MONEY AND POSSESSIONS: FUNDRAISING MINISTRY
IN THE ALREADY-NOT YET

by

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B.S., West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 1999

A THESIS
Submitted to the faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
Religion
at Reformed Theological Seminary

Charlotte, NC
July 2016
Accepted:

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First Reader

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Second Reader
ABSTRACT
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Understanding fundraising as a legitimate ministry involves a deeper grasp of the biblical and theological significance of money and a proper application of this significance to fundraising practices today (Jas 1:22). Fundraising is sometimes perceived as a necessary means to begin ministry. But what about fundraising itself? When understood in its biblical context, fundraising is giving others the opportunity to manage that which God already owns (Mt 25:14-30; Ps 50:10). A proper understanding of fundraising requires the construction of a biblical worldview—a set of spectacles through which we view the world. Such a theological worldview of development will free the fundraiser to labor at his maximum capacity.
To My Wife
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Rich Craven, Doug Boyer, Keith McCarthy and Frank Rouland for your valuable mentorship. The teaching and preaching opportunities in Pottsville, Pennsylvania were a priceless learning experience. I also would like to thank Paul Zaspel for your congregation’s generous participation in the Church Partnership Program. I would like to express my appreciation to Cami Haley for your support raising training. I would like to thank Dr. Ben Gladd for your advisement on this work. In addition, I would like to thank my brother, Dr. Joe. I am appreciative for your example of academic discipline. I would like to convey gratitude to my parents, Joe and Edie. Thank you for teaching me the value of education and hard work. Aubrey and Roman, it is a gift to be your father. Nancy, I love you. Thank you for supporting me throughout this writing process. Finally, thank you our Lord Jesus Christ for your grace and mercy.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Understanding fundraising as a legitimate *ministry* involves a deeper grasp of the biblical and theological significance of money and a proper application of this significance to fundraising practices today (Jas 1:22). Fundraising is sometimes perceived as a necessary means to begin ministry. But what about fundraising itself? Is it a legitimate component of ministry? As one who has used fundraising to raise his salary for over ten years, I have found that making an appeal for funds can carry, in the minds of some, a connotation of illegitimate employment. I believe this negative assessment results from a disconnection between our theology and the application thereof. When understood in its biblical context, fundraising is giving others the opportunity to manage that which God already owns (Mt 25:14-30; Ps 50:10). A proper understanding of fundraising requires the construction of a biblical worldview—a set of spectacles through which we view the world. In the process of worldview construction, perspectives regarding fundraising need to be transformed so that our theology and application will go hand in hand (Rom 12:2).

My research is driven by the need to counter superficial perspectives on fundraising that are held by many Christians, and I hope to articulate a theological worldview of fundraising based on the biblical teaching examined in this thesis. I will discuss money and
possessions in the Old Testament, including an emphasis on the beginning of the biblical eschatological story. I will provide a biblical study of Psalm 50. Following that, I will address money and possessions in this New Testament age while providing a focus on possessions in the Early Church. Finally, I will seek to formulate a theological perspective on fundraising by reflecting on Inaugurated Eschatology and a coherent Biblical Theology, specifically, as it relates to one’s worldview. Such a theological worldview of development will free the fundraiser to labor at his maximum capacity.

A biblical view of fundraising concerns more than questions about the pragmatic use of money. Our actions are manifestations of our thoughts. Finances are intimately connected with our hearts (Mt 6:21). Money is a great servant, but a terrible master (Lk 16:13; Prv 22:7). Our view of things is intimately connected with our presuppositions of those very same things. We all see life through certain lenses. Everyone has a worldview. One’s philosophy informs his worldview. Consequently, our worldview is the framework for one’s mindset. We can worship the God of the Bible or some other deity (Jb 24:15). Jesus is Lord of all (Col 1:15-20).

Important resources that have helped me gain greater clarity on a biblical understanding of money include Larry Burkett’s *The Word on Finances*, which provides a plethora of references to money in the Bible; Scott Morton’s *Funding Your Ministry*, which directly addresses the topic of fundraising from a biblical perspective; Steve Shadrach’s *Viewpoints*, which devotes eight chapters to attitudes about fundraising; *Growing Givers’ Hearts* by Jeavons and Basinger, which includes a chapter on fundraising as a special calling from God. Nevertheless, there exists a need for further work on the topic of fundraising.
Burkett’s work includes merely twenty-five percent of his comprehensive headings devoted to attitudes while treating these attitudes as Christian virtues rather than a theology of money. Burkett discusses a commitment to a godly lifestyle. God calls us to commitment to Him. One’s commitment can be evaluated by what is treasured. Similarly, the author addresses the topic of contentment. Contentment is not complacency. Instead, it is learning how to deal with both the good and the bad. We improve the things we can and accept the things not under our control.\(^1\) Although the Bible verses on various topics such as commitment and contentment provide a step in the right direction, the biblical and theological significance of money is lacking in Burkett’s work. Fundraising requires the Christian to be more than a virtuous individual.

Morton confirms the fundraiser can be full of conflicting emotions. Morton addresses the issue of potential missionaries being scared off by having to raise support. Ministry plans are often abandoned by Christian leaders due to fundraising frustration. Morton helps us to see the need for a work of God to be done in the fundraiser. He does devote attention to important issues within the fundraiser such as myths, attitudes, and conscience.\(^2\) However, Morton devotes merely a quarter of his book to the internal fundraising issues with the remaining majority of his chapters addressing the external skills. His personal growth as a fundraiser is encouraging. However, there is a disconnection between Morton’s Biblical perspective on development and fundraising practices today. A worldview is needed to weld this gap.

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Shadrach addresses fundraising paradigms, convictions and attitudes. He discusses the attitudes of teachability, patience, courage, affirmation, confidence, restoration, honor and self-respect. Shadrach, however, addresses these attitudes as support raising virtues rather than a theology of fundraising. For example, he says “poor talk” robs us of our self-respect.³ A fundraiser talking like he is in poverty certainly is counterproductive. However, what about a campus minister who truly believes he is poor? The mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart (Lk 6:45). Changing speech without a change in belief, although possible, is not the goal. God does not call us to behavior conformity. Instead, the good Lord calls us to the ministry of fundraising. Therefore, a deeper grasp of the biblical significance of possessions is needed.

Jeavons and Basinger base their work on a three-year, nationwide study of Christian organizations with successful fundraising efforts. Their work rightly recognizes the need to improve fundraising. A focus is given to spiritually grounded fundraising. Jeavons and Basinger want to create opportunities for donors’ spiritual growth. They look at how fundraising can be a fuller expression of faith.⁴ I applaud their acknowledgment of the need to improve the donor attention component of support raising. Donor attention is often neglected in one’s personal support raising. Their aspiration for donors’ personal spiritual growth is extraordinary. Jeavons and Basinger’s distinction to love your neighbor is biblical. In fact, Jesus Himself said love of the Lord and your neighbor are the two commandments upon which all the Law and Prophets hang (Mt 22:37-40). However, their work falls short in


two areas. In particular, the approach Jeavons and Basinger employ is centered on the donor. Yes, the donor in an important person, especially since God often funds ministry through people. However, a theology of fundraising is God centered because the Lord is the priority.

*Growing Givers’ Hearts* generally treats fundraising *as* ministry. Treating fundraising as ministry is not enough. Fundraising *is* a legitimate component of ministry. Consequently, there is a need to see fundraising itself to be a legitimate ministry.
CHAPTER 2
MONEY AND POSSESSIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In Scripture God has unfolded his plan of salvation in historical stages, whereby being faithful to His initial Messianic promise (Gn 3:15). God’s world was originally made very good (Gn 1:31). This includes making man in His image (Gn 1:27). However, all of humanity has been infected with sin through man’s disobedience (Gn 3:6). God has graciously moved toward us in the God-Man Jesus Christ (Gn 3:9). Born, obedient, crucified, risen and restoring, Richard B. Gaffin says Christ is the fulfillment of Scriptures’ “soteriological purpose.”¹

The Beginning of the Biblical Story

J. Richard Middleton helpfully says we need to begin by establishing an understanding of the “initial state (creation)” and the “nature of the problem (fall)” in order to position ourselves for adequate understanding of the remainder of Scripture.² God tells Adam and Eve to work the garden and rule over His creation (Gn 1:28; 2:15). All of creation


worships God by shaping our “earthly environment into a complex world” that honors our maker (Ps 148). Adam and Eve are to display the likeness of God in the areas of “agriculture” and “animal husbandry” (Gn 1:26-28; Pss 104; 8:5-8). The Old Testament pictures humanity called to be “developmental, requiring innovation, [and] vision” mobilizing community resources to shape the earth. Sin, consequently, results in man’s positive influence on culture “intertwined with innovations in the misuse of power.” Cain murders his brother Abel (Gn 4:8). The building of the tower of Babel is man disobeying God’s command to fill the earth (Gn 11:4; 1:28).

The Plot of the Biblical Story

God continues pursuing His people. This “eschatological redemption consists in the renewal of human cultural life on earth” as the “final destiny” of the believer. God calls Abraham and his descendants to be instruments of blessing to the nations (12:1-3). The goal of God blessing humanity through Abraham and his descendants is for them to serve as priests in God's creation (Ex 19:3-6). In God's creation after the fall, man is to exercise his agency “redemptively, for addressing the problem of evil and brokenness.” Israel is forced to live in Egypt under slave labor (Ex 1:11). The Lord calls Moses (Ex 3:10; 6:10). Moses,

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3 Ibid., 41.
4 Ibid., 42.
5 Ibid., 45.
6 Ibid., 53.
7 Ibid., 58.
8 Ibid., 62.
“the primary agent” in the biblical story, guides the people delivered out of Egypt back to the land (Nm 10:11-13). As God’s agent, Moses instrumentally facilitates God’s Abrahamic promises that are centered on “peoplehood and land.” This is central to Israel’s “flourishing.”

Israel displays a repetitive cycle of sin, oppression and deliverance while frequently crying out to God regarding their oppressors (Jgs 2:16). God graciously delivers His people. Everyone in Israel did what was right in their own eyes (Jgs 17:6; 21:25). God’s people want to be like the other nations (1 Sm 8:20). King Saul is eventually replaced by David, also a sinner (2 Sm 11-12). David makes Solomon king (1 Kgs 1:43). Rehoboam significantly taxes Israel, resulting in division into the northern and southern kingdoms (12:13, 14, 20). God sends prophets who rebuke the kings’ corruption. However, their message is essentially ignored. The northern kingdom is destroyed by Assyria; the southern kingdom is destroyed by Babylon and exiled.

Possessions in the Biblical Story

The major eras of Old Testament history consist of Eden to Sinai, Sinai to Canaan and in the Promised Land. The first major era subdivides into Gn 1-11, Gn 12-50 and Ex 1-19. Although Eden to Sinai does not have a great deal of text regarding material possessions per se, Craig L. Blomberg articulates this era contains many “foundational principles that dare not be overlooked.”

9 Ibid., 63.

The issue of primary importance is that God originally created all things good (Gn 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Abram became wealthy as the initial fulfillment of the promise (13:2). The land of Canaan is the material aspect of the promise. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became prosperous (Gn 20:14-16; 24:35; 26:13; 30:43; 47:27). Though Jacob’s son Joseph finds himself in Egypt, “God blesses him materially” when Pharaoh promotes him to second in command.11 Joseph came to Egypt exercising stewardship of material blessing during the famine (Gn 41:55-57).

A new king rose to power who did not know about Joseph (Ex 1:8). Israelites are being “physically” oppressed and freed in order to let it be known that Yahweh alone is the Lord (Ex 6:7; 9:16).12 The Israelites plundered the Egyptians of silver, gold and clothing (Ex 11:2, 3; 12:35, 36). In Exodus 16:19-21 we see the consequence of “hoarding.”13

Sinai to Canaan includes the Law. The “ownership of property” is conceptually established while guiding Israel against “selfishness.”14 The Promised Land flows with milk and honey enabling the Israelites to generate wealth (Nm 14:8; Dt 6:3; 8:18). Land is given to each family according to the size of their group (Nm 26:52-56). Israel’s material property was on loan because it “ultimately belonged to the Lord.”15 Theft and covetousness were forbidden (Ex 20:15, 17).

11 Ibid., 36.
12 Ibid., 37.
13 Ibid., 38.
14 Ibid. 39.
15 Ibid., 40.
The sacrificial system required Israelites to sacrifice something of “substantial economic value” to secure their atonement.\(^{16}\) Israel is forbidden to charge interest in their loans to one another (Ex 22:25-27; Lv 25:35-37; Dt 23:19, 20). However, Deuteronomy 23:20 does allow an Israelite to charge interest to a foreigner.\(^{17}\) Israel is commanded to be open-handed because they were once treated poorly in Egypt (15:7, 8, 11). The Israelites are to give a portion of their material possessions for the Levite to tithe to the priest (Lv 27:30-33; Nm 18:21; 26-28; Dt 14:22-29).

The books of Joshua through Nehemiah cover the era of Israel entering Canaan. Though it is primarily material possessions that this project wishes to address, this theme does not dominate this era of Old Testament history. However, along the way of exploring a motif of material possessions, Israel is concerned about occupying the Promised Land in peace and “prosperity.”\(^{18}\) Israel’s blessing for obedience may include material possessions (Lv 26:3-5; 9, 10; Dt 11:27; 28:1-14). Shortly after Israel enters Canaan, we find Achan sinning by taking forbidden possessions (Jo 7:20, 21). Hannah’s grandsons practiced dishonest gain (1 Sm 8:2, 3). David and Solomon had great wealth. Solomon was guilty of excessive luxury (1 Kgs 4:22-28; 10:14-29; Dt 17:16, 17). Rehoboam was greedy and Jeroboam made idols out of gold (1 Kgs 12:28-33). Jehoshaphat had great wealth (2 Chr 17:5). Boaz makes Ruth his wife, involving significant financial sacrifice (Ru 4:6). The prophet Elisha pronounces God’s death sentence on Ahab and Jezebel for their greed (1 Kgs 21:17-24). Later, the divided kingdoms fall at the hands of Assyria and Babylon. Many of

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 41.

\(^{17}\) Blomberg says repayment of loans must never worsen the plight of the destitute.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 50.
God’s people were exiled. Jews return to their homeland in the fifth and sixth centuries and work on the temple re-continued with financial resources (Ezr 1-2). Nehemiah pays more attention to the poor (Neh 5:1-19). Nehemiah did more than required by law. He led by sacrificially loving his people. Blomberg concludes:

> Wealth can turn one heart from the Lord, one may exploit the poor in order to gain it, or one may give of one’s riches generously and compassionately to glorify God and help the needy. Extreme wealth and extreme poverty both appear undesirable. But the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God to people who are frequently faithless overshadows any concerns with merely socio-economic issues.19

**Wisdom and Prophetic Literature**

Job is a man of considerable possessions both at the beginning and end of his life (Jb 1:3; 42:12). The Song of Songs includes the “beauties and delights of earthly possessions.”20 Ecclesiastes emphasizes the importance of enjoying earthly possessions within God’s service (Eccl 5:18-20). The prophets boldly condemn Israel’s sins, including the use of one’s “material possessions.”21 Let us now turn our attention to both Israel’s wrongdoings and what the nation must do.

**The Sins of Israel regarding Material Possessions**

Israel worshipped idols, trusted in ritual, practiced ill-gotten gain, boasted in wealth, and corrupted its leadership. God’s people crafted idols with their own hands (Is 2:7, 8). This is futile (Is 44:12-20). The Lord grieves over the misuse of possessions in Israel’s idolatry

19 Ibid. 55, 56.
20 Ibid., 60.
21 Ibid., 69.
Wealth belongs to the Lord (Hg 2:8). Israel must reform their ways because they trusted in rituals (Jer 7:4). Israel committed robbery and extortion (Ez 22:29). They accept bribes resulting in injustice for the poor (Am 5:11, 12). Israel covets fields and defrauds his fellowman (Mi 2:2). God’s people are dishonest in the marketplace, oppress the needy rather than help them, and defraud workers of their wages (Ez 45:10, 12; Hos 12:7: Am 2:6-8; Mal 3:5). The prophets chastise Israel’s excessive materialism without the slightest regard for the poor and needy; they worship the idol of materials (Am 4:1; 6:4-6; Hb 1:16, 17). They cheat the poor in the marketplace and boast in slave purchase (Am 8:5, 6; Zec 11:5). Lastly, Israel’s leaders take bribes, have the poor’s material possessions in their homes, prey on widows and rob the fatherless (Mi 3:11; 7:3; Is 3:14, 15; 10:1, 2). In Jerusalem bribes are taken for murder, excessive interest is taken, and neighbors are extorted (Ez 22:12). 22 Let us focus to what Israel must do.

What Israel Must Do

Israel must repent. In Jeremiah 22:13-17 Israel is told to repent from making laborers work for nothing. The prophets compare Jerusalem to Sodom. They do not help the poor, are overfed, arrogant and unconcerned (Ez 16:49). God has faithful promises for the impoverished Israelites struggling to rebuild (Is 61:1, 2). Israel must boast in God’s delights of justice, righteousness and kindness rather than in riches (Jer 9:23, 24). Surely, Israel ought to be generous toward the Lord and be blessed (Mal 3:10). God’s people need to “lament” their sins because of the “material blessings that have been lost” through their wicked use of

22 Ibid., 71-77.
them. Israel must seek the good of their Babylonian oppressors. If the city prospers, then they will prosper (Jer 29:7). Israel will experience prosperity in the future (Is 25:6; Zec 14:14).

Earthly Flourishing

The Exodus is God's action to modify Israel's situation by restoring them to a life of harmony in their “concrete earthly environment.” Although Torah (Law of the OT) and wisdom literature are not the same, there are similarities. Torah and wisdom alike include the Lord's means to the ends of blessing and life. They both also consist of avenues that lead to death. Israel's obedience will result in blessing while their disobedience with result in cursing. The blessings of obedience include rain, crops, fruit, safety and peace while these same things will be cursed for disobedience (Lv 26:1-39; Dt 28:1-19). When Israel behaves in accord with God's way, they flourish in their earthly environment. When they do not act in accordance with God's way, this affects the earthly environment in such a way that the land will vomit out its inhabitants as was done to the prior nations (Lv 18:24-28; 20:22).

Obedience and Wisdom

The wisdom literature of the OT presents the reader with two options—wisdom and folly (Prv 2:20-22). Wisdom leads to life and foolishness leads to death (3:13-18). The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Prv 1:7). Therefore, wisdom flows from

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23 Ibid., 80.

24 Middleton, 95.

25 Ibid., 96, 97.
revering the Lord (Jb 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prv 9:10). Like Torah, wisdom is conveyed as the will of God since creation. Obedience and wisdom lead to life. Disobedience is folly. These two ways to life are the Lord’s “creational intent for flourishing.”\textsuperscript{26} Torah and Wisdom address a full range of concerns because the Lord is interested in the “entire range of earthly life and desires flourishing . . . for both humanity and the nonhuman creation.”\textsuperscript{27} Let us now consider Psalm 50.

\textbf{Possessions in Psalm 50}

Donald M. Williams says that Psalm 50 contains a biblical theology of possessions.\textsuperscript{28} It is attributed to Asaph, one of David’s chief musicians (1 Chr 6:39; 15:16, 17). God comes in glory to judge His people (50:1-6). He judges their worship and their obedience (50:7-15; 16-21). The divine judge of Israel is also her savior (50: 22, 23).\textsuperscript{29}

Derek Kidner believes the psalm gives “the impression of a ceremony of covenant remembrance and renewal as the setting of the psalm.”\textsuperscript{30} As defendants the LORD calls those who made a covenant with Him confirmed by sacrifice (50:5). The effect of this identification is to equate those to whom the psalm is being spoken with Israel at Sinai (Ex 24:3-8). They are the “faithful ones” (NRSV) or “devotees” (NJPS), \textit{hasidim} of the LORD,

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 98.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 102.


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{30} Derek Kidner, \textit{An Introduction And Commentary On Books I And II of the Psalms} (Illinois: Intervarsity, 1973), 186.
the ones whose identity and life are determined by the covenant they have made with the LORD. To be the hasid is to hold oneself subject to the LORD under the covenant claims. The judge is also the prosecution. The LORD summons heaven and earth as witnesses for the trial (50:1, 4, 6). False gods were invoked as witnesses and enforcers of sworn agreements and treaties in the Ancient Near East. Court proceedings between the Lord and Israel are theologically dramatized. The gods are replaced by the personifications of heaven and earth (Dt 32:1; Mi 6:1, 2).

A.F. Kirkpatrick tells us that Psalm 50 contains a variety of terms for God. Psalm 50:1 identifies God as El Elohim Jehovah. The three names represent three aspects of His Divine character to emphasize His majesty. El represents Him as the Might One. Elohim represents God as the Awful One in who are united all manifold excellences of Deity. Jehovah refers to God as the Self-Revealing One. Elohim is His name as the God of nature and creation; Jehovah as the God of the covenant and of grace. In Psalm 50:14 God is called the Most High (Elyon) as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. The singular of Elohim (Eloah) is used in Psalm 50:22 in the context of forgetting God. In Psalm 50:5 the word chasid denotes those who are the objects of Jehovah’s lovingkindness. In Psalm 50:21 Ehyeh is used for “I was” (Ex 3:14).

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32 Ibid., 194, 195.

God, identified earlier as “The Mighty One, God, the LORD” (El Elohim Jehovah), speaks directly to his people. “I am God, your God” (50:1, 15). He affirms their sacrifice (50:8). God emphasizes His lack of need for His people’s sacrifices due to His Sovereign ownership of the created order (50:9, 10). God knows (“superintends”) every bird and he owns every creature (50:11) If He were hungry, He would not even tell Israel because, again, the world belongs to Him along with everything in it (50:12). God does not need food or drink. In fact, the very idea is absurd. God does not need Israel to feed Him. In Psalm 50:13 God asks rhetorically if He needs food or drink. Sacrifices exist not for the sake of God but for Israel as a sign of the covenant, as an act of surrender, and as a substitute for sin. Israel is commanded to continue making sacrifices, to call upon God in the midst of trouble (with the promise of deliverance), in order to glorify Him. True worship includes obedience (50:14). Vows must be paid to the Most High (“God above all other gods”). When worship is from the heart and obedient, God promises that His people may call upon Him in the day of trouble (50:15). He will deliver them and they will glorify Him. “This includes both the glory manifested in the rescue itself and the resulting praise from Israel.” Psalm 50:23

34 Williams, 356.
35 Ibid., 358.
36 Williams explains that sacrifices as food for the gods were a common notion in ancient Near Eastern paganism.
37 Williams, 358.
38 Ibid.
summarizes the teaching in 50:7-15.\textsuperscript{39} We also see the ownership of God elsewhere in the Old Testament (Pss 24:1; 89:11; Ex 19:5; Dt 10:14; Jb 41:11).\textsuperscript{40}

According to Psalm 50, God is both judge and prosecutor. The mighty, self-revealing One does not have need. He is the sovereign, strong owner of all things. God’s people are to follow the Lord in humble obedience. Although God does not need our money, it is His design that Israel glorify Him in the management of their material possessions.

**The Eschatological Story**

In the beginning of the biblical story God commands man to exercise dominion over the earth by filling and subduing it (Gn 1:28). God’s people repeatedly prove their failure to steward the creation. Though the Old Testament does not contain the fulfillment of the long term solution to the sin of Israel, Scripture does foreshadow a time when humanity will flourish on the physical earth restoring God’s initial creational intent. Let us continue focusing on the Old Testament as it specifically relates to this highly anticipated future event, entailing a transformed earth and a humanity that takes possession of it.

G.K. Beale says several Old Testament texts following Eden seem to move toward a “final consummation” without achieving it. These texts come to be seen by subsequent canonical writers as patterns pointing to the eschaton that is sure to come at some point in the

\textsuperscript{39} Kirkpatrick, 284.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 281.
future. These eschatological anticipations are sometimes explicitly conveyed with the phrase “latter days” and other synonymous terms.\footnote{G.K. Beale, \textit{A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New Testament} (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 92.}

**Pentateuch**

Beale highlights in Genesis 49:1 Jacob says to his sons, “Gather around so I can tell you what will happen in days to come.” It is readily seen that Jacob conveys how some of his sons and their offspring would not succeed. Judah, however, is the exception. Judah will be victorious (49:8, 11, 12). He, mighty like a lion, will be the leading tribe (49:8, 9; Rev 5:5). Jacob will rule until the nations’ obedience is his (49:10; Rom 1:4, 5; 16:25, 26). This refers to a decisive triumph over all the enemies of Israel. Judah’s eschatological win is related to this tribe being praised by the eleven (49:8). It is through Judah that a restored eschatologically consummated Eden will be eventually fulfilled.\footnote{Ibid., 92-99.}

Beale references in Numbers 24:14 Balaam says “Now I am going back to my people, but come, let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come.” This passage alludes to Genesis 49 as illustrated in this table. Practically the same wording is used in Genesis 49:9 and Numbers 24:9. The word “scepter” is used in both passages. Both texts use “days to come” regarding their respective prophecies. Both Genesis 49 and Numbers 24:8 refer to the “nations.” Each passage uses imagery of the new creation (Gn 49:11, 12; Nm 24:5-7a). In Genesis 49:11, 12 the imagery of the choicest branch, wine, grapes and milk indicate Judah’s descendants will enjoy prosperity in the future. In Numbers 24:5-7a the
**Table 1. Genesis 49 and Numbers 24**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verse from Genesis 49</th>
<th>verse from Numbers 24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You are a lion’s cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness-who dares to rouse him (Gn 49:9)?”</td>
<td>“Like a lion they crouch and lie down, Like a lioness-who dares to rouse them (Nm 24:9)?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his (Gn 49:10).”</td>
<td>“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel (Nm 24:17).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then Jacob called for his sons and said: ‘Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come” (Gn 49:1).</td>
<td>“Now I am going back to my people, but come, let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come” (Nm 24:14).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his (Gn 49:10).”</td>
<td>“God brought them out of Egypt; they have the strength of a wild ox. They devour hostile nations and break their bones in pieces; with their arrows they pierce them (Nm 24:8).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He will tether his donkey to a vine, His colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, His robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk” (Gn 49:11, 12).”</td>
<td>“How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel! Like valleys they spread out, like gardens beside a river, like aloes planted by the LORD, like cedars beside the waters. Water will flow from their buckets; their seed will have abundant water (Nm 24:5-7a).”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
luxury coming to the Israelites is indicated by the new creation imagery of beauty, gardens, aloes, cedars, abundant waters. Such lush blessing is nostalgic of Eden.\textsuperscript{43} Material possessions will be included in the future lives of God’s people. In addition, Deuteronomy 4:30 reads “When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him.” This distress pertains to both upcoming trouble for God’s people and its repenting toward God due to that distress.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{Prophets}

In Hosea 3:5 we read:

Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.

Beale says an “eschatological time will come when God will restore Israel from captivity and reinstall Davidic kingship, and the nation will trust in God.”\textsuperscript{45} Hosea is closely connected to Deuteronomy, which predicts Israel’s blessings in the latter days. (4:30). In Isaiah 2:2 we find an eschatological element. Beale cites, “In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all the nations will stream to it.” This seems to be building on Genesis 49:1, 10 where the peoples’ obedience will be given to Israel’s king. In Isaiah 2:2, 3 we see people coming to Jerusalem subservient to the Lord and His law (see Gn 49:1, 10; Is 2:2, 3; Mi 4:1). Isaiah depicts the mountain of the LORD’s temple as chief among the mountains. This

\textsuperscript{43} Kenneth L. Barker, ed. \textit{The NIV Study Bible} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 223.

\textsuperscript{44} Beale, 99-101.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 103.
communicates a hope that Israel’s temple will be bolstered in the eschaton. Also, nations will no longer train for war (Is 2:4). This is another trait of the eschaton. In Micah 4:4 we read imagery of the new creation. Beale references, “Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken” (4:4). This passage also highlights that God will rule in Zion. In Jeremiah the phrase in days to come occurs four times (23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39). Jeremiah 23:20 indicates, when renewal has occurred, God’s people will have a fuller comprehension regarding why He was angry against Israel. Jeremiah 30:24 indicates a time when Israel will start fulfilling the mandate of Genesis 1:28. This will take place in a new creation where God will make a new covenant with His people (31:12-14; 31-34). In Jeremiah 48:47 and 49:39 God will restore gentile nations. Ezekiel 38:14-16 refers to God bringing oppression to Israel through an enemy. Subsequent to this cruelty by Gog, the Lord will pour out His Spirit and establish His eschatological temple in their midst (Ez 39:28, 29; 40-47). The book of Daniel includes many instances of the phrase days to come (2:28, 29, 45). His vision is that of an enormous statue consisting of four sections. Daniel’s dream culminates with a stone having an unknown departure destroys the statue and fills the whole world. He explains the stone smashing the statue indicates the unending establishment of God’s kingdom on earth (2:44, 45). There is an intimate connection between mountain and temple throughout the Old Testament (Jer 26:18; Mi 4:1; Pss 15:1; 43:3; 99:9; Jer 31:23; Ex 15:17; Ez 40:2; Rv 21:10). The occurrences in the Daniel 2 text refer to both the immediate and distant future and also the immediate past and present (Dn 2:37, 38). Other texts, such as Daniel 10:14, refer to what will happen in the future, for the vision regards a time yet to come. Chapters eleven and twelve provide the content of this end-time revelation zooming in on the historical zenith
(11:28-12:13). The saints, due to their wisdom, will stand firm against Israel’s enemy who has evil intend (11:27, 32-35, 40, 41; 12:3, 4, 9, 10).  

In Ezekiel 36:25-27 the prophet writes:

> For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Christopher J.H. Wright describes this passage as being founded in the gracious initiative of God. Here the Lord is addressing and providing for Israel’s losses and needs. It addresses God’s peoples as deportees, transgressors of the Torah, and their shame among the nations (36:24, 25, 28-30). Similar to the Exodus, God gathers Israel into their own land (see Ex 11:17; 20:34-38). Also, since Israel disobeyed the Law, God provides a great picture of cleansing. A feeling of shame regarding filthiness in God’s clean presence indicates real sin conviction (36:25; Ex 29:4; Nm 8:7; 19; Ps 51:2, 7). Israel’s problem was twofold- heart (leb) and spirit (ruah). This describes the internal person. In Hebrew dialect, the heart is the location of the mind. This is the attitude one brings to decision-making. Israel needs transformation. God will give His people a heart transplant whereby replacing their stone dead heart with a heart of flesh that is alive. God’s Spirit will empower His people to obey.  

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46 Ibid., 103-112.

47 This illustrates the Biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.
Verse twenty-seven literally reads “and I will make [it happen] or “I will work it out, that in my decrees you will walk and my commands you will keep and do them.”

In Jeremiah 31:31-34 the prophet prominently writes:

The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the LORD. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the LORD. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people.

Walter Bruegeemann asserts that the old covenant between God and the Israelites was forfeited by their consistent disobedience. The new offer of relationship established by God is due to God’s own resolve for the relationship. This time the Torah will be written on their hearts (31:33). In the new covenant obeying becomes as normal as eating or breathing. Obedience is now a part of the character of God’s people. This promise ought to produce gratitude over and against arrogant pride.

The prophets had two portions of vision. Through their near-sight lens they saw events in history. With their long-sight lens they saw the final end of history. The events within Old Testament history foreshadow the events to come in the New Testament age like a “seed germinating, sprouting, and then growing into a small plant and then developing into a full plant.” Let us now turn our attention to the New Testament.

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50 Beale, 113, 114.
CHAPTER 3

MONEY AND POSSESSIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Possessions in the Biblical Story

The New Testament believer looks both back and forward. Anthony A. Hoekema says the believer is conscious of the eschatological event foretold in the Old Testament has already occurred while simultaneously realizing another significant series of end time events lie ahead.¹ Though it is primarily development that this project wishes to address, Jesus’ teaching in the synoptic Gospels on poverty and riches is pertinent to our constructing a theology of fundraising. Craig L. Blomberg explains that Jesus’ parables are not meant to provide economic theory. It is, however, possible for each parable to provide information regarding the first-century economic culture. Parables are one of the primary methods Jesus used to convey His message about the kingdom.²

Possessions in the Synoptics

Jesus gave His disciples the secret of the kingdom of God, but everything was said in parables to those on the outside (Mk 4:11). Christ was honored with costly ointment, taught


regarding wealth as a distraction, sacrifice and huge debt (Lk 7:37; Mk 4:18; Mt 13:44-46; 18:23-35). Simon J. Kistemaker provides the explanation that the seed sown among thorns as it relates to money and possessions refers to people who have intentionally relegated their faith to a secondary place. (Mk 4:18). One’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Lk 12:15). Jesus’ parable of the rich fool warns against the spiritual danger of greed. Jesus can accept both a gourmet meal and the pariahs of His day (Lk 14:21). True discipleship requires a willingness to surrender all (Lk 14:33). Jesus highlighted the importance of acting shrewdly with our wealth while rebuking those who set their hearts on money (Lk 16:8, 9, 14). Similar to the shrewd manager, God’s people should avoid setting their hearts on material possessions. Followers of Jesus can afford to give their money and possessions because these assets belong to God.

The Sermon on the Mount includes the subject of anxiety in the context of creation by God’s providence. James Montgomery Boice writes there are three reasons not to worry. First, the love of money is harmful because one cannot serve God and money simultaneously (6:24). Second, the Lord is capable and willing to care for the material needs of those trusting in Him (6:26, 28-30; 1 Pt 5:7). Thirdly, seek the Lord without angst and see if all of your physical needs

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4 Kistemaker, 152.

5 Blomberg, 113-123.

6 Kistemaker, 192.

In Luke 4:16-21 Jesus ministers in Nazareth. He reads from the scroll that He has come to preach good news to those lacking material possessions. He also has come to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus asking if He is the Christ. Jesus replies go back and tell John the good news is being preached to those having inadequate material possessions (Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22). Though Jesus refers to those who are financially bankrupt, we ought not to discount the spiritual aspect. Jesus said to his disciples what good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul (Mk 8:37). Here we find the spiritual over the material in terms of surety. Money and possessions are inadequate sources of security. In Mark 14:3-9 a woman anoints Jesus with a valued perfume (14:3). Some present rebuked her for wasting the costly fragrance (14:4). Those who were preoccupied by her use of the perfume did understand it to be the equivalent of a year’s salary. However, their perspective on it could not be further from the truth. Jesus defends her. He tells them to leave her alone. She poured expensive perfume on Jesus’ body to prepare Christ for burial (14:6, 8). In Mark 12:41-44 a widow makes a financial contribution to the temple treasure. Many rich people gave large amounts. However, she gave two small coins. Interestingly, Jesus gets His disciples attention and tells them that she gave more money than everyone else. Jesus seems to consider it more significant what wealth one has remaining following the gift, rather than the amount of the financial gift itself. She gave from her insubstantial wealth.9 Jesus’ ministry clearly included meeting the needs of the outcasts and

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9 Blomberg, 128-144.
those who did not possess a home during His day. His ministry certainly suggests a framework of generosity.\(^{10}\)

Jesus commences His public ministry by declaring the good news that God’s kingdom is near. The kingdom is the defining theological motif of Christ’s ministry, including the mention of it more than one hundred times in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus was sent to preach the kingdom of God (Lk 4:43). Though He came to preach good news to the poor, this passage has often been interpreted as referring to something other than those lacking in money and possessions (Lk 4:18). This is due to manufactured categories of sacred and secular, holy and profane, spiritual and material, personal and public. The Isaiah background of Luke 4:16-30 is significant. Middleton cites:

\[
\text{The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captive and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor” (Is 61:1, 2a).}
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“Release from darkness for the prisoners” is literally in Hebrew “an opening for the prisoners.” The allusion to opening prison doors allowing light in is taken by the Septuagint of Isaiah 61:1. This refers to the opening of eyes resulting in “recovery of sight for the blind” (Lk 4:18). The addition of “release the oppressed” proves the “concrete, this-worldly nature of the salvation” Jesus is proclaiming at Nazareth.\(^{11}\)

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 145, 146.

On Earth as it is in Heaven

Oscar Cullman says the New Testament presents a tension between that which is already fulfilled and that which is yet to be completed. According to Johnathan T. Pennington, the kingdom is the central message of Jesus’ ministry. The request for God’s kingdom to come to earth is at the heart of the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:10). Christ’s disciples are to pray for God’s name to be revered, His will accomplished, and His kingdom to come. These three realities are happening in heaven, but not yet fully occurring on earth. Clearly the kingdom of heaven needs to and will come to earth. This intimates that in the future God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven will surpass the current social and political realities. This is the “Christian eschatological hope” inaugurated by Christ’s life, death and resurrection (Mt 28:18-20). Matthew 6:9-10 includes that God’s will is done in “heaven” (6:10). Asking this to be the case on earth is the equivalent of requesting God to consummate his promised creational and redemptive plan for the world. There are three possibilities for the meaning of heaven. Heaven can be understood to be referring to the cosmos. This would pertain to God’s will being done universally. Another option is that heaven refers to the sun, moon and stars. This indicates a meaning of these entities of creation being obedient to God’s will while man is rebellious. Consequently, the prayer would be that humanity would also submit to His will. A third possibility is that heaven refers to God’s realm including rebellious angelic beings. We also read our Father in “heaven” (6:9). Jesus is referring to the God of His disciples. The concept of “kingdom” in connection with heaven is evident (6:10). This comparison of God’s way “on earth as it is in heaven” illustrates a tension

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between God and humanity (6:10). This tension between earth and heaven is not part of the Lord’s original plan for creation. Jesus is teaching His disciples to pray the tension will cease by God’s Name being “hallowed” on both heaven and earth (6:10). The eschatological goal is unity of God’s rule over heaven and earth. Christ first coming has begun this reunion, which will be consummated at His second coming. Jesus teaches the disciples to address the Lord as “our Father” because he knows what we need prior to asking (Mt 6:8). The kingdom of heaven is unlike the current kingdoms of this earth. First-century Palestine was an intense revolutionary circumstance. A way to discourage Christian engagement was to emphasize the heavenly nature of the kingdom. God would bring change from heaven rather than through earthly violence. This is underscored in the non-retaliation directives within Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray for the coming kingdom (6:10).

William Hendriksen writes that Jesus’ teaching provides a model prayer. The brevity is seen in its approximately seventy words, including an invocation, six petitions and a conclusion. The glory of God is of utmost importance. Our Heavenly Father’s name, kingdom and will are the first three petitions (6:9b, 10a, 10b). The needs of humanity, including bread, forgiveness and victory over the devil, occupy second place (6:11-13). Christ’s teaching on prayer comprehensively includes God’s glory, our physical and spiritual needs, past and future needs, and our corporate needs as seen in the words “us” and “our” (6:9, 10; 6:11-13; 6:12, 13; 6:9-13).

14 Ibid., 150-155.
15 Ibid., 249.
16 Pennington explains that Roman emperors claimed universal lordship, eternality and divinity.
17 Ibid., 323, 324
18 Ibid., 84.
This is an excellent example for our prayers. Addressing God as “Father” is a privilege to those who are “in Christ” (Jn 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6; 2 Cor 6:18; 1 Jn 3:1, 2). He is the Father of the peacemaker and those who love their enemies (Mt 5:9, 44, 45). The Father’s Name is hallowed by His kingly rule. This rule occurs when God rules in men’s hearts on the basis of Christ’s work and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; Jn 19:30; 16:8). God has revealed His will in the Law. Jesus is teaching us to pray that God’s will that is being perfectly obeyed in heaven would also be obeyed on earth. Preferring God’s will to that of our own is exemplified in Christ Himself (Lk 2:51, 52; Jn 15:10; 17:4; Phil 2:5-8; Heb 5:8). Daniel M. Doriani writes the request for His kingdom regards the Lord’s kingly rule (6:10a). It is a request for the extension of his reign in the lives of those who are presently in rebellion to Him. It is a prayer for the advancement of the Gospel of God’s kingdom. The third petition is a request for kingdom living (6:10b). Jesus’ disciples must also be concerned with God’s will being done with prayer for the renewal of all things (6:10a). It is a pattern to pray that the earth will look more like heaven and less like hell (6:10b).

The Two-Drachma Tax and the Kingdom

In Matthew 17:24-18:5 Peter is asked a question by those who collect the two-drachma tax. Why doesn’t Jesus pay the temple tax (17:24)? Jesus turns the question into an opportunity to teach the contrast between the “kings of the earth” and the “sons” of God (17:25). Simultaneously, another question is raised regarding greatness in the kingdom of heaven (18:1).

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Jesus explicitly discusses the kingdom twice more (18:3, 4). Jesus is contrasting the sons of the kings of the earth with children as a model for the kingdom of heaven. These are two very different manners of living on the earth.²¹ This kingdom is central to Jesus’ proclamation (18:1-4).²² The nature of the kingdom is such that the greatest is like a child.²³ Jesus exhorts people to enter the kingdom of heaven.²⁴

The two-drachma was a Greek silver coin equivalent to a Roman denarius. This equaled the amount of money a man would earn generally for two days of work. Money changers charged a fee for exchanging foreign into Jewish currency. Jesus is under no obligation to pay this tax; the members of the king’s family are maintained by the taxes paid by others (Mt 17:26). We must not be the cause of others becoming ensnared by sin (17:27).²⁵ The disciples are arguing regarding who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (18:1; cf. Mk 9:33, 34). It is at this time Jesus chose to focus their attention on a little child. This illustrates Jesus’ understanding of the nature of the kingdom and the way of entering it. If the disciples continue in their eagerness to be higher than the other and to lord it over them, they will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven (18:3). They must turn from selfish ambition to God (Jn 3:3, 5). The humble one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (18:4). The Lord cannot be separated from those belonging to Him (18:5).²⁶

²¹ Pennington, 319.
²² Ibid., 140.
²³ Ibid., 323.
²⁴ Ibid., 280.
²⁵ Hendriksen, 677-680.
²⁶ Pennington, 686-689.
Possessions in Paul

The Pauline epistles include a theology of material possessions. He writes to the believers in Galatia regarding remembering those who lack money and possessions and sharing good things with his instructor (Gal 2:10; 6:6). This may include sharing wealth with one’s instructor. In 1 Corinthians 1:26 Paul writes that not many of the believers in Corinth were wise, influential nor of noble birth. This seems to imply that a few may have fallen into these categories. The numerous problems in the church in Corinth indicate immaturity. There are sociological divisions and lawsuits among believers (1:11, 12; 6:1-11). The problem of litigation was likely limited to the wealthy, since only they sued one another in the ancient Greco-Roman empire. This rarely was done for the purpose of accruing financial holdings, but to increase their honor and the shame of their rivals. This is a mishandling of God’s material blessings by the believers in Corinth. Paul warns the church against gluttony and prostitution, two activities that would likely require financial surplus (6:12-20). This may very well be related to lavish feasting followed by sexual revelry with hired prostitutes, which elite Roman males practiced. This especially took place just after their social coming of age at eighteen. There are problems related to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper (11:17-34).27

The material elements of bread and wine are being misused. Some Corinthians are eating the bread and drinking the wine at the Lord’s table in an unworthy manner (11:27).28 Paul employs sarcasm in addressing the Corinthian leaders while contrasting their wealth and his plight (4:8-13). There is a sexually immoral brother in the Corinthian church (5:10-13). The

27 Blomberg, 177-183.

28 Blomberg says those who should refrain from the bread and wine are not those with a sense of their own inadequacy, but those in any given church who participate unworthily.
greedy will not inherit the kingdom of God (6:10). Paul tells the church to act as if there is no ownership of property indicating financial worth ought not to be a distraction from God’s work (7:30). In 1 Corinthians 9:1-18 Paul explicitly states his right to accept material support because he is a Gospel minister (9:13, 14; see Mt 10:10). He is also clear that he forfeited this right to money in order to advance the Gospel (9:12b, 15-18). Paul says love is greater than giving to those who lack money and possessions (13:3). Paul explicitly explains the collection of money for God’s people (16:1-4). This is the oldest known reference to a collection of money each Sunday. In 2 Corinthians 2:17, Paul distinguishes his ministry from those who peddle the word of God for profit.29 Clearly generating wealth is not the end goal of ministry. Paul has not wronged, corrupted nor exploited anyone as part of his ministry (7:2). Paul defends his ministry with the notion that he avoided burdening anyone or helping others boast (11:7-12). 2 Corinthians 8-9 are about the collection of money as a manifestation of the grace of God (8:6, 7). They gave out of severe lack of financial means (8:2). Their trial could have been economic hardship resulting from persecution (see Acts 17:1-15). The Macedonian churches voluntarily sought the privilege to share their wealth (8:4). Paul exhorts the Corinthians themselves to give (8:7b). Since Christ sacrificed the richness of His home in heaven for earthly restrictions, we should practice the grace of giving (8:9; Jn 10:18). Paul’s hope is for everyone’s material needs being met equally as in God supplying manna in the wilderness (8:13-15; Ex 16:18). Titus oversees the collection of money (8:16, 17). An appreciation for God’s grace creates a cheerfulness in giving money to others (9:7). Inward purposefulness is to be followed by “decisive and cheerful giving.”30 Though Paul’s Epistle to the Romans has little to do with

29 Paul is referring to false teachers, including the Sophist movement.

30 Blomberg, 153.
material possessions per se, there does exist potential implications for stewardship and sharing. He tells the saints in Rome having the gift of contributing to others needs to generously give (12:8). The Romans are commanded to pay their taxes (13:7). In Romans 13:8 Paul raises the significant issue of debt. Paul says he hopes for the churches assistance while passing through on his journey (15:24). This seems to indicate Paul would like the Roman church to provide some financial support for his further missionary journeys. Macedonia and Achaia made a gift for those who lacked finances (15:26). From Paul’s point of view, they owe sharing material possessions to the Jews because the Gentiles have shared in Jewish spiritual blessings (15:27). It is generally accepted that Paul wrote Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians from a Roman prison in AD 60-62.\(^{31}\) It is possible Philemon was a man of considerable wealth, since he hosted a house church (Phlm 2). Onesimus is Philemon’s run-away slave. He may have stolen property in order to provide for himself. Thereafter, Onesimus accepts the truth of the Gospel as proclaimed by Paul. Paul writes Philemon encouraging him to charge anything Onesimus might own to his account (Phlm 18). Paul tells the believers in Ephesus 4:28 that stealing must be replaced by work for the purpose of having something to share with the needy. The Philippian church financially participated in Paul’s ministry (4:15-18). Dennis E. Johnson writes the Philippians’ “financial support for Paul’s global mission was outstanding for its consistency and its generosity.”\(^{32}\) Paul’s instruction in 1 Timothy 2:9 seems to suggest that the wealthy women in Ephesus were his concern. An overseer of God’s people should not be a lover of money and a deacon ought not to pursue dishonest gain (1 Tm 3:3, 8). Paul explicitly writes in 2 Timothy 3:2, 4 that the last days will include lovers of money rather than lovers of God. Paul promotes

\(^{31}\) Philippians may be dated further along during Paul’s house arrest.

benefaction to qualified widows (1 Ti 5:3). Paul exhorts financial compensation for faithful Christian leaders (2 Tm 2:6). Financial gain is not the purpose of godliness (1 Tm 6:5). Eagerness for riches is dangerous (6:9). A root of all kinds of evil is the love of money (1 Tm 6:10a). John R.W. Stott wisely articulates Paul “is not for poverty against wealth, but for contentment against covetousness.” Riches ought not to result in arrogance. Paul also warns against trusting in wealth while encouraging the enjoyment of God’s provision (6:17). Wealthy individuals in the church are to be generous and share (6:18). Paul explains this is a spiritual investment (6:19). The Apostle Paul commands generosity simply because it glorifies God.\(^{34}\)

The Fullness of Time

In Galatians 4:4 we read that God sent His Son as the earth’s salvific possession when the “time had fully come.” Jesus has initially come on the scene of redemptive history at a time previously determined by the Father (Gal 4:2). It is possible the time of Christ’s first coming was influenced by the prime opportunity for all of humanity to get hold of the Gospel seed through its scattering wide and far due to the spread of the Greek language, presence of the Jewish synagogues, and the network of Roman roads and enforced peace utilized by evangelists.\(^{35}\) According to Herman N. Ridderbos, the previously determined past age had reached its limit by God’s governance.\(^{36}\) David B. McWilliams says in Galatians 4:4 the Apostle Paul is


\(^{34}\) Ibid., 187-212.

\(^{35}\) Hendriksen, 157, 158.

contemplating the two ages and their influence on the Christian lifestyle. The new age emerges at the first coming of Christ. The old has gone and the new has arrived (2 Cor 5:17). Things once hidden are now revealed (Col 1:26; Rom 16:26). Christ has brought about the end of the ages (1 Cor 10:11). Philip Graham Ryken says, in ancient times, the father fixed the time when his son would acquire his estate. Jesus knew He had come in the Father’s perfect timing (Mk 1:14, 15). Carol J. Ruvolo writes that all the preparations were in place, the stage was set, and the world was ready to be endowed with Christ’s virgin birth. Christ died for the ungodly at just the right time (Rom 5:6).

The Powers of the Coming Age

Simon J. Kistemaker points out that tasting the powers of the coming age is a continuation of the goodness of the word of God (Heb 6:5). The Apostle Paul uses the plural form “powers” (cf. 2:4). These powers are both in the present age and the age to come. The phrase “the coming age” occurs six times in the New Testament (Mt 12:32; Mk 10:30; Lk 18:30; Eph 1:21; 2:7; Heb 6:5). Followers of Jesus will fully take hold of the supernatural powers in the coming age, which are now observed in this age. William Barclay asserts the age to come will be a wholly good possession fully owned by God. God will again intervene into human history.

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37 David B. McWilliams, *Galatians: A Mentor Commentary* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2009), 149, 150.


with Christ’s second coming. On this Day of the Lord Jesus will corner the market by bringing judgment and the end of this age. Consequently, the age to come will dominate. However, the Christian is one who enjoyably tastes the powers of the age to come even now.\(^41\) Raymond Brown says the powers of the age to come can break into weak lives transforming frailty into adequacy, weakness into strength.\(^42\)

**Possessions in Hebrews to Revelation**

The author of Hebrews writes regarding confiscation of physical property. From a New Testament perspective, this is a relatively minor issue because their spiritual investments far outweigh the value of their material possessions (Heb 10:34). Richard D. Phillips writes persecutors of Christians “confiscated their homes and possessions. . . . But it was they, the persecutors of the church, whose spirits fell when the Christians responded with the sacrificial sharing to provide for all the believers.”\(^43\) We are to avoid the love of money and be content (13:5). An example of “holiness has to do with contentment versus greed.”\(^44\) In contrast to the Jewish-Christian audience of Hebrews, the Christian audience of 1 Peter seems more Gentile (1:1). Peter addresses his audience regarding the great worth of inward beauty in contrast to the outward costly adornments (3:3, 4). Similar to 1 Timothy 2:9, this audience apparently had the financial resource to purchase expensive attire. Christians should be eager to serve rather than

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\(^{44}\) Ibid., 591.
greedy for money (5:2). The meaning here is “[seeking] foolish gain)” *aischrokerdos*, which is neither appropriate nor productive.\(^{45}\) The Second Epistle of Peter addresses the issue of false teachers’ greed (2:3, 14). They are “well trained in covetousness.”\(^{46}\) Jesus and His disciples apparently gave to those in need of money and possessions (Jn 13:29). The tomb used for Christ’s burial was one in which no one had ever been laid. This, along with the great deal of spices used to prepare His body for burial, seems to indicate Jesus received a rich burial fit for a first century king (19:38-42). Richard D. Philipps says John’s account included a “royal theme.”\(^{47}\) 1 John 2:16 warns against boasting in our possessions. Anyone with a surplus of wealth aware of a human need, especially within the body of Christ, but unwilling to help proves their profession of faith to be empty (3:17). John’s third epistle exhorts hospitality toward missionaries to include financial assistance (3 Jn 6). John R.W. Stott writes this certainly includes “food and money.”\(^{48}\) In Revelation 2:9, John writes to a church that is materially poor but spiritually rich. The church in Loadicea is financially rich but spiritually bankrupt (Rv 3:17). The new created community of God’s people will include the nations’ wealth and luxuries (21:10-21, 24, 26).\(^{49}\)

\(^{45}\) Blomberg, 230.  
\(^{46}\) Ibid., 231.  
\(^{49}\) Ibid., 233-238.
All Things Redeemed

It seems popular to think God will one day take His people to heaven as our final destination. However, Jesus’ followers will possess a renewed earthly creation in contrast to an immaterial heaven. In Acts 3 Peter and John are on their way to the temple when a crippled beggar asks them for money. Peter heals him and notices the crowd’s surprise. Peter addresses the people saying Jesus will return to restore all things (3:19-21). This “restoration” (apokatastasis) is going to be accomplished in regards to “everything” (panta). Peter apparently expects something comprehensive to happen that coincides with the prophets. In Ephesians 1 the Apostle Paul says Christ will bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head (1:9-10). The verb is translated “gathered up” (NRSV), “unite” (ESV), “sum up” (NASB), and “bring together” (NLT), which is from the Greek word anakephalaiosasthai. The NIV places importance on “head” (kephale) as a portion of the verb. The heavens and the earth is how Genesis 1:1 articulates the cosmos the Lord originally made. In Colossians 1 we read that God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven through the blood of Christ. This includes the materials of the earth. Christ is the Father’s agent of creation and redemption (1:15-20). Although the atoning blood of Christ is applied to God’s individual people, it is also applied as comprehensively as possible, to all things, whether on earth or in heaven. In Roman 8 Paul says creation has been groaning up until now (8:22). God’s salvific work is portrayed as liberation or setting free from slavery and the one seizing this salvation is both creation itself and the children of God (8:21, 23). God’s redemption is cosmic in

50 Middleton, 157.

51 Ibid., 158.
scope. Paul uses the deliverance from Egyptian bondage as his logical basis to include the nonhuman creation in God’s plan of salvation. In 2 Peter 3 we read the earth and everything in it will be laid bare and a new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness (3:10, 13). The physical earth and its works will be disclosed. This home of righteousness refers to the entire created universe (3:13). Similar to our four previous passages, salvation brings transformation and newness to the whole creation. All these passages include the final salvific state pictured by the inspired authors, including the entire material creation acquired by God’s people. In Revelation we find John’s vision describing the culmination of a trajectory unfolded in Scripture (Rv 21:1). It is the Lord’s plan to conform earth to heaven (Mt 6:10). The prophets pictured a day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God’s glory like the sea is covered by waters (Is 11:9; Hb 2:14). John paints a picture of what the new Jerusalem will be like when God’s purposes for creation are completely fulfilled, including pearls and pure gold upon which God’s people will get their hands (Rv 21:21). God’s presence decisively shifts from heaven to earth (21:3). This completely fulfills God’s promise to dwell with Israel His people (Ex 29:45, 46; Lv 26:11, 12; Jn 1:14). Heaven is God’s throne and the earth is His footstool (Is 66:1).

Plot of the Biblical Story

God sends His only begotten Son in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4). Jesus is the “paradigm” *imago-Dei* (2 Cor 4:4-6; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). The Second Adam has overcome the failure of the first Adam through His gracious birth, obedience, death, burial and resurrection in the place of His elect solely by faith in Him (Gn 3:6, 15; Rom 5:12-21; 9:1-29; 3:21-31; Jn 1:14;

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52 Middleton, 67.
19:30; Mt 1:25; 5:17; 1 Cor 15:3). Jesus came to restore Israel to righteousness and blessing followed by ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 3:25, 26; Mt 15:24; 10:5-8).  

Jesus commissions the apostles to continue His ministry to the Gentiles (Mt 28:18-20). Jesus' commission to the apostles is rearticulating the Abrahamic vocation of the people of God to mediate blessing to all the nations of the earth. The apostles’ ministry to the Gentiles is the content we find in the majority of Acts and the backdrop to the various Epistles as several churches in Asia Minor are addressed. The Church is the new humanity being renewed in the image of God and will eventually reign with Christ on the earth (Eph 2:15; 4:22-24, 2 Tm 2:12; Rv 22:5: 5:9, 10; 1 Pt 2:9). Humanity will, like in the Garden, utilize their agency to renew the cultural task of ruling, but this time without sin. The Bible tells a coherent story. Heaven is not part of the Biblical Story's plot. In other words, heaven is not our final destiny. Heaven is an important part of the Christian worldview (Gn 1:1; Ps 115:16; Mt 6:10).  

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53 Ibid., 67, 68.
54 Ibid., 69-71.
55 Ibid., 72, 73.
CHAPTER 4
MONEY AND POSSESSIONS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Possessions in the Biblical Story

The Early Church (EC) writings include the book of Acts and the Epistle of James. Acts belongs to an ancient genre of books pertaining to great deeds of people or cities. Authored by Luke, most scholars date Acts within 62-70, 80-95, or 115-30. Acts portrays the obedience of Jesus’ command to the apostles that they spread the Gospel (Acts 1:8). The Epistle of James was written by James the brother of Jesus. It is believed to have been written sometime in the early or middle 40s. James was probably intended for several communities in which James’s scattered parishioners had settled.

Possessions in Acts

The book of Acts includes the community of early believers (Acts 2:42-47). They committed themselves to the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking bread and prayer. “Fellowship” translates the Greek word koinonia. The earliest Christian community was together having “everything in common” (hapanta koina). They sold their possessions and

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goods, sharing with those who had a need. R.C. Sproul asserts the early church was not interested in communism nor socialism. Instead, this first century community was motivated by “generosity.” In Acts 4:34 we find the early church community having no needy persons among them. The word translated “needy” (endees) appears only here in the New Testament. The early church was committed to there being no poor among them. We see both positive and negative examples in peoples’ lives regarding wealth (2:36, 37; 5:1-11). J.A. Alexander says a great sense of awe came over all who had knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira’s deaths in relation to their mishandling of wealth. The EC cared for the widows’ needs among them (6:1). Simon’s attempt to buy the gift of God with money illustrates the serious problems that the mistreatment of money can create (8:20). Dorcas and Cornelius are praised for doing good and giving to the poor (9:36; 10:2). The EC gave each according to his ability (11:29). Many in Ephesus publicly burned their highly valued documents supposedly having magical formulas and secret data (19:19). Their monetary value was equivalent to 50,000 days’ wages.

Pentecost

In Acts 2:1-4 we find the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Simon J. Kistemaker says, in obedience to Jesus’ command, the apostles wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Spirit (1:4). When the fiftieth day arrives, the period of waiting is complete. A new era dawns for the

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apostles. The Holy Spirit comes to take up His dwelling with men forever. The people “were all together in one place” (2:1). Though the disciples are anticipating the Spirit’s arrival, His coming is a sudden appearance whereby revealing the inception of a supernatural event (2:2). This includes a violent wind from heaven (see Jn 3:8). “Tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them” appeared (2:3; see Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16). Fire is symbolic of God’s presence. They began speaking in “other tongues” as the Holy Spirit allowed them to do so (2:4). These other “tongues” are the equivalent of the concept of spoken languages. Consequently, the indwelled Christian is transformed into the Spirit’s mouthpiece (4:6, 8, 11). These languages ranged from Persia in the east to Rome in the west. This is distinct in contrast to the ecstatic speech for edification requiring interpretation (1 Cor 14:28). The ability to speak in tongues at Pentecost comes from within as an internal sign of the Holy Spirit. Wind and fire are external signs. The Spirit stays rather than coming and going. The Spirit stays with the person taking full possession of the filled believer. (4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52). The Spirit reaches out in widening spheres to the Samaritans, the Gentiles, and John the Baptists’ disciples in accord with Jesus’ witnessing command (8:17; 10:44-46; 19:1-6; 1:8). In Acts 2:14-41 Peter explains Pentecost. He begins by explaining the event itself and quoting Joel’s prophecy (2:14-21). Peter faces the multitude and speaks on behalf of the other apostles (2:14). Peter indicates that the era of the last days has come (2:17). These days inaugurate the Messianic age in which God pours out His Spirit on His people (2:18). Prophets within the EC instructed and exhorted God’s people. The inclusion of “servants” signifies that God pours out His Spirit to every class of society (2:18; see Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tm 6:1, 2; Ti 2:9, 10; 1 Pt 2:18-21). Peter’s quotation of Joel in Acts 2:19-21 is

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fulfilled in Jesus’ death on the cross when darkness came over the land for three hours at which time the sun was not visible and the signs of nature testified to Christ’s death. (Mt 27:45; see Rom 10:13). Peter focuses attention on Jesus’ death, resurrection and exaltation (2:22-36).\(^7\) According to Jerry Horner, this is the first sermon in the EC. Luke describes the Lord’s continuing ministry on earth through the agency of servants empowered by the promised Holy Spirit. The time of eschatological fulfillment has dawned. This is a fulfillment of Scripture (1:16, 17). The Jews saw time divided into the present age and the age to come. The latter is effected by God’s intervention whereby introducing the last days (see Heb 1:1, 2). The old order has ended and the new has come. The expected Holy Spirit has arrived (2:33; Jn 7:39). The eschatological hope foretold by Joel is fulfilled (2:16-21). The personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the distinguishing feature of the last days. The outpouring of the Spirit on “all people” excludes nationalism while stressing the eschatological promise to all of creation (2:17; cf. Jl 2:28). Peter speaks of the fulfillment of prophecy and the inauguration of the new age in both present and future terms. The fulfillment is already realized in the birth, obedience, death, resurrection, ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment simultaneously belongs to the future, since Christ will Judge the “living and the dead” (10:42). The “great and glorious day” is yet to come (2:20). The new age has become a reality in the life of the EC.\(^8\) G.K. Beale asserts that Acts 2:1-12 is the initial fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy to “pour out” the Spirit to all classes of the covenant people (Jl 2:28, 29). Peter substitutes the phrase “in the last days” in place of Joel’s “afterward” from Isaiah 2:2 (2:17; Jl 2:28). Peter seems to interpret the Spirit’s arrival in

\(^7\) Ibid., 87-91.

fulfillment of Joel to also be the beginning of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy of the end-time temple. Peter’s quotation of Joel’s prophecy shows that in his day it was finally beginning fulfillment at Pentecost. Peter’s quotation of Joel 2:30-32 indicates blessing to a faithful remnant that survives the judgment (2:19-21).⁹

The apostles wait in Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus’ command in order to take possession of the Holy Spirit (1:4). He takes up His occupancy with men forever. The suddenness with which the Holy Spirit arrives involves wind and fire. God exercises His proprietary rights with the presence of the Holy Spirit. He endowed the apostles with the ability to speak in other tongues. The Spirit resides within the believer without possibility of foreclosure. The Holy Spirit accrues with His widening reach to the Samaritans, the Gentiles, and John the Baptists’ disciples in accord with Jesus’ witnessing command. Peter explains the salvific portfolio created by the Spirit’s investment. These are the days that God’s people are “marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession-to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:13, 14). This investment is for the lower, middle and upper classes of people. Peter’s quotation of Joel is fulfilled in Christ’s complete financial payment on the cross. (Jn 19:30). Darkness came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour when “the sun stopped shining” (Lk 23:44, 45; see Jl 2:31), God’s kingdom has already come in part with Christ’s crucifixion (Mt 27:51-53). Jesus committed His spirit to the Father preceding His last breath from His material physical body (Lk 23:46). Peter focuses on the fact that Christ wrote the check with His death, resurrection and exaltation. God has made the investment in this age (Mt 24:3, 29). The Father has sacrificed His priceless and most treasured possession-His One

and Only Son Jesus Christ. God’s kingdom will fully come with Christ’s return collecting His dividend whereby allowing the faithful remnant that survives the judgment to receive their inheritance as benefactors without tax penalty (Rv 6:12; see Jl 2:31).

**Times of Refreshing and Restoration**

In Acts 3:1-10 Peter heals a crippled beggar in response to his faith (2:43; 3:16). This resulted in numerical growth of the church (4:4). Peter and John both belonged to Jesus’ inner circle. Peter and John went up to the temple together as was their custom (3:1; see Mk 6:7). A man crippled from birth begged them for something (3:2; see Jn 9:1, 8). The man asked them for money and they looked intently at him (3:3, 4). The man gives them his attention expecting to receive something (3:5). Peter miraculously heals the man immediately in Jesus’ Name whereby God grants physical restoration (3:6). Peter takes him by the right hand in Christ-like fashion (3:7; see Mk 1:31). The crippled man “jumped to his feet” (3:8; see 14:9, 10). Isaiah did prophecy that the lame will “leap like a deer” (Is 35:6a). Jesus makes the lame walk whereby inaugurating the messianic age through Peter’s agency (Lk 7:22). The people saw the man walking and praising God (3:9). They recognized him and were amazed (3:10). In Acts 3:11ff Peter utilizes the opportunity to witness to the Gospel by speaking to the onlookers. Stanley Toussaint and Jay Quinn explain Peter’s sermon. God the Father has glorified His Son (3:13). Peter accuses Israel of rejecting the Christ (3:14, 15). He tells them to repent and turn for the remission of sins in order that “times of refreshing may come”

10 Kistemaker says early Christians considered themselves Jews including the practice of traditional prayer times.

(3:19). The sentence structure implies the coming of times of refreshing and the sending of the Messiah are simultaneous. Peter’s command for repentance is the contingency of human responsibility. The wiping out of Israel’s sins will precede the times of refreshing and the return of Christ in the eschatological age to come on the earth. However, other views exist. First, some say it pertains to present day spiritual blessings when Christ comes into the heart of one who trusts Him. Second, some say times of refreshing will be fulfilled in the present age. Third, some hold the point of view that it refers to blessings for present day believers but sending the Messiah refers to the second coming of Christ bringing spiritual blessings.

Fourth, others see it pertaining to present day believers with the Messiah coming in the future to fulfill an earthly kingdom. A fifth view sees times of refreshing and sending Jesus both as eschatological and refer to the coming of the Davidic kingdom. This fifth view is supported by the fact that “times of refreshing” and that he may “send the Christ” are joined together (3:19, 20). Acts 3:21b refers to the eschatological age promised in the Old Testament. Acts 3:19 literally reads “that there may come seasons of refreshing from the face of the Lord.” The word “refreshing” occurs only once in the New Testament. Consequently, scholars offer three suggestions as to its meaning. First, times of refreshing refers to the age of salvation that is promised to Israel nationally if it repents. Second, “times of spiritual strength” (GNB) refer to the future and Christ’s Second Coming. Third, times of refreshing pertain to times in the present. The word “times” is a plural term referring to periodic seasons in which forgiven and restored believers experience nearness of the Lord. At the end of the age, God will send Christ Jesus again. Acts 3:21 says Jesus must stay in heaven until the “time comes for God to

restore everything” as promised in the past age. The time of Jesus’s return is only known by
the Father (Mt 24:14). The Gospel of God’s Kingdom must be preached to the whole world
prior to Christ’s return (Mt 24:14). Though the “times of refreshing” are periodic and
subjective, the coming time for God to “restore everything” is permanent and objective (1
Cor 15:24). Peter grants healing to the crippled beggar. This results in compounding
interest for the church. Peter and John both held membership in Jesus’ inner circle. The
crippled beggar solicits them for a monetary gift. However, he received an unexpected
donation in the form of physical restoration. The man jumped to his feet like a stock share
purchased low, but sold high. Peter accuses Israel of causing God’s investment to be returned
to sender. He tells them it is their responsibility to utilize the remaining time to cash the
check in order to be ready for the Proprietor’s return. The Gospel of God’s Kingdom must
accrue to the ends of the earth prior to Christ’s return. God’s people will take possession of
periodic times of refreshing and the restoration of everything forever.

Possessions in James

James writes his letter to the twelve tribes (1:1). The theme of wealth and poverty is
evident in the book of James. He writes commands to both rich and poor (1:9-11).
Apparently, many in James’ audience are poor Christians (2:1-7; 5:1-6). The phrase “in
humble circumstances” translates the Greek adjective tapeinos (1:9). In contrast to materially
wealthy, this word becomes compatible with monetary impoverishment (ptochos). Material
riches are transient (1:10). The wealthy Christian ought to take pride in his low position

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A.W. Morrison says riches are “gone in a flash.” True religion includes looking after orphans and widows in their distress (1:27). Favoritism based on wealthy or the lack thereof is prohibited (2:1-7). The temptation here is to treat the rich person with great honor while treating the poor person shabbily. The quarrels in the church are due to battling desires (4:1). James rebukes his audience for neglecting to ask God and asking with the motive of spending what is received on pleasures (4:2, 3). James tells his audience they arrogantly conduct business to make money without humbly acknowledging the Lord (4:13-17).

Douglas J. Moo says James is rebuking any kind of planning for the future that stems from human arrogance in our ability to determine the course of future events.

Douglas J. Moo states the letter of James includes an eschatological context. Future eschatology is clearly evident in James. The author frequently mentions the future judgement in order to motivate believers to the right attitudes and actions (1:10, 11; 2:12, 13; 3:1; 5:1-6, 9, 12). James also reminds his readers regarding the future reward (1:12; 2:5; 4:10; 5:20). In a fashion consistent with early Christianity, he insists the Lord’s Second Coming is near (5:8, 9). The new age has dawned with the virgin birth of Christ Jesus. The culmination of history can occur at any time with Christ’s return. James simultaneously addresses present eschatology. His use of “the last days” regarding hoarded wealth indicates a belief that followers of Jesus were already living in the age of eschatological consummation. James is to

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14 Some argue the man discussed in James 1:10, 11 is a non-Christian.


be read with this inaugurated eschatology or fulfillment without consummation point of view.\textsuperscript{17}

**Twelve Tribes**

Simon J. Kistemaker explains the Epistle of James is the most Jewish of all the New Testament letters evidenced by the greeting “To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations” (Jas 1:1). James is addressing his epistle to Jews who live outside of Israel; they are Jews in dispersion (Jn 7:35). Luke lists the places where Jews resided outside of their homeland (Acts 2:5, 9-11). These Jews returned to their residences from Jerusalem following Pentecost. Those who remained in Jerusalem were persecuted and driven away after Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 8:1; 11:19).\textsuperscript{18} J.A. Moyer says James highlights that Jesus chose twelve apostles and looked forward to His own glory when they would sit on the twelve thrones ruling the twelve tribes of Israel (Mk 3:13, 14; Mt 19:28). Jesus led the Israel of the old covenant into its full reality as the Israel of the new covenant. This apostolic people of the Lord Jesus Christ is who Paul calls “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16). Israel is Christ’s church. Christians are children of Abraham and he is our father (Gal 3:7; Rom 4:11, 16).

“The twelve tribes” places the church in the persecutions and pressures of this life. James has his readers understand their Christian journey through these kinds of experiences. They are the Lord’s twelve tribes scattered among a menacing and testing world. They have not yet fully taken hold of their homeland. Meanwhile, they are the redeemed by the blood of the


Lamb feeling the weight of a fallen creation.\textsuperscript{19} The book of Revelation pictures the people of God in the last days drawn from each of the twelve tribes and the heavenly Jerusalem including twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rv 7:5-8; 21:12).\textsuperscript{20}

**Possessions in the Last Days**

In James 5:1-6 the author addresses the rich. Love for money leads to all kinds of evil (1 Tm 6:10). James assails the rich who have responded in arrogance to God (5:1). Their judgment is coming (5:1). Their wealth has decayed, which likely pertains to a food supply (5:2). Their expensive garments have been eaten by devouring larvae (5:2). Precious metals are corroded (5:3a). Since gold and silver do not rust, we must understand the term “corroded” figuratively. Hoarding does not serve any meaningful purpose. In this sense, these metals are as useless as if they really were corroded. James speaks of corrosion in order to indicate the worthlessness of material possessions. Their corrosion will testify against them (5:3b). In this sense, their possessions now have a negative value. In a court of law, this can be used as evidence against the rich. Instead of helping the poor by meeting some of their needs, these rich oppressors hoarded it either for their own pleasure or no purpose whatsoever. James says it will eat their flesh like “fire” (5:3b). God’s judgement is coming upon them, which cannot be escaped (see Acts 12:23). They have “hoarded” wealth in the last days (5:3c). There are three interpretations here. First, those who are materially rich may very well be spiritually bankrupt. Man ought to store up treasures in heaven (Mt 6:20).


\textsuperscript{20} Moo, *The Letter of James*, 49-50.
Second, the rich accumulate treasures in the form of storing up wrath against themselves (Rom 2:5). Third, James twice mentions the coming of the Lord (5:7, 8). “The Judge is standing at the door!” (5:9). The phrase “the last days” refers to the end of the ages realized in the New Testament times (Jn 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17; 2 Tm 3:1; Heb 1:2). These “last days” pertain to the period between Christ’s first and second coming. The rich have hoarded material wealth in the shadow of Christ’s return. They will face judgement when He returns.  

21 Patrick J. Hartin writes that the rich are called to wail for the miseries they will experience (5:1). The verb “to wail” (ollozontes) refers to cries of violence in the LXX. James refers to food, clothing and money (5:2, 3). The rich will stand before God’s judgment seat with worthless possessions. These “last days” are days of judgment (5:3). A weight of punishment awaits them. Their over concern with this age is absurd because “the last days” are at hand (5:3).  

22 Hoarding riches is serious because believers are in “the last days” (see Acts 2:17; Heb 1:2). It is foolish to hoard wealth in days when salvation has come and in days when judgement is near.  

23 The verb James uses means “lay up treasure” (thesaurizo). This, along with the judgment imagery, conveys a negative interpretation. They have ironically stored up wrath for the coming day of judgement (see Lk 12:15-21).  

24 James sees the fact that they have “hoarded wealth in the last days” as senseless (5:3). They would have been better off without their material possessions. They lived without watching God’s clock


(see Mt 25:24-30). Hoarding is a denial of proper use, of true trust, and of biblically informed expectancy (see Lk 12:33; 1 Tm 6:17; 6:18, 19).²⁵

²⁵ Motyer, 165-166.
CHAPTER 5
MONEY AND POSSESSIONS IN THE APPLICATION OF FUNDRAISING

The Christian is not only to listen to God’s Word, but to obey it (Jas 1:22-25). Richard B. Gaffin says, theology is not for a purely intellectual purpose. From front to back the Bible provides knowledge intended to enter into the actual life of man, to be worked out by him in all its practical bearings.¹

Fundraising is a legitimate ministry involving a thoughtful grasp of the biblical and theological significance of money and a proper application of this significance to fundraising practices today (Jas 1:22). Fundraising is sometimes perceived merely as a necessary means to begin ministry. I believe this negative assessment results from a disconnection between our theology and the application thereof. When understood in its biblical context, fundraising is giving others the opportunity to manage that which God already owns (Mt 25:14-30; Ps 50:10). A proper perspective of fundraising requires the construction of a biblical worldview—a set of spectacles through which we view the world. In the process of worldview construction, perspectives regarding fundraising need to be transformed so that our theology and application will go hand in hand (Rom 12:2).

Worldview

According to John Calvin, a worldview is a set of spectacles through which we view the world. Philip Graham Ryken defines a worldview as the framework of understanding that we use to make sense of life. It is our way of viewing life, our explanation of the universe, the bearing of our souls. Whether we recognize it or not, we all have basic beliefs about our present, past and future. Although not necessarily in a self-reflective way, our choices are informed by the worldview one holds. Even if we are never consciously thinking about our worldview, we still view everything with it, and then apply our view of things to our lifestyle. Although one’s worldview may not be self-reflective, life is carried out on the basis of that worldview. It is so common to whom we are as people that we hardly even recognize it, but simply take it for granted.

The Fragmented Secular Worldview

Higher education provides an excellent example of the fragmented secular worldview. In other words, a view of life that seeks to remove God. Consequently, this worldview lacks a unifying absolute upon which all is centered. Truth is considered to be relative. Alan Bloom says an instructor can expect the conviction that truth is relative from almost every student. He says testing the belief of relativism would result in a student

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4 Ibid., 8.

5 Ibid., 8.
reaction of non-comprehension. Anyone not regarding relativism as anything but self-evident astonishes them, as if he were calling into question 2 +2 = 4. Students are unified only in their relativism and in their allegiance to equality. The danger they have been taught to fear from absolutism is not error but intolerance.\textsuperscript{6} Relativism is essential for openness. This is the sole virtue to which decades of education has dedicated itself to indoctrinating. Rather than error, intolerance is feared.\textsuperscript{7} Framed in relativism, openness is valued highly. Openness—and the relativism that makes it the only plausible stance in the face of various claims to truth and various ways of life and kinds of human beings—is the great insight of our times.\textsuperscript{8}

The Christian is not immune to this fragmented secular worldview. Nancy Pearcey says we reside in two separate worlds, navigating through life with a sharp divide between the religious and the ordinary.\textsuperscript{9} To put it another way, American evangelicals have a split mentality in our own minds. The dichotomy is so obvious that it is actually hidden in the Christian mind. It’s so familiar that it is extremely difficult to recognize.\textsuperscript{10} This reality also exists within Christian fundraising. Fundraising can sometimes be viewed as nonspiritual.

\textbf{Fundraising and a Christian Worldview}

Scott Morton says:


\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 25-26.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 26.

\textsuperscript{9} Nancy Pearcey, \textit{Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity} (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 35.

\textsuperscript{10} Pearcey, 69-70.
In America, Christians tend to separate life into sacred and the secular. Sacred activities include discipleship, evangelism, Bible study, and prayer meetings. But money matters are usually viewed as nonspiritual. A missionary once told me, “I could never choose money over the souls of men and women.” Agreed. But does it have to be either/or? He saw fundraising as a plague, not a privilege. A curse, not a call. A menace, not a ministry. But what does the Bible say?\textsuperscript{11}

Henri Nouwen says fundraising is rarely a topic we consider from a spiritual perspective. Fundraising may be thought of as a necessary but unpleasant means to support spiritual things.\textsuperscript{12} Morton confesses he felt secular trying to raise funds. Raising finances was a necessary evil in his mind. In reality making disciples was the ministry and he had a tendency to stay away from money matters.\textsuperscript{13} According to Terry Axelrod, the old reality of raising money was based on scarcity and survival. However, the new reality is based on abundance. Axelrod probes:

Whichever side of the fund-raising fence we sit on, asker or donor, our issues about money keep us firmly implanted in the old reality. It is a wonder people actually get beyond their fear of asking or their fear of being manipulated and taken advantage of in giving. Fund raising is fraught with emotional baggage, all of it a vestige of the old reality.\textsuperscript{14}

The Worldview of Postmodernity and Materialism

One may argue that postmodernity is a friend of the gospel whereby providing opportunity for free dialogue. William Edgar writes that it might seem good that many are


\textsuperscript{13} Morton, 13.

rejecting modernity’s claims. However, do they have any reason for living?¹⁵ Is he who disavows modernity providing the Church a window of opportunity or is he an opponent of the gospel?¹⁶ Neither the fragmented secular worldview in general nor postmodernity in particular are friends of the gospel. Postmodernity is flawed on three levels-its rationalist pretense along with its aspects of autonomy and relativism.¹⁷ The Christian fundraiser’s worldview must be biblically informed. Meaning is found in devotion and obedience to God over and against the idol of materialism (Eccl 12:13; 5:10; 1 Jn 5:21). We need to give our hearts to God alone (Mt 6:19-24). We need a consistently Christian worldview that shapes our thinking, guides our speaking, and motivates our deeds.¹⁸

Inaugurated Eschatology

Craig L. Blomberg says:

A major component of the material dimension is transformation in the way God’s people utilize ‘mammon’-material possessions. To the extent that the kingdom has been inaugurated from the cross of Christ onward, Christians individually and corporately are called to model that transformation, however imperfectly, as a foretaste of the perfect redemption that must ultimately await the age to come.¹⁹


¹⁶ Ibid., 360.

¹⁷ Ibid., 378, 381.

¹⁸ Ryken, 7.

The Christian worldview includes the biblical teaching of redeeming human culture.\textsuperscript{20} Jesus' resurrection has introduced the fulfillment of the kingdom. The biblical authors can renew our presuppositional lenses.\textsuperscript{21}

A Coherent Biblical Theology

The kingdom of the new creation is a huge step toward the primary goal of redemptive history, which is to glorify God. The Biblical Story of the NT is built upon the Biblical Story of the OT. This NT Story, including the resurrection, has propelled this end time already-not yet. The first coming of Christ has inaugurated a new creation in the days to come that will continue until Christ’s second coming.\textsuperscript{22}

The Ethical Challenge of the Kingdom

The Gospel accounts reveal God’s greatly anticipated kingdom has entered into history through the person and work of Jesus Christ. This already aspect brings along a certain ethic.\textsuperscript{23} In Luke 4 Jesus returns to Galilee teaching in their synagogues with the peoples’ support. He also taught in Nazareth on the Sabbath reading the scroll of Isaiah. Jesus tells them today is the day this prophecy is fulfilled and everyone speaks well of Him (4:14-22). However, rather than accepting the compliments, Jesus leads their attention to the


\textsuperscript{22} Beale, 958-961.

prophets Elijah and Elisha. Jesus tells His initially pleased audience there were many widows and those with leprosy in Israel. However, Elijah was sent to a widow in Sidon and Elisha to Naaman the Syrian. Neither was sent to needy Israelites (4:23-27). The synagogue people became furious driving Jesus out of town attempting to throw Him down a cliff (4:28-30).

Middleton says:

Jesus here focuses on the outsider status of the two recipients of divine grace in the narrative in 1 Kings 17:1-24 and 2 Kings 5:1-19. While these Old Testament texts clearly regard these two as outsiders, neither text goes as far as Jesus does in emphasizing the contrast with Israelites in need. There were many Israelite widows and lepers, he explains, who desperately needed help from God. However, Elijah and Elisha were sent to none of them, but rather to a Sidonian widow and a Syrian leper. According to Jesus, the God of Israel acted not on behalf of his own people, but instead on behalf of two gentiles in need—in one case to provide a food supply for a poor woman during famine and then to raise her son from the dead, and in the other to heal a powerful military leader.

Jesus is overcoming the ministry barriers of His day such as Jew and Gentile, male and female, rich and poor and privileged and marginal. Jesus is using concrete examples that illustrate the absolute inclusiveness of the Father’s grace. In the ministry of Elisha, Naaman changes his attitude and is healed of leprosy. This attitude is the equivalent of the faith and repentance needed for the new birth that allows one to enter the kingdom of God. God’s grace is available to all, including outsiders designed with dignity (Gn 1:26-28). Jesus’ audience needs to realize their ‘us versus them’ dichotomy is a liability. Jesus challenges His listeners beyond their comfort zone. The saving restoration Jesus brings is not limited to only Jews, whites, Americans, the middle class, or Christians. The Lord desires the renewal of the entire human family. We must be willing to participate in the salvation of others who are different than us. We need to disassemble our habitual thinking of dividing reality into spiritual and earthly because the biblical reality is that God deeply desires to “heal all our
brokenness, both internal and external, whether personal or social.”\textsuperscript{24} Gladd and Harmon assert:

[Western] Culture idolizes the wealthy and talented but marginalizes the weak, even the ordinary. Jesus’s kingdom message, however, flips society’s expectations and values on their heads. The kingdom is not characterized by wealth and talent but by humility and service to those caught in the fringes of society. Jesus often spoke on this topic, and we have scores of texts from which to choose. Two poignant examples are the parable of the wedding and the parable of the banquet (Luke 14:7-24; Matt. 22:1-14).\textsuperscript{25}

Humility and personal transformation are needed along with this worldview shift. This involves interpersonal reconciliation similar to that of Jew and gentile (Eph 2:14-16). It is time for mutual submission and demonstrating the love of Christ (5:21, 1, 2). Unity in Christ must be lived out in concrete ways (Gal 3:28). The Gospel is for the spiritually bankrupt, which includes each and every human being (Mt 5:3). The values of our culture need to be identified and overturned. We need to treat people in an atypical manner. The difficulty lies in that God’s kingdom has already arrived, but not yet fully. Therefore, we can expect hostile situations until Christ’s second coming.\textsuperscript{26} The practice of God’s people of this kingdom ethic during the overlap of the ages is faithfulness in the Lord’s particular stage of redemptive history.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{24} Middleton, 263-272.

\textsuperscript{25} Gladd and Harmon, 42.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 44, 45.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 42.
The Theological Meaning of Money

All things belong to God, including our money (Col 1:15-20; see Lk 21:1-4). Our possessions ultimately belong to Christ. We are commanded to be good managers of that which God entrusts to us (Mt 25:14-30). Money is to be earned, spent, given, received, enjoyed, saved and invested (1 Thes 4:11-12; Phil 4:19; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor 9:14; 1 Tm 6:17; Prv 6:6-8).

The Coherent Christian Worldview

Polls consistently show that a high percentage of Americans claim to believe in God or to be born again—yet the effect of Christian principles is decreasing in the public square. Most evangelicals have little training in how to frame Christian worldview principles in a language applicable to public life. It is desperately important for Christians to have a consistent Christian worldview at all times. Do we see ourselves and the world around us the same way that God sees them, or are we viewing things from some other point of view? Does our way of looking at the world correspond to the world as it actually is? Do we see the world as it is according to God?

The creature and Creator are distinct. Since Jesus is Lord of all, this consists of every area of the Christian life, including fundraising (Col 1:15-20). In biblical perspective fundraising is a ministry. Morton says we don’t do fundraising so we can do ministry.

28 Pearcey, 68.

29 Ryken, 9.

30 Westminster Confession of Faith (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian, 1646), 5.1.33.
Biblical fundraising is ministry. Why? It helps people store up treasure in heaven. It helps them live Matthew 6:33, seeking first the Kingdom. Let us change our minds about fundraising being the distasteful medicine of Christian service. Biblical fundraising is a ministry, an enjoyable privilege. Let us view it to be sacred. The challenge to bring fundraising over to the sacred side of life is no small task. Applying a coherent Christian worldview of fundraising to be a legitimate ministry requires a real conversion. It involves a reframing of our entire spiritual house. Nevertheless, fundraising must be considered spiritual. We must not allow ourselves to be tricked into thinking that fundraising is merely a secular activity. As a form of ministry, fundraising is spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry.

A Biblical Worldview of Fundraising

According to Bruce A. Little, the Church is the corrective to decomposed human knowledge whereby replacing compartmentalization with organization (1 Tm 3:15). Followers of Jesus must combat the postmodern influence on their thinking. Secondly, Christians need to intentionally study, dialogue and serve within the “framework of a Christian worldview perspective.” Little asserts:

31 Morton, 30.
32 Ibid., 31-32.
33 Nouwen, 4.
34 Ibid., 6.
While Scripture makes claims regarding religious behavior, it also makes powerful truth-claims that bear directly on the great questions of life. This changes everything. It means more than sermon material for Sundays. It means that an objective epistemological point of beginning exists because God, the ontological Reality, is its source. Scripture's claims are truth-claims, not merely religious claims. Therefore, they provide answers to all of life, not simply religious life.\(^{36}\)

This affirms that liberal theology is not the answer to the practical problems of the Church. J. Gresham Machen asserts, “Christianity is being attacked from within by a movement which is anti-Christian to the core.”\(^{37}\) A distinctive coherent Christian worldview is needed in order to stand firm (Eph 6:14). All followers of Jesus Christ should return, in these trying days, with new earnestness, to the study of the Word of God. If the Word of God be heeded, the Christian battle will be fought both with love and with faithfulness. Party passions and personal animosities will be put away, but on the other hand, even angels from heaven will be rejected if they preach a gospel different from the priceless gospel of the Cross. Each of us must decide upon which side he will stand.\(^{38}\) The biblical fundraiser needs to demonstrate his coherent understanding of Scripture’s context by applying it to the ministry of fundraising. John M. Frame says understanding Scripture includes applying it to situations not even envisaged in the original text (Mt 16:3; 22:29; Lk 24:25; Jn 5:39f.; Rom 15:4; 2 Tm. 3:16f.; 2 Pt 1:19-21). Scripture says that its whole purpose is to apply the truth to our lives (Jn 20:31; Rom 15:4; 2 Tm. 3:16f.).\(^{39}\) The Christian fundraiser must first be living out grace and obedience in his life. Those of us who ask for money need to look carefully at ourselves.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 440.

\(^{37}\) J. Gresham Machen, Christianity & Liberalism (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1923), 173.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 178.

\(^{39}\) John Frame, The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God (Philipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987), 84.
The question is not how to get money. Rather, the question is about our relationship with money. We will never be able to ask for money if we do not know how we ourselves relate to money. The correlation between our personal wealth and sense of value is an important issue. Do we have positive emotions when money is plentiful? Does a limited amount of cash cause us to feel bad about ourselves? Does small revenue cause embarrassment?41

The theological meaning of money is manifest in the application of fundraising. The practice of fundraising can be organized into two primary categories—support raising and donor attention. Fundraising is a coin. As you know, a coin has two sides. Such it is with fundraising. One side is support-raising and one side is donor attention. Each side must be present for fundraising to occur. There is no such thing as a one-sided coin.

**Giving Others Opportunities for Generosity**

Support-raising is a giving issue. It includes both giving others the opportunity to give and praying God will give others the concern to support (Mt 6:21; Neh 2:8). This includes asking in various ways such as face-to-face invitations, letters, and phone calls. A face-to-face invitation is ideal and should always be used whenever possible. Communications should be as personal as is possible.42 March and December are excellent times of the year to ask for financial support.43 It is important during these months to segment your newsletters in

40 Nouwen, 11.

41 Ibid., 13.

42 A personal postscript of two or three sentences is an excellent way to personalize a support raising letter.

43 March is tax-refund season and December is when many are identifying their tax-deductions up to an including December 31st.
order to personalize rather than confuse the recipients. February and November are a great time to update those on your mailing list regarding your support raising progress.\textsuperscript{44} This initiative on the part of the fundraiser is coupled with dependence on the Lord. God is the source of one’s ministry funding. The fundraiser of God prays asking the Lord to give others the concern in such a way that they would decide to exercise generosity whereby joining one’s financial support team. Support-raising is both spiritual and earthly. It is your responsibility to provide the giving opportunities. Dave Ramsey writes that Jesus and church has everything to do with money. We are spiritual people. When we ignore the spiritual aspect of life financials are affected.\textsuperscript{45} Coercion has no place in Biblical fundraising (2 Cor. 9:7). Giving others the opportunity for generosity towards a biblical vision is good for the potential donor. Providing an opportunity for someone to give is a juncture for someone’s heart to be blessed (Mt 6:21). Ramsey elaborates:

No farmer has ever grown a crop unless he planted some seed. Personal growth requires that you give money away. The institutions to which you give will survive if you don’t give, but you will have missed an opportunity to benefit . . . You need to plant some seed in self-growth, and you can do this only by giving. I do not totally understand what giving does to the human spirit, but I do know that I meet very few well-balanced, happy, healthy, wealthy people who don’t give money away.\textsuperscript{46}

If holistic salvation represents the ultimate good God wants all of humanity to receive, then our charitable giving should be directed to those who minister holistically, caring for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[44] This will communicate your need in preparation for your March and December appeals.
\item[46] Ibid., 28-29.
\end{footnotes}
people’s bodies and souls, addressing their physical and spiritual circumstances. Giving is more blessed than receiving (Acts 20:35).

The greater the number of opportunities extended for generosity, the higher the likelihood your ministry will be fully funded. Start by making a brainstorm list of everyone you can think of who might desire to financially partner with your ministry. Start asking with family and friends. Invite people to support your ministry each month. Meet with as many people face-to-face as possible. You will need to confirm your appointments beforehand. This is a good time to establish a verbal contract upfront with your prospective donor essentially communicating what you picture your time together to look like. This should include the timeframe, the content of the meeting, and the action your potential donor will have the opportunity to take. Create and bring a ministry Case Statement with you. A broad question about your specialized ministry context can be a good conversation starter. This could prove to be a discerning process regarding how your potential donor’s concerns may very well fit with your ministry. This has been called an Emotional Hook. Asking for introductions can be a great way to grow your list of potential donors. Leave a ministry Overview handout with your prospective donor. Send an email confirming your agreement following the meeting. Also, support raising letters should include a contribution envelope.

47 Blomberg, 247.

48 Since you will almost certainly make mistakes initially, family and friends tend to be more forgiving and understandable because they already have a relationship with and like you.

49 A Case Statement is a support raising tool that helps you present your ministry vision.

50 Axelrod, 98.

51 The term “introductions” has a relational connotation whereas “referrals” has a corporate connotation.
Potential donors having an online giving option will be helpful. Always be sure to communicate your thankfulness to each contributor.

Events can be a great fundraising method for your ministry. An event can serve as an opportunity to invite others into your ministry. This can be an event that you create called a Point of Entry.\textsuperscript{52} Another option is to tweak an existing event into what has been called a Point of Entry Conversion.\textsuperscript{53} This would also involve asking for permission along with follow up in relation to your appeal. Special occasions such as a birth or home purchase should be opportunities for your supporters to increase their regular giving.\textsuperscript{54} Let us now direct our focus to donor attention.

\textbf{Knowing the Condition of Your Flocks}

Donor attention is the other side of the fundraising coin. It is easier to keep a donor than it is to find a new one. People often discontinue giving because they are never told their gift \textit{makes a difference}. The Biblical fundraiser gives attention to his donors (Prv 27:23). It is essential to have a plan. We need a system for structuring and strengthening your self-sustaining individual giving effort.\textsuperscript{55} A donor attention plan can be seen in the included table. The system you create will serve you for years to come. Putting in the work to

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\item \textsuperscript{52} Axelrod, 79.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 197.
\item \textsuperscript{54} It is typically best to make an increase appeal by half of the giving amount. For example, we can ask a supporter giving one hundred dollars a month to increase their support to one hundred and fifty dollars a month.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Axelrod, 15.
\end{itemize}
establish a plan on the front end of your support raising will guide you on an efficient path rather than a haphazard way of doing things. An Electronic Newsletter (EN) should be sent monthly, which can also remind your monthly supporters to make their next contribution.\textsuperscript{56} An event Celebrating God’s Faithfulness (CGF) can be planned to take place in the spring. This should include a Celebrating God’s Faithfulness Invitation (CGFI) and a Celebrating God’s Faithfulness Invitation Phone Call (CGFIPC) in order to highlight the opportunity for your guests.\textsuperscript{57} I enjoy sending a Thanksgiving Card to Regular Supporters (TCRS) communicating my gratefulness for their financial partnership.

It is necessary to keep a database detailing donor information such as fulfilled pledges. The fundraiser is responsible for continuing to pursue a relationship with his donors. In the context of a relationship, the fundraiser is to communicate the financial partnership makes a difference. This can be done in a variety of ways. The Biblical fundraiser makes

\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{56}} February and November Electronic Newsletters (EN) should include an update regarding progress toward your goal of being fully (100\%) funded. This will communicate your financial need prior to your Special Opportunity Support Letters (SOSL) in March and December.

\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{57}} A Special Opportunity Support Letter (SOSL) should be sent in both March and December followed by a Special Opportunity Letter Phone Call (SOSLPC) in order to emphasize the opportunity for your supporters.

### Table 2. Donor Attention Monthly Plan

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time to communicate thanks to his donors. He ministers to his donors by informing them how your financial partnership is manifesting itself in your ministry context. This should be done through stories on a monthly basis. Each update should include the opportunity for a financial contribution. Differentiating communication methods maintains a fresh donor attention approach. Financial partners have a great deal of demands on their time. Faithfully fulfilling their pledge to your ministry simply is not their only responsibility. Donor attention can provide a helpful reminder to donors who truly believe in you and your ministry.

Though the application of fundraising is reasonable, we are not to assume this always involves ease. The application of fundraising involves a spiritual battle (Eph 6:10-18). You may feel attacked at times tempted to believe lies about yourself, your ministry vision, your financial partners, or something in your past. As with any kind of Gospel advancement, Satan (the father of lies) seeks to steal, kill and destroy (Jn 8:44). We need to persevere in our fundraising ministry holding fast to the Truth (Heb 10:39). You are responsible to overcome spiritual attack with truthful donor attention.\(^{58}\) This can be done by speaking truth into the lives of your donors through a story. Donor attention involves painting a picture regarding how the Gospel is at work in people’s lives through your ministry. This is faithful, proactive, God-honoring fundraising. You can be a blessing to your financial partners in this way. People enjoy hearing how their investments are being used. It is a good idea to write one newsletter a year that can specifically minister to your donors that is about your specific ministry context.

Theology includes the application of the Word of God to every area of our lives. The work of theology is taking the truth of Scripture and humbling serving others. Our

\(^{58}\) Your supporters can also minister to you in meaningful ways such as financial and prayer support.
possessions belong to Christ. The thoughts, words and deeds of the biblical fundraiser correspond with reality as defined in the Word of God. Scripture is authoritative for the fundraiser. Applying a biblical perspective on fundraising is a coin that includes giving others the opportunity for generosity and providing attention to those who contribute.

Fundraising is biblical. Fully funded ministry is reachable and necessary. Morton shares an encouraging part of his story:

“"I finally understood I was unbiblical in my attitude and in my view of money. The Word of God clearly pointed out my errors, and the Word of God enabled me to do something about it. . . . God has brought me from resenting fundraising to enjoying it."”

59 Morton, 13.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

This work has strived to establish fundraising as a legitimate ministry involving a deeper grasp of the biblical and theological significance of money and a proper application of this significance to fundraising practices today (Jas 1:22). Constructing a biblical worldview contributes to the transformation of fundraising perspectives so that our theology and application will go hand in hand (Rom 12:2). What follows here is a concise overview of our conclusions along with implications for understanding fundraising to be the giving of opportunity to others to manage that which God already owns (Mt 25:14-30; Ps 50:10).

Money and Possessions in this Age

The Old Testament pictures humanity called to mobilize community resources in order to shape the earth. God originally created all things good (Gn 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Sin introduces the misuse of power into man’s positive cultural influence. Eschatological redemption involves the renewal of human cultural life on the earth to be the final destiny of God’s people. The Lord grieves over Israel’s misuse of possessions (Hos 2:8). Wealth belongs to the Lord (Hg 2:8). God’s people must reform their ways by repenting. Obedience and wisdom are the ways to flourish on the earth as our Maker intended. God does not need our money and possessions because He is the Sovereign owner of the created order (Ps 50:9-
Sacrifices exist for the sake of Israel as an act of surrender. God’s people are to follow the Lord in humble obedience. Although God does not need our money, it is His design that Israel glorify Him in the management of their material possessions. Though the Old Testament does not contain the fulfillment of the long term solution to the sin of Israel, Scripture does foreshadow a time when humanity will flourish on the physical earth restoring God’s initial creational intent. The prophets had two portions of vision. Through their near-sight lens they saw events in history. With their long-sight lens they saw the final end of history. The events within the past age of Old Testament history foreshadow the events to come in this New Testament age.

The New Testament believer looks both back and forward. The eschatological event in the past age of the Old Testament has simultaneously already occurred while realizing further significant end time events lie ahead. The kingdom is the defining theme of Christ’s ministry. Jesus was sent to preach the kingdom of God (Lk 4:43). The request for God’s kingdom to come to earth is at the heart of the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:10). Matthew 6:9-10 includes that God’s will is done in “heaven” (6:10). Asking this to be the case on earth is the equivalent of requesting God to consummate his promised creational and redemptive plan for the world. The concept of “kingdom” in connection with heaven is evident (6:10). This comparison of God’s way “on earth as it is in heaven” illustrates a tension between God and humanity (6:10). This tension between earth and heaven is not part of the Lord’s original plan for creation. Jesus is teaching His disciples to pray the tension will cease by God’s Name being “hallowed” on both heaven and earth (6:10). The eschatological goal is unity of God’s rule over heaven and earth. Christ’s first coming has begun this reunion, which will be consummated at His second coming. The Philippian church financially participated in Paul’s
ministry with consistency and generosity (4:15-18). The last days of this age include lovers of money rather than lovers of God (2 Tm 3:2, 4). Paul exhorts financial compensation for faithful Christian leaders (2 Tm 2:6). Christ died for the ungodly at just the right time (Rom 5:6). Anyone with a surplus of wealth aware of a human need, especially within the body of Christ, but unwilling to help proves their profession of faith to be empty (3:17). John’s third epistle exhorts hospitality toward missionaries to include financial assistance (3 Jn 6).

In Acts 2:1-4 we find the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2:14-41 Peter explains Pentecost. He begins by explaining the event itself and quoting Joel’s prophecy (2:14-21). Peter indicates that the era of the last days has come (2:17). These days inaugurate the Messianic age in which God pours out His Spirit on His people (2:18). Peter’s quotation of Joel in Acts 2:19-21 is fulfilled in Jesus’ death on the cross when darkness came over the land for three hours at which time the sun was not visible and the signs of nature testified to Christ’s death. (Mt 27:45; see Rom 10:13). Peter’s quotation of Joel is fulfilled in Christ’s complete financial payment on the cross. (Jn 19:30). Darkness came over the whole land from the sixth to the ninth hour when “the sun stopped shining” (Lk 23:44, 45; see Jl 2:31), God’s kingdom has already come in part with Christ’s crucifixion (Mt 27:51-53). Jesus committed His spirit to the Father preceding His last breath from His material physical body (Lk 23:46). God has made the investment in this age (Mt 24:3, 29). The Father has sacrificed His priceless and most treasured possession-His One and Only Son Jesus Christ. God’s kingdom will fully come with Christ’s return.

In James 5:1-6 the author addresses the rich. Love for money leads to all kinds of evil (1 Tm 6:10). They have “hoarded” wealth in the last days (5:3c). The phrase “the last days” refers to the end of the ages realized in the New Testament times (Jn 11:24; 12:48; Acts 2:17;
These “last days” pertain to the period between Christ’s first and second coming. The rich have hoarded material wealth in the shadow of Christ’s return. They will face judgement when He returns.

Money and Possessions in the Age to Come

Tasting the powers of the coming age is a continuation of the goodness of the word of God (Heb 6:5). The Apostle Paul uses the plural form “powers” (cf. 2:4). These powers are both in the present age and the age to come. The phrase “the coming age” occurs six times in the New Testament (Mt 12:32; Mk 10:30; Lk 18:30; Eph 1:21; 2:7; Heb 6:5). Followers of Jesus will fully take hold of the supernatural powers in the coming age, which are now observed in this age. The age to come will be a wholly good possession fully owned by God. God will again intervene into human history with Christ’s second coming. On this Day of the Lord Jesus will corner the market by bringing judgment and the end of this age.

Consequently, the age to come will dominate. The new created community of God’s people will include the nations’ wealth and luxuries (Rv 21:10-21, 24, 26). Jesus’ followers will possess a renewed earthly creation in contrast to an immaterial heaven. In Revelation we find John’s vision describing the culmination of a trajectory unfolded in Scripture (Rv 21:1). It is the Lord’s plan to conform earth to heaven (Mt 6:10). The prophets pictured a day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God’s glory like the sea is covered by waters (Is 11:9; Hb 2:14). John paints a picture of what the new Jerusalem will be like when God’s purposes for creation are completely fulfilled, including pearls and pure gold upon which God’s people will get their hands (Rev 21:21). God’s presence decisively shifts from heaven.
Money and Possessions as Managed through Fundraising

The fragmented secular worldview seeks to remove God resulting in a lack of a unifying absolute upon which all is centered. Truth is considered to be relative. Similarly, the Christian can navigate through life with a sharp divide between the religious and the ordinary. This reality also exists within Christian fundraising. Fundraising can sometimes be viewed as nonspiritual. God’s people are called to model the transformation regarding how we utilize material possessions as a foretaste of the perfect redemption in the age to come. This requires followers of Christ to think of the needs of others outside of the kingdom rather than thinking of solely our own needs. We must be willing to participate in the salvation of those who are different than us. We must cease from dividing reality into spiritual and earthly because God desires to heal all of our brokenness. The kingdom is characterized by humility and service rather than wealth and talent. We must be faithful to the Lord during this overlap of the ages. Our possessions ultimately belong to Christ. Most evangelicals have little training in how to frame Christian worldview principles in a language applicable to public life. It is desperately important for Christians to have a consistent Christian worldview at all times. Fundraising is a ministry. Let us change our minds about fundraising being the distasteful medicine of Christian service. As a form of ministry, fundraising is spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry. Scripture’s claims are truth-claims, not merely religious claims. The biblical fundraiser needs to demonstrate his coherent understanding of Scripture’s context by applying it to the
ministry of fundraising. The theological meaning of money is manifest in the application of fundraising. Support-raising is a giving issue. It includes both giving others the opportunity to give and praying God will give others the concern to support (Mt 6:21; Neh 2:8). The Biblical fundraiser gives attention to his donors (Prv 27:23).
GLOSSARY

Agency. The role of God’s image-bearer exercising his duties or functions.

Already-Not Yet. Phrase pertaining to the inaugurated eschatological new age in both present and future terms.

Autonomous. Self-governing concept meaning independent from God.

Biblical Story. The inspired, inerrant, infallible metanarrative of Scripture in its entirety.

Coming Age. Period of redemptive history that will begin with Christ’s second coming.

Covenant. The relationship established by God between Himself and His people.

Decree. Eternal purpose of God.

Donor Attention. The aspect of fundraising concerned with frequent communication to financial partners, including illustrating how one’s gift is being utilized while nurturing the donor’s personal growth.

End of the Ages. Period of redemptive history between Christ’s first and second coming.

Epistemology. The philosophical study of human knowledge.

Husbandry. Cultivation or agricultural management.

Inaugurated Eschatology. The study of the last things considering the renewing of creation to have begun with Christ’s first coming.

Idolatry. Giving any person, place or thing the priority in your life that only God deserves; false worship.

Last Days. Period of redemptive history between Christ’s first and second coming.
Messiah. Hebrew term meaning the anointed one of God.

Metanarrative. Scriptural analyzes or commentary on the Biblical content itself.

Modernism. The convictions and ideology of the modern.

Modernity. A great shift from the mode of tradition to the mode of the new.

Past Age. Old Testament period of redemptive history.

Pentateuch. Law, the first five book of the Old Testament consisting of Genesis through Deuteronomy.

Postmodern. A general state of open-endedness characterized by deep skepticism about classical values and definitions.

Postmodernism. A prescription for calling modernity into question.

Present Age. Period of redemptive history between Christ’s first and second coming.

Rationalist. A postmodern pretense considering the mind to be authoritative over and against the Bible.

Relative. An underpinning of postmodernism that rejects absolute truth.

Septuagint. The Greek version of the Old Testament.

Torah. Old Testament Law, the Pentateuch.
ARTICLES


BOOKS


CHAPTERS


