnation and "he does not resist."[116] Such oppression is hamartiologically identified as a matter of injustice in Jas 5:1-6. The smaller scale oppression of being defrauded by a tax collector is proscribed in Luke 3:12-13. Similarly, the oppression enabled by a soldier's occupation, the ability to extort and bear false witness in relative security, is likewise proscribed in Luke 3:14.

While noted briefly in the earlier Widows data section (beginning on page 145), the main options for what the unjust devouring of widow's houses entailed must now needfully receive further attention. John Nolland contends that, of all the possible

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[116] Ralph Martin agrees that, as conceived in this passage, "the poor do not resist because they cannot" for "they are helpless:" Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: fames,* 181-182.

options,[117] either inappropriate estate guardianship or the abuse ofhospitality is most likely to be in view.[118] Being pressed into offering hospitality does not appear to the author as likely grounds for becoming insolvent — for if the widow did not have much, there would not be much to share. It is apparently best to understand Jesus' mandate in terms of the inappropriate guardianship identified in *Gittim* 52a-52b ofthe Babylonian Talmud.[119] This defrauding of widows' estates is, at minimum, a matter of injustice (Matt 23:14 // Mark 12:40 // Luke 20:47) and appears to have been carried out with the occupational privilege entailed in oppression.

If this interpretation is correct, this despoiling of a widow's property joins the above noted NT data as a form of oppression. These mandates form the boundaries of what may be identified as systemic sin towards the poor within the NT textual data. Revealingly, these institutionally permitted transgressions are components of the notions of murder, defrauding theft and the bearing a false witness-proscriptions which benefit all persons generally. Consequently, the NT data does not support a notion of the hamartiosphere which entails non-volitional injustice. Accordingly, the soldiers and tax collectors of Luke 3:12-14, while participating in the maiJtenance of an occupational and often unjust regime, were not mandated to cease their involvement in this hamartiosphere but rather to desist from the concrete doing of injustice — the injustice over which they had control. The forms of oppression mentioned in the NT texts are purposeful and intended. They are enabled by the privilege of occupation or the manipulative influencing

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[117] Joseph Fitzmyer, for example, catalogues six options which include, beyond the options noted earlier, the unlikely possibility that the scribes and Pharisees took fees for intercessory prayer and the similarly unconvincing possibility that mere estate mismanagement is in view: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Anchor Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Luke,* vol. 28A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 1318.

[118] John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 18:35-24:53,* vol. 35C (Dallas: Word, 2002), 976.

[119] J. Duncan Derrett agrees and Joseph Fitzmyer is similarly inclined: J. Duncan M. Derrett, "'Eating Up the Houses of Widows': Jesus's Comment on Lawyers?" *Novum Testamentum* 14:1 (January 1972): 1-9; Fitzmyer, *Anchor Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Luke,* 1318.

enabled by wealth and, consequently, would not be achievable against the oppressor's peers. Such oppression is merely concrete injustice safely pursued from behind the protections of financial power and occupational privilege.

Several additional general injustice mandates, which also apply towards the poor, are noted in the NT. These mandates concern covetousness, being able-bodied and unwilling to work, partiality and gleaning. Covetousness, like being unwilling to work, is identified as a cause for disassociation from other believers (1 Cor 5:9-11). As noted earlier, Acts 20:33-35 relates these two injustices. The believer is to "beware, and be on … guard against every form of greed" (Luke 12:15). Jesus evaluates the rich man who stores up only for himself as a "fool" (Luke 12:20). To the extent to which avarice affects interhuman treatment it results in idolatrous injustice for it seeks to secure that which does not rightfully belong to it. The arrangements of 2 Cor 9:5 are intended to thwart the possible negative affects that avarice might play in giving towards the Jerusalem collection. In this sense, the sin of covetousness may act against the mercy of sharing with the immediately poor. Covetousness results in interhuman injustices such as rapacious swindling and defrauding in addition to having an affect bn a person's willingness to engage in merciful aid to the immediately poor. As such, covetousness results in a form of 'alienation' which hardens its host against the needs of the poor. This unjust rapaciousness is a concrete and willed component of the hamartiosphere.

Being unwilling to work is, as has been noted, similarly identified as an injustice against those who would support such indolence. Titus 1:12-13 mandates against indolent laziness and includes it among the sins oflying, evil viciousness and gluttony. Correspondingly, indolence is to result in the consequence of being disassociated from fellow believers (1 Cor 5:9-11).

While many Scriptural texts, including Jas 3:17, forbid partiality against anyone, Jas 2:1-12 specifically proscribes partiality towards the rich at the expense of the immediately poor. While the partiality proscribed here merely concerns displays of honor

in the assembly, it is hamartiologically and semantically identified as the transgression of a justice level obligation.

The hand-picking of another's standing grain for the purpose of satiating one's hunger is not mandated but allowed by Jesus in the parallel texts of Matt 12:1, Mark 2:23 and Luke 6:1. This limited and labor intensive pre-harvest meeting of a person's sustenance needs is allowed for by Deut 23:24-25. This Deuteronomy mandate is a non-sanctional casuistic command and consequently its obligation status remains undisclosed. In any case, such labor intensive alleviation of hunger-which is most likely to benefit the poor at the outlay of wealthier landowners-is defended by Jesus in His Judean context. This gleaning provision, despite its uncertain obligation status, entails that the hungry may satiate themselves (at a significant outlay oflabor)[120] in the brief window of time between the ripening and harvesting of the harvest. The lack of a NT mandate along with the uncertainty concerning the obligation level of this provision entails that it will not be included within the forthcoming enumeration of needs based justice.

The above integration of general justice and oppression reveals that oppressive injustice, as far as it is indicated in the NT, is not something systemically hidden from the obligator but rather concerns the protected transgression of clear justice obligations.

Needs Based Justice

The mandates concerning the proper use of wealth subsume Jesus' parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). This text identifies being rich and using one's surplus solely for the purpose of self-indulgence in the face of immediate, calamity-caused, non-able-bodied poverty-when the alleviation of the sustenance needs involved is a matter of donating one's scraps (v. 21)-as a matter of sin requiring repentance (v. 30).[121] The obligators of

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[120] The wielding of a sickle as well as any gathering for later is specifically forbidden in Deut 23:24-25.

[121] As noted previously, Luke 16:20-21 reveals that the poor man was non-able-bodied for he was defenseless and had to be "laid," "£P£PATJTO," at the rich man's gate.

this justice mandate are the very rich who habitually dress "in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day" (v. 19). This delimiting of the obligator set, aside from being an integral part of Jesus' mandate, is entailed by the resolution principle in integrating this text with Matt 25:31-46. This parable of the sheep and the goats identifies, in a manner conceptually analogous to Luke 16:19-31, the sharing of sustenance with those who are diseased and feeble (acr8ev£w in Matt 25:36, 39 and acr8ev c:; in Matt 25:43-44), as a matter of mercy. Consequently, a non-contradicting, resolution based integration requires that Matt 25:31-46 be understood as communicating the mercy obligation level of such sustenance provision to obligators generally-and specifically to those who are not themselves very rich. Said another way, the rich are obligated by a justice mandate which is superimposed on top of the generally applicable mercy mandate. This obligator limiting integration similarly extends to all analogous mercy mandates, such as those entailed in the parable of the Good Samaritan, which befittingly do not identify their intended obligator set as very wealthy. The parable of Lazarus identifies a unique, need based justice level obligation which obligates those of the highest levels of wealth. The self-indulgent rich who behave analogously to the rich man in the parable of Lazarus rightly receive the warning woes of Luke 6:24 —for they are presently receiving their "comfort in full" and can therefore expect no further comfort in the life to come.

The extent of those obligated by this justice mandate can be identified as those who are wealthy enough to be able to provide for the immediate sustenance needs which exist in their immediate presence out of the scraps and leftovers[122] which fall from their table —the food which "would have been thrown out anyway"[123] or perhaps given to the dogs (Matt 5:27 // Mark 7:28). Not donating such scraps and leftovers to the non-able-

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[122] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1367; John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 9:21-18:34,828-829.*

[123] Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Luke 9:51-24:53,* 1367.

bodied in immediate poverty, when such poor are in the rich person's immediate vicinity, is a matter of injustice.

While beyond the explicit obligator set — those who are very rich and live indulgently out of a great surplus — the non-poor believer may be wise to consider how her scraps may provide for the immediate sustenance needs of the calamity-caused, non-able-bodied poor in her immediate vicinity.[124]

The above integrated contours on NT obligation outline how believers are to be just, merciful and loving in their treatment of the poor. The only ruler related treatment found within the present case study — outside the incidental mentioning of judicially enabled oppression — encompasses the noting of the gleaning provisions of Deut 23:24-25. The hamartiosphere, as it is demarcated in the NT with respect to its affects upon the poor, was found to be composed of known and personally willed sins.

Evaluation of the Core Contention

The core contention — whether justice obligation is ultimately needs based or ownership based — is bound up with the identification of the expansiveness of the proper domain of interhuman justice. More specifically, it is the demarcation of the domain of interhuman justice with respect to the poor — those who experience material needs — which is logically requisite in evaluating the core contention. Said another way, only the revealed expansiveness of justice unto the needy could identify the needs based aspects of justice obligation.

The NT data reveals that the justice level mandates which intend to assist the poor are delimited to not despoiling widows of their houses, not being partial to the rich in the bestowing ofhonorable treatment and to engaging in the sustenance provision

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[124] It is perhaps possible that this mandate unto the rich may be extrapolated beyond the personal calamity of disease and disability to encompass other calamity causes such as those noted in the alms texts — general calamities such as famine as well as dependant widowhood. Such extrapolation is nevertheless fairly tentative.

referred to in the parable of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Because defrauding widows of their estates is a sub-aspect of the general justice mandate against stealing, Luke 16:19-31 furnishes the only mandate that is concerned with distributive justice. No other individual -in the non-familial sense-or church corporate justice obligations unto the poor are mandated within the NT.

As a result, the NT data affirms that the moral treatment of the poor, particularly as it relates to providing for their poverty needs, is predominantly a matter of mercy obligation and is therefore almost completely ownership based. The biblical data reveals that meeting the needs of the immediately and potentially poor is considered, in all but one unique instance, an issue of mercy. This unique instance mandates that the very rich donate their scraps to alleviate the sustenance needs of the calamity-caused, immediately poor within their immediate vicinity (Luke 16:19-31). This mandate entails a justice level of obligation which is hamartiologically revealed. Consequently, this mandate constitutes the sole instance of need based justice obligation that is presented within the NT. As a result of these considerations, the relationship between need and obligation, in terms analogous to Figure 1: Values of Distributive Justice (as found on page 16 of chapter 2), may be presented in the form of Figure 34 below.

Figure 34: Values ofNT Distributive Justice

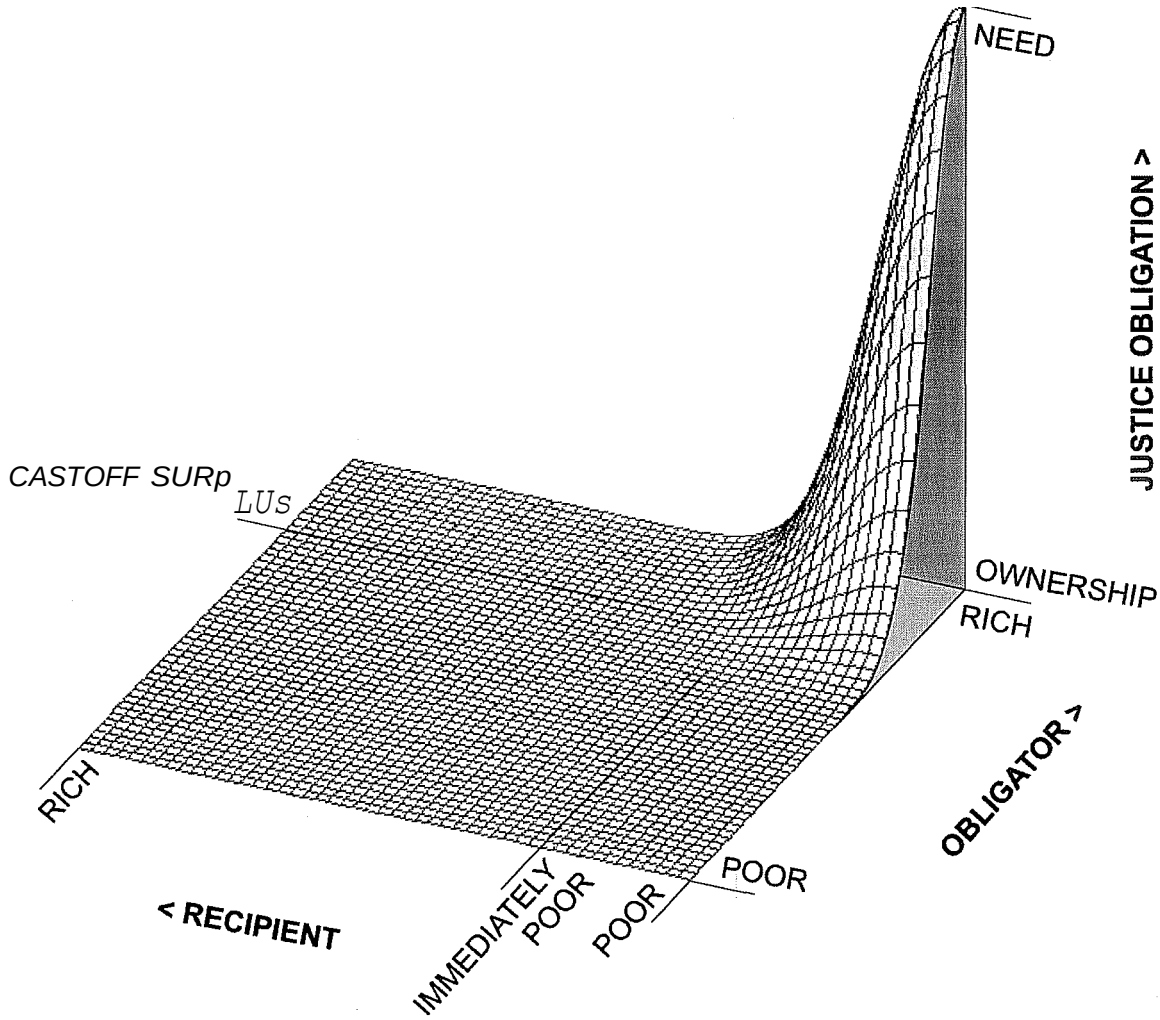

Figure 34 portrays the NT relationship between ownership based and needs based justice. It affirms that justice, as it is delineated in the NT, is predominantly ownership based except in the instance of the rich who are able to provide, out of their surplus scraps, for the sustenance needs of the calamity-caused, immediately poor within their immediate vicinity. All the other moral treatments, helpings and assistance of the poor are explicitly, semantically or hamartiologically identified, whenever such identification is textually provided, as possessing the contingent obligation level of mercy.

Evaluation of the Recent Theological Influences

Now that the core contention has been evaluated, the additional key challenges raised by the more recent theological influences upon evangelical ethics will receive a brief and preliminary evaluation as well.[125] These recent theological influences on evangelical conceptions of a believer's obligations to the poor consist of the social gospel, liberation theology and sustenance rights approaches.

Social Gospel

Three main contentions are raised by the social gospel beyond the core contention. These concern the domain of the biblical concept of oppression and systemic evil, the isolation of their biblical remedies and the clarification of whether notions of common property are subsumed under biblical justice.

The NT data identifies only a few instances of systemic evil and oppression. These instances of oppression are revealed to be merely matters of concrete injustice safely pursued from behind the protections of financial power and occupational privilege. The identified oppressions may be subsumed under the general categories of murder, defrauding theft and the bearing of false witness. The concrete textual instances refer to an oppressive abuse of the judicial system (Jas 2:6), defrauding hired workers of their pay (Jas 5:4), the committing of judicially enabled murder (Jas 5:6), defrauding during tax collection (Luke 3:12-13) as well as extortion and false accusation (Luke 3:14). The defrauding of a widow's property also appears to be a matter of oppression (Matt 23:14 // Mark 12: 40 // Luke 20:47). The NT data does not entail or support any notion of a hamartiosphere which consists of non-volitional injustice (Luke 3:12-14). The forms of oppression identified within the NT texts are revealed to be purposeful and intended. This communicated domain does not incorporate notions of corporate responsibility but

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[125] These main contentions were encountered and distilled throughout the Recent Theological Influences section of chapter 2 (beginning on page 17).

rather communicates that individuals are responsible for the evil that they personally will against those who are vulnerable to them.

Accordingly, the NT response to such oppression includes the assertion of mandates to cease and desist from participating in such injustice (Luke 3:12-14) as well as warnings concerning divine recompense upon the oppressors (Jas 5:1-6, Matt 23:14 // Mark 12: 40 // Luke 20:47). Furthermore, believers are mandated to bear up under theft and defrauding (Luke 6:29-30) and even commended for joyfully accepting the seizure of their property (Heb 10:34). These acceptance mandates do not serve to diminish the sinfulness of oppression but reveal that seeking mutual Christian support (Heb 10:34) rather than vengeance upon one's legitimate enemies (Rom 12:17-21, Matt 5:43-45) is understood to be the path of Christian obedience.

The NT data concerning common property reveals that the sharing pursued in the nascent church of Acts and likewise during the Jerusalem collection is not a matter of justice but rather mercy. This merciful sharing was furthermore intended to voluntarily 'shave off the surplus of comparatively well off believers for the sake of meeting the immediate poverty needs of other believers. It was not intended to produce the equality of uniform distribution but rather the 'equality' of enabling the immediately poor to have their needs met. In addition, 2 Thess 3:6-16 mandates that indolent believers were not to be included in any such sharing.

Liberation Theology

Two addition key contentions are raised by liberation theology. These main emphases concern the delineation of the domain of unjust alienation and ascertaining whether all of the poor are necessarily so due to oppression.

The NT case study affirms that covetousness, avarice and rapaciousness are indeed matters of sinful injustice. Such alienation, when it affects interhuman treatment is a matter of transgressing a justice level obligation. Thus defrauding, swindling and being unwilling to work are related to the injustice of covetousness. Nevertheless generosity, the polar opposite of covetousness, is revealed to be a matter of mercy-even when it is

extended to the immediately poor who are so due to having suffered calamity or injustice. Consequently, the NT data suggests that the justice domain of alienation, as it is proposed by Gustavo Gutierrez, is too broad. The NT data does not affirm that all forms of alienation are themselves unjust for even the mutuality of Christian Kmvwv(a is identified as a matter of mercy. Furthermore, 2 Thess 3:6-16 even mandates alienation from immediately poor believers when this poverty is caused by their own indolence. The NT case study reveals that providing care for the poor, in all instances but those described in the parable of Lazarus, is a matter of mercy. Consequently Gutierrez's contention, that failing to provide such care is a manifestation of sinful alienation, is contradicted by the NT data. Due to Gutierrez's emphasis on alienation, he contends that sin is systemically pervasive and must never be perceived as solely privatized. This related contention, as has been noted, is also at odds with the pursued data set. In summary, the NT domain of unjust alienation is limited to concrete sins such as covetousness and the injustice decried in the parable of Lazarus —this domain does not extend its reach to any other provision of aid to the poor.

Gutierrez's blanket identification of the poor with the oppressed is also difficult to maintain in light of the NT data. While his setting makes such a focus understandable, it nevertheless remains at odds with the textual data. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16 mandates that those who are in immediate need due to indolence are not to be treated like those who are unjustly imprisoned or mistreated (Heb 13:3). The NT data also affirms that calamity, personal as well as general, can result in poverty. Consequently, even in the parable of the Good Samaritan, mercy rather than justice is at stake in responding to the injustice that had already taken place. Gutierrez's strategy in identifying the poor with the oppressed is intended to increase the obligation level of all those participating in his conception of the hamartiosphere. If all poverty is due to injustice, and everyone plays a part in this injustice, then everyone is obligated at a justice level of obligation to assist the poor. As a result, not only is the set of those classically referred to as the 'undeserving

poor' completely emptied, as all of the poor are automatically reclassified as 'deserving,' [126] but the communicated obligation level of the mercy mandates unto helping the poor is automatically overridden — in defiance of the text.

Sustenance Rights

Nicholas Wolterstorffs sustenance rights approach raises the following three main contentions for evaluation. Are Wolterstorffs three duties-to avoid depriving people of sustenance, to help protect the vulnerable from such deprivation and to sustain the victims if deprivation does occur-matters of justice obligation? Because Wolterstorff considers all practicable aspects of helping the poor as matters of justice, except perhaps when the poor are indolent in the face of 'decent' work, these three duties are intended to cover the breadth of the moral treatment of the poor.

Wolterstorff s frames his first duty, to avoid depriving people of sustenance, in active terms. His assertion that the objective victimization of the poor is a matter of justice is, not unexpectedly, supported by the NT data. His second duty, to help protect the vulnerable from sustenance deprivation, is not well attested within the NT data. Wolterstorff frames this second duty in structural terms and thus would suggest that influencing unjust structures is a matter of justice obligation. While Jesus and James speak out on behalf of the oppressed, it is unclear whether the trajectory of such engagement is a matter of justice or mercy obligation. Because no NT mandates are attested in this regard, the justice or mercy nature of this second duty remains uncertain on the basis of the present case study. Wolterstorff formulates his third duty, to sustain the victims of deprivation, in very broad terms. He argues that the provision of sustenance, except

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[126] The 'deserving poor' classically referred to those who were to receive help while the 'undeserving poor' referred to those who were not to be helped for fear of enabling their indolence (akin to the differentiation mandated in 2 Thess 3:6-16). See also: John Richards et al., *Helping the Poor: A Qualified Case for "Workfare"* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1995), xxv, 151-183.

perhaps when the poverty is caused by indolence, is "not an issue of generosity"[127] but rather a matter of justice obligation. Correspondingly, he considers those who do not receive sustenance as having been deprived.[128] By way of evaluation, except in the unique instance of the mandate contained in the parable of Lazarus, helping the poor in the NT is textually revealed to be a matter of mercy rather than justice obligation. Consequently, Wolterstorff s third duty is, for the most part, contradicted by the textual data. The testimony of 2 Thess 3:6-16 furthermore confirms that indolence annuls even the remaining obligations entailed by mercy.

In summary, the data and analysis presented in this chapter was employed to evaluate the core contention concerning justice. After the data was integrated into an outline of the NT witness concerning the moral treatment of the poor, this same data was employed to identify justice as being predominantly ownership based. Subsequently, the additional key challenges raised by the more recent theological influences upon evangelical ethics received preliminary evaluation.

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[127] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdrnans, 1983), 82.

[128] Ibid., 85.

CHAPTER6

CONCLUSION

Evangelicals harbor a great concern for helping the poor. Nonetheless, this practical and scholarly engagement has not translated into theological agreement concerning a believer's justice obligations unto the world's poor. This dissertation endeavors to spur greater consensus concerning this important issue by seeking to make evaluable the core contention underlying the contemporary theological dissonance over the proper domain of distributive justice.

Summary

The core contention at the heart of the contemporary dissonance over a believer's justice obligations unto the poor concerns whether justice is ultimately needs based or ownership based. Addressing this core contention, on the basis of a case study of the NT textual data, was the main purpose of this dissertation. This intent necessitated the identification of the variously conditioned extra-hermeneutical presuppositions which make agreement elusive. The identification and consideration of these presuppositions articulated and justified the necessity of adopting a textual, rather than an extra-textual, approach to addressing the core contention. The pursued consideration of these presuppositions also served to identify and isolate the necessary characteristics of any proposed textual solution. Furthermore, the necessity of pursuing a textual delineation of the domain of poverty was exposed.

The consideration of the hermeneutical challenges also inherent in this pursuit enabled the development and proposal of the resolution principle as the preferred means of data post-processing and integration. This principle was developed on the assumption that, methodologically, determinis - preferable to indeterminism. Building upon canonical criticism and the grammatical-historical method, a focused hermeneutical

approach dependant upon a heuristic textual *discrimen* was developed and proposed. The proposed *discrimen* is hamartiologically based and entails id ntifying which mandate trag g.J."ess_igns are variously indicated as sinful and W()rthyof punishment at the textual } Y, LThis *discrimen* was wedded to semantical identifiers of justice and mercy in identifying the obligation levels communicated by the NT data.

The application of the proposed hermeneutical methodology enabled the discovery and articulation of the contours and extents of a believer's justice and mercy obligations — as they are asserted within the NT texts. Correspondingly, the results of applying the developed hermeneutical approach enabled a textual level evaluation of the core contention. The NT data was found to affirm that the moral treatment of the poor, particu1<: .t:ly !!_! l tes to providing for their poverty needs, is predominantly ownership - -d.. Only one needs based justice mandate was identified within the NT texts. This mandate, located in Luke 16:19-31, constrains the very rich to donate their scraps to alleviate the sustenance needs of the calamity-caused, immediately poor found within their immediate vicinity. The application of the proposed methodology also enabled the generation of a preliminary evaluation of the main emph ses of the social gospel, liberation theology and sustenance rights approaches to assisting the poor.

Confrrmation of the Thesis Statement

The development and application of the propo_ q_l1_ IJ:l rtiological *discrimen* and resolution principle enabled the core contention — the extent to which justice unto the poor is needs based or ownership based — to be made evaluable on the basis of the biblical text. The results generated from the NT case study validate this dissertation's thesis statement: *Th pose<!discrimen* and resolution principle are valuable for a a.!y ing the NT data concerning the moral treatment of the poor so as to enable a .!_<:_ al evaluation of the extent to which justice unto the poor is need or ownership based. Correspondingly, this dissertation concludes that justice obligation unto the poor, as it is delineated in the NT, is predominantly ownership based.

Additional Evaluation and Results

One of the main strengths of the methodological proposal is that whereas an interpreter's variously conditioned presuppositions concerning the domains of justice and mercy are generally unevaluable on the basis of the text, the proposed approach allows for such a textual level evaluation. This enabled evaluation similarly permits a textually based assessment of the currently extant theological dissonance-concerning a believer's moral obligations to the poor —to be rendered.

The proposed hamartiological *discrimen,* when coupled with the resolution principle, is able to demarcate the NT domains of justice and mercy obligation-as these relate to the treatment of the poor —in a consistent and non-contradicting manner. [1] This amiable consistency is likewise apparent between the *discrimen* itself and the semantic indicators extant in the case study texts. Not only do the semantic and hamartiological indicators overlap within many of the NT data aspects, but several passages exhibit this overlap within their own bounds. This overlap is evident within the boundaries of both justice and mercy level mandates: Matt 6:1-4, Luke 6:34-36, Luke 11:39-42, Luke 12:22-34, 1 Cor 6:7-10 and 1 John 5:17.Z This textg .ffirmation of the proposed *discrimen,* on the basis of its semantic fidelity, corroborates its heuristic textual fit.

The resolution principle allowed passages containing greater detail to stream this detail to passages possessing a lower level of resolution so as to avoid contradiction within the process of data integration. The resulting integration also enabled the preliminary evaluation of the main emphases of the social gospel, liberation theology and

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[1] Because the mandates within the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46) conjoin the righteousness of faith with the works of faith, this text does not threaten, particularly from an evangelical perspective, the noted consistency.

[2] 1 John 5:17 even claims that all injustice is a matter of sin: "mlaa MtK[a Uflap-r[a em[v." Walther Gunther agrees that, in this verse, acStK[a most likely refers to "unjust deeds and injustice amongst men:" Walther Gunther, "acStK[a," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) in *Pradis* 6.0 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). For additional discussion of this text see: Stephen S. Smalley, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1, 2, 3 John,* vol. 51 (Dallas: Word,2002),297-301.

sustenance rights approaches to helping the poor. In terms of the emphases of the social gospel, the NT data proposes that oppression and systemic evil is limited to the willful and cognizant committing of concrete injustice, that such oppression ought not to be repaid with vengeance and that notions of common property are not an aspect of NT justice. With respect to Gustavo Gutierrez's conception ofliberation, the data affirms that only the sin of coveting and the mandate contained in the parable of Lazarus are matters of unjust alienation. The NT case study similarly challenges Gutierrez's identification of the poor with the oppressed. With respect to the three duties entailed by Nicholas Wolterstorffs sustenance rights, the NT texts proscribe actively depriving people of sustenance, are uncertain concerning the obligation level of helping to defend against such deprivation and in all instances, save those akin to the parable of Lazarus, contradict the justice nature of sustaining the victims of sustenance deprivation. In addition, in terms of the psychological models of helping and change, the NT data affirms the Existentialist and Behavioralist approaches to behavior modification by mandating both reproof and consequences for indolent behavior (2 Thess 3:6-16).

Potential Research Directions

The focused hermeneutical methodology that was developed in this dissertation was purposely formulated with the requirement of being applicable to the whole of Scripture. Correspondingly, the presented approach anticipates the subsequent evaluation of the OT textual data as well. This further research will generate more data concerning ruler or societal obligation —for this area of moral obligation receives significantly more attestation within the OT. This broader application of the proposed hermeneutical methodology will also enable the evaluations of the core contention and the recent theological influences upon evangelical ethics to shed their preliminary status.

Another potential research direction is bound up in the pursuing of other heuristic *discrimen* for the purpose of disassociating justice and mercy at the textual level. Such treads must possess the characteristic of being well attested within the biblical data concerning the moral treatment of the poor. Nevertheless, identifying a textual level

thread with greater Scriptural attestation than the proposed hamartiological *discrimen* is likely to be significantly challenging — for the notions of sin, punishment and reward are very common within the biblical text. Wolterstorffs proposal of employing "forgiveness language,"[3] while engaged upon a trajectory parallel to the hamartiological *discrimen*, entails such a decrease in utility due to its considerably smaller textual attestation. For the purpose of stimulating additional research in this direction, the author has proposed a minimum set of *discrimen* requirements in the Necessary Characteristics of a Textual Resolution section of chapter 2 (beginning on page 39).

Concluding Remarks

Viewed from the macro level, this dissertation aims to contribute to the fostering of greater theological agreement concerning the believer's justice and mercy obligations unto the materially poor. In light of the challenges entailed in the pursuit of the proper domains of justice and mercy, this dissertation sought to enumerate the reasons which intimate that the engaged approach must be textual rather than extra-textual and, in addition, pursuing its differentiation at thtextual level. The present engagement aimed to demonstrate the necessity and desirability of pursuing a textual level resolution to demarcating believers' justice obligations to the poor. The proposed hamartiological *discrimen* holds apparent promise in the pursuit of this end.

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[3] Nicholas Wolterstorff, "How Social Justice Got to Me, and Why It Never Left" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA., 18 November 2007).

APPENDIX

PASSAGES CONCERNING THE MORAL TREATMENT OF THE POOR IN THE NT

Matthew
5:3
5:7
5:42
5:44-48
6:1-4
6:11
6:19-21
6:22-23
6:24-34
7:1-2
8:20
9:13
10:9-10
10:40-42
11:5
12:1
12:7
12:18
13:22
14:15-22
15:36-38
16:24-27
18:21-35
19:21-25
19:27-30
20:1-16
23:11-12
23:14
23:23-25
25:31-46
26:6-13
27:57

Mark
2:23
4:18-19
4:24
6:8-9
6:34-44
8:34-37
9:35
9:36-37
9:41
10:19-26
10:28-31
10:42-44
12:38-40
12:41-44
14:3-9
15:43

Luke
1:53
3:11
3:12-13
3:14
4:18-21
6:1
6:20
6:24
6:27-28
6:29-30
6:32-33
6:34-36
6:38
7:22
8:1-3
8:14
9:3
9:23-25
9:48
9:58
10:4
10:27-37
11:34-36
11:39-42
12:13-21
12:22-34
13:19
14:12-14
14:18-23
14:32
15:14
16:1-13
16:19-31
18:11
18:22-26
18:28-30
19:2
19:8-9
20:46-47
21:1-4
21:34
22:24-27
22:35-36
23:50-51

John
6:4-15
6:27
12:3-8
12:25
13:14
13:29
13:34-35
19:38

Acts
2:44-46
4:32-37
5:1-11
6:1
9:36
9:39-41
10:2
10:4
10:31
11:28-30
16:14
20:33-35
24:17

Romans
1:31
12:8

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