



# **SCRIPTURE AND VOTE YES FOR FAIR TAX**

**Selections from the Old Testament and the New Testament**

**On Economic Justice, Love of Neighbor, Faith and Deeds**

**July 2020**



## Vote Yes for Fair Tax and Scripture

Our current tax structure is unfair and inflicts hardship on the poor and neediest in our state.

“The Bible has a great deal to say about how individual people and their communities must treat the poor, powerless and needy among them.”

The selected scriptures and notes on the theme of economic justice are offered to support your Bible study, sermon, letter or presentation.

The scriptures are organized into two sections, “Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)” and “New Testament;” scripture is listed in an overview format at the beginning of each section, and followed by the full text later in this document for easy reference. Most translations are the New International Version.

### Scriptures from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy “forbid numerous actions, such as taking a cloak or a millstone (which were needed in the ancient world to survive and earn a living) as a pledge for debt, charging interest, holding back wages, selling food at a profit and using dishonest scales and measurements, as specific but not the only examples of economic oppression.”

“In addition to commanding that they be *treated justly*, which requires far more than courtroom justice, God also requires that *safety nets* be created to allow poor and powerless persons a minimum opportunity to meet their basic needs and improve their lives. Certain rights to harvest from the land of others and secure ownership of their own land (which was the way to secure economic well-being in the ancient world) are among specific examples in the Bible, but are not meant to be the only opportunities required, so that the poor and powerless can try to improve their lives.”

### Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) Overview/List

- Genesis 1:27-29 – All humankind is created in the image of God and endowed with the blessing of our Creator. All persons are worthy of dignity and respect.
- Genesis 4:9 – Story of Cain and Abel. Yes, we are our brother’s keeper and owe a responsibility to our fellow human beings.
- Exodus 21:2; Exodus 22: 21-22; Exodus 23: 9-11
- Leviticus 19:10 – “You shall not strip your vineyard bare or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard, you shall leave them for the poor and the alien.”
- Leviticus 19:18 – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Leviticus 25 – The year of the Jubilee! The generational prescription to forgive debts and redistribute wealth according to God’s commandments and mercy.
- Deuteronomy 15:1-3,7-14;23:19;24:6,12-15,17,19-21



- Psalm 82:3-4 – “Give justice to the weak and the orphan, maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy and deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”
- Psalm 140:12 – “I know that the Lord maintains the cause of the needy, and executes justice for the poor.”
- Proverbs 14:31 – “Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor him.”
- Isaiah 58: 6-10 – Right and just worship of God includes the feeding the hungry and housing the poor
- Amos 8 – God speaks through the prophet condemning greed and the exploitation of the poor and promising judgment upon the offenders
- Micah 6:8 – The famous declaration of what God requires of God’s people. “...to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.”

And also these scriptures on our **Moral Duty to correct unjust conditions for “the least of these” and passages on economic justice:**

- Isaiah 1:17-23; 5:8-23; 10:1-4
- Jeremiah 22:2-4, 12-17
- Ezekiel 22:25-29; 34:2-4
- Amos 2:6-8; 5:7, 10-11, 14-15; 5:21-24; 8:4-6
- Micah 2:1-2, 9; 6:6-8
- Psalm 82:1-5; 140:12
- Proverbs 14:23; 31:8-9
- Jeremiah 22:11-17



## Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) Scripture: Full Text

Genesis 1: 27-29 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." <sup>29</sup> Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

Genesis 4:9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Exodus 21:2 "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything.

Exodus 22: 21-22 <sup>21</sup> "Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt. <sup>22</sup> "Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless.

Exodus 23: 9-11 <sup>9</sup> "Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

### Sabbath Laws

<sup>10</sup> "For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops,<sup>11</sup> but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

Leviticus 19: 9-10 <sup>9</sup> "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup> Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:18 <sup>18</sup> "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Leviticus 23 (Overview) The Appointed Festivals (the Sabbath, Passover, Offering the Firstfruits, leaving some of the harvest to be gleaned by the poor and the foreigners residing among you.

Leviticus 25 (Overview) – The year of the Jubilee! The generational prescription to forgive debts and redistribute wealth according to God's commandments and mercy.

Leviticus 25:8-16 <sup>8</sup> "Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years.<sup>9</sup> Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. <sup>10</sup> Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. <sup>11</sup> The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of



itself or harvest the untended vines.<sup>12</sup> For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

<sup>13</sup> “In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

<sup>14</sup> “If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. <sup>15</sup> You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. <sup>16</sup> When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. <sup>17</sup> Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 25:23-28

<sup>23</sup> “The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers. <sup>24</sup> Throughout the land that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

<sup>25</sup> “If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold. <sup>26</sup> If, however, there is no one to redeem it for them but later on they prosper and acquire sufficient means to redeem it themselves, <sup>27</sup> they are to determine the value for the years since they sold it and refund the balance to the one to whom they sold it; they can then go back to their own property. <sup>28</sup> But if they do not acquire the means to repay, what was sold will remain in the possession of the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be returned in the Jubilee, and they can then go back to their property.

Leviticus 25:35-43

<sup>35</sup> “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. <sup>36</sup> Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. <sup>37</sup> You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit. <sup>38</sup> I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

<sup>39</sup> “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. <sup>40</sup> They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. <sup>41</sup> Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. <sup>42</sup> Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. <sup>43</sup> Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.

Deuteronomy 15:1-3 The Year for Canceling Debts

**15** At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. <sup>2</sup> This is how it is to be done: Every creditor shall cancel any loan they have made to a fellow Israelite. They shall not require payment from anyone among their own people, because the Lord’s time for canceling debts has been proclaimed. <sup>3</sup> You may require payment from a foreigner, but you must cancel any debt your fellow Israelite owes you.



#### Deuteronomy 15:7-14

<sup>7</sup> If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. <sup>8</sup> Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need. <sup>9</sup> Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward the needy among your fellow Israelites and give them nothing. They may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. <sup>10</sup> Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. <sup>11</sup> There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

**Freeing Servants** <sup>12</sup> If any of your people—Hebrew men or women—sell themselves to you and serve you six years, in the seventh year you must let them go free. <sup>13</sup> And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. <sup>14</sup> Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the Lord your God has blessed you.

#### Deuteronomy 23: 19-19

Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest.

#### Deuteronomy 24: 6

<sup>6</sup> Do not take a pair of millstones—not even the upper one—as security for a debt, because that would be taking a person’s livelihood as security.

#### Deuteronomy 24: 12-14

<sup>12</sup> If the neighbor is poor, do not go to sleep with their pledge in your possession. <sup>13</sup> Return their cloak by sunset so that your neighbor may sleep in it. Then they will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the Lord your God.

<sup>14</sup> Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. <sup>15</sup> Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

#### Deuteronomy 24: 17

<sup>17</sup> Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.

#### Deuteronomy 24: 19-21

<sup>19</sup> When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup> When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. <sup>21</sup> When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.



Psalm 82: 3-4 – “Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy and deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Psalm 140:12 – “I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy.

Proverbs 14:31 – “Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Isaiah 58: 6-10 –

<sup>6</sup> “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice  
and untie the cords of the yoke,  
to set the oppressed free  
and break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry  
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—  
when you see the naked, to clothe them,  
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will quickly appear;  
then your righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> will go before you,  
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;  
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,  
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,  
<sup>10</sup> and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.

Amos 8:4-6 – God speaks through the prophet condemning greed and the exploitation of the poor and promising judgment upon the offenders:

<sup>4</sup> Hear this, you who trample the needy  
and do away with the poor of the land,  
<sup>5</sup> saying,

“When will the New Moon be over  
that we may sell grain,  
and the Sabbath be ended  
that we may market wheat?”—  
skimping on the measure,  
boosting the price  
and cheating with dishonest scales,



<sup>6</sup> buying the poor with silver  
and the needy for a pair of sandals,  
selling even the sweepings with the wheat.

Micah 6:8 – The famous declaration of what God requires of God’s people. “...to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.”

<sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly<sup>[a]</sup> with your God.

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**Scriptures on our Moral Duty to correct unjust conditions  
for “the least of these” and passages on economic justice:**

Isaiah 1:17-23 New International Version (NIV)

**<sup>17</sup> Learn to do right; seek justice.**

**Defend the oppressed.<sup>[a]</sup>**

**Take up the cause of the fatherless;  
plead the case of the widow.**

<sup>18</sup> “Come now, let us settle the matter,”  
says the Lord.

“Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson,  
they shall be like wool.

<sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient,  
you will eat the good things of the land;

<sup>20</sup> but if you resist and rebel,  
you will be devoured by the sword.”

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

<sup>21</sup> See how the faithful city  
has become a prostitute!

She once was full of justice;  
righteousness used to dwell in her—  
but now murderers!

<sup>22</sup> Your silver has become dross,  
your choice wine is diluted with water.

<sup>23</sup> Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves;  
they all love bribes and chase after gifts.

They do not defend the cause of the fatherless;  
the widow’s case does not come before them.

Isaiah 5:8-23



## Woes and Judgments

<sup>8</sup> Woe to you who add house to house  
and join field to field  
till no space is left  
and you live alone in the land.

<sup>9</sup> The Lord Almighty has declared in my hearing:

“Surely the great houses will become desolate,  
the fine mansions left without occupants.

<sup>10</sup> A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a bath<sup>[a]</sup> of wine;  
a homer<sup>[b]</sup> of seed will yield only an ephah<sup>[c]</sup> of grain.”

(about 6 gallons)

(about 360 lbs yielding 36 lbs)

<sup>11</sup> Woe to those who rise early in the morning  
to run after their drinks,  
who stay up late at night  
till they are inflamed with wine.

<sup>12</sup> They have harps and lyres at their banquets,  
pipes and timbrels and wine,  
but they have no regard for the deeds of the Lord,  
no respect for the work of his hands.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore my people will go into exile  
for lack of understanding;  
those of high rank will die of hunger  
and the common people will be parched with thirst.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore Death expands its jaws,  
opening wide its mouth;  
into it will descend their nobles and masses  
with all their brawlers and revelers.

<sup>15</sup> So people will be brought low  
and everyone humbled,  
the eyes of the arrogant humbled.

<sup>16</sup> But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by his justice,  
and the holy God will be proved holy by his righteous acts.

<sup>17</sup> Then sheep will graze as in their own pasture;  
lambs will feed<sup>[d]</sup> among the ruins of the rich.

<sup>18</sup> Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit,  
and wickedness as with cart ropes,

<sup>19</sup> to those who say, “Let God hurry;  
let him hasten his work  
so we may see it.

The plan of the Holy One of Israel—  
let it approach, let it come into view,  
so we may know it.”

<sup>20</sup> Woe to those who call evil good  
and good evil,  
who put darkness for light  
and light for darkness,



who put bitter for sweet  
and sweet for bitter.

<sup>21</sup> Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes  
and clever in their own sight.

<sup>22</sup> Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine  
and champions at mixing drinks,

<sup>23</sup> who acquit the guilty for a bribe,  
but deny justice to the innocent.

Isaiah 10:1-4 New International Version (NIV)

**10** Woe to those who make unjust laws,  
to those who issue oppressive decrees,

<sup>2</sup> to deprive the poor of their rights  
and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,  
making widows their prey  
and robbing the fatherless.

<sup>3</sup> What will you do on the day of reckoning,  
when disaster comes from afar?

To whom will you run for help?  
Where will you leave your riches?

<sup>4</sup> Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives  
or fall among the slain.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,  
his hand is still upraised.

Jeremiah 22:2-4

<sup>2</sup> Hear the word of the Lord to you, king of Judah, you who sit on David's throne—you, your officials and your people who come through these gates. <sup>3</sup> This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. <sup>4</sup> For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people.

Jeremiah 22:12-17

<sup>12</sup> He will die in the place where they have led him captive; he will not see this land again.”

<sup>13</sup> “Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness,  
his upper rooms by injustice,



making his own people work for nothing,  
not paying them for their labor.

<sup>14</sup> He says, 'I will build myself a great palace  
with spacious upper rooms.'

So he makes large windows in it,  
panels it with cedar  
and decorates it in red.

<sup>15</sup> "Does it make you a king  
to have more and more cedar?"

Did not your father have food and drink?  
He did what was right and just,  
so all went well with him.

<sup>16</sup> He defended the cause of the poor and needy,  
and so all went well.

Is that not what it means to know me?"  
declares the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> "But your eyes and your heart  
are set only on dishonest gain,  
on shedding innocent blood  
and on oppression and extortion."

#### Ezekiel 22:25-29

<sup>25</sup> There is a conspiracy of her princes<sup>[a]</sup> within her like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they devour people, take treasures and precious things and make many widows within her. <sup>26</sup> Her priests do violence to my law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common; they teach that there is no difference between the unclean and the clean; and they shut their eyes to the keeping of my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. <sup>27</sup> Her officials within her are like wolves tearing their prey; they shed blood and kill people to make unjust gain. <sup>28</sup> Her prophets whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations. They say, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says'—when the Lord has not spoken. <sup>29</sup> The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the foreigner, denying them justice.

#### Ezekiel 34:2-4

<sup>2</sup> "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? <sup>3</sup> You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. <sup>4</sup> You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.

#### Amos 2:6-8



## Judgment on Israel

<sup>6</sup>This is what the Lord says:

“For three sins of Israel,  
even for four, I will not relent.  
They sell the innocent for silver,  
and the needy for a pair of sandals.

<sup>7</sup>They trample on the heads of the poor  
as on the dust of the ground  
and deny justice to the oppressed.

Father and son use the same girl  
and so profane my holy name.

<sup>8</sup>They lie down beside every altar  
on garments taken in pledge.

In the house of their god  
they drink wine taken as fines.

## Amos 5:7

<sup>7</sup>There are those who turn justice into bitterness  
and cast righteousness to the ground.

## Amos 5:10-11

<sup>10</sup>There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court  
and detest the one who tells the truth.

<sup>11</sup>You levy a straw tax on the poor  
and impose a tax on their grain.

Therefore, though you have built stone mansions,  
you will not live in them;  
though you have planted lush vineyards,  
you will not drink their wine.

## Amos 5: 14-15

<sup>14</sup>Seek good, not evil,  
that you may live.

Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you,  
just as you say he is.

<sup>15</sup>Hate evil, love good;  
maintain justice in the courts.

Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy  
on the remnant of Joseph.

## Amos 5:21-24



<sup>21</sup> "I hate, I despise your religious festivals;  
your assemblies are a stench to me.  
<sup>22</sup> Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,  
I will not accept them.  
Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,  
I will have no regard for them.  
<sup>23</sup> Away with the noise of your songs!  
I will not listen to the music of your harps.  
<sup>24</sup> But let justice roll on like a river,  
righteousness like a never-failing stream!

Micah 2:1-2

Human Plans and God's Plans

**2** Woe to those who plan iniquity,  
to those who plot evil on their beds!  
At morning's light they carry it out  
because it is in their power to do it.  
<sup>2</sup> They covet fields and seize them,  
and houses, and take them.  
They defraud people of their homes,  
they rob them of their inheritance.

Micah 2:9

<sup>9</sup> You drive the women of my people  
from their pleasant homes.  
You take away my blessing  
from their children forever

Micah 6:6-8

<sup>6</sup> With what shall I come before the Lord  
and bow down before the exalted God?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?  
<sup>7</sup> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?  
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
<sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
**And what does the Lord require of you?**  
**To act justly and to love mercy**  
**and to walk humbly<sup>a</sup> with your God.**



Psalm 140:12

<sup>12</sup> I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor  
and upholds the cause of the needy.

Proverbs 14:23

<sup>23</sup> All hard work brings a profit,  
but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Proverbs 31:8-9

<sup>8</sup> Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,  
for the rights of all who are destitute.

<sup>9</sup> Speak up and judge fairly;  
defend the rights of the poor and needy.



## Scriptures from the New Testament: Overview/List

### Jesus' concern for the poor:

“Jesus declares that He has come to fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures and His teachings show that the moral requirements of the Old Testament protecting poor and powerless persons apply to all Christians. In addition to identifying the love of God and the love of neighbors (even those with no wealth or status) as the two greatest commandments, and announcing that He has come ‘to preach the good news to the poor’ and ‘release the oppressed,’ Jesus showed special compassion and concern for the poorest and neediest persons of society throughout His earthly ministry. At the very least, Jesus calls for social structures that protect poor persons from economic oppression and allow them a minimum opportunity to improve their lives.”

- Matthew 5: 1-12 – In the Beatitudes Jesus paints a picture of those who are blessed by God, and lifts up the poor and humble as precious in God’s sight
- Matthew 7: 12
- Matthew 22: 37-40
  
- Matthew 22: 1-10 – The Parable of the Wedding Banquet. The King invites all to the table to share in the feast
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Matthew 25: 31-46 – Jesus’ famous declaration to care for the hungry, the thirsty, the sick and naked, the one described as “the least of these.”
- Mark 10:17-31
- Mark 11: 15-19 – Jesus turns over the tables of the money changers in the Temple.
- Luke 3: 11-14
  
- Luke 4: 14-21 – Jesus in the synagogue reads from the scroll of Isaiah and declares that God has anointed him to “bring good news to the poor and release to the captives..”
  
- Luke 6: 31-36 Luke 20:47
- 
- Luke 12: 13-21 – The Parable of the Rich Fool who builds barns to store his wealth and is not generous with God or neighbor.
- Luke 12: 48 - “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.”
- Luke 16: 19-31
- Luke 19: 1-10 – The story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector of small stature who climbs a tree to see Jesus and pledges his wealth to the poor and his fidelity to Jesus.
- Luke 20:47





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- James 2 – Instruction to the early church to provide for the poor and execute justice in their community. “So faith, by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”
- James 1: 22-27;
- James 2: 1-9;
- James 2: 14-17;
- James 5: 1-6
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- 1 John 3: 17-18 – Authentic love is not just speech, but action on behalf of siblings in need.
- 1 John 4:19-21

### Scriptures from the New Testament: Full Text

Luke 12:48 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>48</sup> ...From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Matthew 5: 1-12

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

**5** Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said:

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,



for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 7: 12

<sup>12</sup> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 22: 37-40

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22: 1-10 – The Parable of the Wedding Banquet. The King invites all to the table to share in the feast

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

**22** Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup> He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

<sup>4</sup> "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

<sup>5</sup> "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. <sup>6</sup> The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. <sup>7</sup> The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

<sup>8</sup> "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. <sup>9</sup> So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' <sup>10</sup> So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Matthew 23:23 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>23</sup> "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.



Matthew 25:31-46 New International Version (NIV)

The Sheep and the Goats

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

<sup>44</sup> “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

<sup>46</sup> “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Mark 10:17-31

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”



<sup>18</sup> “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’<sup>[a]</sup>”

<sup>20</sup> “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

<sup>22</sup> At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

<sup>24</sup> The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is<sup>[b]</sup> to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

<sup>26</sup> The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

<sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

<sup>28</sup> Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

<sup>29</sup> “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. <sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

#### Mark 11: 15-19

<sup>15</sup> On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, <sup>16</sup> and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. <sup>17</sup> And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’<sup>[a]</sup>? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’<sup>[b]</sup>”

<sup>18</sup> The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

<sup>19</sup> When evening came, Jesus and his disciples<sup>[c]</sup> went out of the city.

#### Luke 3: 11-14

<sup>11</sup> John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”



<sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

<sup>13</sup> “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

<sup>14</sup> Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

Luke 4: 14-21 – Jesus in the synagogue reads from the scroll of Isaiah and declares that God has anointed him to “bring good news to the poor and release to the captives..”

#### Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

<sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup> He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,

<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

#### Luke 6: 31-36

<sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 12: 13-21 – The Parable of the Rich Fool who builds barns to store his wealth and is not generous with God or neighbor.



## The Parable of the Rich Fool

<sup>13</sup> Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

<sup>14</sup> Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" <sup>15</sup> Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

<sup>16</sup> And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. <sup>17</sup> He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

<sup>18</sup> "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. <sup>19</sup> And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

<sup>20</sup> "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

<sup>21</sup> "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Luke 12: 48 - "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded."

or

<sup>48</sup> But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Luke 16: 19-31

The Rich Man and Lazarus

<sup>19</sup> "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. <sup>20</sup> At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores <sup>21</sup> and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup> "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup> So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

<sup>25</sup> "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'



<sup>27</sup> “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

<sup>29</sup> “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

<sup>30</sup> “No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

<sup>31</sup> “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Luke 19: 1-10 – The story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector of small stature who climbs a tree to see Jesus and pledges his wealth to the poor and his fidelity to Jesus.

#### Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

**19** Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup> He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup> So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

<sup>7</sup> All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

<sup>8</sup> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

#### Luke 20:47

<sup>47</sup> They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

James 2 – Instruction to the early church to provide for the poor and execute justice in their community. “So faith, by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”

#### Favoritism Forbidden

**2** My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.<sup>2</sup> Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup> If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” <sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?



<sup>5</sup> Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

<sup>8</sup> If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself,"<sup>[a]</sup> you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery,"<sup>[b]</sup> also said, "You shall not murder."<sup>[c]</sup> If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

<sup>12</sup> Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

#### Faith and Deeds

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

<sup>20</sup> You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless<sup>[d]</sup>? <sup>21</sup> Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"<sup>[e]</sup> and he was called God's friend. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

James 1: 22-27;

<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror<sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

<sup>26</sup> Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

James 5: 1-6





## Warning to Rich Oppressors

**5** Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.<sup>2</sup> Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.<sup>6a</sup> <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

<sup>1</sup> John 3: 17-18 – Authentic love is not just speech, but action on behalf of siblings in need.

<sup>17</sup> If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

<sup>1</sup> John 4:19-21

<sup>19</sup> We love because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.