

# **The Theme of Wealth in Luke – Acts Study Guide**

Riches I heed not nor man's empty praise  
Thou my inheritance now and always  
Thou and Thou only first in my heart  
High King of heaven my treasure Thou art

**from *Be Thou My Vision***  
Irish Hymn

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# **Luke – Acts**

## **The Theme of Wealth**

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# Luke – Acts

## The Theme of Wealth

### Part 1: Leader’s Notes

*Foreground Action: John the Baptist’s Teaching on Wealth*

Lk.3:10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?” 11 And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” 12 And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” 14 Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”

#### Questions

1. What groups of people does John address?
2. How are these teachings similar and different?
3. Look closely at what John tells the tax collectors. Jewish tax collectors were employed by the parasitic Roman government (a form of racialized systemic injustice), but they made their living by charging more taxes than the Roman Empire actually levied. They skimmed off the top from (pimped?) their own people. John tells them to collect no more than what they had been ordered to, which means that they would technically make nothing. How could the tax collectors have survived without pay? By just depending on God? By asking for help from other Jews?
4. What kinds of systemic injustice do we participate in? What might John the Baptist say to us?
5. Comment: Before we take these as absolute, we’re going to see how Jesus’ teaching is similar or different to that of John’s.

*Foreground Action: Jesus’ Mission to Restore*

Lk.4:14 And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And he began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom.

He stood up to read,

17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, b/c he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

20 And he rolled up the scroll,

gave it back to the attendant,

and sat down.

The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

#### Questions

1. There was a Roman garrison stationed in Nazareth. How would that have made the Nazareth inhabitants feel?

2. What might they have expected Jesus to say about the Romans soldiers occupying Nazareth? What kind of Messiah were they expecting?
3. What is the soundtrack playing in the background?

*Soundtrack/Background Music: The Isaianic Servant*

- Isa.61:1 The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God.
4. Who did the Jews at Nazareth think 'the poor' and 'the oppressed' were?
  5. What are ways you may be in the 'poor and oppressed' category?
  6. Who do you expect Jesus to say 'the poor' and 'the oppressed' are?
  7. But why does Jesus add the phrase, "recovery of sight to the blind" (Lk.4:18)?
  8. Who are 'the blind'?
  9. Was Isaiah 61:1-2 the only passage Jesus was referring to? Discuss also Isaiah 42:1-7:

*Soundtrack/Background Music: Spiritual Sight to the Nations*

- Isa.42:1 Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold, My chosen one in whom My soul delights; I have put My Spirit upon him; He will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry out or raise his voice, nor make his voice heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed he will not break and a dimly burning wick he will not extinguish; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not be disheartened or crushed until he has established justice in the earth and the coastlands will wait expectantly for his law. 5 Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it, 6 "I am the LORD, I've called you in righteousness; I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you; and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations 7 to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.
10. How is that passage connected to the phrase, "and recovery of sight to the blind" (Lk.4:18)? What does that phrase itself hearken back to?

*Soundtrack/Background Music: The Fall Into Self-Focused Sight; True Sight Restored*

- Gen.3:7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they realized they were naked.
  - Isa.42:1 I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations 7 to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison.
  - Lk.2:30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation, 31 which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.
11. So who is Jesus restoring? Who are the poor, the captives, the oppressed, the blind? How does that differ or agree with the Jews in the Nazareth synagogue in their interpretation of Isaiah 61?
  12. Why is this "recovery of sight" phrase at the center of the chiasm in Lk.4:18? Because it's the main point.

*Foreground Action: The Restoration of Who?*

Lk.4:22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" 23 He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor,

cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” 24 And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. 25 But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; 26 yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. 27 There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” 28 When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. 30 But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

**Questions**

1. Why was this so offensive? Who was the widow of Zarephath? Who was Naaman the Syrian? Why demonstrate God’s grace going to Gentiles?
2. Who was Elijah’s mission to? The Northern Kingdom of Israel
3. And Elisha’s? Also the Northern Kingdom of Israel
4. Did the Northern Kingdom accept and embrace their ministry? No.
5. What happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel afterwards? They were overthrown. In 722 BC, Assyria swept in and destroyed many of them and took others captive.
6. Was the Northern Kingdom of Israel a legitimate community in the eyes of God? No. See 2 Kings 17. They did not worship at Jerusalem, have Levitical priests, obey the Davidic king, and maintain a true record of Israel’s history. Therefore, they did not actually worship God in truth.
7. What role did Elijah and Elisha play in relation to the Northern Kingdom? As the last prophets to that nation.
8. Who is Jesus saying he (and John the Baptist) is (are) to the Israel of that day? The last prophets.
9. Will Israel as a whole accept Jesus? No.
10. What will happen after Israel rejects Jesus? Destruction and exile.
11. Who will God’s grace go to? Israel’s traditional enemies, the Gentiles.
12. Notes:

*Soundtrack/Background Music: Elijah & Elisha*

<b>Motif</b>	<b>Moses – Joshua</b>	<b>Elijah – Elisha</b>	<b>John – Jesus</b>
Great prophet summons Israel to a covenant with God	Moses inaugurates the era of the Mosaic Law	Elijah is sent to the Northern Kingdom of Israel to protest the sin of the northern kings	John the Baptist warns that being part of the Abrahamic family is not simply genealogical
Dies before the final stage of ministry (conquest) truly begins	Moses dies on the mountaintop outside the land (Dt.34)	Elijah taken up by chariots outside the land (2 Ki.1)	John thrown into prison and later killed before the resurrection (Lk.3:19-20, 7:18-35)
Prepares a successor	Joshua	Elisha	Jesus
Who is ‘baptized’ in the Jordan	Joshua parts the waters of the Jordan to cross it (Jos.3:14-17)	Elisha parts the waters of the Jordan to cross it (2 Ki.2:14)	Jesus is baptized in the Jordan (Lk.3:21-22)
Successor marches into the promised land from the wilderness	Joshua spent 40 years in the wilderness and then led Israel into the land. Joshua parts the waters of the Jordan to cross it (Jos.3:14-17)	Elisha returns after Elijah is taken up (2 Ki.2:14). Elisha parts the waters of the Jordan to cross it (2 Ki.2:14)	Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness and then enters the land (Lk.4:14)

And proclaims God's judgment on the pagan inhabitants, who will be destroyed	The Canaanites	The Northern Israelites (!)	The whole nation Israel (!!!)
And rescues a faithful remnant	Rahab and her household spared	Widow of Zarephath receives provision and witnesses the resuscitation of her son; Naaman the Syrian is cleansed of leprosy	The disciples

Hence, Jesus' ministry was like that of Joshua and Elisha because he was now gathering to himself the remnant who would believe rightly before God scattered the nation...in holy war against them.

13. Why was Jesus particularly hard on the Nazareth synagogue Israelites? What was Jesus trying to accomplish vs. what were they concerned about? (Salvation to all humanity, bringing them together in one body vs. their ethnocentric nationalism)
14. If Jesus were to stand before you and proclaim his mission of giving God's blessing to someone, is there someone that Jesus can mention that would get you really mad at him?
15. Why would you be angry in that situation?
16. Can you give your anger over to God?
17. Comment: If we retitle the sections as follows, notice the clear message that comes through.

Lk.3:21 – 38	Jesus, the Climax of the Human Race
Lk.4:1 – 13	Jesus the New Adam Survives the Temptations
Lk.4:14 – 21	Jesus Comes to Restore...
Lk.4:22 – 30	Restore Both Jew and Gentile

18. If you redefine Christianity to serve the interests of your own group, what will Jesus come and do to that?
19. According to Luke, this is one of the first public declarations Jesus made. The gospel has to do with reaching and ministering to all humans and all human groups. What group is especially hard for you to minister to? Another ethnic group? Those who speak a different language? The poor? The homeless? The less educated and illiterate?
20. How much of your resources (time, money, energy, relational networking, strategic thinking, ministry focus, etc.) goes towards people who are basically like you?
21. Who would it really stretch you to minister to?

*Foreground Action: Jesus Teaches the Twelve*

Lk.6:19 And all the multitude were trying to touch him, for power was coming from him and healing them all. 20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. 22 Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. 24 But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 25 Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. 26 Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. 27 But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 If you love those who love you, what

credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

#### Questions

1. Who is blessed?
2. Who are “the poor”? Is that people who are poor for any general reason? Or the disciples specifically?
3. Are they the same as “the hungry”? “Those who weep”? Those who are hated?
4. Who will get defamed “on account of the Son of Man.”
5. Why are the disciples poor, hungry, sad, and hated?
6. Who is Jesus speaking to in v.24-26? Perhaps the multitude? People who aren’t really committed?
7. What kind of poverty is Jesus talking about? Physical (not spiritual, as in Matthew 5). That is the kind of poverty that Jesus’ teaching in v.27-36 leads to.
8. How are Jesus’ disciples to treat their enemies? Their material possessions?
9. If you followed Jesus’ teaching in v.27-36, what would your lifestyle look like?
10. Compare Jesus’ teaching on wealth to John the Baptist’s. Is it the same? More stringent?
11. Think of a loan you made to someone. What would it be like to not expect that money back?
12. How was this different from the rest of Israel’s attitude towards wealth? The rest of Israel expected to be made rich by God, to have Rome leave them alone on their land, and for their land to become prosperous again. Jesus is giving a new teaching.
13. How might we feel like God is ripping us off?
14. How does Jesus address that in v.38 by saying that God will not be stingy with us? How will we be running over?
15. In what areas of life do we tend to use ‘standards of measurement’? With people who upset us, with whom we have short tempers, who use up our resources, financial and otherwise. We judge them by minute and demanding standards. They fill up our impatience quota pretty quickly. But look at the standards for our conduct in v.31 and v.36. Do to others as you would have them do unto you, not as they actually do unto you, but as you would have them do unto you. And do unto others as your Heavenly Father is merciful. What do you think of those reference points?
16. What would it mean for you to have a larger measure? If desired, focus specifically on your financial decisions, to give and lend to others or not.

#### *Foreground Action: Jesus Teaches the Seventy*

Lk.9:51 When the days were approaching for his ascension, he was determined to go to Jerusalem; 52 and he sent messengers on ahead of him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for him. 53 But they did not receive him, because he was traveling toward Jerusalem. 54 When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” 55 But he turned and rebuked them, [and said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; 56 for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.”] And they went on to another village. 57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” 58 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 59 And he said to another, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” 60 But he said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” 61 Another also said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” 62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” 10:1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of him to every city and place where he himself was going to come. 2 And he was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

#### Questions

1. What would it mean for you to have a larger measure? If desired, focus specifically on your financial decisions, to give and lend to others or not.
2. From what you've seen Jesus teach the twelve about money, what would you expect him to teach the seventy?
3. What did Jews of Jesus' day expect to hear their Messiah say about living securely in the land?
4. Compare and contrast that with what Jesus says in 9:57-58.
5. Why does Jesus have "nowhere to lay his head"? Why does that affect his disciples?
6. Read ahead to chapter 10, v.1-5. Notice how Jesus sends these disciples out without anything. Why would he send them out dependent on others' hospitality?

*Foreground Action: Challenging the Crowds*

Lk.12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." 16 Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17 And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God." 22 He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you--you of little faith! 29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Questions

1. What did Jews of Jesus' day expect to hear their Messiah say about living securely in the land?
2. Compare and contrast that with what Jesus says in 9:57-58.
3. Why does Jesus have "nowhere to lay his head"? Why does that affect his disciples?
4. In 12:13, what family inheritance does this man want? Family land.
5. Is there anything wrong about his request according to the Law of Moses? No, this is ordinary arbitration, and is the most important economic issue Moses deals with. It is basic Mosaic distributive justice.
6. Why does Jesus refuse to arbitrate this? What is Jesus' stance towards Israel's land? All material wealth?
7. What are the rich man's assumptions about his land? His crops? His life? What does he really want to do?
8. How is the rich man with the barn like the man who wants his inheritance?
9. What does it mean to instead store up treasure by being rich towards God?
10. Where else in Scripture is heavenly treasure talked about? Paul in 2 Cor.4 is a good example.
  - We have this treasure in earthen vessels...always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we

who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (2 Cor.4)

11. How is our giving an aspect of the life of Jesus being expressed through us?
12. How is giving connected to Jesus' worldwide mission?
13. What is heavenly treasure? It is the life of Jesus.
14. Why is it necessary to give away material wealth to gain heavenly wealth? Because that is how Jesus expresses his life through us.
15. The disciples are already poor (see Lk.6:20), and yet Jesus says this. Why does he not counsel them to become middle class?
16. Why does Jesus not argue for a simple redistribution of wealth towards the average level of wealth? In what sense does Jesus go beyond distributive justice?
17. What kind of lifestyle is Jesus defining for his followers? – settler or pilgrim? Pilgrim, just like in 9:57-58.
18. What worries and anxieties do we have about financial insecurity? Is there such a thing as financial security?
19. What barriers do you have to letting Jesus give through you?

*Foreground Action: What the Kingdom Party is Like*

Lk.14:1 It happened that when he went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching him closely. 2 And there in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. 3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they kept silent. And he took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6 And they could make no reply to this. 7 And he began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table, saying to them, 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. 10 But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." 12 And he also went on to say to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. 13 But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." 15 When one of those who were reclining at the table with him heard this, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 But he said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' 19 Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' 20 Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.' 21 And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' 22 And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' 23 And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

25 Now great multitudes were going along with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 'If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me

cannot be my disciple. 28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. 33 So therefore, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

#### Questions

1. Who are the Pharisees? Lay out what we know about them. Specifically, try to define what kind of spirituality they had, and what they thought of others who weren't Pharisees.
2. Break up into groups of 2's or 3's and talk about: 'How did the Pharisees party?' What might it have felt like to be at a Pharisee party? In general, what did the Pharisees expect of Jesus as their dinner guest? (They should come up with things like (1) 'a red-carpet affair' where Pharisees step onto the red carpet and people are looking at them, kind of like photographers and journalists taking pictures of famous celebs going to a party; (2) a hob-nobbing party; (3) an event where Pharisees are really aware of how they look and who they're with.) Essentially, they party to be honored.
3. Compare this to a wedding banquet. Have you ever been at a wedding reception party where you sat on the outside edge of the tables? How did that feel? (In some sense it's a bummer – we have to sit with our kid cousins and take care of them, for example.) BUT, is there still some kind of joy you have? Yes: The joy of celebrating with the bride and groom. (In Middle Eastern weddings, the groom was more the center of attention.) What kind of person goes to a wedding and tries to take center stage????
4. Why do you think Jesus compares the Pharisees' party to a wedding banquet, then?
5. When we think the kingdom is about **us**, and about getting recognition **for ourselves**, what happens to us? E.g. Shallow spirituality, bad motivations, people-pleasing, craving public roles to seem like we've got it all together, not taking opportunities to care for difficult people. But when we understand that the kingdom is a wedding banquet that is about Jesus, and not about us, then we can minister to junior high kids (for example), who give us no recognition and thanks! We can love difficult people. We can be the janitors of the church building. We can be genuinely humble because we know the party is about Jesus. Jesus will elevate and honor these people.
6. Notice that you can break down the passage into three roles. Guests, hosts, invitees. What attitude does Jesus want guests to have, according to v.7-11? What wrong attitude did the Pharisees have *as guests*? Why?
7. According to v.12-14, what kind of hosts does Jesus want?
8. What wrong attitude did the Pharisees have *as hosts*? They only invited each other. It was self-congratulation on associating with the right company.
9. What would it be like if you threw parties like this (v.12-14)? Costly, inconvenient, awkward.
10. How is eating with someone more than just serving them from behind a soup kitchen counter? Deeper relationship. Friendship.
11. How uncomfortable must the Pharisees have felt after v.14?
12. Why does Jesus care so much about parties? Jesus sees this eating/banquet/feast/table scene as a foreshadowing of the kingdom of God, where the ultimate banquet is coming. Jesus hates bad parties because they paint bad pictures of the kingdom. His parties are inclusive because his kingdom is inclusive. Exclusive parties are bad!
13. Where is the man in v.15 trying to take the conversation? 'This is something we can all agree on! Right, Jesus?' It's as if he's trying to strike common ground after a very awkward disagreement.
14. Where does Jesus take it in v.16ff.? Essentially says, 'Yeah, and you're not going to eat bread in the kingdom.' He makes it worse!
15. According to v.16-23, What wrong attitude did the Pharisees have *as invitees*?
16. What kind of excuses are these really? What attitude do the invitees in the parable have? That being invited means that you can go at any time.
17. Does being invited mean that one actually goes to the banquet?
18. What do you think of these excuses? It's kind of like, 'I just bought a new car, and I need to test drive it.' These are stupid reasons, and Jesus is saying that actually all your excuses are stupid. They're

lame excuses. Leave your land behind. Bring your wife to the party if you have to. But COME! Otherwise you won't taste of his dinner!

19. Describe Jesus' definition of table fellowship in the kingdom of God from the point of view of guests, hosts, and invitees. How must our definitions change in accordance with his?
20. Emphasize: Why does Jesus get upset with bad parties? Because they don't portray the kingdom correctly! This is even more true in how the shepherd uses resources to celebrate the finding of a lost sheep, how the woman uses resources to celebrate the finding of a lost coin, how the father uses resources to celebrate the finding of a lost son.
21. Why does Jesus tell us to 'count the cost' in v.25-33? Because we are to use our resources to serve the downtrodden, without expecting anything in return. Boston's BIG DIG was foolishly planned, and it makes us look stupid. Likewise, people who try to be a part of the kingdom without counting the cost first are foolish.
22. Explain v.33. Why does Jesus want all our possessions? Does that have to do with hating your father and mother, etc.? Does that have to do with throwing parties for people who can't repay you? What does that mean for you?

*Foreground Action: Reactions to Jesus' Teaching on Wealth*

Lk.16:1 Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. 2 So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' 3 Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' 5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' 7 Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' 8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. 10 Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? 13 No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." 14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him.

Questions

1. Why do the Pharisees mock Jesus in v.14? The Pharisees were not rich per se, so why does Luke say they love money? In what sense? Can you love money without being wealthy? Yes, just as the Pharisees aspired to an era when Israel would be collectively and nationally prosperous.
2. If you are in a culture (especially as a minority in that culture) that offers you the chance to be wealthy, but simultaneously oppresses you, what are the dangers of becoming materialistic? While calling out structural evil, how can we still maintain our commitment to generosity and sacrifice in Jesus' name in such an environment? What reminders do we need?
3. Recall the 2 x 2 matrix from an earlier study. This is helpful in understanding the various Jewish groups at the time of Jesus, and also their issues with wealth.

<b>High Identification with Jewish culture</b>	The <b>Pharisees, lawyers and scribes</b> defined Jewishness around aspects of the Mosaic Law, i.e. Sabbath-keeping, ritual and racial purity, and smaller aspects of the commandments. The <b>Essenes</b> in the Dead Sea region defined Jewishness around physical separateness and waiting for the Temple to be cleansed	The <b>priests</b> kept up the Jerusalem Temple's sacrificial system but had to work the Roman system to do so.
<b>Low Identification with Jewish culture</b>	The <b>sinners and prostitutes</b> were not welcomed into the synagogue and mainstream Jewish society The <b>Samaritans</b> were half-Jewish and were rejected by mainstream Jewish society as well. They could not worship in Jerusalem.	The <b>Sadducees</b> changed their beliefs about resurrection and made political alliances with Rome for land. The <b>tax collectors</b> became part of the Roman taxation machinery and were seen as traitors to the Jewish nation.
	<b>Low Assimilation with Graeco-Roman culture</b>	<b>High Assimilation with Graeco-Roman culture</b>

4. Why does Jesus tell the disciples the parable starting with 16:1?
- What happened to the steward? Why?
  - What could the rich man have done to the steward? He could have dealt much more severely, like the father could have had the prodigal son killed for disrespect. Why isn't he more severe? He is merciful.
  - What does it mean that the rich man was informed of the steward's white collar crimes by the community? Is the rich man respected in the community? Yes.
  - What is the steward's plan? To bribe the debtors into taking him in?
  - On the surface of it, how could that plan possibly work? Why would these debtors trust this steward? He's already known for embezzling money. Now he's downright dishonest. All the rich man needs to do is to squeal on him. We've already seen that the rich man is respected. Who would side with the steward? Even if they did get some kickbacks!
  - So what does the steward also have to do? Keep the rich man from talking and salvage his entire reputation so that he'll be welcomed in the community.
  - Why would the rich man stay silent? Consider the following questions:
  - If the steward reduces the debts while the debtors think he's still employed by the rich man, who gets the credit? The rich man will be regarded as merciful. Like a generous boss. Especially in Middle Eastern culture from that period. The master's name was probably being circulated and praised by the debtors for his seeming generosity. The rich master wouldn't want to ruin the atmosphere just created, nor the appreciation that is accruing to him. Thus, the master stays silent. Bailey draws a helpful parallel between the steward and the factory foreman of today. The foreman negotiates between the workers on the factory floor and upper management. If the foreman were to say that he had successfully extracted a day's paid vacation from upper management, the workers would not only praise him but also upper management who would then be perceived as merciful. But whereas in an industrial culture that is contractual and built on temporary relationships, the foreman's duplicity would be exposed or reversed by upper management with an apology for the miscommunication, in a Middle Eastern village culture where relationships are permanent and mercy is a publicly admired quality, the rich master would have stayed silent. So when the steward leaves the stewardship, he will leave as a hero of the community, having silenced the rich master in regards to the debt-forgiveness by placing him in a conflict of interest. The rich master will be silent even about the fact that he had fired the steward, so the steward will be able to pass off his termination as a voluntary departure! This explains why the steward can even hope at all to be an acceptable member of the community again, in fact, to be

- among the very debtors to whom he had lied. This is the only possible explanation of the parable that takes the story seriously *in its cultural context*.
- i. What indication did the steward have that the rich man was a merciful man? His gentle dismissal.
  - j. Who does the steward represent? The disciples, who are making the transition from national Israel to Jesus.
  - k. What crisis of dismissal did the Jewish disciples of Jesus' day need to come to terms with? The giving of the vineyard to others, i.e. stripping away of Israel's land and material wealth as a manifestation of God's blessing.
  - l. What are the disciples supposed to do with wealth instead? Be radically generous. Portray God as an extraordinarily merciful master.
  - m. What will that get them? Membership in the 'eternal tents' with the other debtors, the Gentiles. What is that? The body of Christ.
5. So what are the true riches Jesus wants us to have?
- a. Describe the sources of wealth, listed in three different ways in v.10-13

Very little (v.10a, c)	Much (v.10b, d)
Worldly wealth (v.11a)	True riches (v.11b)
Someone else's property (v.12a)	Property of your own (v.12b)

- b. What was Israel given that was "very little," "worldly wealth," and "someone else's property"?  
The land of Canaan.
- c. What wealth did Jesus want to give them? Wealth that is much more, true, and their own (permanent).
- d. In what ways do we focus on "very little," "worldly wealth," and "someone else's property"?  
How can we focus more on the wealth that is worth much more, true, and is our own (permanent, the heavenly treasure)?

*Foreground Action: Rich Man, Rich Man*

Lk.18:15 People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. 16 But Jesus called for them and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 17 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' 18 A certain ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 19 Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 20 You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.' 21 He replied, 'I have kept all these since my youth.' 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' 23 But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, 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.' 26 Those who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' 27 He replied, 'What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.' 28 Then Peter said, 'Look, we have left our homes and followed you.' 29 And he said to them, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.' 31 Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged him, they will kill him; and the third day he will rise again.' 34 But the disciples understood none of these things; and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

Lk.18:35 As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging. 36 Now hearing a crowd going by, he began to inquire what this was. 37 They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he called out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' 39 Those who led the way

were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' 40 And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to him; and when he came near, he questioned him, 41 'What do you want me to do for you?' And he said, 'Lord, I want to regain my sight!' 42 And Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.' 43 Immediately he regained his sight and began following him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God. 19:1 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2 A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' 6 So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. 7 All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' 8 Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' 9 Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

#### Introductory Questions to ask your audience

1. What have you heard said about this passage? (Get all the excuses out there. Typically, this passage is taken as a contrast between legalism and grace, or about simply 'being willing' to give money away, or other individual issues). Say explicitly that most of those interpretations have to do with individualistic issues.
2. Who is childlike in this section? Who is not?
  - a. Rich ruler?
  - b. Disciples?
  - c. Blind man?
  - d. Zaccheus?
3. What is childlikeness?

#### Questions (as or after you brainstorm the childlikeness issue)

1. The Infants/Children:
  - a. Why do you think Jesus praises 'infants' and 'children'? Because they're dependent, teachable, don't cling to something as theirs, etc.
  - b. What does it mean to be 'childlike'? Bottom line: What is an infant? A new human life.
  - c. What does an infant represent? Newness of life, a new birth. (Say later, at a choice moment: Why does the kingdom of God belong to 'such as these'? Because you must be born again spiritually and start a new life in Christ. You have to be like an infant or a little child in that way.)
2. The ruler:
  - a. Who is this 'certain ruler'? What did he probably rule in? A Jewish synagogue.
  - b. Who does he think Jesus is?
  - c. Why do you think he asks about eternal life? What kind of internal need is he aware of? Or is he just testing Jesus? Probably authentically interested.
  - d. How is he not a child? Notice he regards himself as not being young any more. 'Since my youth,' which sounds long ago. This is one way he is not being a child. Perhaps he doesn't want to be a child because he has stockpiled all this moral currency by obeying the Law all his life.
  - e. What is so surprising about v.29? Why doesn't Jesus just say, 'I tell you the truth, if you've given up all that, you've got me!' We do have him, but we also have 'house and wife and brothers and parents and children.' In other words, we inherit a new family. We become a part of a new community.
  - f. This challenge is not so much about individualistic struggles with materialism as it is a challenge to join a new community, Jesus' community. And Jesus wants his community to be a radical one. That's why he demands everything of this man. It's just like Luke 14:33, where Jesus says, 'No one can be my disciple who does not give up all his (or her) possessions.' The reason is because Jesus calls us into a new community, where wealth is meant to be shared and be used strategically.
  - g. Countering Objections:
    1. The rich ruler is unique. No: His problem with materialism is not just his problem. This is evident because Peter and the disciples in v.28 also say that they had given away all

they had. Thus, the rich ruler is typical. Jesus asks all his disciples to give up all they have. See Luke 14:33.

2. The rich ruler was being legalistic; Jesus was bringing him to the end of himself by asking him to do something that was and is impossible. No: Jesus does not say that he actually didn't live up to the Law, or that he did it with bad motives. Jesus doesn't debate that the rich ruler had indeed lived by the Law since his youth. The issue, rather, is that the rich ruler believed that he should continue to own his ancestral land. Jesus, on the other hand, is seeking to free Israel from its ancestral land and send his disciples out into the world.
- h. What's the problem with trying to hold onto wealth and the Mosaic Law? It's incompatible with Jesus' agenda because it is from Israel's old life. Mosaic Israel (a stationary community tied to its land) needs to transition to Messianic Israel (a mobile community not tied to financial security) and become new. WE KNOW where Jesus is headed with his community, and he wants this man to be a part of it. But wealth gets in his way.
- i. Let this point sink in, because it's not how we are used to thinking about the Law and Jesus. 'In Israel, what was appropriate until then was appropriate until then. Now with Jesus, everything changes.'
- j. Think about Asian American culture. How important is it to be financially secure? VERY!
- k. What would this rich ruler be able to give his kids? Not his land anymore! This ruler is so invested in the system, he can't be an infant and start with nothing.
- l. Why might Peter remind Jesus in v.28 that the disciples have left homes and followed Jesus? He wants to be validated? He wants to be affirmed as being in God's will? He is childlike, and just wants to have Jesus give his okay.
- m. What is Jesus' response? That you can't outgive God. You are entering a new community where people will be an extended family to you, and (hopefully) help you. And you will inherit much more in the next age.
- n. How do you join a new family? As an infant. Jesus wants this rich ruler to join his kingdom family as an infant in it.
3. Individual heart level applications:
  - a. How can you more deeply love financial sacrifice? It is one of the distinguishing marks of Christians in contrast to the world.
  - b. The issue is not just 'being willing to give,' but 'being **eager** to give, being **glad** to give.' You should be disappointed if you don't get a chance to give. How can you cultivate more of this attitude?
  - c. If you feel the need to be financially secure and stable, pray that God would work in you to remove that.

#### Questions: Zaccheus

1. Comment: The disciples don't understand Jesus' saying, suggesting that they have not truly been born again yet (since the death and resurrection of Jesus had not yet happened). But the healing of the blind man outside Jericho symbolizes how someone in Jericho will 'see' Jesus truly. The blind man is also childlike in that he keeps calling out for Jesus, kind of like a needy child or baby calling out for Daddy or Mommy, even though someone tells them to stop.
2. How wealthy is Zaccheus? Where did he get his wealth? He is the drug dealer who pimps his own community. He is the arch-tax-collector: he sat at the top of the tax collecting pyramid. He got cuts off of everyone underneath him, and it was all based off of extortion from his fellow Jews (tax collectors for Rome didn't get paid a salary by Rome – they lived off an extra 'cut' they charged over and above the tax).
3. So you can imagine why no one helped him see Jesus! No one cared about him.
4. Who normally climbs trees? Children. Zaccheus is also 'short in stature'! So how is Zaccheus like a 'child' or 'infant'? He humbles himself to the place of a child. He allows Jesus to see him as a child and start relating to him as someone who is newly born in the kingdom family.
5. What might have discouraged Zaccheus from climbing the tree? Internal and external factors?
6. Why does Jesus greet and dine with Zaccheus? What does it mean when Jesus 'eats' with someone?
7. How does Zaccheus show that he's been 'born again,' as 'an infant'? He climbs up a tree, something only children did. Thus, Zaccheus is showing that he is a child, like the 'infant' of 18:15-17. He has

inherited the kingdom through a new birth. And second, he redistributes his wealth, which the rich ruler could not and did not do. He tries to make peace with those he's hurt and remedy structural problems.

8. Does Zaccheus expect a long line of claimants at his door, saying they want four times back? Surely he does. He was bracing himself for it! It's probably why he only gave half of his money straightaway to the poor. He's not just saying the other part just to sound nice in theory. He probably has wronged people and will need to pay back four times as much.
9. Why does Jesus say that 'salvation' has come to this house? Is it because Zaccheus was able to let go of his wealth?
10. Notice the familial term, 'son of Abraham,' applied to Zaccheus. He has become an infant in the true family of God.
11. Countering Objections:
  - a. That is salvation by works. No: He allows Jesus to have authority over him, including his use of money. Zaccheus has become committed to letting Jesus define his life. That is salvation.
12. How come Zaccheus could let go of his wealth while the rich ruler could not? Zaccheus is the drug dealer who pimps his own community but hates himself for it. The rich ruler is the socially 'legit' wealthy establishment person who is tied up with his money. Do we see ourselves as Zaccheuses or as establishment people? That will affect how we feel about our ill-gotten wealth (especially in America).
13. How can modern day Zaccheuses demonstrate the new birth?

*Foreground Action: The Impoverished Widow*

Lk.21:1 He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; 2 he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; 4 for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

Question

1. Why does Jesus commend this widow?
2. How could Jesus commend a person in her financial situation for giving? Why not give her her money back? What kind of person would let a poor widow give her last coins? (A person who believes that giving is all-important, for anybody and everybody.)
3. In what ways is she being rich towards God? What kind of treasure in heaven does she have?
4. In what ways is the widow a model for us?

*Foreground Action: Repentance Required*

Lk.24:45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'

Questions

1. What is repentance in Jesus' name?
2. What does forgiveness of sins usually mean to us? Just a private decision of 'faith.'
3. When was the first mention of repentance in Luke's Gospel? With John the Baptist's preaching about money matters.
4. How has Jesus called people to repent? How has Jesus called people to repent specifically of materialism?
5. How have money matters figured in the overall message? Prominently.
6. Even if we assume that Lk.24:47 means more than repenting of materialism, we should not assume that it means less. In what ways can we grow in our repentance in money matters?
7. In what ways can we take more seriously our commission to proclaim all aspects of repentance?

*Foreground Action: How the Early Christians Regarded Wealth*

Acts 2:44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. 4 Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, 'Look at us.' 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Acts 4:32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'). 37 He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

#### Questions

1. If you were a part of this community, what might it have felt like?
2. What's challenging about this?
3. What's attractive about this?
4. Notice how they eat together? What does that seem to mean here? It's more than communion!
5. Why did Barnabas sell his land?
6. How do you sense the teaching of Jesus behind all this?

6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. 8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly induced men to say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council. 13 They put forward false witnesses who said, This

man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us. 15 And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

#### Questions

1. Start with v.8-15. This is the conflict Stephen runs into. Let's try to understand the world of Jerusalem outside the Christian community. Notice that there is a Synagogue of the Freedmen, in Jerusalem. Why is there a Synagogue in Jerusalem?? A synagogue was formed when you couldn't get to the Temple, like after the Babylonian Captivity. You needed 10 Jewish men. But why would you need a synagogue in Jerusalem?? These are Jews who are culturally different from the 'pure Hebrews.' Perhaps they looked different, having lived for generations in Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia.
2. Who had the power in Jerusalem? The Hebraic Jews or Hellenistic Jews? Hebraic. So what did this mean in terms of ethnic and cultural tension? Lots of tension.
3. (optional) They were maybe trying to assimilate, but were kept out of power by the establishment. So what do they do to Stephen? They accuse him of violating the establishment. They are immigrant assimilationists! They are very serious about the Temple and the customs.
4. Point: There were lots of tensions between the Hellenistic Jews and the Hebraic Jews. So when we look at the tensions in the Christian community, it's easy to understand why the Hellenistic Jewish Christian widows were 'overlooked.'
5. Let's set up the scene more: How was the food distributed? Land and wealth were sold and brought to the apostles (ch.4). The apostles bought food. How did they know where people lived? By word of mouth, relational networks. Since the apostles were from the Hebraic Jews and not from the diaspora Hellenistic Jewish community, they knew the Hebraic widows better. What kind of systemic problem does this create? The imbalance of power in the world causes an imbalance of power in the church. Tensions in the world create tensions in the church. Ethnic and cultural division in the world cause ethnic and cultural division in the church.
6. What does this show about table fellowship at this point? It had become a matter of economic redistribution.
7. Did the apostles demean 'serving tables' in order to favor 'preaching' and more 'spiritual' activities? No. Table fellowship was a central feature of their community life, and an expression of their unity and care for one another. In fact, they needed to have so much integrity to handle all that money. Remember Judas Iscariot was the first money carrier. A better translation would be that the apostles did not want to 'manage the table fellowship.' It was a complex system of receiving money from the community, having absolute integrity in buying food with it, and then distributing it to the community where there was a need. 'Table fellowship' is a huge responsibility! They honor it by saying that they need 7 men devoted to it full-time.
8. How could the apostles have responded differently? They could have said, 'Well, the problem is that you minorities are angry!' Defensively. Instead, they acknowledge the truth of the Hellenistic minority complaint.
9. How do the apostles take risks in their leadership? By allowing the community to choose the seven. By admitting they were wrong, that they had blind spots.
10. Notice that the seven deacons have Greek names. They were probably all Hellenistic Jews. Why is this surprising? No Hebraic Jews on the committee. It's amazing if the whole community agreed and selected these men.
11. How do you sense Jesus teaching on table fellowship behind these practices?
12. Why has the church given up on redistributing financial resources and food within itself?

#### *Foreground Action: Industries Challenged by the Gospel*

Acts 19:11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out. 13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' 14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said to

them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' 16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. 18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. 19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing. 21 Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, 'After I have been there, I must also see Rome.' 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. 23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; 25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, 'Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. 26 You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. 27 Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.' 28 When they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' 29 The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. 30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him. 31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater. 32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' 35 After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven? 36 So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. 40 For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no real cause for it, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering.' 41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

#### Questions

1. What industries today might be financially challenged and injured by the gospel transforming people? Discuss any of the following: astrology, pornography, military, luxury goods, etc.

#### *Foreground Action: Spiritual Leadership and Wealth*

Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. 17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord

Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" 36 When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

#### Questions

1. Focus in on the things Paul says about wealth and how he modeled using it, in v.33 – 35.
2. If the 'savage wolves' in v.29 and the men who speak 'perverse things' in v.30 abuse spiritual leadership in order to gain wealth (one possibility among others), how does Paul's statement in v.33 – 35 fit in?
3. Paul suggests that spiritual leadership uses wealth in certain ways. What are those ways?
4. How do you feel about this last statement in v.35?
5. What are all the reasons why it might feel more blessed to receive?
6. Why must be true about God in order that it is more blessed to give?

#### Summary questions & conclusions about the theme of wealth and Israel's land in Luke

1. What did Jesus call Israel to part with? Jesus called Israel to part with its \_\_\_\_\_, the primary economic commodity and tangible blessing from God of its day.
2. Mosaic Israel was a stationary community, but the kingdom community of Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_
3. Just as Jesus was generous and sacrificial with himself, he called everyone to be \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sometimes we say, 'I just have to be willing to give.' But in reality, Jesus would want us to say, 'I am not just willing; I'm \_\_\_\_\_ to give. I'm disappointed when I can't give!'
5. Wealth is to be \_\_\_\_\_ to those in need within the church, even on a worldwide level.
6. But the giving of wealth goes beyond distributive justice. Even the \_\_\_\_\_ are asked to give and sacrifice.
7. And wealth is to be used in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel and the expansion of the kingdom community.
8. In fact, all Christians are to accept and embrace \_\_\_\_\_ insecurity.
9. We are to be on a \_\_\_\_\_ to becoming poor, not for its own sake, but because we are called to display the life of Christ in sacrificial \_\_\_\_\_ for others.

## Appendix A: Israel's Land

*Foreground Action: The Warning*

Lk.1:13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of **Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children,** and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

### Questions

1. What do you expect of John the Baptist?
2. Examine the quotation from Malachi, below. How does Malachi threaten Israel?

*Soundtrack/Background Music: Israel's Last Chance Before God's Judgment*

- Mal.4:5 Lo, I will send you the prophet **Elijah** before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. 6 **He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, lest I come and strike the land with a curse.**
3. What did it mean for God to strike the land with a curse?
  4. What was Israel's ideal lifestyle? What did it have to do with enjoying God's good land? They wanted to live on a garden land, one similar to the one Adam and Eve lost.
  5. If the Israelites do not accept the teaching of John the Baptist, what would be the outcome?
  6. What do Israel's leaders eventually decide about John the Baptist? (Lk.7:30 The Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John.)
  7. What does that mean God will do to the land? Strike it with a curse.
  8. What would the curse look like? See below.

*Foreground Action: What the Curse Looks Like*

Lk.1:46 And Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 **He has filled the hungry with good things** but has sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers."

### Questions

1. What Psalm does Mary quote? Psalm 107

*Soundtrack/Background Music: Restoration from Exile, or Not?*

Ps.107:1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,  
those he redeemed from trouble  
3 and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastes,  
     finding no way to an inhabited town;  
 5 hungry and thirsty,  
     their soul fainted within them.  
 6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
     and he delivered them from their distress;  
 7 he led them by a straight way,  
     until they reached an inhabited town.  
 8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,  
     for his wonderful works to humankind.  
 9 For he satisfies the thirsty,  
     and **the hungry he fills with good things.**

*33 He turns rivers into a desert,  
     springs of water into thirsty ground,  
 34 a fruitful land into a salty waste,  
     because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.  
 35 He turns a desert into pools of water,  
     a parched land into springs of water.  
 36 And there he lets the hungry live,  
     and they establish a town to live in;  
 37 they sow fields, and plant vineyards,  
     and get a fruitful yield.  
 38 By his blessing they multiply greatly,  
     and he does not let their cattle decrease.*

2. According to Psalm 107, and in the mind of Mary, what is the very tangible penalty for “the wickedness of its [the land’s] inhabitants?”
3. Did this happen? Yes, when non-believing Jews persisted in rejecting Jesus and the gospel.
4. When? After Pentecost until two important dates. In 70 AD, the Romans came in and leveled Jerusalem. In 130 AD, after the Bar-Kochba Revolt, the Romans dispersed them from the land.
5. How might Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Mary have hopes because of the birth of John and Jesus?
6. How might Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Mary have fears because of the birth of John and Jesus?
7. What is the significance of the following passage in connection with this?
  - Lk.20:9 And he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. 10 And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard, but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 And he proceeded to send another slave, and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12 And he proceeded to a third, and this one they also wounded and cast out. 13 And the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son, perhaps they will respect him.’ 14 But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.’ 15 And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others.” And when they heard it, they said, “May it never be!”

# Luke – Acts

## The Theme of Wealth and Israel’s Land

### Part 2: Manuscript Handout

*Foreground Action: Malachi’s Warning*

Lk.1:13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. 16 And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of **Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children**, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

*Soundtrack/Background Music: Malachi’s Prophecy*

- Mal.4:5 Lo, I will send you the prophet **Elijah** before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. 6 **He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, lest I come and strike the land with a curse.**

*Foreground Action: Mary’s Hope for Restoration from Exile*

Lk.1:46 And Mary said, “My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 **He has filled the hungry with good things** but has sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”

*Soundtrack/Background Music: Restoration from Exile, or Not?*

Ps.107:1 O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever.  
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those he redeemed from trouble  
3 and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south.  
4 Some wandered in desert wastes,  
finding no way to an inhabited town;  
5 hungry and thirsty,  
their soul fainted within them.  
6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress;  
7 he led them by a straight way,  
until they reached an inhabited town.  
8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,  
for his wonderful works to humankind.  
9 For he satisfies the thirsty,

and **the hungry he fills with good things.**

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springs of water into thirsty ground,  
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because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.*  
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a parched land into springs of water.*  
36 *And there he lets the hungry live,  
and they establish a town to live in;*  
37 *they sow fields, and plant vineyards,  
and get a fruitful yield.*  
38 *By his blessing they multiply greatly,  
and he does not let their cattle decrease.*

*Foreground Action: John the Baptist Prepares Israel*

Lk.3:10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, “Then what shall we do?” 11 And he would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.” 12 And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” 14 Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.”

*Foreground Action: The Mission of Jesus*

Lk.4:16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom.

He stood up to read,

17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him.

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, b/c he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.**

**He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,**

**to let the oppressed go free,**

**19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”**

20 And he rolled up the scroll,

gave it back to the attendant,

and sat down.

The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

*Soundtrack/Background Music: The Isaianic Servant*

Isa.61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,  
*and the day of vengeance of our God.*

*Foreground Action: Jesus' Teaching on Sacrifice and Love*

Lk.6:19 And all the multitude were trying to touch him, for power was coming from him and healing them all. 20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. 22 Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. 24 But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. 25 Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. 26 Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. 27 But I say to you that listen, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

*Foreground Action: Jesus Prepares the Seventy*

Lk.9:51 And it came about when the days were approaching for his ascension, that he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem; 52 and he sent messengers on ahead of him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for him. 53 And they did not receive him because he was journeying with his face toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples, James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village. 57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 59 And he said to another, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Permit me first to go and bury my father.' 60 But he said to him, 'Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.' 61 And another also said, 'I will follow you, Lord, but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.' 62 But Jesus said to him, 'No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'

*Foreground Action: Jesus' Teaching on Disinheritance and True Riches*

Lk.12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." 16 Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17 And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God." 22 He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell

you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you--you of little faith! 29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

*Foreground Action: It Takes Everything You've Got*

Lk.14:1 It happened that when he went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching him closely. 2 And there in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. 3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they kept silent. And he took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6 And they could make no reply to this. 7 And he began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table, saying to them, 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. 10 But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." 12 And he also went on to say to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. 13 But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." 15 When one of those who were reclining at the table with him heard this, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 But he said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' 19 Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' 20 Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.' 21 And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' 22 And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' 23 And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

25 Now great multitudes were going along with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 'If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. 33 So therefore, no one of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

*Foreground Action: A Lesson on Shrewdness*

Lk.16:1 Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. 2 So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ 3 Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ 5 So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ 6 He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ 7 Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ 8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. 10 Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? 13 No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” 14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him.

*Foreground Action: Rich Man, Rich Man*

Lk.18:15 People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. 16 But Jesus called for them and said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 17 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.’ 18 A certain ruler asked him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ 19 Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 20 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.’ 21 He replied, ‘I have kept all these since my youth.’ 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, ‘There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ 23 But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, ‘How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, 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.’ 26 Those who heard it said, ‘Then who can be saved?’ 27 He replied, ‘What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.’ 28 Then Peter said, ‘Look, we have left our homes and followed you.’ 29 And he said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.’ 31 Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. 32 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, 33 and after they have scourged him, they will kill him; and the third day he will rise again.’ 34 But the disciples understood none of these things; and the meaning of this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

Lk.18:35 As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging. 36 Now hearing a crowd going by, he began to inquire what this was. 37 They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he called out, saying, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’ 39 Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ 40 And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to him; and when he came near, he questioned him, 41 ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ And he said, ‘Lord, I want to regain my sight!’ 42 And

Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.' 43 Immediately he regained his sight and began following him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God. 19:1 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2 A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' 6 So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. 7 All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' 8 Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' 9 Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

*Foreground Action: Taking Away the Vineyard Land*

Lk.20:9 And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. 10 And at the harvest time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order that they might give him some of the produce of the vineyard, but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 And he proceeded to send another slave, and they beat him also and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12 And he proceeded to a third, and this one they also wounded and cast out. 13 And the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son, perhaps they will respect him.' 14 But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, 'This is the heir; let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.' 15 And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, therefore, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it, they said, "May it never be!"

*Foreground Action: The Impoverished Widow*

Lk.21:1 He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; 2 he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 He said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; 4 for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.'

*Foreground Action: Commissioned to Proclaim Repentance*

Lk.24:45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'

*Foreground Action: How the Early Christians Regarded Wealth*

Acts 2:44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. 4 Peter looked intently at him, as

did John, and said, 'Look at us.' 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, 'I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.' 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Acts 4:32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'). 37 He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. 8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11 Then they secretly induced men to say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him and dragged him away and brought him before the Council. 13 They put forward false witnesses who said, This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us. 15 And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.

*Foreground Action: Industries Challenged by the Gospel*

Acts 19:11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out. 13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' 14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' 16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. 18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. 19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing. 21 Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, 'After I have been there, I must also see Rome.' 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus,

he himself stayed in Asia for a while. 23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; 25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, 'Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. 26 You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. 27 Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.' 28 When they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' 29 The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. 30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him. 31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater. 32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' 35 After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven? 36 So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. 40 For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no real cause for it, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering.' 41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

*Foreground Action: Spiritual Leadership and Wealth*

Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. 17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. 35 In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" 36 When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

### Summary questions & conclusions about Luke's Theme of Wealth and Israel's Land

1. MOSES & JESUS: What did Jesus call Israel to part with? Jesus called Israel to part with its \_\_\_\_\_, its primary economic commodity and tangible blessing from God.
2. MOSES & JESUS: Mosaic Israel was a stationary community in one land, but Jesus' community is a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. JESUS' EXAMPLE: Just as Jesus was generous and sacrificial, he called everyone to be \_\_\_\_\_.
4. JESUS & THE CHURCH: Wealth is to be \_\_\_\_\_ to those in need within the church, even on a worldwide level.
5. JESUS & THE POOR: But the giving of wealth goes beyond distributive justice. Even the \_\_\_\_\_ are asked to give and sacrifice, and to a large degree, they already have!
6. JESUS & HIS MISSION: And wealth is to be used in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel and the expansion of the kingdom community.
7. OUR HEARTS & OUR ACTIONS: Sometimes we say, 'I just have to be willing to give.' But in reality, we probably should say, 'I am not just willing; I'm \_\_\_\_\_ to give. I'm disappointed when I can't give!'
8. PILGRIMAGE: In fact, all Christians are to accept and embrace \_\_\_\_\_ insecurity so we can receive \_\_\_\_\_.
9. THE IMPACT OF We are to be on a \_\_\_\_\_ to becoming poor, not for its own sake, but because we are called to display the life of Christ in sacrificial \_\_\_\_\_ for others.

## Humanity's Relationship with the Creation (Land) in the Bible

<b>Adam &amp; Eve</b>	<b>Abraham</b>	<b>Mosaic Israel</b>	<b>Messianic Israel (Church)</b>	<b>Messianic Israel (Church)</b>
Inheritance of All Creation		Inheritance of Promised Land		Inheritance of All of New Creation
	Pilgrimage Through Promised Land		Pilgrimage Through All Creation	

## Israel's Relationship with Creation (Promised Land) in the Bible

<b>Creation</b>	<b>Israel</b>
God	Fathers
Gave the garden land	Gave a portion of the land inheritance
To Adam	To sons
Eve also inherited the land via marriage	Women also inherited land via marriage

- **Land distributed by tribe**
- **Land passed down by father to sons**
- **Women inherited land by marriage**
- **A father with daughters and no sons would give land to daughters; the daughters had to marry within the tribe to keep that land within the tribe (Num.36)**
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## Humanity's Relationship with Land & City Through Biblical Time Periods

<b>Gen.1:1-2:3</b>	<b>Gen.2:4 – 4:26</b>	<b>Gen.11-Deutrnmy</b>	<b>Joshua-Kings</b>	<b>Exilic Prophets</b>	<b>Gospels, Epistles, Revelation</b>	<b>Revelation</b>
Adam & Eve	Adam & Eve	Abraham & Sarah	Mosaic Israel	Mosaic Israel	Messianic Israel (Church)	Messianic Israel (Church)
Blessed	Exiled	Blessed & Promised	Blessed	Exiled	Blessed & Promised	Blessed
Inherit the Abundant Land			Inherit the Abundant Land			Inherit the Abundant Land
	Pilgrimage Through Land	Pilgrimage Through Land			Pilgrimage Through Land	
	Cain Lives in a City	Godless humanity lives in a City	Israel inherited Cities they did not build; they were not to build more Cities, but did	Israel is exiled in a City	Have a mission in the City	Inherit the New City

## Humanity's Relationship with Wealth Through Biblical Time Periods

Time Period in Biblical History	Creation	Abraham and the Patriarchs	The Exodus	Israel's Early Life in the Land	Israel's Kings (e.g. Solomon)	Jesus and the Early Church
<b>Where Wealth Comes From?</b>	Land	Land (harvest, flocks), other people	The Egyptians, then the Promised Land	Land from God, Harvest from Labor	Land, taxes	As God cares for the birds and lilies. We are to live in a new creation way, even in a fallen world, before the new creation fully arrives
<b>How to think about Land</b>	Abundant land given by God	Abraham, etc. are pilgrims sojourning in the Land, but haven't received it yet	Israel is looking forward to inheriting the Land	* Abundant land given by God; * Land parceled by tribe and family through fathers and sons; * Land can be bought and sold but returns to original families in Jubilee	Israel's kings were supposed to honor the Mosaic Land distribution, but some stepped over it (e.g. Ahab and Naboth's vineyard)	* Israel is called away from her ancestral Land, thus no more land inheritance and no more financial security (Lk.12:13-34, Mt.6:19-34); * Peter says we are aliens and pilgrims (1 Pet); * The new Exodus is spiritual and not ethnic-specific (Col.1:13-14); * The church is not a geographically fixed or stable community because our mission involves the whole world; * We await a new Land in the new heavens & earth
<b>How to think about Labor</b>	There was no labor done to survive	Labor on the Land seemed essential to survive (e.g. flocks)	Labor can oppress (e.g. Ex.5)	* Labor is essential; * Labor can be oppressive; slaves are freed in Jubilee	Israel's kings were not supposed to oppress the people with labor, but some did (e.g. Solomon)	* Labor is essential for self-sustenance (2 Thess.3); * Can stem from idolatry (Acts 19) * Can be oppressive (thus, slavery is checked, Eph.6, Col.3); * Can be a distraction (1 Cor.7); * Apostolic work is labor that can receive payment (1 Cor.9)
<b>How to think about Capital &amp; more complex forms of wealth-creation</b>	None	War seemed occasionally sanctioned, although Abraham did not always accept wealth from war (Gen.13);	NA	* No usury and interest rates within Israel; no banking; * No idols or money related to Canaanite paganism (Josh.7) * Trading criticized (e.g. Ezk.28)	* War seemed sanctioned; sometimes * Israel's kings taxed the people (e.g. Solomon)	* Do not steal (Eph.4:28) * War becomes a spiritual matter, not a physical one, so War is not sanctioned (Eph.6:10-18); * OT attitudes towards usury and interest are assumed to carry over; * Redistribution of wealth does happen often (e.g. Acts 2,4,6; 2 Cor.8-9, Lk.18:13-19:10, Gal.2:10, James) * Injustice must be addressed (Lk.14:12-14, James)
<b>What To Do With Wealth, Generally?</b>	Enjoy it, eat	Primarily practice hospitality	Regard wealth from Egypt as recompense for past oppression	* Enjoy a partly creational situation, where a partially restored Paradise Land is given to all * Support the Levitical system	* Supposed to not abuse the people and accumulate wealth (Dt.17:14-20); * But most did	* Paul assumes parents save for children (2 Cor.12:14), but this should not be stretched and confused with saving for oneself, which is criticized (Mt.6:19-34, Lk.12:13ff.) * By and large we are to sacrificially give, even beyond the family, because we have a new kingdom family (Lk.-Acts) * Pay taxes, do not get into debt (Rom.13:7-8) * Do not favor the rich (James)
<b>What Should the Poor Do?</b>	No one is poor	Receive it	Receive it	Receive it, give some tithes and offerings	Ask the king to enforce the Mosaic Law, protecting the poor	* Receive it (e.g. Acts 2, 4, 6, Jas.1:27); * Give it sacrificially also (e.g. Phil.4, Lk.6:20ff.; 21:1-4, Acts 3:1-11)

## Preliminary Principles in Teaching on Wealth Biblically

1. We privilege the NT over the OT on this subject because we are not in Israel's earlier part of the story.
  - a. The primary difference is that Mosaic Israel was a stationary community and primarily mono-ethnic, whereas Messianic Israel (the church) is a mobile, missionary community and multi-ethnic.
  - b. In the NT, who emphasizes money and wealth the most? In order:
    - i. Luke
    - ii. James
    - iii. Paul
    - iv. Matthew
    - v. John, Mark
2. Teaching 'biblically' does not mean summarizing all the material and averaging it out. Nor does it mean that *any* passage from the Bible can be taught straight off the page. Teaching biblically means that you respect the development of themes and theology throughout the canon.
  - a. At times the OT seems to 'match' the NT teaching, as when the 'pilgrim' language is applied to both Abraham and us, or when 'care for widows and orphans' appears in both the Mosaic Law and the NT (e.g. Acts, James, etc.).
  - b. However, there are always dissimilarities as well. Abraham was not given strong commands to sacrifice and reach out. Neither were the poor in the OT.
  - c. In many cases, the NT goes beyond or even overturns the teaching of the OT (e.g. especially with respect to Land).
  - d. Your confidence in making a point out of the OT depends very much on finding the points of continuity and discontinuity with the NT.
    - i. For example, working to support oneself (like in Proverbs) is still taught in the NT, but without the assumption that you're a landowner, and without the explicit motivation to become fairly wealthy.
    - ii. For example, caring for the poor is still taught in the NT, perhaps even more strongly than in the OT. This is because in the OT, there was an external, baseline socio-economic order that 'justice' referenced. So, care for the poor could be satisfied, at least in theory. But in the NT, there is no baseline socio-economic order. Instead, what matters is generosity and sacrifice: internal character qualities. Therefore the responsibility to care for the poor is open-ended and unlimited.
3. The NT teaching on wealth is much more complex than the prior phases in Israel's history; we need succinct statements that are faithful to the teaching and yet very punchy.

## Part 2: Tough Questions

### Case Study A: The Big Talk

You are leading a small group, and things were going well until the day you decided to do a bible study on money. That's when the 'big talk' started.

**Carol**, normally easy-going, quickly perked up. A White American young woman from a wealthy family in Connecticut, Carol said: 'The Bible doesn't actually teach anything on money. It only teaches about materialism. As long as we don't put money before God in our hearts, it's okay, right?'

**Elaine**, also a White American from a wealthy family, who was planning on joining the Peace Corps next year, said, 'Well, I think there's stronger teaching than that – Jesus calls us to really give up things, like in Mark 10 or Luke 18 when he called the rich young ruler to give up all his possessions.'

**Andrei**, a recent immigrant from Kazakhstan, from an Orthodox church, majoring in Political Science, was puzzled: 'All his possessions? Wait. I thought God gave the creation to us. And it's good to be somewhat greedy. That's why the U.S. has become so powerful. Some kind of greed is useful to society. As long as you're not too greedy that you don't help others...'

**Jim**, a member of the Young Republicans, said, 'I'm not totally comfortable with this, but at our Young Republicans meetings, some say that Christians ought to promote capitalism and hard work.'

**Jerome**, a biracial (African American and Puerto Rican) student from New York majoring in African American studies and Sociology, spoke up: 'Carol and Rick, you're putting the focus on yourselves, as if all that mattered was whether you, Carol, are materialistic, or whether you, Elaine, give to causes. And Andrei and Jim, you're assuming capitalism is good and then you're justifying the attitudes capitalism needs to keep going. But God focuses us on the poor. What matters is what we've done for the poor and where we are relative to the poor. Look at Isaiah 58 or James 5.'

**Carol** replied: 'But there were all kinds of people in the Bible who had lots of money. Look at Abraham in Genesis... (flipping open her Bible) 13:2 ('Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold') or all the promises God made to Israel about having a land flowing with milk and honey. And Solomon was wealthy, too. What do we do with those people?'

### **Case Study B: The Big Talk**

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**Andrei**, a recent immigrant from Kazakhstan, from an Orthodox church, majoring in Political Science, was puzzled: 'All his possessions? Wait. I thought God gave the creation to us. And it's good to be somewhat greedy. That's why the U.S. has become so powerful. Some kind of greed is useful to society. As long as you're not too greedy that you don't help others...'

**Jim**, a member of the Young Republicans, said, 'I'm not totally comfortable with this, but at our Young Republicans meetings, some say that Christians ought to promote capitalism and hard work.'

**Jerome**, a biracial (African American and Puerto Rican) student from New York majoring in African American studies and Sociology, spoke up: 'Carol and Rick, you're putting the focus on yourselves, as if all that mattered was whether you, Carol, are materialistic, or whether you, Elaine, give to causes. And Andrei and Jim, you're assuming capitalism is good and then you're justifying the attitudes capitalism needs to keep going. But God focuses us on the poor. What matters is what we've done for the poor and where we are relative to the poor. Look at Isaiah 58 or James 5.'

**Carol** replied: 'But there were all kinds of people in the Bible who had lots of money. Look at Abraham in Genesis... (flipping open her Bible) 13:2 ('Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold') or all the promises God made to Israel about having a land flowing with milk and honey. And Solomon was wealthy, too. What do we do with those people?'

**Jerome** said, 'Well, that's because God is a God of justice. Israel had just come up from being oppressed in Egypt. And notice that Abram had just been in Egypt, too, in Genesis 12 where his wife was taken by Pharaoh? God gave them wealth because they had been an oppressed people. That's why race and ethnicity is a big deal when we talk about money.'

**Carol**, skeptical: 'So the hard passages in the Bible apply to me because I'm White, but not to you because you're Black and Latino?'

**Jerome**: 'Well, they focus us on the poor, so maybe they apply to you more because you're more wealthy.'

**Andrei**: 'Wouldn't that still mean for you, Jerome, that you as an American should give more money because you are wealthier than most people in the world?'

**Elaine**: 'Can we back up just one step? So it's okay for the minority families I work with to spend lots of money on TV's, CD's, and brand name clothing? Or, Jerome, you yourself can be materialistic, but it's okay because you're less wealthy to start with? You make it sound like if you're poor, then you don't have to struggle with materialism and you have no responsibility but to receive. Does justice as you define it override our common Christian responsibilities? What about the poor widow in Luke 21? She gave all she had, and she was poor, and Jesus applauded her. And what about the Philippian church? They gave to Paul, and they were poor (2 Cor.8), and Paul applauded them. Even if you're poor, you have responsibilities to give.'

**Jerome:** ‘Now wait a minute. Lots of studies show that poor people on the whole are more generous than rich people. I’ll admit that there are some ways that the poor can be materialistic, too, like you mentioned, but I feel like you’re oversimplifying something.’

**Thomas,** a Sociology and History double major, part Wompanoag (a Native American tribe living in the Southern MA and RI area) chimed in, ‘I have to say, Jerome, that I’m not sure we should use the Exodus passage that way. The White Americans who took lands away from the First Nations peoples used the Exodus idea in the same way, so you can understand my hesitation. They were poor and persecuted, too, and they thought they were the new displaced chosen people who were inheriting a new land, even though it wasn’t their land at all. And they used the idea of settling the land and taking it away from the Canaanites to subtly justify it. So I think the Exodus story is...I don’t know exactly how to feel about it, since I guess God did it with Israel. But I don’t think we were meant to use it again. I think it was unique.’

**Jerome:** ‘But it establishes a principle, that God is a God of justice, the one who levels the playing field for the poor.’

**Thomas** said: ‘If that’s true, then maybe we fill out that principle by looking for another passage that is not violent and ethnically polarized.’

**Lisa,** the daughter of struggling Korean immigrants in NY, said, ‘Well, I agree with you, Jerome, that race and ethnic background is a factor. But what about money earned by hard work? I mean, Jim the Republican isn’t completely off there. Christians should talk about hard work, too. My church at home went through a study of Proverbs. And Proverbs talks a lot about working hard, and, Elaine, it seems like wealth is an okay motivation to have to some degree. He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who pursues vain things lacks sense – Proverbs 12:11. Or Wealth obtained by fraud dwindles, but the one who gathers by labor increases it – Proverbs 13:11. Or, Much wealth is in the house of the righteous, but trouble is in the income of the wicked – Proverbs 15:6. Or A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous – Proverbs 13:22.’

**Carol:** ‘And Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3 that if a man doesn’t work, let him not eat. If that’s true, and if my parents were just hardworking, then does that mean my family is doing alright?’

**Lisa:** ‘Well, I’m not saying that’s *all* there is...’ Elaine, Jerome, and Thomas also look visibly uncomfortable.

**Jerome:** ‘Carol, Proverbs also talks about giving to the poor. Like ‘The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor, the wicked does not understand such concern – Proverbs 29:7.’

**Thomas:** ‘But Proverbs assumes that you’re an Israelite living a rural life in the promised land. He who tills his land – like you said in Proverbs 12:11 and in lots of other places like 28:19. But what if you don’t have a land anymore?’

**Andrei:** ‘And Proverbs, like the Mosaic Law, speaks against banking and interest rates. Look at Proverbs 28:8 – 9, ‘He who increases his wealth by interest and usury gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor. He who turns away his ear from listening to the Law, even his prayer is an abomination.’ What happens now that we live in the world of complex finances? Or if you’re not the Jewish chosen people?’

**Jim:** ‘That’s where I struggle. It seems like we have to be realistic. But sometimes the Bible seems very unrealistic on this topic. And it seems irresponsible to take just bits and pieces of what the Bible teaches, especially within one book.’

**Andrei:** ‘You know, we’ve been talking mostly about how money gets to you, whether through work, or through injustice, or through redistribution of wealth in an attempt to see injustice corrected. What about what to do with it once we have it?’

**Lisa:** ‘That’s honestly where it becomes uncomfortable for me. Because doesn’t it matter how it got to you? And what motivates you? If you earned it, then isn’t that somehow God’s way of rewarding you? So long as you tithe 10 percent to your church?’

**Jerome:** ‘But Lisa, what about in Acts 2 and 4, where Christians give up a lot to help each other? They were doing more than tithing 10%. They were redistributing wealth in an attempt to show justice.’

Elaine nods in agreement, and **Thomas** says, ‘I agree – I like *that* picture of Christians addressing injustice, and people’s needs.’

**Lisa:** ‘So what’s the point of my parents coming to the States and working hard if it’s just supposed to all go somewhere else?’

**Andrei:** ‘Maybe God blessed you to be a blessing to others?’

**Carol:** ‘Yes, but I guess we have to be careful about that, too, because in the case of White Americans, how much comes from injustice and how much comes from working hard is hard to tell.’

**Jim:** ‘I was going to say that Ephesians 4:28 says for the thief to stop stealing, and that that’s fairly easy to understand, but even that doesn’t seem as easy any more.’

**Andrei:** ‘Still, there must be some way to boil things down. Do you think we’re supposed to find all the references to wealth in the Bible and just average them out?’

**Elaine:** ‘I don’t think so – it would blunt the teaching of Jesus and wouldn’t leave us with anything really coherent.’

**Lisa:** ‘Elaine, why do you make the teaching of Jesus more central than the Old Testament?’

**Elaine:** ‘Because Jesus’ teaching goes beyond the Old Testament on this topic.’

**Thomas:** ‘I agree with Elaine. Also because ancient Israel had special arrangements with land and wealth that we can’t duplicate. The Old Testament told them to break up the Promised Land by tribe and family when they first settled it. Land was then passed down from father to son, divided by the father among his sons. When the Psalms speak of a ‘portion’ or an ‘inheritance,’ it was the land inheritance.’

**Carol:** ‘What about the women?’

**Thomas:** ‘Women inherited land by marriage, because it was assumed that everyone did get married. That’s why widows, orphans, and aliens get mentioned as needing protection; they were vulnerable because they had no land. Numbers 36 describes the special situation where a man has only daughters – the daughters then inherit the land temporarily, but have to marry men from within their tribe to keep tribal lands within the men of their tribe. Land was so central to life and blessing from God that in the Jubilee, land was to be returned to its original owners. But notice that while God tells Israel to care for these widows, orphans, aliens, and special cases, He didn’t change the fundamental arrangement that land is passed down from father to son. And when the Prophets railed against Israel, it’s not because they wanted to change Moses’ Law about land. It’s actually not because they thought widows, orphans, aliens, and women in general should just have their own piece of land. Land and wealth were to be shared justly, but land belonged to the family, embodied by the men. The Prophets never changed this picture. I guess we might struggle with that...’

**Carol:** ‘Yes, I do.’

**Thomas:** ‘...but fortunately for us, I think, Jesus set that aside and went beyond what Moses set up.’

**Elaine:** ‘Look at the poor guy in Luke 12 whose brother wasn’t sharing the land inheritance with him. He asks Jesus to divide the inheritance, but Jesus refused!’

**Thomas:** ‘Israel’s practice goes back to the creation picture where God as Father gave Adam as son the land and Eve inherited it by marriage. And that’s why, in Revelation 19-22, God as Father will give Jesus as Son the whole new heavens and new earth to share with his bride the Church. The whole ‘Jesus as groom, Church as bride’ metaphor is there not primarily because it’s romantic but because God is giving a new land in the future.’

**Elaine:** ‘Oh – and that’s why Jesus could call us to almost disinherit ourselves from our ancestral forms of wealth, and into such deep sacrifice. I never saw that connection before explicitly. I just thought Jesus was just cool and radical and extreme.’

**Lisa:** ‘Well, he is pretty extreme.’

**Jerome:** ‘Do you think that being Native American helps you see these things in Scripture?’

**Thomas:** ‘In some ways, but I think if we read the story as an unfolding story, we’d all see it. It’s there.’

**Jerome:** ‘Is that why you like the Acts passages but are hesitant about the Exodus passage?’

**Thomas:** ‘Yeah, and in general, the New Testament over the Old Testament. That’s also because Old Testament Israel was a stationary community that didn’t interact much with other nations, but Israel under Jesus is a very mobile community with the responsibility to reach out to all people groups.’

**Jerome,** seeing new possibilities: ‘But if wealth is now meant to be more fluid in general, and land is no longer tied to men, and wealth is meant to be given, even by the poor, and the focus for Christians is the whole world, then that actually has new implications for justice, doesn’t it?’

**Thomas:** ‘I think so. I think it would put the whole justice conversation into a new context. But that’s a whole new topic.’

#### Questions

1. What do you think of this dialogue?
2. Is there someone you especially relate to?
3. What Scriptures do you see brought up?
4. What objections do you see brought up?
5. Note: Not all loose ends get tied up, and this is far from a comprehensive discussion on the subject. What questions does it leave you with?