

THE POOR, THE RICH, AND GOD!

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Exodus 23:8 And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

Exodus 23:9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

So, how does God relate to the poor and the rich?

3 possible answers:

1. God's preferential concern for the Rich!

If we look across cultures and throughout time → this is probably the most common viewpoint

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1 Timothy 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. **1 Timothy 6:2** And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. **1 Timothy 6:3** **If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 1 Timothy 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 1 Timothy 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.**

James 2:1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, **with respect of persons.** **James 2:2** For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; **James 2:3** **And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: James 2:4** **Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? James 2:5** **Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? James 2:6** **But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?**

James 2:7 **Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?**

What do we know from the Scripture?

- This is what the disciples thoughts / understanding
- This is what **some** in and around the church at Ephesus believed & taught
- This is what James's church members believed & (more importantly) practiced
- This was **certainly** what Job's 3/4 "friends" believed & encouraged Job with!!!

Why is this so?

- God blesses believers
- God blesses obedience → so an obedient believer

➤ **God blesses diligence → so an obedient, diligence**

Proverbs 10:4 He becometh **poor** that dealeth with a slack hand: But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: But the slothful shall be under tribute.

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: **But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.**

Proverbs 21:5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; But of every one that is hasty only to want.

➤ **The rich and riches are from God → obviously!**

All of these ideas are true with several huge caveats:

- **Caveat #1: oppression changes the dynamics**
- **Caveat #2: natural disasters up - end the process(es).**
- **Caveat #3: Covenantal Promises cement these benefits → to Israel**
- **Caveat #4: riches & poverty are at God's sovereign disposal & purposes**

2. God's preferential concern for the Poor!

Isaiah 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, And shew my people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. **Isaiah 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, And delight to know my ways,** As a nation that did righteousness, And forsook not the ordinance of their God: They ask of me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching to God.

Isaiah 58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, And exact all your labours. **Isaiah 58:4** Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, And to smite with the fist of wickedness: Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, To make your voice to be heard on high. **Isaiah 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen?** A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, And to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD? **Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, And to let the oppressed go free, And that ye break every yoke? Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?**

Zechariah 7:8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, **Zechariah 7:9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, And shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: Zechariah 7:10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; And let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.**

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Thoughts:

- **God cares for the poor**
- **God commands us to care for the poor!**
- **God commands us "how" to care for the poor!**

Deuteronomy 24:16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

Deuteronomy 24:17 Thou shalt **not** pervert the judgment of the stranger, **nor** of the fatherless; **nor** take a widow's raiment to pledge:

Deuteronomy 24:18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Deuteronomy 24:19 When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: **that** the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

Deuteronomy 24:20 When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Deuteronomy 24:21 When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Deuteronomy 24:22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

- **God doesn't only care for the poor but also for the vulnerable**
(Poor, orphans / fatherless, widows, strangers)

➤ **God condemns any & all oppression of the poor^{+++!}**

This isn't class struggle

This is right / righteousness / doing right

➤ **God also condemns other causes of poverty!**

What might some of these be?

God's poor

Devil's poor

Proverbs 6:6-11	Proverbs 13:4	Proverbs 20:2
Proverbs 19:15	Proverbs 19:24	Proverbs 22:13
Proverbs 24:3-34	Proverbs 26:13-16	

3. God's preferential concern for Himself & His righteousness!

The right, good, true, and beautiful.

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD: that is my name: And my glory will I not give to another, Neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 48:11 For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: For how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory unto another.

Everyone wants God:

➤ **In their back pocket**

➤ **On their side**

➤ **For their group**

Giving them the high moral ground

Silencing all debate

Eliminating any, opposing voices

Preventing / precluding any other ideas

Leviticus 19:15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

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Proverbs 22:2 The rich and poor meet together: **The LORD is the maker of them all.**

Proverbs 29:13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: The LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

➤ **God is on God's side**

➤ **God favors neither the rich or the poor**

➤ **God is God and Lord of all**

➤ **All – rich & poor – stand before God**

➤ **All – rich & poor – stand under God**

➤ **God judges all according to His righteous character**