

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Charles Spurgeon and a Biblical View of Wealth

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the degree of
Ph.D. in Bible Exposition

by
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New Albany, Mississippi

May 10th, 2023

ABSTRACT

Charles Spurgeon and a Biblical View of Wealth

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2023

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Charles Spurgeon preached wealth as a spiritual commodity based on his Christological exposition which countered the preaching of wealth as a divine right. Some people have come to view earthly wealth as a substance that comes as a result of obedience to God. There are also a number of people that believe that any biblical theology pertaining to wealth is amendable and see no lasting truth in the text. Spurgeon critiques these approaches. He saw earthly wealth primarily as a spiritual commodity and believed it to be a substance that should be utilized for the purpose of bringing glory to God. The researcher will present a study of what the Bible teaches with regards to wealth as perceived by Spurgeon by applying biblical theological categories and an analysis of wealth from its inception until the present day.

Abstract Length: 137 Words

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to God first and foremost for all of His many wonderful blessings. I am beholden to Dr. David Pederson, my Dissertation Mentor. I am also grateful to my Dissertation Reader Dr. Robert Talley. I most appreciate that these men were willing to lend their amazing expertise, personal time, and skillful guidance. I am especially grateful to have had the opportunity to glean from their extensive knowledge and experience during this process. I want to thank the Bible Exposition program director Dr. Richard Fuhr and the wonderful staff at Liberty University.

I very much appreciate the way the faculty and staff at Liberty University have gone to such great lengths to help me achieve my goals. It has been a pleasure to connect with such thoughtful and compassionate individuals. I want to express my gratitude toward family and friends. I am thankful for all their support. I want to recognize the North Mississippi Baptist Bible Institute and all those that are involved in that ministry. This would not be possible without the support of my teachers, professors, church pastors, deacons, and all of my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am truly amazed at the love and care demonstrated by those that have given liberally of their time and resources in order to help me to continue in this process.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Evangelical Westerners often misunderstand the meaning of biblical wealth. Charles Haddon Spurgeon illustrates this point and provides to his readers a vast wealth of writings from which one might derive a method to approach this critical issue. When discussing earthly increase Spurgeon once said, “If you ask for wealth, you may not get it; for it is a small and paltry thing which the Lord may not care to give you. But if you ask for eternal life, you shall have it; for this is a great thing and God delights to give blessings to those who come to Him by Christ Jesus, so that what might seem to hinder should now encourage!” In this quote Spurgeon eloquently contrasts earthly wealth to the things eternal.¹

This chapter will provide an overall introduction to the topic. It will discuss key terms and relate relevant introductory issues. It will highlight some of the habits that westerners incorporate into their Bible study. The habits being presented are those that often hinder the audience’s perception. These are habits that may obscure interpretations that the original audience and readers from other cultures understand quite clearly.

This study seeks to deal with these issues and provide a positive framework that Western readers may employ in order to better perceive and relate the truth about biblical wealth. The influence of presupposition on Bible interpretation is not a new concept. This is an idea that is frequently discussed in scholarly settings as well as less formal spheres of influence. As such, this chapter will introduce readers to problems with biblical interpretation that connect with cultural obstacles. This paper seeks to tackle the challenges associated with biblical wealth and

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Gems* (Pensacola, FL: Chapel Library, 2012), chap. 2, Kindle.

offer a constructive framework that enables Western readers to gain a deeper understanding of its true nature.

The chapter will differentiate between three differing groups within modern Western culture. These groups are composed of individuals taking a conservative approach, regressed approach, and simple approach to wealth. Each of the groups maintains their own distinct views about this topic. The chapter will describe differences between Western culture and non-Western culture and consider a number of probing questions that highlight key factors within the study.² It will describe and outline the need for this study. It will offer data pertaining to the author's background, a statement of the problem, a statement of the purpose for the study, a statement of the importance of the study, a statement of the position of the problem, the limitations of the study, the methods employed, a development of the thesis, a review of the literature, and a brief discussion of the results. The chapter will seek to relate the underlying principles that drive the study.

Spurgeon often spoke about the spiritual commodity of wealth. He touched on this topic when preaching on the three sections of text found in 1 Peter 2:7, 2 Peter 1:4, and 2 Peter 1:1. These passages discuss “three precious things.” In 1 Peter 2:7 says, “he is precious.” 2 Peter 1:4 mentions “Precious promises.” 2 Peter 1:1 describes “Precious faith” (2 Pt 1:1; 2 Pt 1:4; 2 Pt 1:7 [KJV]) Spurgeon said, “These three precious things, when put together, present to us a treasure of priceless things, altogether without parallel.” He believed that these spiritual commodities were far more precious than earthly treasure. He proclaimed, “We have here three precious things which will outlast sun and moon; precious things which are all heavenly, spiritual, soul

² E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blindness to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), Introduction, Kindle.

filling, and satisfactory; precious things which, if a man has them, they shall make him rich, and bring him no sorrow.” Spurgeon believed that the precious things of God would outlast any earthly treasure. He said there are, “precious things that shall adorn and enrich their owners when all the peculiar treasure of kings shall be dissolved by the last fire.”³

Solomon argues that those clinging to earthly wealth often do not fully realize the grandeur of God’s provision and protection. Proverbs 18:11 says, “The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and as high wall in his own conceit” (Prv 18:11). This passage of Scripture affirms that earthly wealth cannot take the place of God as a foundation for security. While riches and material possessions are more desirable than poverty, they cannot prevent catastrophes from occurring. People that store up earthly treasures often believe that their wealth can save them much like the high city walls would protect citizens from the enemy in biblical times. However, they are sadly mistaken. Money and material possessions are no defense for many of the struggles that people may encounter from day to day.⁴

The Problem

The teachings of Jesus Christ on wealth and material possessions have been a source of inspiration and guidance for Christians throughout history. The text clearly demonstrates that believers are to lay up their treasures in heaven. When Jesus taught on the law, he used the words “Ye have heard that it was said” and “But I say to you” (Mt 5:21-22). He employs this wording to draw attention to the fact that his own teaching goes past simple conformity.⁵

³ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 16 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

⁴ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1:944 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985).

⁵ Charles Nathan Ridlehoover, “The Logic of Matthew 6.19-7.12: Heavenly Priorities in the Kingdom of Earth,” *New Testament Studies* 66, no. 4 (October 2020): 582–600, doi:10.1017/s0028688520000132.

Christ compels believers to look deeper into what the law demands. The Bible text guides believers well into the realm of wealth studies. When speaking of treasures in Matthew 6:19-21 Jesus asserts that earthly treasure is not sufficient. Christ contends, that in order to truly adhere to what the law demands, believers must strive for heavenly treasures rather than earthly riches. Matthew 6:19 through Matthew 7:12 begins with a *kelal* to seek heavenly treasure. This section of Scripture ends in Matthew 7:12 with the summary clause, “Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law of the prophets” (Mt 7:12).⁶

The golden rule not only summarizes what Christ said in Matthew 6:19-21, but also the overall message of the sermon. While the golden rule may be used to summarize what Christ said in Matthew 6:19-21 as well as the overall message of the sermon, it is worth noting that it does not fully consider the Beatitudes or the general context of Matthew's Gospel. The Beatitudes play a significant role in the Sermon on the Mount, which is where the golden rule is found. They provide a framework for comprehending the ethical teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and give a glimpse into the character of those who would live according to the kingdom of God. Moreover, the broader context of Matthew's Gospel includes Jesus' teachings on various topics beyond ethics, such as eschatology and Christology, which are essential for grasping the message of the Gospel in its entirety.⁷

Jesus focuses on earthly wealth in Luke 16:9. He affirms that Christians are to use their earthly wealth to benefit others. The idea is to share God's love and bring about His kingdom. In late Second Temple Judaism, alms giving was developed as a blessed act. The teaching

⁶ Ridlehoover, doi:10.1017/s0028688520000132.

⁷ Ridlehoover, doi:10.1017/s0028688520000132.

originates from a Bible passage that connects with the change of heart seen within the prideful King Nebuchadnezzar. When the king faces blistering judgment, hope is offered through kindness and giving toward the poor.⁸

Daniel contends that the giving of one's wealth to the poor may offer a redemption of sorts. Daniel 4:24 says, "Therefore, O King take my advice; redeem your sins by alms and for your misdeeds by kindness to the poor" (Dn 4:24). This text suggests that turning to God may be accomplished by turning to the poor. In the New Testament Luke's interest in charity interacts closely with his teaching on money. For instance, the preaching of John the Baptist is foundational as it pertains to both Luke's treatment of money as well as how the book of Acts approaches this topic. As the penitent crowd draws near to John at the Jordan to receive the "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" he adamantly demands that "fruits worthy of repentance" be manifest. He explains that individuals within the various social classes must reform their selfish approach to the handling of money.⁹

Scripture found in the book of Luke follows a similar line of thought. In Luke 16:9 the apostle suggests that by doing righteous deeds with one's money that it "is like making a bank deposit to an account in heaven." This thought stands on the metaphor of "reliable treasure." Luke suggests that "true riches" can only be those which thieves cannot steal and moths cannot destroy. The Pharisees appear to value varying modes of covenantal assimilation. The misinterpretation of shared traditions can lead to a distorted understanding of biblical teachings

⁸ Joseph Anthony Giambrone, "'Friends in Heavenly Habitations' (Luke 16:9): Charity, Repentance, and Luke's Resurrection Reversal," *Revue Biblique* 120 (4): 529–52, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiBCB161229003182&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁹ Giambrone, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiBCB161229003182&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

on wealth and material possessions. Luke's expression of repentant charity parallels the coming reversal of all things. Therefore, the "love of money" will eventually yield to that which separates the wicked Pharisees from the eternal church.¹⁰

Spurgeon elaborated on the treasures that cannot be purchased with money when preaching from the text in Isaiah 55:1. In this passage the Bible states, "He that hath no money; come you, buy, and eat" (Is 55:1). He detailed the atoning treasure of Christ Jesus demonstrating a Christological approach to the text.¹¹ It is not surprising that Spurgeon would approach the topic of wealth in such a way. Spurgeon's Christological convictions could often be observed through his doctrinal embracing's of the mercies of Christ.¹² John David Talbert points out that when reviewing the contributive factors to Spurgeon's Christological homiletics a "Christocentric" focus may be observed not only in his sermons but his life and work as well.¹³

Spurgeon strived to connect Christ with every sermon he preached. This could certainly be observed in his sermons which focus on the spiritual commodity of wealth. He said of Christ's atoning gift, "This is so costly a treasure that heaven and earth could not match it. Where else could we find a sacrifice for sin, a justifier of many? This atoned one of God, upon

¹⁰ Giambrone,
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiBCB161229003182&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 29.

¹² Christian T. George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pihnn David Talbertlgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," Order No. U605460, University of St. Andrews (United Kingdom), 2011, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global,
<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/jesus-christ-prince-pilgrims-critical-analysis/docview/1512396084/se-2>.

¹³ John David Talbert, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Christological Homiletics: A Critical Evaluation of Selected Sermons from Old Testament Texts," Order No. 9004365, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global,
<https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/charles-haddon-spurgeons-christological/docview/303833842/se-2>.

whom the chastisement of our peace was laid - who would not have him to be his Savior?" He went on to describe those treasures that extend beyond the atoning work of Christ. He said, "all the treasures of God are freely bestowed upon the sons of men who are willing to accept them as gifts of grace."¹⁴

Misgivings having to do with earthly wealth are very much related to the problem of misinterpreting biblical wealth. At the center of this research is the notion that presupposition often impacts the way individuals perceive biblical wealth. Certain sectors within modern Western culture promote the attainment, hoarding, and handling of wealth as a means of realizing happiness and living prosperously. This behavior is often associated with a regressed approach to wealth, which prioritizes material possessions over spiritual well-being. Additionally, the simple approach to wealth is characterized by a lack of firm position or perspective. It is a view that lacks conviction or direction, likewise, giving way to an improper attainment or appropriation of wealth. The Bible teaches believers that it is spiritual wealth that brings about lasting joy. Improper teachings related to the acquisition, management and distribution of earthly wealth are key issues that surround the main problem. These include but are not limited to the teachings on prosperity, hoarding, usury, deceptive trading, and any unscrupulous methods of distributing wealth.

While there are a number of different perceptions of wealth, in reality there are only two kinds of wealth. There is earthly wealth and there is biblical wealth. The Bible teaches that earthly wealth is not guaranteed and is provided by God at His discretion. Biblical wealth or spiritual increase is provided by God in connection with obedience to God's word and is a promise that is to be relied upon. The meaning of biblical wealth has been adulterated by

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 29.

individuals and cultures throughout history. This paper asserts that people often fail to understand biblical wealth which causes individuals to misread Scriptures relating to blessings, wealth, usury, benevolence, and servanthood.

This paper will show that Spurgeon's audience in the late Victorian era was quickly evolving. New innovations and new modes of thought were rapidly being introduced. Some have suggested that Spurgeon was unduly suspicious of thought. The consensus is that he saw no need for a theological re-statement. As more of the world embraces contemporary culture fewer people tend to see things the way Spurgeon saw them. Even so, how is it possible to reconcile the life and work of a man with such a heart for benevolence and resounding devotion to God's word.¹⁵

Christians today live in a time when information is much more available. Yet, as Paul Wilson contends, on average people appear to be less biblically informed.¹⁶ Thus, culture defines their discernment. As a result, modern cultures have been deeply affected. The level of ability and availability for individuals to tap into information streams and the consequential means of presenting and storing information have significantly impacted the functioning of societies by shifting the means and capacity by which cultures learn and communicate. The possession of information is a key to maintaining power over those who do not possess the ability or resources to obtain it. Traditionally this problem was often caused by one simply not being included in

¹⁵ Philip Paul, "Spurgeon and Social Reform," *The Expository Times* 86 (8): 246–247, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000749963&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁶ Paul Scott Wilson, "Christ and Culture: A Belated Assessment of H.R. Niebuhr for Preaching," *Homiletic (Online)* 41, no. 2 (2016): 11. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiGU0171016004263&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

circles where information was being exchanged.¹⁷ At present the way information is accessed and transferred is impacting many areas of society including but not limited to individual, specialized, leisure, and intellectual activities.¹⁸

Additionally, this change is occurring at a perplexing pace. The current state of affairs has influenced not only social interaction but cultural norms as well. This shift cannot simply be regarded as unadulterated social good or evil. In truth the very same technology that affects one appears to be capable of affecting the other as well.¹⁹ Historically it was often the case that one's position in society dictated the level of access to which they were granted. With the invention of the printing press, data could more easily be disbursed.²⁰

However, only people with access to the printed word were privileged to receive that data. This meant that only those with economic means and the proficiency required to read could profit from the results of that newfound technology. Therefore, the bulk of information was controlled by either gifted orators or by those who possessed specialized writing skills. At the end of the 20th century society had become advanced beyond what had previously been imagined. Now there are information repositories available that are practically immeasurable. The only skills needed to tap into those storehouses of information are those of listening, looking, or reading.²¹

¹⁷ Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, vol. 2, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI.; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill, 1999-), 699–700.

¹⁸ Jonathan Cole, " Personhood in the Digital Age: The Ethical Use of New Information Technologies," *St Mark's Review* 233, (October 2015): 60-73, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAn3854242&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁹ Cole, 60-73. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAn3854242&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²⁰ Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 699–700.

²¹ Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 699–700.

Machines are now readily available with the functions needed to filter and organize a wide range of specialized data. Conversely, people who possess the intellectual propensity required for organized analysis, detailed searching, and recording of information are now in high demand. These individuals are needed so that the data available may be properly assessed and dispersed in the information age. Not only are there new and emerging concerns regarding the dissemination of information and developing technologies to consider but there are also concerns brought to light by modern discoveries in the field of archeology. In this context some critical scholars have put forth new pleas in matters relating to Bible history, accuracy, and inherency.²²

The status of the Bible in the church and in Christian faith impacts virtually every facet of the life of the church and the presentation of the gospel message as it is offered to the world. It has been suggested that many obstacles for the modern church might be removed if the message of the Bible was more highly regarded. Resources which possess substance pertaining to the liberation of the church and the gospel message invariably lie to a great extent within the Scriptures contained within the Bible.²³ People are often persuaded when the information being disbursed is provided by caring individuals. It is the responsibility of those who are engaged in ministry to take advantage of new information emulating from innovative sources and present it in a compassionate way.²⁴

When considering one's Christian care, it is often understood that interacting and identifying with others in a positive way creates a type of bond that could not otherwise be created. When the evangelist demonstrates a sincere concern for the welfare of the people that

²² Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 699–700.

²³ Carl Ferdin and Howard Henry, vol. 4, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 20–21.

²⁴ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 632–633.

are being witnessed to, then the target audience is much more likely to listen and respond affirmatively.²⁵ Moreover, the church is called to reach out with a spirit of compassion to individuals who are urgently lacking with regards to spiritual matters.²⁶ As one considers contemporary teaching that relates to productive ministry strategies as well as the discoveries and innovations pertaining to technology and archeology it becomes apparent that much has changed in recent years. These changes shed new light on Bible teaching relating to a host of topics.

Cultural misgivings that stem from information shifts and new discoveries are only part of the problem. Misinterpretations of the Bible text that have developed as a result of false theology are also a concern. For example, when one considers Job's trials and the way his friends responded, it provides a glimpse into the mindset of those that embrace this kind of divisive methodology. This false theology teaches that if one will simply obey God then He will cause his people to prosper and become wealthy. Job refuted this kind of reasoning which caused his friends to become disagreeable. His friends had a very narrow view of wealth, faith, and life. Job on the other hand had a deep understanding of the things of God.²⁷

Developing an accurate perception as it relates to what the Bible teaches with regards to wealth will enhance the Bible interpreter's ability to better formulate a productive plan relating to the application of biblical teachings in general. This in turn will improve the lives of all involved. The aim of this study is to create a benefit for the contemporary Christian by analyzing how a biblical focus on wealth as it relates to modern culture will enhance a response to the

²⁵ *Growing Your Church Through Evangelism and Outreach.*, 1st ed., Library of Christian leadership (Nashville. TN: Moorings, 1996), 88–90.

²⁶ Elwell and Beitzel, 632–633.

²⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1991), Job 21:1.

gospel. To provide guidance and rationale for this study the author has developed a number of probing questions that help to highlight the inspiration and thrust behind the researcher's literary investigation and analysis.

1. What does Charles Spurgeon say about wealth?
2. What does the Bible say about wealth?
3. What does Christ have to say about wealth?
4. How is biblical wealth defined by divergent groups within modern culture?
5. What are some of the advantages or benefits if any that are received as a result of following biblical teachings that relate to wealth?
6. What are some of the problems that arise when believers do not follow sound biblical teachings that relate to wealth?
7. How should Christians that have failed in applying sound biblical teachings that relate to wealth begin to apply those instructions to their lives in order to live better and glorify God?
8. How should the believer communicate wisdom that is gained from a biblical study of wealth to others?

The Purpose of This Study

The overall focus of this study is to magnify God's word, to glorify His name, and to increase the observances of His directives. Conformity to God's instructions is contingent on knowledge, wisdom, devotion, and dedication. Adherence to God's commands requires understanding. Gaining wisdom and learning to be dedicated to God often results in victory. The

servant of God is encouraged to do what politicians, businessmen, and generals do for their cause and engage in study and strive to be steadfast in service.²⁸

Since understanding one another is the initial step in offering positive help, Bible interpreters might do well to carefully research and plan out an effective approach to Bible exposition.²⁹ Not only is the Bible interpreter encouraged to place emphasis on understanding the key concepts relating to sound Bible interpretation, but expositors are also encouraged to work toward maintaining a clear understanding with regards to problems and potential pitfalls pertaining to the improper interpretation of Scripture due to cultural presupposition. As such, it might benefit the Bible interpreter to better understand how to perceive and deal with the problem of cultural presupposition. The problem that the research is focused on is that of cultural misinterpretation. As we look at this issue in Bible exposition there are a number of reasons that the Bible interpreter may err as it relates to cultural presupposition.

First, the Bible interpreter may become persuaded due to an un-biblical assumption of divine approval. The Bible expositor may be convinced that because they are God called in their mission that the interpretive decision-making process does not require learned procedure. With this presupposition the Bible interpreter is so sure of their own belief that study has become irrelevant. Second, the Bible interpreter may demonstrate presupposition due to natural human tendencies that propagate a false narrative. This might cause the Bible interpreter to engage in a misdirected form of selection.³⁰

²⁸ Hurley, 242.

²⁹ Hurley, 242.

³⁰ Richard Coble, "Performing in a Veil: Sia Furler, Embodied Resistance, and the Cognitive Therapeutic Bias of Pastoral Theology," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health* 19, no. 3 (2017): 169–88, doi:10.1080/19349637.2016.1234956.

For instance, there are a vast number of Bible translations in mass publication at present. One might unknowingly select a Bible translation that has a host of interpretive issues, and as such, communicates a message that is faulty at its root. There are a number of causes that might bring on this selective self-censorship including a desire to veer toward a word for word, thought for thought, or even a paraphrased rendering. Third, there is the controversial assumption relative to exclusive divine selection. This presupposition might cause the Bible expositor to rotate toward a certain rendering or interpretation due to the accepted belief that one element of measure overshadows all others. This type of selection is prevalent in groups that are prone toward exuding behaviors that are extreme and excessive such as those who demonstrate characteristics that relate to cultic behavior.³¹

For example, the Bible interpreter may believe that because a rendering or interpretation has been deemed authoritative or received at a given point in time that the rendering is above any reproach and as such is incontestable. When this occurs the Bible interpreter is engaging in predictive analytics rather than sound Bible interpretation. To illustrate how the omission of a relevant idea might lead to cultural presupposition consider the following general example in which the model for Bible or Scripture selection involves a full analysis of data relating to a given source. When some or all of the data is left out of the analysis the analysis becomes faulty and as such should not be deemed trustworthy. If one were to go to the hardware store and there were three lines to check out, and the participant chose the short line without considering the number of items each patron had in their cart, the type of merchandise, or the mode of payment,

³¹ Dennis Ingolfssland, "Books on the Historical Jesus as a Test Case for Selection Bias in American Academic Libraries," *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 8, no. 1–2 (2009): 1–12, doi:10.1080/10477840903308213.

then the participant would not be able to make an informed decision as to the time it might take to check out. When making a proper analysis all relevant data should be considered.³²

Last but certainly not least, there is the problem of predisposition that relates to monetary benefit. This is a type of cultural presupposition that may often go unnoticed. It involves the inclination of prejudice, either for, or against something or someone for financial gain. For instance, if a Bible translation or Christian literary work is being funded by a third party in essence the translators or writers are working for the party funding the operation. It is entirely possible for individuals to distort the results of a given work for profit. This study will explore what makes cultural presupposition toward biblical wealth possible and address the problems related to misinterpretations pertaining to wealth.³³

Spurgeon spoke about the misinterpretations pertaining to wealth when preaching a sermon on the text found in Colossians 1:5. This passage of Scripture states, “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, where of you heard before in the world of the truth of the gospel” (Col 1:5). He suggested that the calamities that occurred in connection with a local bank scandal had caused some businessmen to consider more carefully where they lay up their treasures. He went on to imply that some miscommunication had occurred. As a result, many have stored up treasure in places that are unsecure.³⁴

Spurgeon said, “We find it hard to lay up our valuables safely in this world because thieves break through and steal. The iron safe, the strong room and all sorts of inventions are

³² Angel L. Harris and Keith Robinson, "Schooling Behaviors or Prior Skills? A Cautionary Tale of Omitted Variable Bias within Oppositional Culture Theory: A Magazine of Theory and Practice," *Sociology of Education* 80, no. 2 (04, 2007): 139-57, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/216485840?accountid=12085>.

³³ Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

³⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

employed to preserve them from felonious grip, but when God becomes the Guardian of our treasure, He lays it up where none can touch it and neither man nor devil can steal it.” After speaking of the security of laying up treasures in heaven Spurgeon went on to describe what kind of treasures are secured there. He said, “A man may have hope of old age, yet he may never reach even middle life, and thus it is clear that the hope of long life is not in itself, longevity.” Spurgeon believed that there is a divine hope that stems from faith and love. He believed that this kind of hope was one that would never disappoint. He explained that it was this kind of hope that the apostle was speaking of when he described the things hoped for. Spurgeon suggested that this is the kind of hope that the apostle wrote about which is “laid up in heaven.” He declared, “What a marvelous hope is this which long before its realization is treated as a matter of actual attainment and spoken of as a treasure reserved in the coffers of heaven!”³⁵

The Importance of the Problem

Understanding what the Bible says about wealth means that readers must remove cultural presuppositions and approach the text in a way that allows for proper exegesis. Literary competence deals with the value, quality, form, or meaning of a literary work. It involves literary criticism which in some cases may be synonymous with hermeneutics or other methods of interpretation. In the latter part of the 20th century the discipline of literary theory moved into areas of literary criticism to include numerous deviating methods designated to support the literary critic.³⁶ In telling the biblical story, evangelists used certain literary techniques.³⁷

³⁵ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

³⁶ Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 291.

³⁷ Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2016) chap. 8, Kindle.

Over the last 200 years researchers have developed three major slants to the problem of gospel origins and development. First, there is form criticism, which focuses on the period of oral transmission. Second, there is source criticism, which describes how various literary units were established. Third, there is redaction criticism, which distinguishes both the literary and theological contributions of each gospel writer as an individual. In recent years, the eyewitness character of the gospel has been emphasized as a means of prescribing weight as well. Narrative criticism has increased in popularity as of late due to the fact that it views the text in its entirety and avoids fragmenting text into dissimilar units.³⁸

Since all Scripture is a text of literature, understanding the various literary and linguistic aspects of the biblical material encompasses the bulk of the interpretive work.³⁹ As one begins the work of textual interpretation it is worth remembering that language in the various literary forms and genres in which it finds expression in Scripture is part of history and culture. Linguistic forms found in Scripture originated in the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic writings. They are a reflection of the historical-cultural realm in which God has chosen to reveal himself to his people not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well. The study of linguistics covers the full gamut of research devoted to the study of the nature of language. A related field of study in this area that is important to those interested in textual analysis is that of semantics. This is the science of determining word meanings. It has become increasingly understood that language is a delicate interwoven fabric within which the Bible expositor must work.⁴⁰

³⁸ Kibbe, chap. 8.

³⁹ Kibbe, chap. 1.

⁴⁰ Kibbe, chap. 13.

The factor that differentiates human speech and language is the object meaning that man assigns to symbols or words. Language is the rational organization of the units of linguistic communication. Human beings associate language with abstract thought. They assimilate sounds as units to convey complex ideas and information.⁴¹ Determining the author's intended meaning is the underlined hermeneutical purpose in studying linguistics. For instance, the Greek word that underlies the New Testament term "miracle," is "*dynamis*," meaning "dynamite." That does not mean that the miracles performed by Jesus were literally "dynamite." The meaning assigned to "dynamite" at present is an advanced linguistic development that should not be read back into a text that was written before the terms later expansion. In fact, it should be understood that there are a number of linguistic options for the Bible expositor to pay attention to. Each option may derive a particular proportion or meaning within the text. That is not to say that the larger linguistic system should be avoided as this must be taken into account as well.⁴²

Bible doctrine may be viewed by some as an unproductive recitation of beliefs or formal declarations. It is often contrasted with the vigorous spiritual and personal experience that the believer has with God. As one considers the regressed and simple approach to biblical wealth which are discussed in more detail in the following sections of the paper, it becomes apparent that there is a tendency among some believers to gravitate towards the more appealing aspects of Christianity and avoid the more challenging doctrine and theology found in the Bible. The nuanced and stabilizing elements of theology can be tough to fully grasp. That is why it is crucial for those interpreting the Bible to derive their theological beliefs directly from the text, rather

⁴¹ Fahlbusch and Bromiley, 330-331.

⁴² Kibbe, chap. 13.

than imposing their own personal biases and interpretations onto it. The search for sound biblical theology has fallen under the section of study categorized beneath the term “biblical theology.”⁴³

Biblical theology is theology derived from Scripture rather than a theology that is imposed onto the Bible by a specified interpreter of Scripture. Following that line of thought it should be understood that Old Testament theology is the theology of the Old Testament while New Testament theology is the theology of the New Testament. Bible theology seeks to study Scripture in unique terms. It causes the Bible expositor to pay express attention to not only the concepts addressed in the Scripture, but the words and terminology used by biblical authors.⁴⁴ Some welcome the emergence of theological interpretation while maintaining that some approaches to theological interpretation are to be rejected. It is important to understand that there exist a variety of approaches to theological interpretation. When it comes to the Bible, it is imperative to utilize an accurate hermeneutic that recognizes the ontological nature of the Bible as the word of God. Failure to do so will inevitably lead to a misrepresentation of its intended meaning.⁴⁵

Biblical theology not only seeks to study Scripture on its own terms it also seeks to understand the word of God in light of its historical context. One objective of biblical theology is to understand a given passage of Scripture within its own original historical confines. For instance, when interpreting the famed passage, “for I know the plans I have for you,” found in Jeremiah 29:11, the interpreter may find it sensible to ask, who were the original addressees of

⁴³ Kibbe, chap. 15.

⁴⁴ Kibbe, chap. 15.

⁴⁵ Craig G. Bartholomew, “Responsible Hermeneutics: Philosophy, Theology and Biblical Interpretation,” *Canon & Culture* 10, no. 2 (2016): 5–33, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIc9Y190325002134&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

that promise, and at what time in Israel's past was the Scripture authored (Jer 29:11). Those engaging in Biblical theology will desire to understand a given passage in its original historical context even before asking questions regarding how the passage might be pertinent to the believer at present. Guidelines for studying biblical theology include determining the focus of one's study, determining the relevant Scripture that must be studied in depth, providing careful contextual attention to relevant passages with regards to their historical content and the salvation-historical stage framed within the life of the church or the life of Israel, and determining the original message and its intended recipient within the respective framework of salvation-history.⁴⁶

The Researcher's Position on the Problem

Spurgeon preached wealth as a spiritual commodity based on his Christological exposition which countered the preaching of wealth as a divine right. This dissertation argues that Charles Haddon Spurgeon held that biblical wealth relates primarily to spiritual treasures. The study focuses on Spurgeon's teachings related to how biblical wealth should be understood. The paper will focus on how biblical wealth has been perceived historically and how it is understood by various opposing groups in the modern era. It is the researcher's contention that Spurgeon viewed earthly wealth primarily as a means of advancing God's kingdom.

This study will analyze physical or earthly wealth as a means of individual blessing, maintaining personal necessities, upholding, and promoting the church, and as a means of spreading the gospel. Spurgeon's approach to the acquisition and distribution of earthly wealth will be reviewed. The way that wealth is generated and dispersed often impacts the way

⁴⁶ Kibbe, chap. 15.

resources may be used to further the gospel and bring glory to God. It is the perspective of the researcher that several issues arise in connection to the misinterpretation of biblical wealth. This paper will explore a number of these issues in detail. These include engaging in a deliberate departure from scripture, faulty exposition of the Bible text, cultural presupposition, and various forms of bias.

While opponents may argue that individual groups within modern culture have developed a better understanding of the biblical concept of wealth, some evangelical westerners often misread parts of Scripture that deal with money due to preconceived notions that have been adopted concerning this topic. This paper will show that there is some discontinuity between the biblical perception of wealth in various genres and modern readings because certain groups of people have been unduly persuaded by presupposition and pre-understanding regarding wealth. As such, this study will help Christians better perceive God's character and gain insight into what the Bible teaches about wealth. It will look at how wealth and prosperity was understood in both the Old Testament and New Testament and discuss different terms used to describe wealth in the text. It will discuss how ideas relating to wealth have evolved and review a number of different approaches to wealth in the modern era.

Spurgeon described the future of those who have embraced earthly misgivings pertaining to wealth when preaching on the text in Luke 1:53. In this passage of Scripture the word of God states, "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent away empty" (Lk 1:53). He described God as a lumberjack chopping down lofty hoarders of earthly wealth. Spurgeon said, "Like the woodman with his axe, the providence of God is cutting down the high

and goodly cedars, while making fruitful trees that were dry and withered. That which is full, God empties, and that which is empty, God fills.”⁴⁷

Spurgeon went on to portray those who cling to the wealth of this world as individuals seeking extravagance while refusing to accept the truth which they perceive to be a mundane commodity. He asked the question, “How is it that the hungry get filled while the rich are sent away empty?” His answer was this, “I think it is, partly, because the hungry are not to be satisfied with anything but bread. There are many, in the world, who spend their money for that which is not bread, and they are contented when they get unsubstantial diet, but a really hungry soul knows that it needs bread and will not be put off with anything else.”⁴⁸

Approach and Methodology

This evaluation will discuss the criteria for developing a sound biblical approach to wealth. It will connect Charles Spurgeon’s approach to wealth to a sound Bible interpretation by applying biblical theological categories and a diachronic analysis of wealth from the inception of humanity until the present day for the purpose of improving Bible study and drawing attention to the cause of Christ. In order to approach this study exhaustively, data pertaining to wealth will be gathered and categorized into sections and analyzed carefully. Categories pertaining to the word wealth, and its various root words in the Greek and Hebrew will be utilized. Word usage and function will be considered. Primary and secondary sources will be reviewed and applied. The paper will primarily involve Bible exegesis.

As such, it will involve a great deal of Bible-based research and analysis. It is most appropriate that a biblical approach to this research be conducted. While this kind of approach to

⁴⁷ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 52.

⁴⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 52.

research is standard in the field of Bible exposition, the paper will include justification for the methodology in order to deliver a logical, self-contained, exhaustive analysis of the issues surrounding the topic of biblical wealth. In dealing with the various contemporary approaches to wealth, ethical and philosophical ideas and considerations will be discussed. While the problem appears to be theological at its core, a number of the surrounding concerns seem to be cultural in nature. Therefore, the research will approach the topic of biblical wealth from a cross-cultural perspective.

Various Christian and secular world views will be analyzed along with some of the cultural and contextual issues that may contribute to the misunderstanding or misrepresenting of biblical wealth. Biblical data will be collected into sections utilizing categorized tables and analyzed to see how wealth is used and interpreted throughout the text. Key terms will be divided within the analysis. For each of the headings or terms compiled in the analysis there will be a number of Scriptures collected. A brief description of the word's grammatical usage will be included. This will allow the researcher to determine precisely how each connecting word is utilized in the text.

The analysis will consider heretical, cultural, expository, and prejudicial causes that may promote a misrepresentation of biblical wealth. Deviations in the way the Scripture has been interpreted will be evaluated. A table will be used with key Scriptures divided in the body of each row. This will allow for a detailed analysis of interpretation involving the texts surrounding the topic of wealth. As such, the study will involve some theological research. The table will be employed in order to better engage all sides of the issue. The analysis will allow readers to better perceive how misrepresentations in the way that wealth is conveyed has impacted individuals in western culture.

The writings of Charles Spurgeon are a key focal point for the paper. Scholarly sources detailing Spurgeon's life and work will also be utilized. Spurgeon's sermons will be carefully evaluated as a primary source for the study. Sermon data will be collected into sections utilizing categorized tables and analyzed to determine Spurgeon's position as it relates to wealth. Key terms will be divided within the analysis. For each of the headings or terms compiled in the analysis there will be a number of topics collected. A brief description of both the terms and the topics will be included. This will allow the reader to determine precisely how each of the connecting terms are utilized within both the sermons and the collection as a whole.

Limitations

There has been a considerable amount of writing done on the topic of wealth. However, much of what has been written on the topic has been influenced by culture. As such, there are a number of limitations that will have an impact on this study. The researcher intends to cover this topic from a biblical perspective, and states plainly that his initial presupposition is that he believes that the Bible text is both truthful and unfailing. He writes that to communicate to the reader that he believes that the Scripture is the inspired word of God and that it is accurate and factual from Genesis to Revelation. The researcher desires to identify the cultural elements that have impacted interpretations of wealth.

A great deal of the study will directly involve analysis of the text surrounding the topic of biblical wealth. The grammatical and historical approaches will be employed to complete this study. Recommendations will be derived from a careful analysis of Bible data and information extracted from credible scholarly sources. Relevant information will be identified and discussed in order to help researchers identify and veer from cultural presuppositions that might cause readers to deviate from improper interpretations of biblical wealth. The paper will demonstrate

an awareness of Spurgeon's understanding of soteriology, hamartiology, bibliology, and eschatology. However, it is his Christological approach to wealth that seems to be most prevalent.⁴⁹

The researcher will attempt to develop Spurgeon's Christological approach to wealth in some detail. The analysis will focus on Christology as a prime theme in Spurgeon's writings on wealth. Spurgeon's Christological approach to the text is a topic that is well documented by a number of authors. Perhaps, one of the most prominent scholarly writings on the exegetical Christologies in the sermons of Spurgeon was presented in a thesis submitted by Christian George in 2012 titled, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)." The researcher will examine Spurgeon's approach to the Bible text in a similar way to determine if his approach to Scripture pertaining to wealth is predominately Christological. Therefore, the researcher will focus more on the depth of Spurgeon's Christological approach to Scriptures pertaining to wealth.⁵⁰

Conclusions pertaining to Spurgeon's overall Christology thus far have been formed chiefly on Christian George's findings that Spurgeon's literal, historical interpretation of the Scripture is nuanced by his Christological typological hermeneutic supported by a consistent variation of Christology throughout his ministry. George analyzed Spurgeon's ontological Christology through a diachronic study of the Christological developments that most influenced

⁴⁹ Christian T. George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom 2011), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/jesus-christ-prince-pilgrims-critical-analysis/docview/1512396084/se-2>.

⁵⁰ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 1-314.

his doctrinal beliefs of Christ. He suggested that it was his use of language that was most essential to perceiving Spurgeon's Christology. His Christological beliefs were largely made known through his conveyance of the mercies of Christ. The paper will seek to determine if Spurgeon's "deeply appropriated Christological convictions" also apply to his approach to wealth. It will attempt to show whether or not his Christological approach to wealth is evident. Furthermore, the study will seek to determine if Spurgeon sways at times from a typical Christology when interacting with Scripture relating to wealth.⁵¹

The paper will deal mainly with Spurgeon's sermons or public speeches because they were the communications that were in the newspapers and other publications. They were the part of his writings that were most publicly observed and critiqued. This study involves a systematic approach to understanding wealth in the text. It seeks to analyze wealth in its Scriptural, historical, and cultural context. In his book titled, *Understanding the Bible as a Scripture in History*, biblical Scholar James W. Watts outlines an approach to studying what he calls the "three dimensions of written texts." He works through the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament dealing with what he deems to be key sections of Scripture. He focuses on spans of time including but not limited to the historical periods before and after Ezra along with the New Testament and Old Testament era. In addition, he discusses Hebrew poetry and wisdom literature along with other specific categories of Scripture.⁵²

This study sets out to follow a similar pattern. Eight specific books were chosen that draw from some of the primary categories discussed by Watts. His analysis of the New Testament

⁵¹ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 1-314.

⁵² James W. Watts, *Understanding the Bible as a Scripture in History, Culture and Religion* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021) chap. 1-15, Kindle.

involves the Gospels, Paul's letters, iconic dimensions, and an analysis of the scripturalization and canonization of the text. Scriptures from Old Testament books were drawn predominantly from Genesis, Psalms, Proverbs, Jeremiah, and Amos. Scripture from the book of Genesis highlights the culture and early perceptions of wealth occurring at its inception. Genesis falls within the category of scriptures that were written in the early period of biblical history.⁵³

The books of Psalms and Proverbs were selected as they interact with the important categories of Hebrew poetry and wisdom literature. The book of Psalms was selected because it contains some of the Bible's most renowned examples of Hebrew poetry. In addition, it connects Spiritual wealth with God's written word. This appears to be one of the underlying themes of the Bible in its entirety. Therefore, this is a topic that will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of the study. The book of Proverbs was chosen as a primary text from the category of wisdom literature as it connects with the topic of wealth more expansively than other books from this category.⁵⁴

As such, the researcher has chosen this particular book to represent all of the Scripture of this type. The books of Jeremiah and Amos were selected because they specifically connect with culture and early perceptions of wealth after the book of Ezra was written. These Old Testament books are unique in that they deal more prominently with the mishandling of earthly wealth and the subsequent pronouncement of God's judgment. Passages from the New Testament were drawn from the books of Matthew, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation. The book of Matthew was chosen as it represents the Gospels. Matthew was written for a Jewish audience. The writings were intended for Jews that were living in and around the nation of Israel. The author

⁵³ Watts, chap. 1-15.

⁵⁴ Watts, chap. 1-15.

emphasizes the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. As such, the teachings on wealth found in the book of Matthew interact with Jewish thought in the context of New Testament theology. Additionally, passages that pertain to wealth in the book of Matthew may be some of the most widely discussed sections of Scripture dealing with this topic in all of the New Testament.⁵⁵

The book of 2 Corinthians was included to represent the epistles. This book is unique in that it deals directly with church management, the acquisition and distribution of wealth, and the mishandling of Scripture for profit. The book of Revelation was chosen so that the study might include some discussion on the iconic dimensions of the text and provide some commentary on scripturalization and canonization. This book is perhaps the most publicized of all the sections of the Bible dealing with iconology. The Scripture presented in each section of this study was chosen because it helps the researcher work through the text diachronically and provides a unique look at wealth as received by God's people.⁵⁶

This thesis foregoes the customary biographical introduction to Spurgeon and will instead seek to incorporate the actions and influences of Spurgeon that are most prominent and pertinent to the study directly into the succeeding chapters. The researcher acknowledges that there are some unique limitations that he brings to the study. He has been involved principally in Judaism and the Christian faith as a Baptist with little exposure to Pentecostalism or other relevant denominational entities. The researcher seeks to overcome these limitations by recognizing and discussing opposing viewpoints while deliberating on Spurgeon's approach to wealth. Contrasting viewpoints will be contextualized through a study of his global recognition, through

⁵⁵ Watts, chap. 1-15.

⁵⁶ Watts, chap. 1-15.

an analysis of his work as a Bible expositor and church pastor, and by considering and discussing recent scholarship that has impacted the study.⁵⁷

Definitions

Several terms have been defined in order to provide clarity within this study. The words “wealth,” “blessings,” “Increase,” “riches,” and “prosperity” may be used interchangeably as well as the words “Christian” and “believer.” When the researcher uses the word, “Christian” he is referring to one who follows and professes belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Redeemer of mankind. When the researcher uses the term “biblical wealth” he is referring to wealth that is promoted in the Bible and is spiritual in nature. It is either a heavenly wealth or a physical wealth that is used to sustain life and further God’s kingdom. It should be understood in light of Christ’s command in Matthew 6:19 which asserts, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt 6:19). The term “conservative approach” means the belief held by those that lean toward the view that biblical wealth has to do primarily with the things eternal rather than the things that are temporal.

Those taking up this view believe that earthly prosperity is not a guaranteed result of obedience to God and His commands. When the researcher references the term, “regressed approach” he means to indicate those people that lean toward the view that biblical wealth may be physical or spiritual. Furthermore, it includes the belief that physical increase including large

⁵⁷ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 14.

possessions of money, goods, or land are a direct result of obedience to God and His commands. The term, “simple approach” means the belief relating to wealth held by people that lean toward the view that biblical wealth is not restricted primarily to any given definition. In addition, it includes the belief that worldly prosperity may or may not be contingent upon obedience to God and His commands. There are many different definitions of biblical theology and how it should be approached. For the sake of this study, biblical theology will be defined as the theological framework that is derived directly from Scripture, rather than a theology that is imposed onto the Bible by a particular interpreter of Scripture.

Literature Review

What appears to be behind many of the problems arising from cultural presuppositions leading to the regressed approach or the simple approach to wealth is a perilous detachment from the Bible text and relevant accompanying literature. No single work addresses the issue of cultural presupposition and its impact on the evangelical westerners understanding of the biblical concept of wealth. The objective of this study is to address a significant gap in the existing research literature. Theological scholars often approach topics with a narrow focus, relying on sources that may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, there appears to be a lack of research that delves into the effects of culture and the global community on theological discussions, even though these factors greatly impact perspectives. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this research gap and furnish readers with a thorough analysis of the topic, enabling them to form their own conclusions and interpretations.

In his book titled, *The Legacy Journey: A Radical View of Biblical Wealth and Generosity*, Dave Ramsey explains that God’s way of dealing with money works. The author

seems to take a regressed approach to wealth.⁵⁸ While the author does not cite the Bible as the foundation for defending his position, he often points to Bible directives as the inspiration for his teaching on money and wealth.⁵⁹ He claims that if his readers or listeners will do the things that he teaches from God's word then they will eventually become wealthy.⁶⁰

He suggests that no matter who you are or where you are starting from, if you listen to what he teaches and follow his program then you will at some point become one of those "rich people." It is for this reason that Ramsey seems to fit into the category with those who take a regressed approach to wealth. It does not appear that his teachings regularly include the improving of health and wealth as a result of obedience to God's word. However, he does seem to give some indication that obedience to his interpretation of God's word relating to money and wealth will eventually lead to earthly riches regardless of any other internal or external factors.⁶¹

In their book titled, *Health Wealth and Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ*, David W. Jones and Russell S. Woodbridge explain, "Theology is important because correct doctrinal beliefs are essential to the relationship between the believer and God." They believe that incorrect theology will lead to an incorrect understanding of God, His Word, and His interaction with mankind. The authors explain that the gospel must be communicated properly, as the results of that communication may carry with it eternal consequences. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "For the time will come when they will not

⁵⁸ Dave Ramsey, *The Legacy Journey: A Radical View of Biblical Wealth and Generosity* (Brentwood, TN: Ramsey Press, 2014), chap. 1, Kindle.

⁵⁹ Rob Moll, "Beyond credit card shredding: more congregations than ever are hosting Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University: now he's looking at their budgets, too," *Christianity Today* 55, no. 8 (August 2011): 30-32, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001849784&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁶⁰ Ramsey, chap. 1, Kindle.

⁶¹ Ramsey, chap. 1, Kindle.

endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tm 4:3-4). Sadly, many Christians are inclined toward a “gospel of materialism.” They mistakenly believe that earthly riches and material possessions will make them content.⁶²

Wealth and riches have become a priority and Jesus Christ has become a secondary thought. In the above-mentioned book the authors take a much different approach to wealth than many individuals in mainstream culture. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Jones and Woodbridge appear to take a “conservative” view regarding wealth and riches and veer from teaching that suggests that the prosperity gospel is a message that is founded in Scripture.⁶³

In fact, the authors suggest that there is little proof to substantiate the claim that obedience to God’s commands will result in monetary gain. Chapter 3 of this book examines a number of doctrinal errors related to some common misinterpretations of wealth. The authors explain that while some Christians understand that there are some practical problems relating to a proper approach to wealth, many believers simply do not recognize the many theological errors that underpin these false concepts. The authors state, “when we rightly understand the biblical gospel, it becomes obvious that the prosperity gospel cannot possibly be true.” Jones and Woodbridge go on to deal with the topic of suffering. In contrast to what individual groups of people within modern culture might have to say about suffering, the authors describe the skewed view of suffering which often accompanies a misinformed or misinterpreted understanding of wealth.⁶⁴

⁶² David W. Jones and Russell S. Woodbridge, *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 18-22, Kindle.

⁶³ Jones and Woodbridge, 18-22, Kindle.

⁶⁴ Jones and Woodbridge, 18-22, Kindle.

The authors claim that contrary to popular teaching on prosperity, Christians may be called to suffer, and that God uses this suffering to accomplish His purposes. In their discussion of wealth and poverty they argue that faith in the Scripture does not necessarily bring on material prosperity. Instead, the text indicates that labor is a primary means of creating wealth. The authors declare that while many Christians believe that the Bible focuses on wealth and riches, the text actually encourages believers to be more concerned about the economic well-being of one's brothers and sisters in Christ. The Scriptures adamantly warn about the dangers of storing up wealth.⁶⁵

Therefore, they suggest that it is unwise to be fixated on the blessings of material possessions. In their final chapter Jones and Woodbridge focus on charity. They claim that when Christians study what the Bible teaches about benevolence, significant wisdom about the many facets of charity or giving may be received. The authors provide a great introduction to the topic of prosperity and wealth and describe the many problems that come from cultural presuppositions relating to wealth and prosperity.⁶⁶ In his book titled, *Prosperity: Good News for God's People*, Frederick Price explains that prosperity is a tool utilized by God to minister to the lost, nourish God's people, and to help bring about God's kingdom on earth. The author believes that the key to understanding prosperity is for Christians to take hold of God's plan for prosperity and to find where it is that they belong in that plan.⁶⁷

It has been said that before his death due to complications from Covid-19 in February of 2001 that Frederick Price was a charismatic preacher that believed in miraculous healing. Some

⁶⁵ Jones and Woodbridge, 18-22, Kindle.

⁶⁶ Jones and Woodbridge, 18-22, Kindle.

⁶⁷ Frederick K. C. Price, *Prosperity: Good News for Gods People* (Los Angeles CA: Faith One Publications, 2008) chap. 1, Kindle.

have suggested that he preached what may be described as the “prosperity gospel,” or a gospel that carries with it the idea that God rewards faithfulness and obedience with abundance whether it be material or otherwise. Price appeared to associate wealth more with riches and physical possessions. He seemed to believe that earthly wealth was a result of faithfulness and obedience to God’s commands. It is for this reason that Frederick Price is categorized for the purposes of this study as taking a regressed approach.⁶⁸

In their book titled, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*, E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O’Brien discuss the topic of wealth. The authors suggest that Westerners are often tempted to compromise themselves as a result of the way that they perceive the world around them. There is a tendency for Westerners to view the world dualistically. People in Western culture often view things as either being true or false. There is no middle ground. The topic of money and wealth is complicated for Westerners.⁶⁹

Richards and O’Brien explain that non-Western cultures often view wealth much differently than Western cultures. They make clear that outside of Western culture money and riches are often very limited. Therefore, outside of Western culture it is believed that if an individual in the community grows wealthy there is less wealth to spread around for the remaining individuals in the community. Westerners believe that money and possessions are an unlimited resource.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ "Rev. Frederick K.C. Price of Crenshaw Christian Center in South L.A. Dies from COVID-19," Los Angeles Times, February 14, 2021, accessed September 17, 2021, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-14/reverend-frederick-price-crenshaw-christian-center-megachurch-south-la-died>.

⁶⁹ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 1, Kindle.

⁷⁰ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 1, Kindle.

A vast number of Westerners believe that anyone can become rich if they work hard and have the virtues required for success. Psalm 52:7 pictures a man that has become wicked because he trusted in money and riches and grew more powerful by exploiting those around him. Richards and O'Brien suggest that Westerners would most often see the wicked man's heinous offenses divided into two separate categories. First, he trusted in money and riches. Second, he exploited individuals around him. Nevertheless, the psalmist deems these to be one solitary offence.⁷¹

In Hebrew poetry academics may refer to this as "synonymous parallelism." As such, the two clauses in the passage have the same meaning even though each clause is communicated with different phrasing. Moreover, the authors explain that Westerners often presume that the wickedness in trusting in money and riches does not have any connection to wealth itself. They view the problem as being connected with placing one's faith in wealth rather than trusting in God's sovereign provision. However, the psalmist conveys an idea that is in opposition to this view.⁷²

According to the psalmist the wicked person stores up more wealth than he actually needs. The condemnation in this passage was not for amassing wealth but rather for storing up large quantities of wealth. In piling up large quantities of wealth, the individual destroyed others without any regard for their wellbeing. Richards and O'Brien appear to take a conservative approach to the topic of wealth. They describe wealth as an important term that certainly influences one's interpretation of the Bible. The authors present wealth as a potential pitfall and

⁷¹ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1, Kindle.

⁷² Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1.

lean toward the idea that wealth is connected more with one's labor rather than to obedience to God's commands.⁷³

In his paper titled, "Situational Hermeneutics in the New Testament's Use of the Old," William Boyd explores the relationship between the various hermeneutical methods utilized to interpret Scripture. This study analyzes the use of situational hermeneutics as it relates to the various ways in which the New Testament utilizes Old Testament terminology. Furthermore, the author evaluates how situational hermeneutics may be utilized to better explain current usage of Scripture.⁷⁴ In her study titled, "Reading Scripture: Developing Intimacy with God, the Church, and Community," Tammy Janiece Jacko addresses the topic of biblical literacy. She explains that there is a decreased level of biblical literacy that correlates with the lack of discipline as it relates to Bible study.⁷⁵

Jacko suggests that there is an impact on "spiritual growth, maturity, and Christian worldview" that results from employing proper exegesis and hermeneutics. The study seeks to identify how individuals incur personal and communal growth through an in-depth study of Scripture. She goes on to explain that sociologically, spiritual growth within the church affects nearly every area of socio-economic development.⁷⁶ In his paper titled, "Prosperity Gospel in Liberia: A Theological Alternative to the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Jerome A. Newman discusses the problem of not being theologically grounded due to a lack of foundational understanding as it

⁷³ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1.

⁷⁴ William Boyd, "Situational Hermeneutics in the New Testament's Use of the Old" (Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, 2018), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/1899>.

⁷⁵ Tammy Janiece Jacko, "Reading Scripture: Developing Intimacy with God, the Church, and Community" (Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, 2019), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/2266>.

⁷⁶ Jacko, 1-137.

relates to the truths of the gospel. Newman examines the prosperity gospel that connects with “Faith, Wealth, and Health.”⁷⁷

He suggests that there is a substantial divergence from the gospel of Christ which undercuts a sound hermeneutical understanding of the Bible text.⁷⁸ In a study titled “Contextualizing Worship and Music in a Multicultural Church: A Case Study at Christ Fellowship Miami,” Kimberly A. Martin delves into the problem of contextualizing language among multicultural, multigenerational, and multilingual individuals within the church. The study discusses cultural consciousness and promotes the planning, development, and execution of integrated communication in worship. A number of practical approaches are discussed relating to the problem of extreme diversity as it pertains to communication and fellowship within the Christian community. The author reveals a variety of practical approaches that may be beneficial for individuals hoping to engage in a more culturally conscious contextualization of Scripture.⁷⁹

In his book titled, *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*, Kevin Vanhoozer discusses the topic of culture and wealth. Van Hoosier suggests that wealth is something that appeals to the masses. He explains, “to live the good life means, at least, financial security, but more often it equates to having a bottomless pit of money.” For most people money equates to power and a life of leisure. It opens doors and is the means by which many people

⁷⁷ Jerome A. Newman, "Prosperity Gospel in Liberia: A Theological Alternative to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, 2020), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/2729>.

⁷⁸ Newman, 1-140.

⁷⁹ Kimberly A. Martin, "Contextualizing Worship and Music in a Multicultural Church: A Case Study at Christ Fellowship Miami" (Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, 2018), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/1767>.

associate “the good life.” Vanhoozer explains that wealth allows people to access and attain power, beauty, knowledge, health, and social status.⁸⁰

In his paper titled “Portraits of Transformative Stewardship,” Robert S. Norris explains that the church has had much to say about the topic of wealth. Norris discusses the topic of benevolence and highlights a number of perceptions and behaviors pertaining to donor behavior. He believes that when one turns to the New Testament it becomes apparent that Christ’s words about wealth and possessions transcend the idea of giving out of a sense of obligation. He argues that wealth and financial means are instead a “vehicle of grace, mercy and peace.” As such, Christ urged people that were financially blessed to sell all of their possessions and give to the impoverished.⁸¹

In his book titled, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*, G. K. Beale discusses the problem of idolatry. He suggests that Paul himself acknowledges that idolatry may be as simple a thing as trusting in money. He explains that Christ had previously dealt with the matter when he stated in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt 6:24). Beale goes on to relate that the early Jewish commentator Philo held to the same view. Furthermore, he affirms that this is a perspective anticipated in the Old Testament as well and points his readers to Job 31:24-28.⁸²

⁸⁰ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman, *Everyday Theology How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*, version Kindle (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014).

⁸¹ Robert S. Norris, “Portraits of Transformative Stewardship” (dissertation, PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 2004), <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fportraits-transformative-stewardship%2Fdocview%2F305149989%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

⁸² Gregory K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

In his paper titled, “A God of Wealth: Religion, Modernity, and the Rhetoric of the Christian Prosperity Gospel,” Michael C. Souders suggests that the emergence of the prosperity gospel with its influence on social conditions, politics, and mass appeal is simply an attempt to address the problems of a fragmented symbolic environment. Furthermore, Souders believes that the prosperity gospel is a product of an eroded interpretation of the biblical text put forth by both religious and secular bodies.⁸³ In a study titled, “Wealth, Poverty and Economic Inequality: A Christian Virtue Response,” Kate Ward argues that both wealth and poverty operate in the realm of chance and work to obstruct one’s pursuit of virtue. Moreover, she believes that the problem of economic inequality within the social structure only adds to the problem. Ward believes that the Christian community can combat the problem of economic inequality and its impact on virtue through politics, a renewed vigor for tithing and benevolence, and the creation of spaces for the wealthy and impoverished to interact.⁸⁴

In a study titled, “An Analysis of the Correlation between the Christian Education Context of the Local Church and the Biblical Worldview of High School Students,” David Scott Rutledge discusses the significant relationship between Christian education provided by the church and the biblical worldview of individuals at the high school level. Rutledge suggests that there is little or no correlation between church attendance and the biblical worldview of graduating seniors. He goes on to explain that many Christians utilize decades-old methods and strategies to teach students in the present age. Rutledge believes that while the biblical

⁸³ Michael C. Souders, “A God of Wealth: Religion, Modernity, and the Rhetoric of the Christian Prosperity Gospel” (dissertation, PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 2011), <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fgod-wealth-religion-modernity-rhetoric-christian%2Fdocview%2F916426509%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

⁸⁴ Kate Ward, “Wealth, Poverty and Economic Inequality: A Christian Virtue Response” (dissertation, PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 2016), <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fwealth-poverty-economic-inequality-christian%2Fdocview%2F1797412295%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

worldview does not change over time, cultures in fact do change. As such, interpreters must continually work to develop their priorities, study habits, and teaching strategies to ensure that the Bible message is being conveyed in an effective way while considering the rapid changes taking place.⁸⁵

In a study titled “Fidelity in Institutional Structure: Divine Family Formation and the Variance of Church amid Dysfunctional Behavior,” Terrence Lyne Toliver discusses the many misconceptions that have caused individuals to replace what is decent and orderly with wickedness through modes of humanism described as science, technology, philosophy, cultism and other paths that are lacking biblical substance. Toliver believes that devotion to Bible study is the key to experiencing faithfulness both in and outside the home. He focuses especially on how group study practices may impact understanding.⁸⁶ In an article published by the *Toronto Journal of Theology* titled, “Kierkegaard and the Relation of Hermeneutics and Cultural Criticism,” Lee C. Barrett, III explains that most theologians consider hermeneutics and cultural criticism to be “discrete enterprises.” He suggests that the conditions for an edifying reading of the Scripture may require a more stringent study of modern culture.⁸⁷

The author goes on to describe the way that presuppositions relating to groups within contemporary culture have a tendency to dispel the unique forms of “inwardness” or “pathos” that may lead to a transformative reading of the text. He suggests that cultural barriers inspire a

⁸⁵ David Scott Rutledge, "An Analysis of the Correlation between the Christian Education Context of the Local Church and the Biblical Worldview of High School Students" (Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, 2013), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/738>.

⁸⁶ Terrence Lyne Toliver, "Fidelity in Institutional Structure: Divine Family Formation and the Variance of Church amid Dysfunctional Behavior" (Doctoral Dissertation, Liberty University, 2021), <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/3047>.

⁸⁷ Lee C Barrett, III. “Kierkegaard and the Relation of Hermeneutics and Cultural Criticism,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 34, no. 1 (Spr 2018): 21–33, doi:10.3138/tjt.2017-0227.

rearrangement of meaning that hinders critical assignments of texts, shifts self-critique to the critique of others, undermines self-evaluation through the propagation of diverting inducements, idealizes incapacitating uncertainty, and nurtures a deceptive explanatory self-dependency. Barrett believes that the result of these cultural barriers is that Christian concepts become skewed as they become combined or confused with the ideology of the “nation, the race, the family, and the marketplace.”⁸⁸ In a journal article titled “The New Visibility of Religion: Studies in Religion and Cultural Hermeneutics.” Teemu Taira discusses the problem of the decline of religion.⁸⁹

He suggests that religion and its privatization and secularization are often viewed as antiquated. He believes that in order to truly understand what is going on in the world believers must step up and honor the church in a way that is biblically sound. Taira explains that some scholars have suggested a renewing and deprivatization of religion as well as providing a stringent favorable publication of the church in order to combat secularization. The research demonstrates that there are current forms of religion that have become disconnected from their former points of establishment.⁹⁰

In a journal article published by the *Bulletin for Biblical Research* titled, “Cultural Criticism and Biblical Hermeneutics: Definition, Origins, Benefits, and Challenges,” Gerald A. Klingbeil discusses the fact that hermeneutics as it connects to biblical studies have expanded immensely. He explains that in recent years cultural criticism has become instrumental in the

⁸⁸ Barrett, 21–33.

⁸⁹ Teemu Taira, “The New Visibility of Religion: Studies in Religion and Cultural Hermeneutics,” *Temenos* 46, no. 1 (2010): 139–43, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001859944&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁹⁰ Taira, 139–43.

interpretation process. Furthermore, he believes that the area of cultural criticism has begun to gain significant traction when it comes to Bible study. Klingbeil believes that there are various potential challenges both to cultural criticism and Bible-based hermeneutics that may have lasting missiological ramifications when expositional and cultural obstacles are ignored.⁹¹

In a journal article titled “A Biblical Analysis of the Main Teachings of the Prosperity Gospel, with Special Reference to the Preachers of Hyderabad, India,” David Prasanna Kumar Mende discusses the “Word of Faith” movement. This is the movement that has more commonly come to be known as the “prosperity gospel.” The article focuses on two of the movements popular teachings relating to healing and faith. Mende explains that one of the main reasons for the movement’s success is its emphasis on physical health. He suggests that people are drawn into the movement because of their desperate need for relief from injury, pain, and ailments. People flock to churches that have taken up preaching the prosperity gospel in droves because divine healing is promised.⁹²

Mende explains that while he agrees that God still heals people miraculously, he does not agree that Christians should expect to receive divine healing or exemption from disease as a result of obedience or faithfulness. Moreover, he proposes that absolute healing will only be achieved when believers have been resurrected and glorified.⁹³ In a journal article titled “Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond,” Nimi Wariboko provides an analysis of the prosperity gospel especially among African Pentecostals.

⁹¹ Klingbeil, 261–77.

⁹² David Prasanna Kumar Mende, “A Biblical Analysis of the Main Teachings of the Prosperity Gospel, with Special Reference to the Preachers of Hyderabad, India,” *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* 23, no. 1 (March 2019): 19–35, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAI FZN190415001500&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁹³ Mende, 19–35.

The author suggests that the prosperity gospel has been described by some as, “transformative in nature” and “adapting to context and traveling through history.” He goes on to explain that many observers see the message of the prosperity gospel as one that is “winding through local and transnational networks of churches and individuals” and “circulating in modern mass media” while “meandering through desperate political spheres of cultural spaces.”⁹⁴

The author continues on to communicate that when supporting scholarship is analyzed principles of organization may come into question. He does not address the viability of the prosperity gospel in depth but rather deals with the cultural and religious issues. Interestingly enough, Wariboko makes a comparison between African Pentecostals and both traditional African religions and Islamic practices throughout the region. He believes that similar messages may stem from indigenous roots or culturalization which have been mischaracterized as Pentecostalization.⁹⁵ In a journal article published by the *Journal for Scientific Study of Religion* titled, “A Gospel of Prosperity?: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Religion and Earned Income in Ghana, the Most Religious Country in the World,” Sedefka V. Beck and Sara J. Gundersen examine the relationship between church affiliation and earned income in Ghana.⁹⁶

The authors describe Ghana as a country that may be considered by some to be the most religious country on the planet. They describe what they view as a relationship between religion and socioeconomic outcomes in the United States. They specify connections between religion,

⁹⁴ Nimi Wariboko, “Pastures of Plenty: Tracing Religio-Scapes of Prosperity Gospel in Africa and Beyond,” *PentecoStudies* 16, no. 1 (2017): 138–40, doi:10.1558/ptcs.33404.

⁹⁵ Wariboko, 138–40.

⁹⁶ Sedefka V. Beck and Sara J. Gundersen, “A Gospel of Prosperity?: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Religion and Earned Income in Ghana, the Most Religious Country in the World,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55, no. 1 (March 2016): 105–29, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiBCA160815004391&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

earnings, and religious denominations. Beck and Gundersen believe that there is a correlation between earnings and religion both in the United States and in Ghana.⁹⁷ In a journal article titled, “Gift Challenges and Transforms Prosperity Gospel,” Thomas J. B. Mboya discuss the rapid growth of entrepreneurial and prosperity churches.⁹⁸

The author describes the prosperity gospel as a teaching that holds to the belief that “financial blessings, healing and material prosperity” are received as a result of one’s faith in God and one’s “continuous donations to the church.” They suggest that economic deprivation and health-related problems may be two of the primary forces behind the prosperity Gospel. Mboya believes that people need a message of hope that addresses issues of healing and wealth. Nevertheless, he insists these issues must be understood in light of the Scripture. The author explains that what believers do should be based on their love for God, fully acknowledging the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹

In his book titled, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude*, Brandon D. Crowe explains that many church leaders are more concerned about money, sex, and the accolades of their peers than they are about having a genuine love for Christ and a passion for the “true gospel.” He believes that the love of money is an ever-present danger for church leaders. This appetite for pleasure and avid greediness is graphically illustrated in the Old Testament text.¹⁰⁰ In their book titled, *Mastering*

⁹⁷ Beck and Gundersen, 105–29.

⁹⁸ Thomas J. B. Mboya, “Gift Challenges and Transforms Prosperity Gospel,” *AFER* 58, no. 1–2 (March 2016): 16–42, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAn3886426&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁹⁹ Mboya, 16–42.

¹⁰⁰ Brandon D. Crowe, *The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), chap. 4-8, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

Personal Growth, Maxie D. Dunnam, Gordon MacDonald, and Donald W. McCullough suggest that both time and money may limit one's cultural experience. The authors believe that in such instances when resources are available it allows for a heightened experience that stimulates the mind and touches emotions.¹⁰¹

In his book titled, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application*, Roy Gane describes wealth as a vital part of the social structure in the Old Testament. Wealth and especially public wealth meant the creation of "economic safety nets." Many societies did not have public wealth or welfare as one might understand it in the modern era. Gane suggests that individuals survived by becoming part of a cooperative or extended family. Failure to cooperate meant that the wealth of the community would be unavailable.¹⁰²

In the journal article titled, "Why Worldwide Bible Translation Grows Exponentially," Matthias Gerner explains how renderings of words such as "wealth" come about. In translations put out by organizations such as the United Bible Societies and the Nestle-Aland, Catholic sponsorship is required.¹⁰³ Richard Alan Fuhr and Andreas J. Köstenberger appear to concur with this assessment. In their book titled, *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology*, they explained that Catholic Church law provides for collaboration with publishers outside of the church so long as they meet with church approval. The authors believe that words may often be tricky to

¹⁰¹ Maxie D. Dunnam, Gordon MacDonald and Donald W. McCullough, *Mastering Personal Growth*, Mastering Ministry (Sisters, OR: Multnomah; Christianity Today, 1992), 105.

¹⁰² Roy Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2017), chap. 13, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

¹⁰³ Matthias Gerner, "Why Worldwide Bible Translation Grows Exponentially," *The Journal of Religious History* 42, no. 2 (June 2018): 145–180, doi:10.1111/1467-9809.12443.

understand, and that the context of a word should always take priority over its lexical definition.¹⁰⁴

In a journal article titled “Land, Slave Labor and Law: Engaging Ancient Israel’s Economy,” Zipporah G. Glass explains that for some scholars the Old Testament has little or no practical application in the modern era. However, he goes on to explain that there are a number of academics that believe that even laws relating to things that are no longer in place in contemporary culture may be applied to different situations yielding positive results.¹⁰⁵ In their book titled, *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton discuss wealth and money as it relates to Old Testament historical context. The authors describe the importance of money in relation to regional markets, social independence, and the local economies of ancient Israel. Greer, Hebner and John agree that in ancient Israel wealth could hardly be measured in terms of money or countable pieces of currency.¹⁰⁶

The Old Testament reflects an era of wealth that came about before the rise of money. Unique possessions and gifts laden with status permitted both families and individuals to show their prosperity.¹⁰⁷ In his book titled, *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning*, Wayne A. Grudem explains that there is a price to pay for misusing wealth. He

¹⁰⁴ Richard Alan Fuhr and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016) Chapter 3-10, <https://app.wordsearchbible.com/reader>.

¹⁰⁵ Zipporah G. Glass, “Land, Slave Labor and Law: Engaging Ancient Israel’s Economy,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 25, no. 91 (December 2000): 27–39, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000915639&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton, *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2018), Chap. 56, <https://app.wordsearchbible.com/>.

¹⁰⁷ Greer, Hilber, and Walton, chap. 56.

provides a number of Scriptures that deal with wealth and riches and keeps to the idea that God holds dishonest rich people accountable for the way that they manage their good fortune. Grudem suggests that it is the natural effort of every individual to want to better their own situation.¹⁰⁸ In his book titled, *Biblical Ethics: Choosing Right in a World Gone Wrong*, James P. Eckman, declares that Christ's admonition is that the believer is to be in the world, but not of it.¹⁰⁹

He believes that Christ separated himself from any wicked misrepresentations of God's glorious creation. Eckman goes on to relate that Christ wanted nothing to do with the misuse of wealth, social position, or political authority.¹¹⁰ In their book titled, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*, Scott A. Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee discuss wealth in the context of modern culture. The authors suggest that individuals wielding great wealth have the means to cause world-wide destruction through the development of weapons of mass destruction. Coming to terms with one's own wealth in the framework of overwhelming poverty may become quite complicated.¹¹¹

Conflicting priorities often confuse things when individuals are involved in caring for and protecting others in a culture that is unfamiliar. The authors believe that when it comes to the church there is a moral obligation to practice good stewardship according to the dictates of the church body and its spiritual convictions.¹¹² In a journal article titled, "The Unalterable Word,"

¹⁰⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Christian Ethics: An Introduction to Biblical Moral Reasoning* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), chap 34, Kindle.

¹⁰⁹ James P. Eckman, *Biblical Ethics: Choosing Right in a World Gone Wrong*, Biblical essentials series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 24.

¹¹⁰ Eckman, 24.

¹¹¹ Scott A. Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee. *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), chap. 12, Kindle.

¹¹² Moreau, Corwin, and McGee, chap. 12.

Bryan Murphy discusses the fact that Christ makes it clear that He wants believers to know that he is personally aware of their physical circumstances. Murphy believes that Christ is constantly evaluating these individual situations and that every believer that remains faithful will enjoy the blessings of His future domain. Rather than providing immediate earthly rewards, God makes His great wealth available for all of His people in His promised kingdom.¹¹³

In his book titled, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, Brent D. Sandy discusses the difficulty in relating God's word clearly. He suggests that knowing whether or not the text should be taken at face value requires an extensive understanding of literary methods. Sandy believes that it is important for Bible expositors to take the time to better understand the methods and culture of the biblical writers.¹¹⁴

In his book titled, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity*, Ronald J. Sider elaborates on the topic of wealth and widespread poverty. He explains that people now live in an age of great prosperity and yet there is also extensive impoverishment.¹¹⁵

Sider believes that it is a tragedy that affluent Christians throughout the world hoard wealth while millions of people live on the verge of starvation.¹¹⁶ In his book titled, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook*, Gary V. Smith discusses the topic of biblical wealth. In dealing with the major themes in the prophetic books of the Bible, he declares that God's people often had large military forces and were rather wealthy. As such, Smith believes

¹¹³ Bryan Murphy, "The Unalterable Word," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 165–177, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiBCA160705002047&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹¹⁴ D. Brent. Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), chap. 2, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

¹¹⁵ Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, an Imprint of Thomas Nelson, 2015), chap. 1, Kindle.

¹¹⁶ Sider, chap. 1, Kindle.

that the upper-class became dependent upon riches and military strength. A result of this behavior is that God's people became proud and did not trust in Him. Smith believes that this attitude was one that ultimately caused the military defeat of God's people.¹¹⁷

In his book titled, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ*, Robert H. Stein describes the methodology for establishing a comprehensive study as it relates to the life and circumstances of Christ. He believes that Christian and non-Christian sources should be assembled including pagan and Jewish sources.¹¹⁸ Douglas R. Sharp added to this in a journal article titled "Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods." He explained that a concentrated study relating to Christ should fall within the context of historical and cultural Judaism along with the ancient Greco-Roman world. Sharp believes that in studying the topic of wealth in relation to the life and expectations of Christ, detailed accounts of biblical and extra-biblical Jewish and non-Jewish resources give researchers a broader cultural and religious atmosphere for analysis and reflection.¹¹⁹

Brain J. Tabb discusses the topic of wealth in his book titled, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone*. The author suggests that God's word is trustworthy and true. In addition, he explains that Christ's revelation is presented in individual testimony, prophecy, the unsealed scroll, the law code, and the word of God. Tabb believes that the communication found in Revelation establishes a basis for the urgency for believers to receive Christ's offer of divine

¹¹⁷ Gary V. Smith, *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 2014), chap. 1, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

¹¹⁸ Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2017), chap. 2, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

¹¹⁹ Douglas R. Sharp, "Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods," *Review & Expositor* 100, no. 2 (Spr 2003): 285–86, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001433471&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

blessings or spiritual wealth.¹²⁰ In his book, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose*, Paul R. Williamson explains the shortcomings of humanity. He describes the inevitability of the failure of God's people in the Old Testament text.¹²¹

As such he believes that God's people have experienced blessings and curses that have been presented as successive realities throughout history. Williamson believes that studying the Old Testament and paying particular interest to the Old Testament prophets will allow Bible interpreters to better understand God's restoring mercy and His righteous judgment.¹²² Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorn discuss the topic of wealth in their book titled, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. The authors explain that God's people are distinctively blessed. However, it is God's desire to bless beyond His covenant people.¹²³

The authors believe that wealth should bring about a desire to be a blessing in a biblical sense. They suggest that being a blessing means something more than just sharing wealth. God's blessing is multiplied in unique and extraordinary ways.¹²⁴ In a journal article titled, "A Reflection on the Nature and Theological Basis for Poverty and Debt Laws in the Pentateuch," Wong Fook Kong explains that a number of scholars view the Old Testament biblical laws as a set of statutes that were put in place to keep the poor from being taken advantage of by the wealthy.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Brian J. Tabb, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2019), chap. 1-10, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

¹²¹ Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in Gods Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2007), chap. 5, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

¹²² Williamson, chap. 9.

¹²³ Ralph D. Winter, and Steven C. Hawthorn, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. 4th. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), chap. 1-6, Kindle.

¹²⁴ Winter, and Hawthorn, chap.

¹²⁵ Fook Kong Wong, "A Reflection on the Nature and Theological Basis for Poverty and Debt Laws in the Pentateuch," *Review & Expositor* 111, no. 2 (May 2014): 187–95, doi:10.1177/0034637314524533.

They were believed to have been designed to help the impoverished to break the cycle of poverty. Kong believes that the Old Testament law carries with it a theological core that is relevant for every generation.¹²⁶ Diving deeper into the subject area of hermeneutics, A. K. M. Adam discusses the topic of biblical hermeneutics in his book titled, *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation*. The author approaches the topic of hermeneutics by looking at how theological tradition has been interpreting Scripture for centuries without the discomfort to which contemporary interpreters testify. The writers investigate interpretive disagreements and delve into subject areas where more expert scholars seem to have achieved no consensus.¹²⁷

A. K. M. Adam compares precritical to critical biblical interpretation. He believes that a major problem with biblical interpretation in the modern era is that interpreters refuse to recognize alternative modes of interpretation as legitimate.¹²⁸ Craig G. Bartholomew discusses the topic of wealth in his book titled, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*. He explains that allegory was often used to make sense of the Old Testament within the confines of the Christian perspective. The author goes on to suggest that allegory was by no means confined to the pages of the Old Testament.¹²⁹

Bartholomew believes that when Christ told the rich young man to abandon his wealth and property in Matthew 19:16-22, He was in effect asking him to banish any notion of wealth from his soul including excitement, morbid feelings or anxiety which brings about the forms of

¹²⁶ Wong, 187–95.

¹²⁷ A. K. M. Adam, *Reading Scripture with the Church: Toward a Hermeneutic for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), chap. 8, Kindle.

¹²⁸ Adam, chap. 8.

¹²⁹ Craig G. Bartholomew, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), chap. 5, Kindle.

existence that stifle one's growth and hinders the abundant life that Christians are meant to experience.¹³⁰ David R. Bauer, and Robert A. Traina discuss the topic of wealth in their book titled, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics*. The authors proclaim that the New Testament provides no promises relating to believers and the physical blessing of prosperity as a result of association, faithfulness, or obedience. Furthermore, they go on to explain that likewise, the church itself has received no such promise. Bauer and Traina believe that the New Testament as a whole teaches that discipleship may result in physical adversity, a loss of wealth, or may leave the believer lacking in those things needful to the body.¹³¹

Daniel I. Block elaborates on the topic of wealth in his book titled, *Deuteronomy: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text -- to Contemporary Life*. The author suggests that there are dangers associated with wealth and excess. He explains that in the Western world individuals enjoy an abundance of wealth and extravagance. Because of that, Westerners often find it difficult to remember that everything that is attained is a gracious gift from God. Block believes that people often become like the rich farmer in Christ's parable found in Luke 12:14-21.¹³²

Individuals often exude a smug self-confidence that is propped up on a platform of wealth and excess, and yet these same individuals behave as though they are paupers toward God.¹³³ Abner Chou contemplates the topic of wealth in his book titled, *The Hermeneutics of the*

¹³⁰ Bartholomew, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, chap. 5.

¹³¹ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), chap 17, Kindle.

¹³² Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text-- to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Deuteronomy 6:10-25, Kindle.

¹³³ Block, Deuteronomy 6:10-25.

Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles. The author discusses the book of Joshua and explains that there is a level of hermeneutical precision brought out in the text. Wealth as it pertains to authority is mentioned. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 explains that a king must not multiply wives, gold, or horses. The intent of the text is to communicate the idea that a king should trust in God rather than a large dynasty, excessive wealth, or a large military force.¹³⁴

Chou believes that the command found in Joshua 11:6 where there is a command to hamstring the horses is most likely intended to highlight this stipulation.¹³⁵ David S. Dockery expounds on the topic of hermeneutics in the foreground of history in his book titled, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church*. He discusses a number of approaches to interpreting the text. For instance, he mentioned that Augustine did not hesitate to allocate multiple interpretations to a given text. He suggests that even a mistaken interpretation that edifies and magnifies love goes astray in much the same way as one who by mistake veers from the highroad and takes a shortcut to reach the same destination.¹³⁶

J. Scott, Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays examine the topic of wealth as it relates to the less fortunate. In their book titled, *Grasping Gods Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, they suggest that the text in 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 presents a marvelous look into the mindset of those who have little or no concern for the less fortunate. Paul writes that in partaking in the Lord's supper there were some that were involved

¹³⁴ Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2018), chap. 3, Kindle.

¹³⁵ Chou, chap. 3.

¹³⁶ David S. Dockery, *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now: Contemporary Hermeneutics in the Light of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), chap. 5, Kindle.

in their own private suppers. As a result, some individuals would remain hungry, and others would become drunk. In clarifying the meaning of this text, the authors explain that Paul was pointing out that the rich had a lack of consideration for the poor and were in fact not celebrating the Lord's supper at all. Instead, they were celebrating "their own supper."¹³⁷

Graeme Goldsworthy considers the topic of wealth and increase in the Bible. In his book titled, *Christ-centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles*, he discusses the advance in the development and the revelation of God's blessings as it pertains to the covenant made with Abraham. Goldsworthy believes that the history from Abraham to Solomon's Temple illustrated an overall advance or development in the revelation of God's blessings as they relate to the Abrahamic covenant. He considers the history from Solomon's apostasy in 1 Kings and 2 Kings extending to the exile. He believes the text demonstrates a general appearance of the curses associated with the covenant. The author believes that the teachings of Christ restore the original hope in the blessed promises of God often associated with the Old Testament Abrahamic covenant.¹³⁸

Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald discuss wealth within the text in relation to historical, cultural, and social constructs in their book titled, *The World of the New Testament Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. When elaborating on the Scriptures and the proper interpretation based on internal factors the authors mention the text in Habakkuk 2:8 in connection with "the wicked." The authors believe that the text in Habakkuk 2:8 which may be

¹³⁷ J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), chap. 6, Kindle.

¹³⁸ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles*. (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2012), chap. 1, Kindle.

interpreted to read “you have plundered many nations,” can be applied to “the last Priests of Jerusalem” who hoard money and rob the people.¹³⁹

Johannes Albertus Loubser discusses the life and death of Christ in light of how it is contextualized in the text. In his book titled, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible: Studies on the Media Texture of the New Testament*, the author suggests that Christ’s life is described in different texts in ways that allow it to fit into “concrete context.” In Philippians 2:4-5 Christ’s life, death and resurrection which is also described as the “Christ event” is compared and contrasted within the context of humiliation and exaltation. Philippians 2:4-5 describes the Christ event in light of social status. Then in 2 Corinthians 8:9 the Christ event is compared to poverty and wealth. Rather than social status, 2 Corinthians 8:9 describes the Christ event in light of financial position. Therefore, the author concludes that wealth, poverty, and social status in the text is quite symbolic.¹⁴⁰

John Anthony McGuckin writes about the topic of humanity and its suffering. In his book titled, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture*, he writes about leadership in the church. The author describes the cry to which the church leadership responds. McGuckin believes that a call to serve in the church is a clear call to the ascension of love that presses church leaders to leave behind the comforts of home to serve the poor and needy.¹⁴¹ Grant R. Osborne discusses the topic of interpretation as it relates to wealth in his book titled, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical*

¹³⁹ Joel B. Green and Lee Martin McDonald, *The World of the New Testament Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), chap. 5, Kindle.

¹⁴⁰ J. A. Loubser, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible: Studies on the Media Texture of the New Testament--Explorative Hermeneutics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), chap. 7, Kindle.

¹⁴¹ John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), chap. 4, Kindle.

Interpretation. The author demonstrates that the biblical writers often used hyperbolic examples to accentuate meaning.¹⁴²

For instance, in Mark 4:31 when Jesus said that the mustard seed was “the smallest seed” he was not merely alluding to scientific fact but was using a hyperbolic contrast. Osborne illustrates that the same was true when Jesus spoke about the problem of a camel going through the eye of a needle in Mark 10:25. The camel was the largest animal in Palestine, and it was used in contrast to the smallest of openings. This hyperbolic contrast was used to stress the immense difficulty of converting those who had amassed great wealth.¹⁴³ Stanley E. Porter and Craig Blomberg deliberate on the problem of impoverishment in their book titled, *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*.¹⁴⁴

In speaking of the problem of interpreting Matthew’s infancy narrative in light of Luke’s narrative the authors suggest that, while historically these narratives may have been predominantly interpreted in this manner, it does not necessarily make the practice precise. For instance, when looking at Luke’s first beatitude in Luke 6:20 which states, “Blessed are you who are poor,” interpreters regularly view the text in light of Matthew 5:3 which reads, “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Lk 6:20; Mt 5:3). As such, the reoccurring emphasis on God’s concern for the poor is nearly altogether veiled. The authors believe that diversity of interpretations is critical as it brings to light things that may be misconstrued. They emphasize that utilizing diversity

¹⁴² Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), chap. 4, Kindle.

¹⁴³ Osborne, chap. 4.

¹⁴⁴ Stanley E. Porter and Craig Blomberg, *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2012), chap. 6, Kindle.

improperly in the interpretation process to celebrate equality or highlight the interpreter's ingenuity is not a proper Christian response.¹⁴⁵

Ron Rhodes expounds on the topic of biblical wealth in his book titled, *Christianity According to the Bible*. The author explains that the body of Christ is the “ever enlarging body of born-again believers” that make up the church over whom Christ reigns as Lord. He makes clear that while members may differ in wealth and social status, they are bound together as one people as described in Galatians 3:28. He goes on to suggest that possessions and wealth should be understood in light of the truths of heaven. Rhodes believes that one should view their problems and even their entire existence from the perspective that God and his kingdom come first, and the believer's earthly existence should then follow.¹⁴⁶

In his book titled *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation*, John Sailhamer discusses the topic of biblical wealth in relation to the Old Testament text. The author explains that it is often believed that the Old Testament writers were attempting to represent the views of prominent religious leaders and well-established institutions in ancient Israel. Yet, Sailhamer infers that the Old Testament authors were not in fact speaking on behalf of Israel's religious authorities but rather for the “poor, the orphan and the widow.” He believes that the Old Testament represents the underprivileged. He explains that the voice that one hears most often in the Old Testament books is that of the prophets.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Porter and Blomberg, chap. 6.

¹⁴⁶ Ron Rhodes, *Christianity According to the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2006), chap. 11-15, Kindle.

¹⁴⁷ John Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (IVP Academic, 2010), chap. 5, Kindle.

Sailhamer suggests that the Old Testament prophets represent those who would otherwise have no representation by the established religious institutions and covenant communities.¹⁴⁸ In his book titled, *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture*, John F. A. Sawyer discusses the topic of wealth in connection with the Bible and the background cultures of the ancient Near East. The author touches on the topic of kingship. He suggests that kingship existed throughout the span of known history. Sawyer goes on to explain that warfare was endemic because it established a justification for kingship and the formation of ready military forces.¹⁴⁹

The author believes that warfare has historically provided a source of wealth in the form of seized goods and slaves.¹⁵⁰ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, James K. A. Smith, and Bruce Ellis Benson discussed the topic of biblical wealth in their book titled, *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads*. The authors explain that people are all equal regardless of wealth or social status. They offer the example of death to illustrate their point. While it is true that in life some may deny this truth, in death this fact cannot be refuted. It is only in death that one attains “equal distribution.” The authors explain that each person ends up with about the same square footage in the graveyard and shares the same bright sun.¹⁵¹

In view of the churchyard all people are equal. The parable of the wedding feast is offered as another example to illustrate this point. Christ said that one’s neighbors should be invited rather than just a short list of friends. Everyone should be invited to the wedding feast.

¹⁴⁸ Sailhamer, chap. 5.

¹⁴⁹ John F. A. Sawyer, *The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), chap. 1, Kindle.

¹⁵⁰ Sawyer, chap. 1.

¹⁵¹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, James K. A. Smith, and Bruce Ellis Benson, *Hermeneutics at the Crossroads* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), chap. 5, Kindle.

The authors believe that God's people ought to be careful not to embrace the dissimilarity of riches or social status as this is only temporal.¹⁵²

In his book titled, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*, William J. Webb suggests that in biblical times people were strictly instructed to be obedient or submissive to their political leaders. The author cites a number of practical reasons why the biblical command for individuals to obey their leaders was important. First, these commands made sense culturally because when the king spoke it was law. Second, the poor had little or no involvement in politics. Many people that lived during biblical times were not well educated.¹⁵³

Therefore, important decisions were made by those who filled positions of aristocracy. Third, wealth was not vastly distributed. As such, the masses often lived very simple lives with little or no involvement in politics. Webb believes that modern democratic societies have caused the logical order to change substantially. The modifications have led the author to suggest that the change in pragmatics alone push individuals in modern culture up to the level of "honor leaders" in contemporary settings.¹⁵⁴ Merold Westphal, discusses the topic of wealth in his book titled, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?: Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church*.¹⁵⁵

The author suggests that those taking a liberal or left leaning stand in society do not necessarily see government as a necessary institution but rather as an insurance policy of sorts. If

¹⁵² Vanhoozer, Smith, and Benson, chap. 5.

¹⁵³ William J. Webb and Darrell L. Bock, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), chap. 7, Kindle.

¹⁵⁴ Webb, chap. 7.

¹⁵⁵ Merold Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?: Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), chap. 10, Kindle.

citizens receive goods and services at a reasonable price, then government may be viewed as a good arrangement. The relationship with an insurance company is contractual. Consequently, while it may not be the case in every instance, the author suggests that people that hold to a politically liberal view may understand government to be merely a product of a type of social contract. Conversely, there are those that believe that government is not about how much an individual can receive for the money they have invested, but how as a political society our culture's most basic values may be protected and shared. Westphal believes that political liberalism does not present a model that is helpful in any sense for the contemporary church.¹⁵⁶

In his book titled, *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*, Jens Zimmermann elaborates on the topic of interpretation. The author explains that theology may be described as the field of biblical study that interprets divine revelation. Along with jurisprudence, he suggests that theology has become a classic hermeneutical discipline that expresses the underlying pragmatic element of interpretation. Zimmermann believes that a mere historical or descriptive understanding of God's word does not satisfy a legal or theological interpretation of the text. Only when an application is provided does the text do the work of providing law or proclaiming truth.¹⁵⁷

In his book titled *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*, Craig Bloomberg guides his readers through a number of passages that deal with poverty and wealth. He is careful to pay attention to proper Bible exegesis while yielding a biblical theology that is sensitive to the historic texts. The author does not outright condemn earthly wealth in light of lessons learned from biblical figures such as Abraham, Job, and

¹⁵⁶ Westphal, chap. 10.

¹⁵⁷ Jens Zimmermann, *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015), chap. 5, Kindle.

Philemon. He also shows no admonition toward an excessive interest in acquiring money or gaining possessions. Bloomberg stresses the positive role that money and wealth play in the lives of God's people while at the same time expressing a sincere concern for the hoarding and misusing of wealth as related in the Bible text.¹⁵⁸

In his paper titled, "An Eagerness to Be Up and Doing, The Evangelical Activeness of Charles Haddon Spurgeon," Alex J. DiPrima writes about the approach that Charles Spurgeon took toward the appropriation of earthly wealth. He suggested that Spurgeon often addressed his points of application to those that were wealthy within the church. He argued that the primary reason that God assigns wealth to individuals is so that they might use their wealth to influence or bless the poor. When speaking of the good Samaritan, who was aiding a man that was presumably a Jew, Spurgeon wrote, "we are to relieve real distress irrespective of creed, as the Samaritan did." DiPrima insists that Spurgeon believed that the proclaiming of the gospel was to be at the very center of the mission of the church rather than the attaining and storing up of wealth.¹⁵⁹

In a paper titled, "Charles Spurgeon's Contribution to Preaching in the 21st Century, The Evangelical Activeness of Charles Haddon Spurgeon," Kevin Jerrod Williams discusses Charles Spurgeon's extensive impact on the importance of church doctrine and advocacy for the impoverished. The author explains that Spurgeon compelled his listeners to focus on Christ as opposed to religious affiliations or social status. He argued that Spurgeon reached the poor and less fortunate by separating his communication from that of his peers and establishing programs

¹⁵⁸ Craig Bloomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), chap. 1-4, Kindle.

¹⁵⁹ Alex J. DiPrima, "An Eagerness to be Up and Doing: The Evangelical Activism of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feagerness-be-up-doing-evangelical-activism%2Fdocview%2F2465980128%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

that impacted the poor directly. The author explains that Spurgeon's innovations in Victorian era homiletics enabled him to build an audience of people from varying backgrounds and intellects and social classes. Williams communicates to his readers that according to Spurgeon good leadership is not achieved without suffering. He suggests that Spurgeon's compassion for people's welfare continues to make his writings relevant to contemporary ministry efforts.¹⁶⁰

In a paper titled, "Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching," Matthew Robert Perry discusses Charles Spurgeon's broad influence on the underprivileged. He looks at Spurgeon's ethic toward the disadvantaged by analyzing his work in the areas of nationalism, racism, and religious liberty. The author suggests that it was Spurgeon's belief that all people matter to God especially the vulnerable. He believed that Spurgeon engaged in ministry to the misfortunate as an act of obedience to God's commands. The author explains that money held no attraction for Spurgeon. Rather than storing up his fortune he gave his money away until there was very little of it left. Perry believed that Spurgeon's placed his confidence, not in earthly wealth, but in the unshakable power of God.¹⁶¹

In a book titled, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, David Bebbington argues for four distinct marks that characterize evangelicalism as a movement. They are biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism, and activism. This theme has become known as the "Bebbington Quadrilateral." While it has been criticized by some, this

¹⁶⁰ Kevin Jerrod Williams, "Charles Spurgeon's Contribution to Preaching in the 21st Century" (Ph.D diss., Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 2020), <http://hdl.handle.net/1802/35706>.

¹⁶¹ Robert Matthew Perry, "Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 92.

account of the history and organization of evangelicalism has become widely accepted among scholars.¹⁶²

In her book titled, *Land of our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims*, Francesca Stavrakopoulou discusses the topic of biblical wealth in connection with land acquisitions in the Old Testament. The author examines the aggressive nature of landgrab ideologies. She goes on to describe the giants of the Old Testament text as being obscure, pseudo-mythical people. Other text describing the wealth of God's eternal kingdom are depicted as mythic motifs. She goes on to infer that the books of the Hebrew Bible are "so-called historical." Ultimately, Stavrakopoulou appears to approach the text from a humanistic viewpoint. For the purposes of this study the author is categorized as having taken a simple approach to the topic of biblical wealth.¹⁶³

In his book titled, *Jesus interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*, Bart D. Ehrman elaborates on the topic of biblical wealth in connection with nature. The author suggests that because Christ's departure and return involves an unseen realm that the text was somehow created for a far less enlightened audience. He infers that because the heavenly realm is unseen and the physical world extending outward is visible to the naked eye that believers should reevaluate biblical teachings that relate to wealth, slavery, disease, and virtually everything else. Ehrman is another biblical scholar that approaches the topic of biblical wealth from the perspective of an atheist. He suggests that individuals should carefully consider what

¹⁶² David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁶³ Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *Land of Our Fathers: The Roles of Ancestor Veneration in Biblical Land Claims* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2012), Kindle.

they believe to be consistent or inconsistent when it comes to the Bible. The author appears to take a simple approach to wealth.¹⁶⁴

In a book titled, *Sense and Goodness without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism*, Richard Carrier expands on the topic of biblical wealth as it relates to the natural world. The author believes that it is immoral to expect individuals to adopt behaviors based on Bible truths pertaining to the topic of wealth. He describes nationalism and religious fundamentalism as “virus like memes.” Carrier appears to believe that social and institutional problems that plague society require a redistribution of wealth. He appears to believe that wealth and not God is the driving force behind the individuals desire to understand the truth about their existence. According to Carrier, humans begin to seek to perfect their access to truth only after they have procured a measure of wealth and security. The author is considered to have taken a simple approach to wealth.¹⁶⁵

Three primary collections of sermons will be utilized for this study. First, there is the collection of sermons that Spurgeon preached from the Mormon Tabernacle pulpit. In this collection Spurgeon consistently made references to the spiritual commodity of wealth as well as those who are spiritually poor or spiritually rich.¹⁶⁶ Second, there are the collection of sermons that Spurgeon preached from the New Park Street pulpit. In this collection of sermons Spurgeon remained consistent in his proclamation of wealth as a spiritual commodity. Furthermore, he communicated that individuals are responsible for the use which they make of their earthly

¹⁶⁴ Richard Carrier, *Sense and Goodness without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2005), Kindle.

¹⁶⁵ Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know about Them)* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2010), Kindle.

¹⁶⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 7-63.

wealth.¹⁶⁷ Finally, there is the collection of lost sermons preached by Spurgeon that were compiled by Christian George. In this collection of sermons Spurgeon remains true to form in taking a Christological approach to preaching wealth as a spiritual commodity. Spurgeon believed that those who put their trust in Christ were wealthier in truth than those who possessed earthly mines of gold.¹⁶⁸

The study will consider data presented in a dissertation written by Christian George titled “Jesus Christ, the ‘Prince of Pilgrims’: A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892).” George believed that Christ was at the center of Spurgeon’s life and work and that Christological metaphors could be found throughout his ministry.¹⁶⁹ A dissertation by John David Talbert detailing Spurgeon’s Christological approach to preaching will also be analyzed. The title of this dissertation is, “Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s Christological Homiletics: A Critical Evaluation of Selected Sermons from Old Testament Texts.” Talbert believed that Spurgeon maintained a Christological approach to homiletics as he believed it was necessary in preserving doctrinal orthodoxy in the church. He explained that Spurgeon acknowledged that to emphasize any other approach would yield disastrous results.¹⁷⁰

In his book titled, *Understanding the Bible as a Scripture in History*, biblical scholar James W. Watts discusses interpretations of the text in relation to historical and cultural

¹⁶⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit, Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by C.H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1-63 (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), Kindle.

¹⁶⁸ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian T. George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. I-II (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), Kindle.

¹⁶⁹ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 1-314.

¹⁷⁰ Talbert, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/charles-haddon-spurgeons-christological/docview/303833842/se-2>.

influences. He describes the way that both Jews and Christians incorporate ritual into their exposition of the text. He analyzes the text in light of its persuasive rhetoric. Watts describes the text as being rooted in the expressive dimensions of the time periods from which each section originated. He goes on to discuss the impact of the text on modern culture and the various conflicts that have stemmed from developing systems of worship.¹⁷¹

Conclusion

The researcher acknowledges that wealth in the form of riches or physical possessions can be beneficial when used for the advancement of God's kingdom. However, Christians are encouraged to follow scriptural guidelines with regards to these matters. The research suggests that contemporary expositors may benefit from endeavoring to expand in the areas of interpretation, culture, and communication when exploring God's holy word. When conveying the gospel message, a general exploration of the text may not be sufficient. Modern interpreters might do well to strive for an enhanced understanding of how certain passages relate to the work in its entirety. The study contends that gaining understanding about what the Bible truly says about wealth involves an authentic effort to perceive the way in which God communicates to His people in and through His word. Furthermore, it alleges that adherence to such standards attests to the believer's faith in the glory of God in Christ Jesus. The Bible expositor may do well to approach this not as a technique but rather an exercise of theological analysis.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ James W. Watts, *Understanding the Bible as a Scripture in History, Culture and Religion* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021) chap. 1-15, Kindle.

¹⁷² Kibbe, chap. 3.

Wealth in the Old Testament

Introduction

This section of the paper will provide an overall introduction to the chapter. Passages from five Old Testament books were systematically chosen as the primary sources for discussion. As previously mentioned, the Scriptures offered in the various sections of this chapter were selected to provide a distinctive look at wealth as understood by Israelites during the Old Testament era. Genesis interacts with perceptions of wealth as understood at its inception. Psalms deals with the poetry, law, and culture of God's people in relation to wealth. Proverbs interacts with the wisdom and culture of the time. Amos and Jeremiah deal with failed perceptions of wealth that impacted the culture as a whole. The books of Amos and Jeremiah bring the study closer to the end of the Old Testament era.¹

The chapter deliberates on Spurgeon's writings on the Old Testament concerning wealth and will consider the topics of covenant blessings, aversion, and rebellion in connection with biblical wealth. Spurgeon emphasized the need to recognize one's sacred obligations concerning spiritual and earthly wealth. He said, "For God does not at this day give harvests to idle men except harvests of thistles, nor is he pleased to send wealth to the man who will not dig in the field to find its hid treasure."²

This chapter addresses the issue of morality. It will show how problems surrounding morality impacted the way that people in the Bible understood and attained wealth. It will demonstrate how wealth was perceived in the beginning. It will illustrate how interpretations

¹ James W. Watts, *Understanding the Bible as a Scripture in History, Culture and Religion* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021) chap. 1-15, Kindle.

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 8 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

regarding wealth developed. The chapter will delve into early culture and its impact on how wealth was understood and connect that with contemporary interpretations. Rather than simply doing an overview of wealth in the Old Testament, this chapter will work through the text diachronically connecting key terms and Bible stories with Western and non-Western interpretations at various intervals throughout history leading up to the modern era. It will discuss how Charles Spurgeon understood and applied the text relating to wealth providing commentary throughout.³

Spurgeon was keen on preaching both the Old and New Testament. He believed that the attainment of wealth carried with it sacred obligations. When discussing the topic of wealth, he once said, “Scripture all through represents the acquisition of wealth as involving very solemn responsibilities and loading the soul with burdens.” He believed that wealth could not only be a blessing but a curse as well. Spurgeon said, “I do not doubt that there are some men who could never have sinned as they have done if they had not been successful in acquiring wealth. They could never have plunged into damnation so deep as that which is theirs if they had not been able to indulge their lusts without stint.”⁴

In the Old Testament book of Psalms, the Bible teaches believers that the acquisition of “riches” carries with it great responsibility. This is especially true when there is a storing up of earthly treasure or an “abundance of riches.” The psalmist proclaims, “Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compasseth me about? They that trust in their wealth, and boast of the multitude of their riches.” He goes on to describe the futility of endeavoring to store up earthly treasure when he writes, “None of them by any means can

³ *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994), 24.

⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 42.

redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption for their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) That he should still live on for ever, and not see corruption” (Ps 49:5-9).⁵

Spurgeon proclaimed, “Wealth to the worldling is not wealth to the Christian. His currency is different, his values are of another sort.”⁶ He believed that wealth had a special meaning to the child of God. Spurgeon understood that wealth could not buy salvation. He knew full well that one could not possibly exchange the wealth of this world for the wealth of the heavenly realm. This is precisely what the psalmist was proclaiming. One cannot hope to earn enough earthly riches to redeem himself or others from the grave. While the Bible is not opposed to the acquisition of earthly riches, the Scriptures clearly explain that such wealth is worthless as it pertains to one’s destiny beyond the grave.⁷

Job’s friends Bildad and Zophar suggest that God blesses the righteous and causes the wicked to suffer. They saw Job suffering and decided that he must be wicked. Job replied by explaining that he had seen the wicked prospering and blessed with long life. Their days were filled with happiness and even their death was quick and easy. Then in death they were honored. Bildad and Zophar were overlooking the heart. They failed to understand that wealth and monetary success was not necessarily the result of godly character.⁸

⁵ Ted Cabal, Chad Owen Brand, E. Ray Clendenen et al., *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), 834.

⁶ Edmond Hez Swem, *Spurgeon’s Gold: New Selections from the Works of C. H. Spurgeon* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010), 35-187, Kindle.

⁷ Cabal, Brand, and E. Ray Clendenen et al., 834.

⁸ Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1991), Job 21:1.

Job was financially ruined. He lost all of his possessions, yet he was described in the Bible as blameless and upright.⁹ Obviously, Job had employed “God’s ways of handling money.” Nevertheless, he found himself impoverished, without his health, and devastated by personal loss. That is the problem with promising others health and wealth for obedience to God’s word. There is no guarantee of human justice or wealth in this life.¹⁰

Charles Spurgeon elaborated on the topic of earthly wealth and its acquisition when preaching on the text found in 2 Chronicles 31:21. The text reads, “And in every word that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered” (2 Chr 31:21). Spurgeon suggested, “This is no unusual occurrence, in fact, it seems to be the general rule of the moral universe that those men prosper who do their work with all their hearts, while those are almost certain to fail who go to their labor leaving half their hearts behind them.” Spurgeon went on to say, “men do not go to bed and wake up in the morning to find themselves famous, at least not until they have encountered many stern labors.”

The Inception of Wealth

The book of Genesis sheds light on the early cultural perceptions of wealth and its inception, as highlighted by Spurgeon's observations. Specifically, the text reveals the ways in which wealth was obtained and viewed in the early days, which may provide insights into current debates and discussions around wealth and its role in society. By exploring this topic in depth, researchers and scholars can gain a better understanding of the historical and cultural contexts in which wealth was created and maintained, which can inform contemporary perspectives on this

⁹ Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary*, Job 21:1.

¹⁰ H. L. Willmington, *The Outline Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), Job 20-21:34.

complex issue. Additionally, examining the origins of wealth in the book of Genesis can provide a framework for understanding the religious and moral implications of accumulating and sharing wealth. This understanding can be especially valuable for religious leaders and organizations seeking to navigate the complexities of wealth in a way that aligns with their beliefs and values. Delving into the early perceptions of wealth in Genesis can offer valuable insights and perspectives for current discussions and debates surrounding wealth and its place in society.¹¹

This section will connect with Spurgeon's writings pertaining to biblical wealth at its inception. It will discuss the topics of evolution, heresy, and interpretation as they relate to spiritual increase. Spurgeon underscored the need for suffering and humility in connection with spiritual blessings. He believed that a right spirit would create harmony and facilitate increase. He said, "Godliness has the promise of life that now is - that is to say, everything that comes to a godly man comes to him by promise." He went on to further explain, "I believe some persons have the life that now is in its fullness, and the promise of it in its richest fulfillment, who have neither wealth, health, nor fame." He believed that pleasing God was reward enough for many. He said, "Being blessed with the suffering Master's smile and presents, they are far happier than those who enroll in wealth, who luxuriate in fame, and have all the rich blessings which health includes."¹²

This section will explore what it is that makes cultural presupposition toward biblical wealth possible. It will address the problems related to misinterpretations pertaining to wealth. It will discuss how wealth was understood at its very beginning. It will look at how prosperity, increase, and wealth was understood by the earliest believers. Readers will be directed to the

¹¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 16.

¹² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 16.

book of Genesis to discuss the beginning and origin of wealth. This section will connect with various terms and interpretations and learn how wealth evolved and was perceived during the time spanning throughout Old Testament history.¹³

Spurgeon wrote about God's glorious increase. He explained that God's "first promise" was found in Genesis 3:15 which says, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gn 3:15). Spurgeon said, "This is a most glorious promise, the first and only one until the time of Abraham." He inferred that rather than seeking earthly riches or fame, as believers, "We must look for trial." He went on to say, "And as surely as that comes will final triumph come."¹⁴

He was declaring that the very first promise of God will result in both "Satan's confinement in the pit" and "the salvation of all the elect." Sometimes the promises of God are difficult to discern. Spurgeon believed that Christians must experience the painful "bruising." However, bruising is not utter destruction and suffering is not death. The suffering of Jesus and His elect has ultimately led to the overthrow of Satan. The result is the establishment of God's holy kingdom.¹⁵

Spurgeon described the blessings of God that were bestowed upon his chosen people as a whole in Genesis 12:1-3. He went on to describe the progression of those blessings initially conferred through the Abrahamic covenant. The blessings flowed from the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12:1-3 to the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 19-24. From there the blessings have progressed to Christ and through Him now all blessings flow. Instead of a law written on stone,

¹³ *KJV Bible Commentary*, 24.

¹⁴ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian T. George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. I (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), Kindle.

¹⁵ Alistair Begg and C. H. Spurgeon, *CSB Spurgeon Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 4-6, Kindle.

the Holy Spirit writes God's precepts upon the hearts of believers. Spurgeon believed that Moses was given the authority to tell Christians what to do, but Jesus has given His people the power to do it.¹⁶

Spurgeon went on to discuss the problem of wealth when addressing his congregation and preaching on the "exceeding great reward" described in Genesis 15:1. In this text the Bible says, "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gn 15:1). Spurgeon said, "You may have losses and afflictions, these are part of your lot, but they shall not overwhelm you. You shall be no real losers in the end, but you shall be kept by the power of God, and shall be delivered out of every trial and affliction." He suggested that a portion of the believer's great wealth was God himself. When speaking about God he proclaimed, "He shall be to you also your shield, and your exceeding great reward."¹⁷

The Bible's teachings on wealth present a complex interpretational problem that is intrinsically connected to the inception of wealth in Genesis. The problem is two-fold. First, in 1 Timothy 6:10 the Bible teaches believers that the love of money is the root of all evil, which is a moral issue that is directly related to the ways in which wealth was perceived and acquired in the early days of human civilization. Secondly, cultural presuppositions about wealth can further complicate the problem, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the text. This issue is compounded by the fact that misinterpretations or corruptions of one part of the text can have an impact on how other parts of the text are understood, which is why 2 Timothy 3:16 emphasizes the importance of understanding all Scripture in its entirety. By examining the

¹⁶ Robert Matthew Perry, "Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 99.

¹⁷ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 49.

cultural and historical contexts in which wealth was created and maintained, scholars can gain a better understanding of how to interpret biblical teachings on wealth and its role in society.¹⁸

In his sermon on "Abraham's Double Blessing," Spurgeon commented on the cultural perceptions of wealth in Genesis. He noted that Abraham was blessed with great wealth, but he also acknowledged that this wealth came from God. Spurgeon stated that "If I had my choice of all the blessings of this life, I certainly should not ask for wealth, for that can bring no ease; and I certainly should not ask for popularity, for there is no rest to the man upon whose words men constantly wait, and it is a hard task one has to perform in such a case as that; but I should choose, as my highest honour, to have God always with me." Spurgeon emphasized that wealth was not inherently evil, but it could become a snare if one placed too much importance on it. He warned his listeners, "There are many men who could not be trusted to be rich; for if they were to attain to wealth, they would become proud, and make an idol of their gold." He believed and that true blessings came from a relationship with God, not material possessions.¹⁹

In Genesis, we see how Satan used his cunning and deceptive tactics to persuade Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. He distorted the communication between Eve and God, causing her to doubt God's intentions and leading her to make the wrong decision. Similarly, Satan uses a methodical approach to persuade individuals to pursue wealth as their ultimate goal. He distorts the true value of wealth, making it seem more important than it actually is, and causing individuals to prioritize it over spiritual values. This distortion of communication is evident in the Bible's warning about the love of money being the root of all kinds of evil in 1 Timothy 6:10. By distorting the communication around wealth and its true value, Satan can lead individuals to

¹⁸ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 4, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 200–201.

¹⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 43.

err from their faith and cause themselves many sorrows, just as he did with Eve in the Garden of Eden.²⁰

Charles Spurgeon understood the importance of proper communication. During the Victorian era English society was divided into a number of stern classes including those of nobility, the middle class, and the working class. Those who belonged to the class of nobility were the powerful elite with both social and political influence. However, these classes were beginning to shift as outsiders began to enter thriving industries such as shipping and mining. The status of women in society began to change as well with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Traditionally women managed households and raised children while men were the primary money earners. In the midst of such change, Spurgeon developed communication patterns and constructed dialogue that prompted individuals to begin to understand and overcome obstacles relating to social status. One such obstacle is often that of persuasion.²¹

Satan's methodical approach to persuading individuals has historically included efforts to distort communication. In Genesis 3:1 the serpent subtly instigated his treacherous attack by casting doubt on God's word by asking Eve, "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?" The serpent ramped up his attack by denying God's word in Genesis 3:4-5 when he stated, "Ye shall not surely die." He went on to say, "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:4-5). In Jeremiah 36, in the midst of the events leading up to the destruction of Israel, king Jehoiakim destroyed the scroll containing God's word. He destroyed the scroll initially by cutting it and then by burning it.²²

²⁰ Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on Jeremiah*, UBS handbook series (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 2003), 720.

²¹ Kevin Jerrod Williams, "Charles Spurgeon's Contribution to Preaching in the 21st Century" (Ph.D diss., Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 2020), 29-30, <http://hdl.handle.net/1802/35706>.

²² Newman and Stine, 720.

Amos 5 is a chapter in the Old Testament that contains a message of judgment against Israel for their unfaithfulness to God. In the chapter, the prophet Amos condemns the wealthy elite for their oppression of the poor and their love of money. This is relevant to the inception of wealth in Genesis because the book of Genesis also addresses issues of wealth and its potential corrupting influence on individuals and societies. In Genesis, we see examples of individuals like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who were blessed with great wealth, but who also faced challenges in maintaining their faith and obedience to God in the midst of their material prosperity. Additionally, we see examples of individuals like Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah who were consumed by their love of wealth and material possessions, leading to their destruction.²³

The message of Amos 5, which highlights the danger of wealth and the potential for it to lead to oppression and unfaithfulness, is a cautionary tale for individuals and societies as they navigate the complexities of economic prosperity. The message of Genesis and Amos 5 reminds us that while wealth can be a blessing, it can also be a temptation and a snare that must be approached with caution and a commitment to justice and righteousness.²⁴ Some have suggested that king Jehoiakim may have, through culturally motivated presupposition, thought that if he annihilated the words on the scroll, that he was in effect destroying the power of God's word. It is interesting to note that as the people continued to reject God's prophetic word in the book of Jeremiah that the judgment would increase in severity.²⁵ In the book of Amos people were

²³ Newman and Stine, 720.

²⁴ Newman and Stine, 720.

²⁵ F.B. Huey, vol. 16, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 318-325.

misinterpreting God's word as it relates to Justice. Instead of using God's word to Judge righteously, people were misusing God's word to mistreat those who spoke the truth.²⁶

In Amos 5:10, the Scripture reads, "They hate him that rebuke in the gate, And they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Am 5:10). This passage describes how the wicked people of Israel detested all those that confronted injustice and communicated decently with an honest voice in court. In Amos 5:12 bribery is cited, as the text asserts, "For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: They afflict the just, they take a bribe, And they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right" (Am 5:12). The Bible goes on to discuss the mistreatment of Gods people by the wealthy in matters of justice. In Amos 2:6-7 the Bible says, "Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; Because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, And turn aside the way of the meek" (Am 2:6-7).²⁷

The writer goes on to describe the behavior of those that engage in such wickedness. In Amos 2:7-8 the writer states, "And a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name; And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, And they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their God" (Am 2:7-8). The judges were refusing to judge righteously according to God's word. The people of Israel with authority and influence believed that the poor were so insignificant that they were willing to pervert God's law and judge them wickedly for as little as the cost of a "pair of shoes" (Am 2:6-7).²⁸

²⁶ Jan de Waard, William Allen Smalley and William Allen Smalley, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Amos*, Helps for translators (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1979), 107.

²⁷ Waard, Smalley and Smalley, 107.

²⁸ Waard, Smalley, and Smalley, 107.

Spurgeon asserted that while some people may contend that all species including humanity were descended from other species, Genesis 1:12 explains that all creatures were created “after his kind” (Gn 1:12). Genesis 1:26 goes on to affirm that man or humanity was created in the image of God. One of the great blessings of humanity is that human beings are distinct from other creatures in that man stands in the “image” and “likeness” of an all-powerful and Triune God (Gn 1:26). At man’s very inception he stood at the pinnacle of creation. Spurgeon saw human beings as image bearers of God. Near the end of his career Spurgeon sought more and more to proclaim these teachings.²⁹

Beyond the inherent wealth described in man’s creation, wealth was understood in terms of agriculture or increase. In Genesis 4:3-4 Cain and Abel brought forth their increase as an offering to the Lord (Gn 4:3-4). In Genesis 17:12 wealth began to be expressed in terms of “money” (Gn 17:12). After money was introduced, enterprise began to develop. In Genesis 39:11 wealth began to be communicated in terms of “business” (Gn 39:11). Then in Exodus 22:25 lending and usury were mentioned. Lending and usury were developed as a means of sharing and acquiring wealth (Ex 22:25).³⁰

It is interesting to note that wisdom was very desirable. Adam and Eve risked all to gain knowledge when they ate from the tree of life. As the Bible comes to the place where Joseph is introduced, readers see that God continues to orchestrate events to promote and prosper His people. In the book of Psalms wealth is expressed in terms of knowledge when the psalmist declared that God’s word was better to him than gold or silver. When considering the topic of

²⁹ Perry, 106-107.

³⁰ Matthew J. Goff, “Alliteration and the Sacred: A Study of ‘Be Fertile and Increase,’” *Heythrop Journal* 38, no. 4 (October 1997): 413–25, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=CPLI0000226761&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

biblical wealth, it would be unwise not to reflect on what the Bible has to say about wisdom and knowledge. This will certainly be a topic for further development and discussion in the upcoming chapters.³¹

Charles Spurgeon viewed the Christian faith to be one without boundaries or borders. He believed that anyone could look to Christ regardless of their social or economic situation. He alleged that there was more to spreading the gospel than simply drawing people from different social classes into the church. Rather than people from different classes throughout the world coming to the church, he believed that God's people should go throughout the land even to the uttermost, teaching about the treasures of God's eternal kingdom. Spurgeon saw the Old Testament fulfillment of this truth, in part, through the rescuing of God's people from the tyranny of Egypt and their miraculous deliverance to the Promised Land.³²

When speaking of interpretation and discussing money Spurgeon said, "Many who affect to despise wealth are the greatest hoarders of it." He went on to proclaim, "You hear them saying, very often, that money is the root of all evil. Now I should like to find that text. But it is not to be found anywhere, from Genesis to Revelation." When talking about money and the thought that it might be evil in and of itself Spurgeon said, "I found the text once, which said, the love of money is the root of all evil. But as for the money itself, I can see very little evil in. If a man will but rightly use it, I conceive that it is a talent sent from heaven, bestowed by God for the purposes, and I am quite sure God's talents are not bad ones." Spurgeon suggested that it was not money that was evil. He believed evil was produced when money was ill-gotten or misused.³³

³¹ Goff, 413–25.

³² Perry, 90-92.

³³ Perry, 90-92.

Wealth in the Psalms

This section will interact with Spurgeon's writings on wealth in connection with the book of Psalms. It will expand on the topics of Darwinism and heresy in relation to spiritual and earthly increase. Spurgeon emphasized the need for obedience and understanding in connection with biblical riches. Psalms deals with these issues. Therefore, this section will look at wealth as seen through the eyes of the psalmist. David was known as a man after God's own heart. Jesus studied and often quoted the Psalms. As such, it may be prudent for believers to pay special attention to what the Psalms say about wealth.³⁴

Charles Spurgeon saw Christ on every page of the text. He utilized the collection of writings found in the book of Psalms as the primary text to underly more than 400 of his sermons. He devoted twenty years of study toward the authoring of a seven-volume series on the book of Psalms titled *The Treasury of David*. Spurgeon personally stated, "The delightful study of the Psalms has yielded me boundless profit and ever-growing pleasure."³⁵ Applying this section of Scripture helps to work through the Bible diachronically and reflects specifically on the cultural uniqueness of God's people and their recognition of God's word as a form of spiritual wealth. This section will consider God's concern for care in the interpretation process. It will review the psalmist's use of eight specific terms and highlight the intricacy of these terms in relation to biblical wealth. It will discuss the divergence from Scripture that often plagued early biblical culture.³⁶

³⁴ Ralph L. Smith, "The Use and Influence of the Psalms," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 27, no. 1 (Fall 1984): 5–16, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000925678&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

³⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. 1-6 (London: Marshall, 1963).

³⁶ Smith, 5–16.

Spurgeon described the wealth and power of this world as one that is in opposition to Christ's Kingdom. Psalm 2:2-3 says, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps 2:2-3). Spurgeon said, "This opposition was very fierce. They raged. Next, they imagined evil. Then the kings set themselves against it, both in counsel and act." He believed that any opposition to truth in the human heart was rooted in humanity's love for sin. Spurgeon understood that the wicked human heart desires earthly riches and lusts for the things of this world.³⁷

The psalmist wrote about the value that could be found in meditation. Psalm 119:162 proclaims, "I rejoice at your word, as one that finds great spoil" (Ps 119:162). Spurgeon suggested that meditating on God's word would in turn make it more valuable. Value is created as it enables the believer to better see how the text relates to each person individually. Spurgeon declared, "A man rejoices in gold rather than in clay because the gold is more precious, and as the treasure rises in value, so his delight in it will rise. The more, then, we think of the Scriptures, the greater will be our delight in them if we see that they relate to us." He explained that there was profit, pleasure, and privilege in dividing the word of God. When speaking of the holy Scriptures, he stated, "If they become to us the infallible voice of truth, that pure light which never misleads, that metal which is entirely free from alloy, then will our joy in Holy Writ overflow as we read in it the mind and will of our father in heaven."³⁸

The psalmist makes it clear that there is great wealth to be found in the word of God. The writer uses a number of different terms to define God's word in the pronouncement of God's

³⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit, Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by C.H. Spurgeon*, vol. 2 (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), Kindle.

³⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 28.

revelation. These words appear in random order and with varying frequency.³⁹ This particular Psalm is an acrostic appointment that functions to praise the holy Scriptures.⁴⁰ Many times, the reason people misinterpret wealth as it pertains to God's word is simply that people forget to include something or do not estimate a given factor adequately. Individuals often expound the word of God and add to, leave out or disregard part of the text for a number of reasons. God appears to pay particular attention to this problem as highlighted in Psalm 119.

When studying the text one might benefit greatly from a review of the critical thinking, procedure, and other interpretive issues related to the text. It is necessary to observe the many literary and rhetorical features within a given passage of Scripture in order to allow readers to formulate a more conversant reading of the Bible. One might do well to take into account what others have communicated about the same passage and connect the concerns, queries, and application areas resulting from critical commentary with opinions relating to how the literary structures and methodology may be integrated together to formulate a more informed understanding of its theological context and spiritual implication. Furthermore, the interpreter is encouraged to frame an overall assessment of the work in its entirety in order to determine whether or not behavioral, academic, social, and or emotional applications should be initiated. An important goal for the interpreter when exploring the given text is the connection between the various literary features within the passage and the theological message relating to the misinterpretation or mishandling of the Bible text.

God's word provided motivation for ancient Israel to live according to the principles and values that are important to God. The creator is concerned with issues that relate to His word as

³⁹ H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 322.

⁴⁰ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, Helps for translators (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1991), 996–1046.

it pertains to the church. God reminded his people of the importance of obedience. The psalmist carefully outlined the defilement that results from rebellion. God deals with individuals in various ways in the midst of their rebellion. He enjoys a privileged relationship with His chosen people and chooses not to bring on their utter destruction. However, the text demonstrates that there are consequences to misinterpreting, misusing, or outright refusing God's word in part or in its entirety.

Spurgeon described the richness of God's word and the wealth provided to God's people through his servant David. He said, "What a mercy it is for us all that he was not an untried man! We have all been enriched by his painful experience." He was explaining that the experiences described by the psalmist through the inspired word of God had been a great benefit to David. In addition, these benefits that were attributed to the psalmist had been a substantial benefit to Spurgeon himself. He had personally immersed himself in these texts and received blessings and help from them.⁴¹

Spurgeon believed that social reform came about as a result of the text. He asserted that social reform was a product of the word of God that not only helps believers in the present but prepares them for the hereafter.⁴² When connecting the Old Testament economy, it should be noted that material blessings were never viewed as an end in and of themselves. Resources that were gathered in abundance were to be shared with the nations. They were to be distributed

⁴¹ Peter J. Morden, "C.H. Spurgeon and Suffering," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35, no. 4 (October 2011): 306–25, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001866236&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁴² Perry, 92.

among God's people. The Old Testament emphasizes property rights. The laws appear to form along two different lines of thought.⁴³

First, they allowed for the opportunity for even those on the lower end of the social spectrum to have at least a modest parcel of land. Second, no single person was to be permitted to have and control too much land. Even in Old Testament times there were the "haves" and the "have-nots." God's people were to adhere to the law respecting even the least of their brethren demonstrating restraint in matters of wealth and acquisition. There were numerous commands within the law that required God's people to demonstrate generosity and self-control. The introduction of Jubilee created a connection between earthly and kingdom principles and set boundaries for interpersonal relationships within local covenant communities.⁴⁴

In his sermon "God's Law in Man's Heart," Spurgeon discusses the importance of property rights. He argues that the Old Testament emphasizes property rights, and that this emphasis is still relevant today. Spurgeon recognized that God's law included provisions for the ownership and transfer of property. He also believed that the principles of the Old Testament law were still relevant and valuable to Christians, even in the New Testament era. He stated, "The law still stands in the Old Testament, and our blessed Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, has condensed it into one word, 'Love;' and then he has expanded it throughout the whole of his earthly life to show us how it ought to be kept." Spurgeon believed that the Old Testament law provided guidance and instruction on how to love and serve God, including how to treat property and possessions in a way that honors Him.⁴⁵

⁴³ Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), chap. 2, Kindle.

⁴⁴ Blomberg, chap. 2.

⁴⁵ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 41.

The psalmist spoke about the problem of refusing or mishandling God's word in Psalm 119 when he spoke about the need for God's people to adhere to "all" of His word (Ps 119:13). He used a number of different terms to describe God's word but repeated this message utilizing different words with fluctuating occurrence. It is important to interact with how Psalm 119 and the omission or misinterpretation of God's word may be understood within the current theological and experiential life of the church. It is critical to understand the text in light of God's word in its entirety describing the extent to which it may be beneficial to the lives of contemporary Christians.⁴⁶

The psalmist provides insight into ways in which God's word might be applied to the modern church just as it would have been in ancient Israel. He describes the problems and pitfalls that may occur as a result of omitting or misinterpreting God's word either in part or in its entirety. The psalmist touches on some of the ways that bias toward God's word can impact the believer. He interacts with some of the problems connected with rejecting or violating the principles laid out by God throughout the Old Testament.⁴⁷

Spurgeon often dealt with various forms of bias in his ministry. As his ministry was just commencing in the United Kingdom a great challenge began to form surrounding the origin and structure of mankind. It was a challenge that would grow into a theory that would impact homes, churches, and schools. It was a railing against the truth of God's word that would "rival the militancy" of the great Charles Spurgeon. The naturalist theory of Charles Darwin, which deviated from the origin narrative described in the text, would suggest that all living things came into existence without a creator. This deviation from the theological teachings of the protestant

⁴⁶ Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 376–377.

⁴⁷ Richards, 376–377.

church appeared to be just one of the fashionable departures from the text that Charles Spurgeon would come to oppose during the Victorian era.⁴⁸

While commenting on those who would choose to adopt evolution over the creation event, Spurgeon said, “In all its bearings upon scriptural truth the evolution theory is in direct opposition to it. God’s word be true, evolution is a lie. I will not mince the matter; this is not the time for soft speaking.” He believed that Darwin’s dangerous theory would impact the church and cause some of the weaker followers of Christ to go astray. Spurgeon said, “I have seen living men carried about on biers. Here is a man who has long heard the good old-fashioned gospel; but, the other day, he met with a believer in evolution, one of the monkey-worshippers of whom I told you last Thursday night, whose father is not in heaven, but of the tree.” While he grieved over those that departed from the truth offered in the text, Spurgeon delighted in those that were faithful and adhered to the word of God.⁴⁹

Spurgeon would often engage those that had little or no regard for the wealth of the text. He had a devout concern for individuals that had no personal relationship with Christ and no real “acquaintance with the Scripture.” He encouraged his congregation stating, “Never be satisfied with a sound creed, but desire to have it graven on the tablets of your heart. The doctrines of grace are good, but the grace of the doctrines is better still.” Spurgeon was describing what it means to desire a spiritual understanding of God’s word. He knew that Christ is “present” with the believer whenever there is a spirit filled reading of the word.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Perry, 197.

⁴⁹ Perry, 202

⁵⁰ Elma Ray Rhodes, Jr. "The Role of Bible Intake and Prayer in the Marriage of Charles and Susannah Spurgeon" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016.), 77, In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Frole-bible-intake-prayer-marriage-charles%2Fdocview%2F1795527912%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

The Deuteronomist and the Psalmist had differing approaches to living a life that was pleasing to God. The Deuteronomist purpose was to emphasize the importance of following a set of rules, laws, and regulations, with the belief that doing so would bring blessings, peace, and prosperity from God. Meanwhile, the Psalmist placed more emphasis on building a personal relationship with God, showing trust and obedience to His commands, and being compassionate towards others. Both of these approaches provide valuable insights into living a life that pleases God. The Deuteronomist's rules and regulations should be followed, but the Psalmist's emphasis on personal relationship and compassion towards others is equally important. Ultimately, it is through living a life that incorporates both approaches that we can experience the joy and peace of being in a right relationship with God.⁵¹

The psalmists' purpose was not exactly like that of a Deuteronomist. The writer did not behave similarly. The psalmist's themselves were certainly conscious agents, even when what they were conscious of was their lack of focus. The psalmist did not behave robotically but demonstrated a sincere passion for God and his commands.⁵² The writer explained that there is a "blameless" state that comes from receiving the word of God completely. This carries with it the idea that one is to achieve a kind of "wholeness" or "completeness."⁵³

There is a peace, fulfillment, or "wholeness" that comes from a desire to recognize and respond affirmatively to God's word. To be blameless is not an intangible feature. It is an affirmative response to a calling to walk in the way of the Lord. It does not mean that the

⁵¹ Brent A. Strawn, "What Is It like to Be a Psalmist?: Unintentional Sin and Moral Agency in the Psalter," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 40, no. 1 (September 2015): 61–78, doi:10.1177/0309089215605795.

⁵² Strawn, 61–78.

⁵³ Frederick J. Gaiser, "Living Blamelessly: New Perspectives on Paul and the Psalter," *Word & World* 30, no. 4 (Fall 2010): 380–90, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001806372&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

believer is living a sinless life. It means that there has been a washing or cleansing through the word of God that transforms believers into a “blameless” or “perfect” living sacrifice for the Lord.

Human relationships are intricate. However, the psalmist was dealing with his relationship with God and His word. The wisdom of Psalm 119 is undeniable for the redeemed. It is a section of God’s word that teaches ethical and moral conduct in keeping with the word of God. One might see traces of lament as the psalmist sometimes describes the emotional state brought about by his enemies. The psalmist takes his plight to the Lord praying that God will liberate him.⁵⁴

The psalmist never clearly identified his foes. His enemies are described as those misinterpreting or refusing God’s word either in total or in part. It is believed that many of his enemies were likely not pagans but fellow Israelites that were simply not as dedicated as he was to the law of the Lord.⁵⁵ The psalmist expounds on the meaning of each word that was used to describe God’s law as he elaborates on its application. It reveals the connection of God’s law to both the daily life of the believer and the destiny of God’s people. The law is as intricate as the Lord that provided it.⁵⁶

It is specific and general, directive, and restrictive, liberating and opening, gracious and solemn. It is never a curse but rather a gracious gift from a merciful God. The effect of this magnificent celebration of the power of God’s word may be seen in the attitude of the psalmist whose praise for God’s mercy, and goodness are profound. The psalmist offered God his highest

⁵⁴ Bratcher and Reyburn, 996–1046.

⁵⁵ Bratcher and Reyburn, 996–1046.

⁵⁶ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version*, Includes Index. (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Ps 119:1-176.

praises for giving His people perfect instructions for living.⁵⁷ The writer declared that the Scriptures are all that believers need for life and godliness.⁵⁸ The word of God is perfect, permanent, and pure, but only through God's power can the believer live by the word of God.⁵⁹

While there were no specific sermons found by Charles Spurgeon that addressed the topic of the blessings of wealth in accordance with obeying the law, Spurgeon's broader teachings and commentaries indicate that he valued humility and faith in God over material possessions. According to Spurgeon, while wealth can offer temporary comfort and security, it cannot ultimately save one from the inevitability of death. In his view, the Psalmist provided wise advice that could be applied not only to spiritual matters, but also to worldly affairs. Spurgeon encouraged his congregations to prioritize their spiritual growth over material gain by emphasizing obedience to God's law as a means of obtaining true blessings. Through his preaching on Psalms and other biblical texts, Spurgeon hoped to inspire his listeners to seek a fulfilling life by putting their faith in God and following His commandments.⁶⁰

The book of Psalms emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and faith in God over material gain, and Charles Spurgeon's teachings align with this emphasis. Through his sermons on Psalms and other biblical texts, Spurgeon emphasized the need for humility and obedience to God's law as key principles for living a fulfilling life. While Spurgeon did not specifically preach on the blessings of wealth that came to those who obeyed the law, he highlighted the importance of prioritizing spiritual values over worldly possessions. As he once preached on Psalm 119:162,

⁵⁷ Radmacher, Allen, and House, Ps 119:1-176.

⁵⁸ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), Ps 119:1.

⁵⁹ Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 243–245.

⁶⁰ Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 2.

"O, brethren, we do rejoice when we get a hold of the precious treasures of the word as Jesus Christ's spoil, fought for by Himself, and then distributed to us." In this way, Spurgeon encouraged his congregations to place their trust in God and find true fulfillment in their spiritual growth rather than in material wealth.⁶¹

Wealth in Proverbs

This section will discuss wealth in Proverbs. It interacts with Spurgeon's writings on Proverbs and considers the topic of discernment in connection with biblical wealth. Spurgeon emphasized the need for sensitivity and the proper exercising of judgment in connection with biblical wealth. He said, "Always beware of thinking that this world is your home - you are not to be here long enough to strike root." He believed that Christians should live as though they were loosely planted waiting for the master gardener to find the time to plant them permanently. He declared, "Find not your riches, dear friend, in a world where Christ had none, but look for your treasurer in the land where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal."⁶²

The book of Proverbs deals with the topic of discernment as it relates to wealth. The Bible states that Solomon was "wiser than all men" (1 Kgs 4:31). As such, his teaching on wealth should be of great interest to readers that desire to approach the topic of wealth in a wise and logical way. Solomon used a number of different terms to define wealth during his reign. This section will review critical thinking, procedure, and other organizational issues related to

⁶¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 28.

⁶² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

interpreting wealth in the text. It will communicate and analyze thoughts and terms often presented in relation to biblical wealth.⁶³

Spurgeon elaborated on what it meant to be on the wrong road. He said, “Man chooses that which seems good, but he is often mistaken.” Proverbs 14:12 states, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Spurgeon went on to say, “The way seems to lead to happiness, peace and having, but leads to hell” (Prv 14:12). Spurgeon believed that much of the business of this world was foolishness. He believed that the covetous nature of what many call “business” is in reality “love of the world.” While it may be called “the way of prudence” it is in truth carnality.⁶⁴

Spurgeon once preached on the blessings of God from Proverbs 3:33. On October 19, 1856, Charles endured a brief instance of horror while preaching from this text. A balcony collapsed which brought about a stampede that resulted in seven people losing their life. Another 28 were injured in the catastrophe. Spurgeon was whisked into a private area and then into the street, and then “taken home more dead than alive.” He proclaimed, “Since men know the fruit of their doings, there will be no excuse of ignorance for them.” He taught that men should be “just in actions, and justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.” He suggested that God’s blessings are dependent upon these things and asserted that one should, “lay the two clauses to heart.”⁶⁵

⁶³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A. R. Fausset et al., *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*, On Spine: Critical and Explanatory Commentary. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 2 Ch 9:13.

⁶⁴ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁶⁵ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian T. George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume II: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. II (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), Kindle.

When contemplating God's word and the problem associated with wealth and its misunderstanding one might reflect on specific strategies for communicating the book of Proverbs and subsequently the subject of biblical wealth. On the onset, the books of Job and Proverbs may seem only to provide general information. However, as believers we are encouraged by these provisions, understanding that the word of God continues to flow, leading believers to the spiritual nourishment and prosperity that is so desperately needed in these last days.⁶⁶ Within the books of Job and Proverbs the word of God provides remarkable encouragement as the theme of creation and the greatness of God's provenance and power in the midst of the storm unfold. The book of Job illustrates that believers should be ready to let go of their ways and look to God whose ways are beyond those of humanity. The importance of humility seems to be a trait that is emphasized in these books. One might rightly consider it to be a trait that is much needed by those that desire to teach and preach the Bible to others.⁶⁷

Spurgeon often spoke about the need for humility when commenting on the topic of wealth. He touched on this topic when preaching on the text in Proverbs 27:1 which reads, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prv 27:1). Spurgeon said, "Oh! my friends, never boast too much of the tomorrow's, because if you do, your disappointment will be tremendous when you shall find it your joys have failed you and your hopes have passed away." To illustrate his point he said, "See there that rich man. He has piled heaps on heaps of gold, but now for a desperate venture, he is about to have more than he

⁶⁶ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume II*.

⁶⁷ Robert S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2002), chap. 9, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

ever possessed before, and he reckons on that tomorrow. Nothingness is his, and what is his disappointment? Because he boasted of imagined wealth.”⁶⁸

Spurgeon's Christological approach to wealth in Proverbs aligns with the call for Bible interpreters to rightly divide the word of truth. He emphasized the importance of abandoning one's ego and pride to focus on the things of God. Spurgeon points to the need for humility and obedience to God's law as key principles for living a fulfilling life. Proverbs 15:33 reinforces this message, inferring that modesty comes before honor and that a righteous fear of God leads to wisdom. Spurgeon's teachings on the value of spiritual growth and trust in God over material gain align with the idea that humility and wisdom are the keys to true honor and recognition. As Spurgeon preached on Proverbs, he sought to encourage his congregations to prioritize spiritual values over worldly possessions, aligning with the call to rightly divide the word of truth and focus on the things of God.⁶⁹

In their book titled, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology*, Kostenberger and Patterson call on their readers to pay special attention to Paul's encouragement to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15. This corresponds with the teachings from Proverbs 15:33 calling for one to set aside selfish motivations and focus on the things of God. Paul wrote, “Study to shew thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tm 2:15). In order to do one's best, the Bible interpreter is encouraged to continue to work through the process of abandoning their ego and letting go of their pride. Bible expositors might do well to focus on the things of God and lay

⁶⁸ Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 2.

⁶⁹ *The Pulpit Commentary: Proverbs*, ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004), 296–297.

aside the things that are purely carnal.⁷⁰ In Proverbs 15:33 the Bible explains that before honor there is modesty. The devout Christian is urged to be meek and willing to measure their actions carefully. A righteous fear of God yields wisdom. Likewise, humility leads to the honor and splendor of being wise. It produces the gift of wisdom and the honor of being recognized and acknowledged among others that are wise.⁷¹

Looking more specifically at how one might better understand Proverbs in a way that reflects the unique characteristic of the book, there are a number of things that come to mind. It is important to understand the genre of the book. Connecting the texts allows the Bible expositor to explain the overall purpose, which is to cultivate a sense of virtue. The Bible expositor may better communicate these books by moving to rescue believers from a type of cold legalism. In the midst of this rescue there are also the Christological implications to consider. One might present Christ as the innocent sufferer who says, “not my will, but thine” (Lk 22:42). Thematic connections are also important. Often times within this book there are isolated topical treasures that are quite worthy of exploration.⁷²

Although the data extracted from Spurgeon's sermons does not seem to explicitly discuss the significance of comprehending the genre of Proverbs or linking the texts to the book's overall purpose, Spurgeon's stress on directing one's heart towards the path of truth, life, and sanctity corresponds to the overarching goal of cultivating virtue in Proverbs. Understanding the genre

⁷⁰ Andreas J. Kostenberger and Richard D. Patterson. *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2011), Chapter 16, <https://app.wordsearchbible.com/reader>.

⁷¹ *The Pulpit Commentary: Proverbs*, ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004), 296–297.

⁷² Richard Fuhr, “Preaching and Teaching Wisdom Literature,” (lecture, Liberty University, Lynchburg VA, February 25, 2021.) https://canvas.liberty.edu/courses/68290/pages/watch-preaching-and-teaching-wisdom-literature?module_item_id=6383176.

and objective of Proverbs can enable Bible expositors to clarify how each passage contributes to this fundamental theme. In one of his sermons, Spurgeon emphasized, "Attempt to steer your heart towards the path of truth, life, and holiness; let none of it stray. Then you will be brimming with joy. Then you will truly realize that you are redeemed." This quotation highlights Spurgeon's focus on directing one's heart towards righteousness and, ultimately, towards salvation, which is a central theme in Proverbs.⁷³

Spurgeon believed that aligning one's heart with truth, life, and holiness was in line with the purpose of Proverbs, which aimed to cultivate wisdom and virtue in its readers. Proverbs consists of a collection of wise sayings and teachings that aim to guide individuals towards living a fulfilling and righteous life. By following the wisdom in Proverbs, individuals can learn to make wise decisions, avoid foolishness, and live according to God's will. As Spurgeon stated in his sermon, "Guide your heart into the way of truth, life, and holiness; don't let it wander. This will fill you with joy and assure you of your salvation." This quote emphasizes Spurgeon's emphasis on leading one's heart towards righteousness and, ultimately, salvation, which is a primary theme in Proverbs.⁷⁴

It is believed by some that the book of Proverbs presents a basic and "over-idealized" depiction of the "good life."⁷⁵ Yet, the research does not show that Spurgeon personally believed this to be true. However, in one of his sermons on Proverbs, Spurgeon emphasized, "There is but one way, and that is the way of wisdom; and this is one, and one only. There are many ways of folly, but there is only one way of wisdom. It is a narrow way, but it is a sure way. It is a difficult way, but it leads to life. It is the only way in which you can be saved." This quote clearly

⁷³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 36.

⁷⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 36.

⁷⁵ Fyall, chap. 9.

conveys Spurgeon's belief that the teachings in Proverbs are universally applicable to all who seek wisdom and salvation. Thus, the wisdom found in Proverbs can guide anyone towards living a righteous and fulfilling life, regardless of their specific circumstances or background.⁷⁶ Bible interpreters are persuaded to present wisdom literature as holding many general truths that at times will allow for theological exceptions. The book of Proverbs is almost readily made for a topical type of preaching and teaching. However, it is sometimes overlooked in terms of its theological significance.⁷⁷

Spurgeon warned his converts about the dangers of falling into the trap of over idealizing the “good life.” He suggested that it was the material success of the Puritans that undermined their faith and eventually led their descendants astray. He explained that the righteous spirit of nonconformity had been skewed. As a result, parents began to sin against the children by not teaching them the fundamentals of God’s truth. Eventually, their children were seduced by the glitter of material possessions and the glamour of success.⁷⁸

Proverbs suggests that righteous living yields blessings. In contrast, the book of Job depicts a man that lives righteously and yet he sees life going quite poorly. Perhaps, the key is to teach the various parts of these books in light of the whole. Books such as Job sometimes take some really dark turns. In order to present a section or even the whole book it would be wise to communicate an overview upfront to give learners a wide-angle lens with which to view the text in its entirety. Discussing the truth as it relates to pain and suffering might allow others to

⁷⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 36.

⁷⁷ Fuhr, lecture.

⁷⁸ Dale Warren Smith, “The Victorian Preacher’s Malady: The Metaphorical Usage of Gout in the Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon” (PhD diss., University of Missouri, 2017), 82, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fvictorian-preachers-malady-metaphorical-usage%2Fdocview%2F1916043677%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

identify with this problem. In a way, these texts give people the opportunity to go through suffering and deal with the kinds of issues that Job dealt with. It allows people to understand that suffering is not necessarily brought on by sin.⁷⁹

The book of Proverbs teaches that if one rejects God's ordering creation or His set boundaries it results in that person being placed in a destructive trajectory. The book exhorts believers to live in harmony with one another. It portrays an omniscient and omnipotent God that demonstrates concern for all of creation. It brings to light that human beings are not the center of the universe, and that God has a unique purpose for people that sometimes deviates from the path that we as individuals may choose. The text in both Proverbs and Job teaches that people experience a deeper understanding of both God and humanity through nature. Wisdom teaches that human beings do not have a monopoly on wisdom.⁸⁰

Spurgeon often preached about taking the wrong road. He discussed this when commenting on Proverbs 10:3 which states, "the Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish; but he casteth away the substance of the wicked" (Prv 10:3). He believed in spiritual wealth or substance which filled the very essence of the believer. When commenting on Proverbs 14:12 Spurgeon said, "Man chooses that which seems good, but he is often mistaken." He said there was a way that "seems to lead to happiness, peace and heaven, but leads to hell." He spoke of the wealth that was spiritual and eternal and described the means by which to identify the method for choosing the things that are eternal over the things that are carnal. He said "trial by

⁷⁹ Fuhr, lecture.

⁸⁰ Andrea L. Robinson, "The Ecosapiential Theology of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 41, no. 2 (April 2017): 134–49, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAn4105513&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Scripture, prayer, self-examination, watchfulness, distrust of self, desire to be right, and faith in Jesus's guidance" were the means for choosing what was right.⁸¹

Wealth in Amos

This section will discuss problematic perceptions of wealth. It will review Spurgeon's writings on the book of Amos in connection with culture and covetousness as it relates to spiritual blessings. In addition, this part of the study explores Spurgeon's approach to devotion, textual analysis, and interpretation. It analyzes Spurgeon's thoughts connecting with the topics of culture and greed as they pertain to the acquisition and distribution of wealth. Spurgeon emphasized the need for communion and Christian care in relation to spiritual increase.⁸²

He recognized that culture and covetousness had an impact on one's perception of wealth. Spurgeon declared, "Covetousness breeds insensibility in the heart, a mortification in the conscience, of blindness in the mind." He believed that wealth could be advantageous when "kept in its right place." The problem he said was, "The horse often runs away with the rider, and he who has wealth too often loses his liberty, and falls into sore bondage, by becoming the slave of his own possessions." As such, he believed that Christians should drink and contentment as it represented the best that life has to offer.⁸³

The writings of Amos connect with a corrupt and perverse society. Therefore, this section will survey some of the problems related to wealth in Amos in order to demonstrate how those pitfalls might be avoided. It takes into consideration how wealth was communicated and connects with concerns, questions, and application areas resulting from scholarly commentary. It

⁸¹ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁸² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 32.

⁸³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 32.

will analyze literary structures and methodology that may be integrated together to formulate a more informed cultural understanding of the text providing theological context and spirit filled application. Ultimately, this section will connect with terms utilized throughout the book of Amos and communicate how cultural barriers may be removed in order to better understand the text.⁸⁴

Spurgeon once asked the question, “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” This was no doubt rooted in the text found in Amos 3:3 which states, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” (Am 3:3). He explained that among the brethren there are a wide variety of views and tastes. Yet, when it comes to the things that matter the most they are agreed. He said, “Among them, there is a union of love, concern, enjoyment of each other. And this, because and just in proportion, as they are agreed in their supreme love toward one common Lord, and in a consistent manifestation of true holiness. These are the conditions of communion.” Spurgeon went on to say, “Let the Christian take heed lest he disagree with God.” He suggested that this could take root either by concealing sin or boasting in one’s own righteousness.⁸⁵

In his teachings, Spurgeon emphasized the danger of wealth's deceitfulness, which can lead people to conceal their sins or boast in their own righteousness. Similarly, the Bible warns about the dangers of riches and how they can distract us from our relationship with God. Amos, for instance, addressed the deceitfulness of wealth in his prophecies. In Amos 8:4-6, the prophet rebuked those who were exploiting the poor and engaging in dishonest business practices in order to accumulate wealth. These individuals were willing to cheat and deceive others in order to increase their profits, even if it meant oppressing the vulnerable and needy. This passage

⁸⁴ Lawrence O. Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 539.

⁸⁵ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

serves as a reminder that Christians must be vigilant against the temptation to prioritize wealth over righteousness and to ensure that they are not participating in any form of exploitation or dishonesty in their pursuit of financial gain.⁸⁶

In commenting on the book of Amos, Spurgeon described ruinous individuals that walked after sin and agree with the enemy. He said, “Those whom we walk with here, we must live with forever.”⁸⁷ As such, one might ask, who are those individuals that live contrary to God’s ways? Amos 6:4 says that they are individuals, “That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall” (Am 6:4). The writer goes on in Amos 6:5-6 to explain that these individuals are those, “That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph” (Am 6:5-6). Spurgeon explained, “They were men of wealth, who spent their money upon all manner of luxuries while the poor of the land were perishing through want.”⁸⁸

He contended that there were some in the community who had just lost a beloved spouse or had a dear child that died in deep sorrow; yet they are now running after the pleasures of this world “more wildly than ever.” After describing the wickedness portrayed in Amos 6:6 Spurgeon’s plea was, “Oh, that this very solemn chapter might convey a warning message to them.” Spurgeon declared that it was not wrong for a person to enjoy the blessings of God in this life in a way that is fit and reasonable. He said, “The sin of these people consisted in the fact that,

⁸⁶ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁸⁷ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁸⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible: Spurgeon's Bible Commentaries* (Seattle, WA, NY: Kindle Publishing, 2015), Amos 6:4, Kindle.

when others were afflicted, they took that opportunity to indulge themselves in all the delights of the flesh; and when God's rod was being used for chastisement, they went on with their sinful mirth to show how little they cared about it." Spurgeon suggested that there were many out there in the world with sick loved ones that were living as though they did not have a care in the world.⁸⁹

While discussing Amos 3:2, Spurgeon once said "as sure as we are the children of God by adoption, we must inherit the promise that it pertains to." If we are to be joint heirs with Christ, we must indeed suffer with him. People are constantly changing, and Spurgeon knew this well. He understood that paternal chastisement should not be equated with eternal condemnation. He taught that as far as legal penalty is concerned there will be no judge to condemn God's people. However, when it came to fatherly chastisement the offenders would not escape. Quoting Amos 3:2 he stated, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," says God; "therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Am 3:2). Parallels between this verse and the matter of wealth can be drawn, as the pursuit of riches through deceitful and unjust means can be interpreted as a violation of God's commandments. Just as the people of Israel were held accountable for their wrongdoing, the wealthy can also be held accountable for their unjust actions towards the less fortunate.⁹⁰

The book of Amos deals with the problem of unbalanced justice. There are two divisions of God's people that had fallen under God's judgement. First, there was Judah, Israel's detested people to the south. Second, there was Israel the kingdom of God's people to the North. When looking closer at this problem it is evident that the issue is directly related to greed and

⁸⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible*, Amos 6:6.

⁹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon and Daniel Partner, *The Essential Works of Charles Spurgeon: Selected Books, Sermons, and Other Writings ...* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Pub., 2009), Kindle.

bias toward the impoverished. The overall problem was that God's people had begun to allow injustice and oppression to take root. Although Amos presents problems with bribery, cruelty to the poor, sexual immorality, hypocrisy, and the tempting of the godly, it was the injustice and the subtle system of bias involving the misuse of the Jewish legal system that was the primary cause contributing to and sustaining the transgressions that caused both Judah and Israel to incur God's divine judgment. The Jewish legal system had become overrun with corrupt judges that were unwilling to rightfully interpret the Scripture.⁹¹

Spurgeon described the deterioration of God's people much the way the deterioration of Israel was presented in the text. He said, "The parents grew rich, and though they were still among us, they were not of us; pride separated them in spirit and their sons and daughters were introduced into other society than could be found amongst the humbler followers of Jesus-to such fashionable company they became united;" Spurgeon went on to declare his contempt for such individuals. He said, "and now the descendants of dissenters are amongst the fiercest refiners of our holy infants, to be mourned over with the resignation which a sure hope begetteth, then that they should live to forsake the Lord God of their fathers, and to pull down what their fathers build up." Spurgeon believed that the nonconformist fathers had a lack of faith that was diluted due to pride, material wealth, and a lack of guidance. As such, the generations that have come since that age have weakened and deteriorated.⁹²

In the book of Amos, one might observe that Israel was purposefully removing God's biblical commands from the equation. Their pride had separated them in spirit from the truth. For example, in Amos 2:6-7 the writer describes how the wealthy were mistreating the poor. the

⁹¹ Waard, Smalley and Smalley, 107.

⁹² Smith, "The Victorian Preacher's Malady" 82-83.

Bible says, “Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Israel, And for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; Because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, And turn aside the way of the meek” (Am 2:6-7). The writer goes on in Amos 2:7-8 to detail additional atrocities being perpetrated by the wealthy. The Bible states, “And a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name; And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, And they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their God” (Am 2:7:8). In this passage of Scripture, it is apparent that a big problem that the population of Israel faced was that of bribery. They were guilty of bias. The people were perverting the scales of justice. The judges refused to consider the laws of God. They simply remove them from the decision-making process. The people of Israel with power and social status simply chose to disregard the statutes of God. They cared so little for the rights of the underprivileged and disadvantaged that they were willing to offer and receive bribes to decide against them that, as previously mentioned, amounted to no more than a “pair of shoes” (Am 2:6-7).⁹³

The wealthy were so unsympathetic to the poor that they trampled their rights as if the act was as simple as taking a stroll along the road.⁹⁴ The wicked people of Israel were unfalteringly opposed to truthful judges. In Amos 5:10, the Scripture reads, “They hate him that rebuke in the gate, And they abhor him that speaketh uprightly” (Am 5:10). This passage explains that the wicked of Israel detested all who challenged injustice and spoke with an honest voice in court. Finally, in Amos 5:12 bribery is mentioned specifically by name, as the word of God declares,

⁹³ Waard, Smalley, and Smalley, 107.

⁹⁴ Richards, 539.

“For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: They afflict the just, they take a bribe, And they turn aside the poor in the gate from there right” (Am 5:12).⁹⁵

Spurgeon recognized the failings of God’s people. In speaking of the wealthy that were drunk in excess in Amos 5:11 Spurgeon proclaimed that, “God has often shown how he can overthrow those who oppress the poor.” Yet, in Amos 5:4 in Amos 5:5 there was a call for repentance. This is a message that God wants professing Christians to hear. Spurgeon’s message to the church was “get in spirit and in truth to God himself.” Spurgeon believed that the calves and idols that were set up for worship was an act that was comparable to the Romanism of his day. He said, “pure spiritual worship was ordained by God, but that was not enough for the idolatrous Israelites.”⁹⁶

Both God and Amos knew well of the countless “transgressions” that were attributed to Israel. The Greek word “*piś.êkem*” or “transgressions” is rendered “sins” in Amos 1:3 and in other passages of Scripture (Am 1:3). Amos was speaking for God. Those he was accusing may very well have been the most prominent citizens. Amos 5:12 states, “for I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from there right” (Am 5:12). The first sin that was listed was that of oppression.⁹⁷

The wealthy were oppressing the poor and the wicked were oppressing the righteous. The term “turn aside” or “*šōrēre*” carries with it the idea of “constricting” or “impeding” (Am 5:12). It means to cause distress. The participle specifies an ongoing occurrence. This is also true of the

⁹⁵ Waard, Smalley, and Smalley, 107.

⁹⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible*, Amos 5:4-11.

⁹⁷ Billy K. Smith and Franklin S. Page, vol. 19B, *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 103–104.

second sin listed, which was bribery. The “righteous” or “*ṣaddîq*” were innocent. They were the ones that were doing what was biblically lawful. Bribery implies that the judges were either taking money for declaring cases that were brought against the rich by the poor to be frivolous or that they were favoring the wealthy in cases against the poor.⁹⁸

In either case there was no impartiality. The final sin listed was that of not allowing the poor the opportunity to be heard in court. “They turn aside the poor in the gate” is a literal translation of the Scripture (Am 5:12). This meant that the poor were denied any chance of being aided by the court. They were being denied any help.⁹⁹

The judicial system had become so corrupt that any protection afforded to the poor was eliminated. God still knew the facts. Claims of innocence by the poor may have been useless in the court system but God recognized the corruption that was rampant throughout Israel. Israel’s wealthy had neglected to consider God and His commands. Judges within the judicial system had become complacent. As such they had abandoned God and were rejecting what was right.¹⁰⁰

Spurgeon once used Napoleon to illustrate a point regarding justice and wealth. He said, “See how Napoleon thought to glorify himself by placing in Paris the works of art which he had taken from the capitals of Europe. What are most trophies but stolen goods, or that which is purchased by them? But when you and I lay hold of holy Scripture, then have we grasped a prey more precious than royal treasures, a prey which we may hold with justice and honor.” Spurgeon believed that one could only grasp the concept of true wealth when they could recognize that the things of God are set apart as an inheritance for the righteous. When discussing the inheritance of God in contrast to earthly riches He stated, “When we can say that the things which God has

⁹⁸ Smith and Page, 103–104.

⁹⁹ Smith and Page, 103–104.

¹⁰⁰ Smith and Page, 103–104.

revealed are ours, then we are rich beyond a miser's dream, and when we can hold them against all corners, then that which we believe becomes our honor and gives glory to us, and glory to faith, and chief glory to Him who worked our faith in us by His almighty Spirit.”¹⁰¹

Wealth in Jeremiah

This section will discuss failed perceptions of wealth. It will delve into Spurgeon's writings on the book of Jeremiah in connection with biblical increase. It will deliberate on the topics of idolatry and rebellion in connection with biblical prosperity. Spurgeon emphasized the need for love and reverence for God in connection with spiritual treasures. He suggested that believers might do well to consider Christian care and morality in the acquisition and distribution of earthly riches. He said, “If your cup runs over, call the poor to catch the drops, and give an extra spell that they may have the more! Moreover, the Church of God needs your substance.” Spurgeon explained that there are many who have made earthly riches their god and in doing so parish under the weight of their material possessions.¹⁰²

He encouraged believers to be careful to use what material possessions God has given them for His glory. Jeremiah 17:11 provides some especially critical commentary on ill-gotten wealth. The Scripture depicts a particularly interesting time in Israel's rich history. This section will elaborate on the troubling effects of ill-gotten wealth and the problems that occur when individuals insist on retaining wealth that is gained and maintained outside of the will of God. It will discuss terms relating to wealth that were utilized during the time that led up to the destruction of Israel. It will discuss biblical culture and its response to the proclamation and

¹⁰¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 28.

¹⁰² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 15.

interpretation of God's prophetic word. It will relate the importance of proper interpretation and discuss the results of disobedience.¹⁰³

Spurgeon declared that many people do not know about the riches in glory because they do not know God. He said, "Some are ignorant." They do not know that the Lord is a king. Jeremiah 10:7 says "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? For to thee doth it appertain: for so much as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee" (Jer 10:7). Spurgeon rightly understood that all people are subject to the King of Kings. He suggested that God has three kinds of subjects. He said there are, "Those He rules by love, constraining them by gratitude. These are willing subjects." Then he said, "There are, "Those He over-rules by power, making their devices and even sins to work his will and purpose." Finally, he said there are, "Those He rules in terrible justice, vengeance, and wrath."¹⁰⁴

The prophet Jeremiah warned Israel of God's impending judgment and declared that if there was no repentance leading them to change their evil ways that certain destruction was imminent. In the first three verses of this passage of Scripture God commanded Jeremiah to write down His holy proclamation onto a scroll. The remainder of chapter 36 describes the responses of the people and their governing officials to this prophetic message. Baruch recorded God's message to Jeremiah on the scroll and read it to the people gathered in the temple. Then he took the message and read it to a number of government officials. After the government officials heard the scroll, one of them took it and read it to king Jehoiakim. The wicked king took the scroll and destroyed it. He annihilated the scroll first by cutting it then by burning it.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Newman and Stine, 406.

¹⁰⁴ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume II*.

¹⁰⁵ Newman and Stine, 720.

Jeremiah speaks out against the oppression of the poor, the use of deceitful business practices, and placing trust in one's own power rather than in God. In Jeremiah 5:26-28, he describes how the wicked have grown rich and powerful by exploiting others, becoming great and rich through their deceitful ways. He warns that those who trust in their wealth will be brought low. Jeremiah 9:23-24 urges people to boast in understanding and knowing God rather than in their own wisdom, might, or riches. Jeremiah's message is clear: seeking wealth at any cost will lead to God's judgment, and people must turn away from their wicked ways and rely on God's mercy instead of their own strength or riches.¹⁰⁶

When preaching on the wicked and their quest for wealth Spurgeon said, “The dealings of God toward the sons of men always puzzled wise men of the earth who have tried to understand them. Apart from the revelation of God, the dealings of Jehovah toward his creatures in this world seem to be utterly inexplicable.” He believed that God often allows believers to receive the greatest affliction. When discussing the believer’s affliction Spurgeon said, “He gives the most afflictions to the most pious. Perhaps he makes more waves of trouble roll over the breast of the most sanctified Christian than over the heart of any other man living.” Spurgeon suggested that believers would be wise to recognize that there is a blessed future awaiting the overcomer. He noted that in this present life one may not necessarily incur any wrath or recompense from God. He said, “So, then, we must remember that as this world is not the place of punishment, we are to expect punishment and reward in the world to come.”¹⁰⁷

The iniquity of God’s people in the book of Jeremiah ran deep. Many only see the surface of the problem. They see the idolatry and miss the root cause of the problem. Israel had become

¹⁰⁶ Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 3.

so greed stricken that they could no longer be obedient to God. The love of money had overtaken them. In Jeremiah 8:9 God states the problem, “The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them” (Jer 8:9). In Jeremiah 8:10 God declares, “Therefore will I give their lives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for everyone from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest everyone dealeth falsely” (Jer 8:10). Spurgeon wrote, “There are far too many of these smooth-tongued deceivers living now. God delivered this land from them, lest they become an occasion of judgment against the people!”¹⁰⁸

Spurgeon’s commentary on the covetous nature of the people may be an indication that he perceived that covetousness or greed was at the root of the problem. Spurgeon said, “Jeremiah tried to show them that the only way to be healed of their hurt was to be healed of their sin, that if they would give up their idolatry and all the infamous wickedness that grew out of it, and turned to the true God and obey his commandments, then brighter days would come.” In pointing out the wickedness and idolatry that grew from covetousness he illustrated the wickedness that was rooted in idolatry. He went on to say, “We sorrowfully assert that it is, very easy, for us to be the subject of a false teaching.” Spurgeon proclaimed, “As a rule, we are all inclined to think too well of ourselves.” He asserted that a superficial faith will always be the trend because it does not necessitate humility or self-denial.¹⁰⁹

Spurgeon knew full well how critical it was to understand the origin, flow, and purpose of God’s word. In some of the landmark passages one can see the major movements of God taking place through his people. In order to rightly understand biblical wealth, one must

¹⁰⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible: Spurgeon's Bible Commentaries* (Seattle, WA, NY: Kindle Publishing, 2015), Jer 8:10-11, Kindle.

¹⁰⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 28.

understand God's heart both for the world and for the individual believer. Various themes are emphasized and build throughout the Old Testament culminating in the New Testament. The intricate connection between inter-textual references, typological relationships, and theological truth means that it is quite easy to misinterpret biblical wealth. However, it is imperative that believers find spiritual discernment with regards to this topic.¹¹⁰

For God's people, in the book of Jeremiah, it was the desire to gain and hold on to ill-gotten wealth that spurred on the rebellion which in turn brought on God's wrath. Ultimately God's people had turned to covetousness and false idols. As sovereign the king was ultimately responsible for the ongoing idolatry. It was this rebellion that caused the wicked king to first cut the scroll which contained the prophecy of God and then burn the scroll. The text here uses the word "leaves." The scroll could be unrolled so that a number of columns could be exposed. This would allow a large portion of text to be read at one time. Translators often use terminology such as "three or four rows of writing" or "three or four sections of writing."¹¹¹

Spurgeon suggested that it is deeply concerning that even the most devout of authorities should need to be cautioned against the most grievous of sins. He cautioned believers about earthly perils and the tendencies that originate from within. When speaking of these inward tendencies he asserted, "Covetousness is a vice of a very degrading kind, and it is therefore the more surprising that those who have a renewed nature, and in whom the Holy Spirit of God dwells, should require to be warned against bowing down their souls before it. And yet such is the necessity that once and again the saints are warned against covetousness, which is idolatry."

¹¹⁰ Nathan Rose, "Spurgeon and the Slavery Controversy of 1860: A Critical Analysis of the Anthropology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, as It Relates Specifically to His Stance on Slavery," *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 16, no. 1 (Spr 2017): 20–37, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiBCB170627003047&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹¹¹ Newman and Stine, 720-728.

Spurgeon rightly perceived greed, the love of money, and covetousness as idolatry. He stated, “As long as Israel is in the wilderness, she is not out of danger from the golden calf.” He knew that the hearts of most people as they are engaged in business is inclined toward buying, selling, and profiting. As such, individuals are apt to become ensnared by the philosophy of money. He said, “It is hard to live where greed grasps all, and not try to save a little for ourselves out of the wreck.”¹¹²

King Jehoiakim would not be satisfied by simply destroying the scroll. He was intent on destroying Jeremiah and Barrack as well. His anger extended to those that were responsible for creating it. However, his actions were futile as the “Lord hid them” (Jer 36:26). The text does not indicate what length of time these men were hidden, but apparently the king eventually withdrew his wrath. As such, after some time it became safe for Jeremiah to travel openly once again.¹¹³

The way in which the palace officials viewed Jehoiakim was further underscored by their precautions with the scroll. They were careful to leave the scroll in the room of Elishama for safety purposes as they continued on to describe its contents to King Jehoiakim. The king was obviously unsatisfied with the oral report. Perhaps, he was intent on laying hands on the scroll. In any case, Jehudi was sent to retrieve the scroll and then was directed to read it for the king. As the chapter unfolds it becomes apparent that the king’s officials were justified in their concern for the scroll’s safety.¹¹⁴

Spurgeon suggested that as the book of Jeremiah progressed the transactions that occurred were all in “proper legal form.” In Jeremiah 32:10-11 the Bible talks about the weighing of money in the balances. God’s people had become disconnected from God’s law.

¹¹² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

¹¹³ Huey, 318–325.

¹¹⁴ Huey, 318–325.

Spurgeon explained that “We are not to be neglectful in business because we are the servants of the Lord; but in all things we should act as men of prudence and common sense.” In Jeremiah 32:32 the Bible describes the depth of the evil that provoked God to such anger. Spurgeon said, “They seem to have been all alike. With scarcely an exception, from the highest class to the lowest, they were always disobeying God.”¹¹⁵

Spurgeon understood both the efficiency and proficiency of biblical truth. He proclaimed that the believer’s optimism is not that of the “health and wealth gospel,” that declares that the believer will be spared from earthly suffering. Instead, he insisted that believers would enjoy Christ’s future glory participating in his riches. He offered 1 Peter 4:13 as a verse to which one may derive comfort. This verse states, “Rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.” Spurgeon believed that the future of God’s people should be cause for present rejoicing in the midst of earthly suffering.¹¹⁶ Jeremiah sought through God’s word to impact Judah’s hierarchy of power. Yet, when they refused God’s prophetic word and chose to ignore the truth, they made their choice and solidified their judgment.¹¹⁷

Spurgeon understood that the material things that can be found on this fallen world will simply not carry over into eternity. Even if they could escape the moths, rust, vermin, and thieves it will be impossible for them to survive God’s all-consuming fire. He believed that Christ’s primary argument against storing up earthly riches did not have anything to do with the fact that it is morally wrong. He thought that in light of the little time that believers have to spend on earth

¹¹⁵ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible*, Jer 32:32.

¹¹⁶ Randy C. Alcorn and C. H. Spurgeon, *We Shall See God: Charles Spurgeon's Classic Devotional Thoughts on Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011), 28, Kindle.

¹¹⁷ Gerald L. Keown, vol. 27, *Word Biblical Commentary: Jeremiah 26-52*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 200-210

it was his opinion that storing up earthly treasures was simply a poor investment and a misuse of the precious time that God has provided. He knew that every day believers grow closer to the time when they pass from this world into eternity. Therefore, those that spend time storing up earthly riches are, in reality, moving away from their treasure and have become distracted from true riches.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter offers a comprehensive examination of wealth in the Old Testament. By selecting key sources from five Old Testament books, the chapter provides a unique perspective on how Israelites during the Old Testament era understood wealth. One recurring theme is that wealth is a gift from God that should be used to benefit others. Proverbs 11:25 captures this sentiment when it says, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prv 11:25).

Additionally, the chapter emphasizes the importance of contentment and avoiding the temptation to always pursue more. Proverbs 15:16-17 reflects this when it states, "Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Prv 15:16-17). Throughout the chapter, the interpretations of various scholars are also examined. Most prominently, the commentary of Charles Spurgeon on wealth is analyzed.

Above all, the chapter stresses the significance of humility and generosity when it comes to wealth. Christians are encouraged to avoid greed and instead use their resources to serve others and spread God's message. Overall, this chapter provides valuable insights for Christians

¹¹⁸ Alcorn and Spurgeon, 24.

seeking to understand the Bible's teachings on wealth. The text offers a detailed exploration of this topic, examining it from different angles and providing historical context. By studying this chapter, readers can gain a deeper understanding of how to approach wealth in a manner consistent with biblical principles, grounded in their relationship with God and service to others.

Believers might do well to recognize that money, power, and culture may influence the way that the word of God is perceived. This chapter reinforces the idea that to understand God's word properly one must identify the intricate methods that God utilizes to communicate His message. This chapter demonstrates both the importance of receiving God's word and the need for continued study as it relates to the issues of oral and written forms of divine Scripture. The child of God is encouraged to be careful to take time to better perceive the truth of the word as well as the methods of the biblical writers. This approach is encouraged as it may well allow Bible interpreters to understand and relate what wealth is and how God intends for it to be used.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Sandy, chap. 2.

Wealth in the New Testament

Introduction

This section will serve as an overall introduction to the chapter. Passages from three New Testament books were systematically chosen as the primary sources for discussion in this section of the study. Chapter three draws largely from these unique books. The passages of Scripture offered in this chapter were selected to provide a look at wealth as understood by Israel during the New Testament era. Spurgeon emphasized the need for Christians to abandon materialism and embrace the richness of God's grace. He said, "Occasionally poverty has been the result of integrity or religion - and here the poor man is to be admired and honored."¹

He believed that much of the problem was a result of the way that people perceive one another.² The New Testament books selected for this study deal with this problem. The chapter delves into Spurgeon's writings on the New Testament books of Matthew, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation in connection with biblical wealth. It will consider the topics of culture, interpretation, heresy, and bias as they relate to earthly and spiritual blessings. It will discuss shifts in the way wealth began to be understood in the New Testament. It will remind readers of the intracultural nature of textual interpretation.³

Cultural worldviews will be discussed in order to communicate cultural differences that separate Western readers from non-Western readers. This section will elaborate on the difference between Christian and secular worldview. Issues relating to cultural assumptions and values will

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 53 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 53.

³ E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blindspots to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), Introduction, Kindle.

be discussed. The research will go on to touch on the topics of cultural awareness, content, and contextualization as they pertain to wealth. The truths provided by this section of the study present information that may allow for a more thorough understanding of key components relating to the interpretive and communicative competencies presented.⁴

To thoroughly understand the topic of biblical wealth Bible expositors are encouraged to endeavor to matriculate data that will enable an understanding of the fundamental elements involved in interpreting Scripture as well as the requirements pertaining to proper development and communication of a given message. Interpreters are urged to be grounded in the basic ideas surrounding historical-cultural awareness. Furthermore, those expounding the Bible text are persuaded to have a canonical consciousness, sensitivity to genre, literary and linguistic competence, grasp of biblical theology, and the ability to proclaim and apply passages from every biblical genre to life.⁵

The research in this section sheds light on the issues dealing with content and contextualization and touches on the main ideas associated with endeavoring to both interpret the Scripture and present the gospel message.⁶ The section reviews the difficulties in communicating the gospel and provides an overall evaluation of the current methods employed in sound Bible interpretation and orderly conveyance of the biblical message relating to wealth.⁷ The principals uncovered may be studied and implemented in one's everyday ministry with the hope that the Christian worker might be able to adapt their labors to improve overall ministry efforts. Being a faithful steward for Christ calls for intense concentration. The ambassador for Christ is

⁴ Richards and O'Brien, Introduction.

⁵ Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2016) chap. 16, Kindle.

⁶ Kibbe, chap. 16.

⁷ Kibbe, chap. 16.

encouraged to learn to focus carefully on the truth and veer from worldly distractions. God's people are to remain fixated on the glorious work of separating truth from fiction.⁸

Spurgeon advised that no riches on earth could compare to the riches of eternity. He once said, "The wealth of Nations is nothing compared to that of Jesus." He suggested that many of the people that call themselves Christians can be found immersing themselves in questionable activities for the purpose of discovering pleasure. Sadly, he believed that many church goers could be seen striving amid wretched materialism searching for the comforts of wealth. Ultimately, he believed that earthly wealth had no power to create harmony in one's life. He stated, "More wealth brings more care, but more grace brings more joy."⁹

Wealth in Matthew

This section will investigate Spurgeon's writings on the book of Matthew as they pertain to biblical wealth. It will weigh in on the topics of interpretive care, knowledge, and truth in connection with spiritual blessings. Understanding the biblical perspective on wealth requires one to possess compliance and humility, as demonstrated in Matthew 6. Within this passage, Jesus instructs his disciples to give generously to those in need, without the desire for recognition or reward. As Spurgeon highlights in his commentary on Matthew 6:1-4, the law of love demands that we do good unto others without any pretense or self-interest. Compliance with the Law of Love necessitates acknowledging that one's wealth is not his own, but rather a gift from God, and the believer is tasked with using it for His purposes.¹⁰

⁸ Maxie D. Dunnam, Gordon MacDonald and Donald W. McCullough, *Mastering Personal Growth*, Mastering Ministry (Sisters, OR: Multnomah; Christianity Today, 1992), 140.

⁹ Edmond Hez Swem, *Spurgeon's Gold: New Selections from the Works of C. H. Spurgeon* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010), 35-187 Kindle.

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible: Spurgeon's Bible Commentaries* (Seattle, WA, NY: Kindle Publishing, 2015), Mt 6:1-4, Kindle.

Spurgeon said, “The infinitely wise God knows that it is better for some men to be poor than rich - they would not be able to bear prosperity and so the oil does not flow, because there is not a vessel to fill.” He believed that if one is spiritually able to receive an earthly gift then it would not be withheld. Christ has declared that he would not withhold blessings such as these from those who walk by faith according to the purpose for which they are called.¹¹ This section will highlight some of Christ’s teachings related to wealth and increase. It will analyze Bible events and distinguish Western interpretation from non-Western interpretation.¹²

Bible exposition can be a complex undertaking. As such, this section will analyze Bible events and highlight the complexities of interpretation. It will discuss the problem of varying cultural worldviews and how this may connect with how wealth is understood universally. It will highlight the problem of misinterpretation as it relates to differing social shifts and motives. As in previous sections, terms utilized in this section of the study will be analyzed and connected with interpretations leading up through to the end of the New Testament era.¹³

The research in this section will further illustrate how covetousness toward material possessions may be overcome. Christ’s response builds a framework for the process of developing a method of tackling the problem of overcoming temptation. It will relate that the development of a proper response to temptation entails pressing on toward the Christian goal of being thorough and prepared. It will elaborate on God’s word and the related benefits that are yielded from the work of Christ Jesus in the midst of His wilderness trial.¹⁴

¹¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 25.

¹² Richards and O’Brien, chap. 1-3.

¹³ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 1-3.

¹⁴ *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994), 1878.

Spurgeon described those individuals that were caught up in making light of Jesus Christ. Matthew 22:5 says, “But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise” (Mt 22:5). Spurgeon believed that these kinds of men not only make light of Christ as peacemaker, intermediary, rescuer, upholder, deliverer, priest, and loving shepherd, but they were also making light of the “Gospel and its blessings.” In doing this, these individuals were making light of “salvation, forgiveness, justification, God’s love and favor, promises, adoption,” and the promised heavenly realm. He said they make light of these things through “Non-compliance with gospel terms.” He went on to name some of the causes of this sin. A few of those being, ignorance, self-conceit, hardness of heart and carnality.¹⁵

Spurgeon understood the tactics of the devil. He asked, “What can the devil offer the joyous Christian?” He knew that Satan would at times utilize the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life to tempt God’s people.¹⁶ Satan continues to use these tactics because they work. Matthew 6:24 says, “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” The word of God indicates that if one’s affections are toward God or if there is love for “the one” then, out of necessity, one must “hate the other.” If the believer determines to resolutely “hold to the one” then at the same time they must disregard or even “despise the other” (Mt 6:24).¹⁷

Delving deeper into the book of Matthew, Spurgeon discussed the trials of managing wealth. He preached on the text found in Matthew 25:22-23. The text begins by stating, “He also

¹⁵ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian T. George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. I (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), Kindle.

¹⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 32.

¹⁷ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A. R. Fausset et al., *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), Mt 6:24.

that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them” (Mt 25:22-23). In the conclusion of this section of Scripture Jesus said, “His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thou ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Mt 25:23). Spurgeon communicated to his followers that God was the source of all earthly material. When commenting on one’s honor and ability he explained, “The parable tells us this very pointedly, for it makes every person acknowledged that his talents come from the Lord.” He went on to say, “Whatever your position or whatever be your gifts, remember that they are not yours, but they are lent you from on high. No man has anything of his own, except his sins. We are but talents at will.”¹⁸

To better understand the topic of wealth one might consider both the temptation and rejection of Scripture as it is related in Matthew 4:1-11. When preaching on this topic Spurgeon said, “If you will study the temptation of Christ, you will not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. If you see how he worsted the enemy, you will learn what weapons to use against your great adversary.”¹⁹ Christ came to earth to be an atonement for the sins of mankind and to offer a perfect example of righteous living to His people. His suffering was necessary so that He might better understand how to aid the tempted. Human beings are tempted in many ways. Christ’s temptation communicates an account of temptation being delivered directly from the prince of darkness. Matthew provides an intricate account detailing the time, place, instigator, agent, temptation, victory, and consolation.²⁰

¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit, Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by C.H. Spurgeon*, vol. 4 (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), Kindle.

¹⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 39.

²⁰ *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

Spurgeon often went to great lengths to highlight the relationship between good works and salvation. He did not believe that good works were simply “meritorious acts of obedience to Christ” performed simply to secure God’s approval. Instead of Christians being seduced by the riches of this world, he believed that they should devote their time to doing acts of Christian service toward one’s neighbor for the purpose of bringing glory to God and uplifting others. He sought to elaborate on what Christ meant by the term “good works” in Matthew 5:15-16 by explaining that “good works are works of love, unselfish works, works done for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. Deeds of charity, kindness, and brotherly love” (Mt 5:15-16). The underlying theme here is that of love.²¹

Believers are commanded to have a loving spirit. In Matthew 7:20 Christ said of the believer, “by their fruit you will recognize them” (Mt 7:20). A critical barrier that hinders Christians from true discipleship is the distraction of earthly possessions. It would be prudent for the disciple of Christ to constantly be aware of the “potential deceitfulness of wealth.”²² Those that possess a contented spirit are the ones that enjoy life in the “truest sense.” Matthew 5:5, states, “Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt 5:5). In contemplating this verse, Spurgeon said “The great man, with all his wealth, is often uneasy with a craving ambition for more; but the quiet spirits of God’s people find a kingdom everywhere.”²³ Although a direct statement equating meekness with contentment was not found in Spurgeon’s Sermons, he

²¹ Alex J. DiPrima, "An Eagerness to be Up and Doing: The Evangelical Activism of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 152, In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feagerness-be-up-doing-evangelical-activism%2Fdocview%2F2465980128%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

²² Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), chap. 4, Kindle.

²³ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible*, Mt 5:5-7:20, Kindle.

emphasizes the significance of meekness as a Christian virtue. When commenting on the text in Matthew 5:3-5, Spurgeon said, “No man ever mourns before God until he is poor in spirit! Neither does he become meek towards others till he has humble views of himself.” According to Spurgeon, meekness involves a spirit of surrender to God's will and a readiness to bear injuries without bitterness. This necessitates a modest and gentle attitude towards others, even in challenging circumstances.²⁴

Christ taught us to pray, “lead us not into temptation” (Mt 6:13). The petition is not some kind of ivory-towered patronization. Christ is not demonstrating sympathy for believers that are sin tempted without ever having come to understand what temptation really means. Jesus is speaking about temptation as one who is familiar with its attraction. Christ knows its seductive power.²⁵

He is acquainted with its destructive effects more intimately than any other human that has ever lived. He teaches us to pray this way because it is a prayer that is inspired from His own struggles with the tempter. The uniqueness of Christ's temptation is of paramount importance. It teaches the believer to grasp onto the hope, comfort, and victory over sin that the love of Christ affords. The freedom that believers enjoy from sin and temptation only comes through His victorious earthly ministry.²⁶

The setting of Christ's temptation has led some readers to ask, where did the gospel writers obtain this information? Matthew and Luke include additional information that was

²⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons on The New Testament: Book by Book Sermons by Spurgeon*, Kindle Edition. (Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2016), Mt 5:3, Kindle.

²⁵ Jacques Roets, “The Victory of Christ over the Tempter as Help to the Believers' Fight against Sin: A Reflection on Matthew 4:1-11,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 22 (2011): 107–27, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001870805&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²⁶ Roets, 107–27.

lacking in the book of Mark. It is believed that Christ may have shared this part of His divine autobiography during times in His ministry when He was experiencing great trials. There are numerous occasions during Christ's ministry when He would have experienced difficulty, prompting Him to share the experience of His temptation. The messianic character of the temptation experience emphasizes Christ's complex sonship. As such, it is unlikely that an early Christian experience of temptation and testing would have been utilized to create a written summation of this event.²⁷

The temptation of Christ occurred immediately after His baptism. Heaven opens up and the spirit of God descends upon the Son. God the Father attested as to the identity of Christ His beloved Son and redeemer of the lost. Adulation and delight precede Christ's preparation in the wilderness and subsequent temptation. The celebration of His illustrious baptism was short-lived. The spirit, after descending upon Christ never to leave Him again, leads Him out into the wilderness to be lured into sin by Satan.²⁸

When Adam was tempted, he failed. Christ's victory over the tempter was at least in part, for all who believe, the undoing of the results of Adam's failure. Jesus would be set to meet the tempter in the wilderness. The time of Christ's temptation occurred just after the beginning of His public ministry. There is no mention of a temptation occurring during the less publicized part of His life. It was only when He begins to perform great works for God's kingdom that He is

²⁷ Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah: A Survey of the Life of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2017), chap. 7, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

²⁸ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 9, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 219-236.

approached by the devil. Obviously, Satan was intent on opposing the inception of the Empire that would ultimately prove to bring about his demise.²⁹

According to God's word, Christ was "led up of the spirit into the wilderness" (Mt 4:1). The site is the subject of much speculation. The intricacy of the historical setting of the temptation that was directed toward Christ suggests that this was a literal experience. Jesus was physically tempted and His human nature was tested. The references to the spirit infer that the two alternate members of the Godhead were involved in His earthly ministry.³⁰ When preaching on the text found in Matthew 4:13 Spurgeon believed affirmed that it was the Spirit of God led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He explained that Jesus did not go there by chance or because He had nothing else to do, but because He had to face temptations in all points just as we do, yet without sinning.³¹

Christ depended on the Holy Spirit to empower Him.³² It was not Satan that led Christ to be tempted. It was the Holy Spirit that led Christ into the wilderness to the temptation. Spiritual victories are often preceded by trials and temptation. It is important to note that Christ's answer to all three temptations was to quote the word of God. In so doing, He demonstrated to the church that the most powerful weapon to be utilized when battling the enemy is the Scripture.³³

The agent that tempted Christ was "the devil" (Mt 4:1). He is the very chief of the apostate angels. Satan is a murderer and an accuser of the brethren. On this occasion he is

²⁹ Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, 219–236.

³⁰ *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

³¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 39.

³² *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

³³ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version*, Includes Index. (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Mt 4:1-11.

referred to as “the devil” (Mt 4:1). He is the great seducer of mankind, and the prince of darkness. At his core he opposes all that is good, true, and holy. He goes about seeking all whom he may devour.³⁴

The devil is seen in this text as “the tempter” (Mt 4:3). Satan is known for his subtlety, craft, power, and monstrous depravity. He is the one that attempts to draw the people of God away from the path of righteousness. In this instance the devil attempts to lead the Son of God away from God’s chosen path. Christ is called to the service of God the Father. The devil tries to entice Him to enter into the service of evil.³⁵

This section of the text deals with Matthew’s account involving the first Temptation of Christ. It introduces God’s word in combating the temptation and provides an example to the extent to which it may be beneficial in the lives of Christians around the world. The child of God may be tempted to distrust God’s word. In despair one might be willing to take the law into their own hands. Yet, God continues to supply. As such, believers are encouraged to resist the desire to snatch at unsanctioned relief. The Christian is biblically charged to wait on divine supply trusting that relief will arrive at the fitting time.³⁶

Spurgeon spoke about the advantages of wisdom and understanding when preaching on the text found in Matthew 13:45-46. This passage of Scripture states, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking good pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Mt 13:45-46). Spurgeon declared that the merchant’s best course of action was “seeking good pearls.” He said, “He was looking for

³⁴ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 69–79.

³⁵ Morris, 69–79.

³⁶ Jamieson, Fausset and Fausset et al., Mt 4:1-11.

something else and came upon the treasure.” He went on to state, “He is seeking good pearls - something good, not exactly seeking the one pearl of great price, for at first he does not know about it.”³⁷

Spurgeon observed that the merchant depends on his wits. He declares, “A merchant endeavors to trade as to make a profit. Whether he deals in pearls or in gain, he does not hope to obtain riches by labor.” Spurgeon explained that the merchant leaves the hard labor to people who “eat their bread in the sweat of their face.” He explained that the merchant uses his brain to get increase. Spurgeon said of the merchant, “He is dependent not so much upon labor as upon knowledge, upon skill, upon the advantage which superior acquaintance with the article which he deals and gives him.”³⁸

He went on to say, “But, still, he is seeking pearls and he comes upon the one pearl in consequence of his seeking.” Spurgeon then goes into discussing those who are unable to overcome their inability to receive knowledge. He asserted, “Oh that we could wake men up to exercise the faculty of thinking, and then to direct, to regulate and to control their thoughts! But thinking is an occupation that a great many persons altogether dislike. They are frivolous. We cannot get them to think about anything.”³⁹

Satan’s first temptation was to incite Christ to doubt the Father’s care and goodness. The devil stated, “if thou be the son of God, command the stones to be made bread.” Christ fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. This was a remarkable feat of physical strength. Christ’s human endurance serves as the background for Satan’s first temptation.⁴⁰

³⁷ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

³⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

³⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

⁴⁰ *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

The incident is rooted in the slur “if thou be the son of God” (Mt 4:3). Christ’s response indeed proves that He is, in fact, the Son of God. The urgency of His situation created a great appeal for Christ to turn the stones into bread. The temptation appealed to His most basic human need. In light of the extensive fast it was indeed an urgent need.⁴¹

The result of Christ using His divine power to transform the stones into bread would have led to the desire for Him to eat the bread. Christ resisted Satan’s proposal and refused to perform a miracle that would bring Himself increase. In fact, there is no record of Him performing a single miracle to benefit Himself. Christ was always concerned with ministering to others. He constantly demonstrated through His word what it meant to be a true servant of God the Father.⁴² Spurgeon highlighted the significance of Jesus as a genuine servant of God the Father. He acknowledged that Jesus always served His Father, consistently followed his Father's will, and perpetually aimed to glorify Him. He was the quintessential servant of God.⁴³

Christ’s response was to draw power from the word of God. He referred to Deuteronomy 8:3 proclaiming that, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Dt 8:3). The Father has power to rain down bread in the midst of famine. There is nothing that God cannot do if He so desires. Satan was inviting Jesus to perform a miracle that was simply outside of the Father’s will. While there was nothing morally wrong with turning stones into bread, Satan’s temptation was intended to cause misdirection.⁴⁴

⁴¹ *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

⁴² *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

⁴³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 39.

⁴⁴ Radmacher, Allen, and House, Mt 4:1-11.

It is God who ultimately sustains all life. Therefore, it is the believer's responsibility to trust God and remain in the very center of His good will.⁴⁵ Most interpreters agree that, when reviewing the evidence, Christ experienced temptation in the context of His earthly humanity. The temptations were experienced through His human limitations. Christ is God who came in the flesh to demonstrate to all of humanity that human life can exist in a godly mode. He demonstrated through the word of God a pattern of obedient life that may be observed in the midst of suffering and temptation.⁴⁶

Satan's rash communication involved an ascension to the pinnacle of the temple. The change in scenery from the wilderness to the temple may have been a visionary experience constructed to set the stage for Satan's response to Christ. Satan then proclaims that if Christ is truly the Son of God, then He will cast himself down. He suggests that it is written, "God shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. Then shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Dt 91:11-12). It is critical to observe that Satan misquoted the passage in Psalm 91:11.

In actuality, the passage said, "to keep thee in all thy ways" (Dt 91:11). Satan wholly perverted the passage. The promise was not written to encourage carelessness. It was to encourage believers to trust in the Lord in meekness and make Him their sanctuary. By referring to Psalm 91, Satan encourages Christ to test God's promise to "rescue" or "protect" those who dwell in the shelter of the "Most High" (Dt 91:9). This was an underhanded attempt to have

⁴⁵ Radmacher, Allen, and House, Mt 4:1-11.

⁴⁶ John E. McKinley, *Tempted for Us: Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ's Impeccability and Temptation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 76-78, Kindle.

Jesus demonstrate His loyalty to God upon the condition that He would respond in a certain way.⁴⁷

Christ responded to Satan's suggestion by once again quoting from the word of life. He explained, citing Deuteronomy 6:16, that "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Dt 6:16). When believers rush into danger carelessly, it violates God's divine exclusion. God promises to preserve His people in the midst of danger. However, it is not proper to "create" danger.⁴⁸

In refusing to tempt God, Christ tactfully condemns all believers that place themselves in harm's way without being called to do so. Believers bring defeat to themselves when they presumptuously call on the faithfulness of God without having any scriptural justification for their dangerous actions.⁴⁹ The believer is not to put the promise of God's security to the test in skepticism. Furthermore, God's people should strive to avoid a wanton display of God's promised safekeeping. To tempt the Lord God is expressly forbidden and would certainly forfeit one's right to expect preservation.⁵⁰

This research demonstrates once again how Satan's attack on God's word may be overcome. It relates data that will permit the reader to better consider how the Christian church should approach the handling of God's word in light of God's teaching in Matthew 4:1-11. It

⁴⁷ Larry Chouinard, *Matthew*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo: College Press, 1997), Mt 4:1-11.

⁴⁸ Jamieson, Fausset, Fausset et al., Mt 4:1-11.

⁴⁹ *The Pulpit Commentary: St. Matthew Vol. I*, ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004), 102–107.

⁵⁰ Jamieson, Fausset, Fausset et al., Mt 4:1-11.

helps to detail and explain specific aspects of Christ's temptation and connect those with the way Christians are to revere and treasure the word of God.⁵¹

Satan's third and final attempt to tempt Christ is through the wickedness of idolatry. The devil takes Jesus to the pinnacle of what the Bible describes as "an exceeding high mountain" where he offers Him absolute rule over all of the nations in exchange for His worship (Mt 4:8). Satan offers Christ everything He sees if He will simply fall down and worship him. Note the vileness of Satan's suggestion. The thought that the Son of God would fall down and worship the devil is utterly deplorable. Satan demonstrates his arrogance and deceitfulness by offering kingdoms to which he has no claim.⁵²

Christ responds accordingly declaring at once to Satan, "Get thee hence." Overcoming the devil's temptation, Jesus cites Deuteronomy 6:13 when He announces, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shall serve him, and shall swear by his name" (Dt 6:13). Christ had ultimately prevailed over His enemy, for Satan promptly left Him. It should be understood that the Son of God honored the divine word. Jesus utilized the Scripture to dispel all of Satan's fiery darts.⁵³

The devil was no match for Christ. His faithfulness and understanding of God's holy word prevailed. Israel had repeatedly forsaken God in favor of foreign gods for political gain or temporary prosperity. Yet, Christ refused to compromise His loyalty to God for temporary comfort or gain. In fact, He chose the path of suffering and pain that would ultimately lead to victory. Satan was forcefully dismissed. In the end, Christ demonstrated His ultimate faithfulness toward obedience.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Jamieson, Fausset, Fausset et al., Mt 4:1-11.

⁵² Chouinard, Mt 4:1-11.

⁵³ Chouinard, Mt 4:1-11.

⁵⁴ Chouinard, Mt 4:1-11.

This text demonstrates how adherence to God's word may bring about comfort and blessings. It reveals how God rewards those that remain faithful to His word in its entirety. Immediately following the temptation Christ received consolation. The Bible declares, "Behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Mt 4:11). Apparently, a host of angels had witnessed Christ's temptation. Christ found himself surrounded by holy beings that were faithful and obedient.⁵⁵

Having witnessed Christ's ordeal, the angels then became ministers of comfort to Him. Once Satan is passionately dismissed, angels appear and minister to Christ's needs.⁵⁶ The phrase "leaveth him" in Matthew illustrates that the order of the temptations is chronological (Mt 4:11). Christ demonstrates through spirit and power how He overcame Satan. He provides believers with the power to overcome temptation. Believers must resist the devil by standing firmly in faith and he will flee, just as he did from Christ.⁵⁷

Spurgeon said, speaking of the devil, "Wretched traitor! Satan had gone about to tempt Christ and yet he owned nothing." He went on to say, "O Lord, grant that if ever we should hunger and be in poverty, like our Lord, we may never yield to the temptation to do wrong to gain wealth and honor, or even the supply of pressing need!" Spurgeon's desire was that God's people would remain faithful. In his plea he pronounced, "May the church never yield to the world with the idea of setting up the kingdom of Christ in a more easy and rapid manner than by the simple preaching of the gospel!" Spurgeon believed that the temptation on the mountain must have been "to any of us a very dazzling and fascinating site; for the glories of even one kingdom

⁵⁵ Chouinard, Mt 4:1-11.

⁵⁶ Chouinard, Mt 4:1-11.

⁵⁷ *KJV Bible Commentary*, 1878.

make hearts beat, and eyes glistened and feet slip.” Satan had certainly laid out the bait.

Spurgeon knew all too well that “the bait is sweet, but the hook lies under it.”⁵⁸

Spurgeon said that “gold and the gospel seldom do agree.” He went on to explain that the people that are successful in obtaining earthly riches most often strive to become subjects of the kingdom in which “faith is riches, and holiness his honor.” In Matthew 19:24 Christ said, “and again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mk 10:25). Spurgeon argued, “A camel is not only large, but it has humps, and how can it go through so small an opening as the eye of a needle? It could not make such a passage except by a strange miracle; nor can a rich man enter into the kingdom of God except by a marvel of grace.” Spurgeon believed that very few wealthy people really receive the richness of the gospel. He said, “they are too great, too fine, too busy, too proud to regard the lowly preacher of the gospel of the poor.”⁵⁹

Spurgeon said that there are a “class of hearers we know by personal acquaintance in this busy age.” He went on to assert, “They hear the word, they are affected by the gospel, they take it as a seed into their minds, and it grows well for a season; but the heart cannot belong to two absorbing objects at the same time, and therefore these men can no longer yield themselves up to the world of Christ too.” Christ said in Matthew 13:22 “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (Mt 13:22). Spurgeon elaborated on the people mentioned in Matthew 13:22. He said that “The leaf of outward righteousness is there, but there is no due on

⁵⁸ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew* (Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2017), Mt 4:8-9, Kindle.

⁵⁹ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew* Mt 19:24.

it; the ear of promised fruit is there, but there is no kernel in it.” He explained that Christ associated earthly wealth with deceitfulness and untruthfulness.⁶⁰

Wealth in 2 Corinthians

Spurgeon recognized the struggles of the early church. Just as the early church sought religious liberty the English-speaking world of Spurgeon’s day sought religious liberty from the Roman Catholic Church. The melding of church and crown created tensions and struggles that have continued until the present day. Yet, Spurgeon looked on the struggles and was encouraged. In 1855 he preached a sermon from 2 Corinthians 3:17 on the topic of “Spiritual Liberty.” He preached the text “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor 3:17). Spurgeon carefully demonstrated the connection between spiritual liberty and religious freedom.⁶¹

This section will explore Spurgeon’s writings on 2 Corinthians in connection with wealth. It will focus on Paul’s epistle and expand on the topics of culture and bias in connection with biblical increase. Spurgeon recognized the struggles of the early church and emphasized the need for encouragement, study, and spiritual strength in relation to spiritual riches. When speaking on the text found in 2 Corinthians 8:9 he said, “We know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through what He has done for us.” Spurgeon went on to explain that others may only recognize God’s grace and His richness through our work in Christ Jesus.⁶² The section will proceed to discuss wealth in the New Testament and examine how wealth was understood in the early church. It will help readers better understand the issue at hand. It will highlight the fact that

⁶⁰ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Commentary on The Bible*, Mt 13:22.

⁶¹ Robert Matthew Perry, “Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching” (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 92.

⁶² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

a primary issue is not simply that one interpretation is superior to the other, but instead, it is often one's personal cultural context and presupposition causing them to overlook important details in the text. Terms from this section will be analyzed and connected with varying interpretations leading up to the present day.⁶³

This section of the paper will endeavor to show that the topic of wealth is important to God. It will demonstrate how wealth motivates individuals. It will strive to reveal that at times the desire for wealth has caused the disregarding of relevant information relating to the interpretation of Scripture. It appears that the desire for wealth is now and was in Biblical times a primary cause of God's people incurring divine judgment. The term "*omitted variable*" refers to any variable that is not included for analysis that might influence the solution, outcome, or the dependent variable. It commonly refers to regression analysis which allows one to examine the relationship between two or more variables of interest. It is interesting to note that another name for omitted variable bias is the word "confounding."⁶⁴

There is often potential for a monetary driven bias which may cause individuals to overlook an independent variable that should be considered.⁶⁵ Martin Luther described his care in considering God's word. He said, "I search the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb-study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings."⁶⁶

⁶³ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1-8.

⁶⁴ Humberto Barreto and Frank Howland, "Omitted Variable Bias," Chapter. In *Introductory Econometrics: Using Monte Carlo Simulation with Microsoft Excel*, 490–507, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511809231.020.

⁶⁵ Barreto and Howland, 490–507.

⁶⁶ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: A Treasury of Illustrations, Anecdotes, Facts and Quotations for Pastors, Teachers and Christian Workers* (Garland TX: Bible Communications, 1996), 400.

Luther was careful not to quickly dismiss any part of the word of God. It is interesting to note that this is the very same way that Christ approached the matter. He often quoted Old Testament Scripture.⁶⁷ For Jesus the Old Testament Scriptures were the ultimate benchmark of the truth for all things of faith and practice.⁶⁸ Christ is committed to living, “by every outgoing of the word of the Lord.” He has refused to forsake God’s word and allocate His power or draw on the power of others for personal gain.⁶⁹

Spurgeon preached on the perils of embracing earthly wealth when preaching on the text in 2 Corinthians 8:9 which says, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Spurgeon said, “Never was there anywhere else such poverty as the poverty of Christ, for it was not merely external, it was also internal. He became so poor, through bearing our sin, that He had to lose the light of His father’s countenance, emptying Himself of all the repute He had.” Spurgeon went on to detail the great poverty endured by Christ. He explained that “He became a spectacle of scorn and shame because our shameful sin had been laid upon Him. See Him on yonder shameful cross, mark His many words, hear His expiring cry, and as you gaze upon that spectacle of majestic misery, remember that although He was rich, he became thus poor.”⁷⁰

It is an overstatement to say that one should not be allowed to embrace earthly riches as a disciple of Jesus. What appears to be missing from the Gospels are followers of Jesus that are rich that simultaneously give generously offering up their surplus wealth for the sake of the

⁶⁷ Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, 227.

⁶⁸ Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, 227.

⁶⁹ A. Sloman, Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The Gospel According to St Matthew: Being the Greek Text*, Rev. and repr. with additional notes. (London: Macmillan, 1912), 81.

⁷⁰ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 54.

underprivileged. In the text there are examples of periodic celebration utilizing material wealth. At times, this material giving even appears to go to lavish extremes. However, these celebrations appear to be isolated and do not represent what is typical. Overall earthly reward for faithfulness to God does not seem to be one of Christ's teachings. In fact, the consensus is that it is explicitly contradicted throughout. Rather than basking in splendor, followers of Christ are expected to engage in self-denying sacrifice.⁷¹

Spurgeon believed that the child of God is one who is opposed to anything that circumvents the Savior. He illustrated this point when commenting on 2 Corinthians 7:11. This text states, "For behold this selfsame thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor 7:11). Spurgeon believed that God's people must carefully guard their hearts against the sin of idolatry. He said, "The true believer, when he gets his Savior in full possession, and in blissful communion, is so jealous lest any rivals should intrude in his heart, he is afraid lest his dearest friend should get more of his heart than the Savior has." He believed that the child of God must reject the sin of pride and fear being overcome by the material things of this world. Spurgeon proclaimed, "He is afraid of his wealth; he trembles at his health, and his fame, and everything that is dear to him, lest he should engross his heart."⁷²

Spurgeon commented on the apostle Paul when deliberating on the text in 2 Corinthians 2:14 which states "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Cor 2:14). He saw Paul as the suffering saint that had veered from the path that would certainly

⁷¹ Blomberg, chap. 5.

⁷² Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament: Spurgeon Commentary Series* (New Zealand: Titus Books, 2014), 2 Co 2:11, Kindle.

have brought him great earthly treasures to choose the less glamorous path which would bring about his earthly demise. He said, “picture Paul, the aged, the man who had been beaten five times” and “dragged forth for dead.” Spurgeon went on to say that Paul was, “the man of great sufferings, who had passed through whole seas of persecution.” He imagined Paul in the midst of this suffering boldly proclaiming, “Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ!” Spurgeon inferred that a right understanding of the richness of God allowed Paul, “to triumph in stocks, to triumph under the stones, to triumph amidst the hiss of the world, to triumph when he was driven from the city and shook off the dust from his feet, to triumph at all times in Christ Jesus!”⁷³

The text might lead one to conclude that the process of rightly understanding wealth involves the taking up of the cause of Christ. It is the Bible expositors task to rightly interpret the word of God being careful to consider every word that He has proclaimed. The lessons learned in studying this topic might best be received and then employed in one’s day-to-day ministry with the prospect of improving one’s expository efforts. The goal is to better understand how interpretations of wealth impact the believer. This will allow Christians to become better ministers for the cause of Christ. Doing God’s work calls for the believer to exert strict focus. The dedicated Christian’s thoughts must be elevated far above tedious disruptions so that the mission that God has purposed for them to realize may be accomplished with enthusiasm and joy.⁷⁴

Spurgeon explained that there were preachers even in his day that believed and lived in opposition to what they openly preached. He proclaimed as for us, “we have renounced the

⁷³ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 2 Co 2:14.

⁷⁴ MacDonald and Farstad, 2 Co 2:17.

hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully.” There was no money or material possession on earth to cause him to want to preach against what he believed. Spurgeon said, “The more you know us through and through, the more glad we shall be. Our gospel is one which may be advertised on every hoarding; we have nothing to conceal.”⁷⁵

He believed that God had taken heavenly treasure and placed it in earthly vessels. 2 Corinthians 4:7 says, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Cor 4:7). Spurgeon said, “One great trial Paul had to endure was that of ungenerous doubt of his apostleship which he obtained in many churches. There were then as now many critics who, if they could find no fault with treasure, abused the vessel. But Paul stops them.” He believed that God’s word had great treasure hidden in it. This was because he believed that it had power to save a person’s life, regenerate people, and awaken people to their moral conscience. Spurgeon alleged, “The Graces God gives are treasures for abundance, enduringness, superiority, immense cost. They need to be guarded with caution, watchfulness, jealousy.”⁷⁶

Spurgeon once preached on the text in 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 which says, “But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor 1:30-31). Spurgeon believed that this text held infinitely more wisdom than the mind could comprehend. He explained that Paul was elaborating on the believer’s spiritual wealth. This is described with four words. Those being, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

⁷⁵ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 2 Co 2:17.

⁷⁶ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian Timothy George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume II: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*, vol. II (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2017), Kindle.

Spurgeon declared that Christ was made all of these things for the believer. He explained, “Christ Jesus is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” He suggested, “we may preach Christ without prescribing how much, only the more we extol Him the better.”⁷⁷

The book of 2 Corinthians plays a crucial role in Spurgeon's approach to wealth. In his sermon titled "Christ's Poverty, Our Riches," where he preached on the text in 2 Corinthians 8:9 he underscores how Jesus Christ's gracious act of sacrificing his riches for humanity's spiritual wealth exemplifies his love and humility. Furthermore, Spurgeon notes that Christ's poverty serves as a means of redemption for believers. Spurgeon uses this passage to challenge his audience to reevaluate their relationship with wealth and to recognize the worth of spiritual riches. There are several parallels that can be drawn between Spurgeon's Christological approach to wealth and 2 Corinthians. For instance, both underscore the transformative impact of Christ's teachings and their potential to alter one's life. Moreover, they both highlight the significance of responsible management and benevolence in the Christian community. These ideas are fundamental to Christian doctrine and have profound ramifications for how believers perceive their connections with God and with fellow human beings.⁷⁸

Wealth in Revelation

This section will expound on Spurgeon's writings in connection to wealth as presented in the book of Revelation. It will consider the topics of scriptural accuracy, iconism, and data analysis as they relate to spiritual increase. Furthermore, this section deliberates on the topics of biblical curses and blessings and discusses the book of Revelation in its canonical setting.

⁷⁷ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 17.

⁷⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

Spurgeon highlighted the need for righteousness and mercy in relation to the interpretation, allocation, and distribution of biblical treasures. He believed that individual misgivings about wealth often resulted in poverty and sorrow. The book of Revelation deals with this issue. When preaching on the text found in Revelation 7:16-17 he discussed this matter in some detail.⁷⁹

Spurgeon said, “To unbelievers, what can I say? They know nothing of spiritual things, and will not believe them, the one man should show them unto them.” He distinguished between those who have embraced Christ and those who have taken hold of faulty interpretations of wealth. He said, “If Christ be with you, you will be so happy in him that wanton, wandering wishes will be like the birds which may fly over your head, but dare not make their nests in your hair.” Spurgeon believed that true contentment can only be found in Christ. He warned his congregation about seeking fulfillment in the things of this world. He said, “I do not mean that the saints find a full content in this world’s goods, but that they find such content in God, that with them or without them they live in wealth.”⁸⁰

This section will discuss individual misunderstandings involving wealth. It will discuss how cultural interpretations of wealth will one day be brought to ruin. It will also discuss wealth in the new millennium. This section will help to provide a transition between cultural blindness and self-doubt, to a faithful interpretation of the text, and a proper application of the Scriptures. It will demonstrate how a biblical interpretation of wealth is that which is most reliable. Terms from this section will be analyzed and connected to interpretation modes and techniques that have been developed and maintained through to the current era.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 36.

⁸⁰ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 36.

⁸¹ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 9.

Spurgeon's conviction in the millennial kingdom is apparent in his sermon on "The First Resurrection," where he expounded on Revelation 20:4-6. When discussing the honor of ruling with Christ for a thousand years, he remarked, "Here is another point upon which there has been a long and very vigorous contention. It was believed in the early Church, I do not know whether there is any Scriptural foundation for the precise date they fixed, that the seventh thousand years of the world's history would be a Sabbath; that as there were six days of toil in the week, and the seventh was a day of rest, so the world would have six thousand years of toil and sorrow, and the seventh thousand would be a thousand years of rest." This excerpt demonstrates Spurgeon's belief in the exact interpretation of the millennial kingdom and its forthcoming manifestation. He also believed that this teaching had practical implications for contemporary Christians since it could inspire them to lead righteous lives while anticipating Christ's return. Overall, Spurgeon's acceptance of the millennial kingdom was a fundamental component of his preaching and teaching, and he viewed it as a crucial aspect of Christian hope and faith.⁸²

This section will discuss the trustworthy word of God, as it is described in Revelation chapter 22. God's word is deemed to be trustworthy, and this truth is communicated throughout the Scriptures by individuals that have firmly asserted that they were His people. Refusing to accept the truth of God's word is an immense interpretation issue surrounding the topic of Biblical wealth. People that study Bible interpretation understand that one Scripture may impact how another Bible text is understood. This paper has previously detailed how that when sections of the word of God are left out, misplaced, or tampered with, it impacts how other parts of Scripture are understood.⁸³

⁸² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 7.

⁸³ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 9.

Spurgeon declared that embracing the wickedness of this world would cause a defiling that will prohibit entry into the eternal kingdom of heaven. Revelation 21:27 says, “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rv 21:27). Spurgeon described the strictness of this law in declaring that “anything” that defiles a person would prohibit entry. He contended that Satan cannot enter, sin cannot enter, and no flesh can enter, as it is defiled. Spurgeon proclaimed that “The heart must be purified.” He explained that this purification is accomplished through grace, and the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴

He carefully described the grace that purifies. He pointed to Revelation 21:6 which says “And he said unto me, It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rv 21:6). Spurgeon affirmed that the grace of God which brings about the riches in glory cannot be bought. He said, “There is a freeness.” They are given to the believer freely. God knows the need or the thirst of his people. Spurgeon said his mercy is “Not to the great.” Rather than rewarding those that store up earthly riches, God’ distributes His mercy to those that seek Him and desire His truth.⁸⁵

When portions of the text are omitted or altered for any purpose, it modifies the results of the Scripture. To put it in mathematical or scientific terms, the potential for profitability is diminished.⁸⁶ In Revelation chapter 22 the text makes it clear that God interacts on an individual basis with those that approach the text carelessly. The Scripture found in Revelation 22:18-19

⁸⁴ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁸⁵ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁸⁶ Jamieson, Fausset, and Fausset et al., Mt 4:1-11.

provides a stern warning to those that refuse or alter God's word. The declaration articulates a curse on individuals that add to or subtract from the prophetic words of Christ.⁸⁷

In his commentary on Revelation 22:18-19, Spurgeon stressed the finality of the book, stating, "The Book is finished. Not another line of inspiration may any man dare to put to it, on peril that God shall add to him every plague of which the Book speaks." He went on to emphasize the perfection of the book, stating, "The Book is perfect. You cannot take a line from it without spoiling it. If you were to take out a solitary text, it would be misused, and the Book should be marred." These quotes highlight Spurgeon's belief in the importance of recognizing the completeness and perfection of the Book of Revelation, and caution against any attempts to add to it.⁸⁸

Spurgeon was outspoken when it came to the topic of wealth and poverty. He demonstrated his great conviction with regards to this issue when speaking of the role of the church in connection with matters of society. He had faith in the ferocity and life transforming power of the Bible text. He was convinced that the Scripture had power to "change hearts." Spurgeon encouraged the church while preaching a sermon from the text found in Revelation 3:17-18. When speaking of the church of Laodicea Spurgeon said, "The kingdom cannot come nor the Lord's banner be lifted high if the soldiers of his own army proved false and turn back in the day of battle. The time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God."

He was adamant that the church must engaged the culture of the day. He expected the people of God to act responsibly when it came to matters of social injustice involving the church. Spurgeon said, "The Lord will be sanctified in them that come near to him, and if any enter the

⁸⁷ Christopher A. Davis, *Revelation*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 2000), 392.

⁸⁸ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Rev 22:18-19.

house to miss behave themselves, they will find that judgment begins at the house of God.”

Twice he echoed Peter’s exhortation in 1 Peter 4:17. Later, in the same sermon, Spurgeon suggested that “below... Is the holy church militant, above it is the holy church triumphant.”⁸⁹

It should be noted that Christ invites people to receive his word and blesses those that hear and obey his commands. However, He serves notice to those who would choose to rebel against Him and reject His Revelation. Rejecting God’s word is in actuality rejecting Christ. Those who take away from Christ’s prophecy will lose access to His glorious kingdom. Individuals that seek to add to Christ’s words will eventually experience all of the plagues found in Christ’s prophetic Revelation.⁹⁰

Revelation combines elements of Old Testament prophecy with a substantial measure of apocalyptic genre. This is a writing style that was adapted from the style of Old Testament prophetic writers. It is believed that the overwhelming majority of the imagery utilized in the book of Revelation has parallels in the biblical prophets.⁹¹ These are images that would be most relevant to late first century readers. The symbols and imagery were often utilized in popular Jewish revelations about the end time. It is believed that the literary outline of the document may have been added later. A number of scholars have suggested that Jewish mystics and other ancient prophets believed that they were engaging in spiritual visionary practices.⁹²

This section will serve to identify the genre of the book and that of the chosen passage as well. It will discuss how the genre connects with the interpretation of the passage. The literary

⁸⁹ Perry, 92.

⁹⁰ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1:944 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985).

⁹¹ Craig S. Keener and InterVarsity Press, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Rv.

⁹² Keener and InterVarsity Press, Revelation.

analysis section will demonstrate how the selected passage fits into the presentation of the book itself. When delving into this section of the study, one might consider the writings of Bryan J. Tabb in his book titled, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone*. It would be prudent for Bible interpreters to consider the various passages that describe the trustworthiness of God's word found in the book of Revelation and the contextual issues that may be examined in relation to this study.⁹³

Tabb presents a number of passages found within the text that describe the divine features of God's word. The first section of chapter 10 introduces the topic and elaborates on the trustworthy words of God. Tabb describes the chapter as one that contemplates Revelation's complex portrayal of itself as the word of God. First, the opening text in Revelation 1:1-2 explains that the contents are "the testimony of Jesus" and describes John as having witnessed Christ's ultimate revelation. Second, the book is described internally in Revelation 22:7 and Revelation 22:19 as a "book of prophecy."⁹⁴

The writer is proclaimed to be a true prophet of God with divine authority and authorization in Revelation 1:3, and Revelation 1:11. Third, the command to refrain from sealing up the words of the prophecy in Revelation 22:10 reverses the command given to Daniel in Daniel 12:9 to seal his scroll until the end which signals the actualization of its words. Fourth, the warning against adding to or taking away from the prophecy highlights a sequence of warnings connecting to the book of Deuteronomy and reveals that the book of Revelation is divine Scripture designated for God's people. Fifth, the description of God's character in Revelation 3:14 as "trustworthy and true," serves as the basis for the complete veracity of the

⁹³ Brian J. Tabb, *All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic an Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2019), chap. 10, <https://app.wordsearchbible.lifeway.com>.

⁹⁴ Tabb, chap. 10.

written words of the book. Revelation 1:3 describes a blessing that is set aside for those who “hear” and “keep” the words of the prophecy (Rv 1:3).⁹⁵

Spurgeon advised his readers that no one knows people like God does. Revelation 3:15 says, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot” (Rv 3:15). He said that when Christ proclaimed, “I know thy works,” the Lord was explaining that he truly knows the heart of men (Rv 3:15). Spurgeon inferred that God was declaring to his followers that, “men think better of you than you deserve. You do not know yourselves, you think your works to be excellent, but I know them to be very different.” He knew all too well that God is not moved by the material things of this world. Spurgeon stated, “He is not deceived by glitter, he tests all things, and values only that gold which will endure the fire. Our opinion of ourselves and Christ’s opinion of us may be very different, and it is a very sad thing when it is so.”⁹⁶

Spurgeon commented on the life of early Christians when discussing Revelation 16:12-15. He explained that persecution and death was part of the life of early Christians. He spoke of the contrast that existed between the early Christians and the Christians of his day. He said “We have to bear the sneer of the world-that is little; its blandishments, its soft words, its oily speeches, it’s fawning, its hypocrisy, are far worse. Our danger is lest we grow rich and become proud, lest we give ourselves up to the fashions of this present evil world, and lose our faith.” He indicates that by embracing earthly treasure one quite often becomes prideful and is robbed of Christian faith.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Tabb, chap. 10.

⁹⁶ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Rev 3:15.

⁹⁷ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Rev 16:12-15.

Spurgeon understood that the Christian church is far more likely to lose its integrity during times of wealth and prosperity. Spurgeon said, “We must be awake now, for we traverse the enchanted ground, and are most likely to fall asleep to our own undoing, unless our faith in Jesus be a reality, and our love in Jesus a vehement flame.” Spurgeon believed that these soft times created soft people. He believed many of these people were simply imposters or counterfeit Christians. He said, “Many in these days of easy profession are likely to prove tears, and not we; hypocrites with fair masks on their faces, but not the trueborn children of the living God.” He believed that the church should be watchful and to be sure to receive the eternal Holy Spirit of God.⁹⁸

Spurgeon saw the modern world as one that was becoming more and more relaxed with its best men either dead or seduced into ill-gotten wealth or worldliness.⁹⁹ It is ironic that the earthly paradise that many people in the West strive so diligently to create is precisely what the Bible offers Christians in an unlimited and eternal context on God’s terms.¹⁰⁰ Spurgeon believed that Christians must recognize the delicate and fleeting nature of life. In so doing, there should be an honest appraisal relating to one’s desire. He said, “Desire is insatiable as death, but He who filleth all in all can fill it. The capacity of our wishes who can measure? But the immeasurable wealth of God can more than overflow it.” Spurgeon taught his parishioners that the things eternal far outweighed the riches of this world. He suggested, “More wealth brings more care, but more grace brings more joy.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Rev 16:12-15.

⁹⁹ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Rev 16:12-15.

¹⁰⁰ Blomberg, chap. 7.

¹⁰¹ Swem, 35-187.

An external look into Christ's perspective is provided in Revelation 22. It emphasizes the antagonism of the world in rebellion against God directed toward a church that is obedient to God's will. It describes the unity of earthly church worship with worship in God's holy city. Victory is a result of Christ's finished work at Calvary. Christians must be prepared to face persecution to uphold Christ's honor. His return is imminent, and it is Christ's desire that all people will be reached. Ultimately, all people will stand before his throne.¹⁰²

The imminent hope of Christ's return is more valuable than anything that earthly possessions may have to offer. The Old Testament covenant at its inception implied a hope for the future of God's beloved people. When ancient Israel was confronted with questions relating to an individual's future, the Old Testament doctrines of justice and hope pointed to the future resurrection. Revelation 22 continues to develop this theme of future hope garnished with the glorious imagery of Christ.¹⁰³

There are instances when intelligent Christians that are both gifted and well-meaning come to a place where they make poor decisions. Oftentimes, these errors originate from efforts to wrestle with real revelatory challenges that are based in Scripture. Frequently these individuals present well-formed arguments that are thoroughly researched. The primary difficulty that many of them face is that they failed to perceive interpretive challenges. Their answers may appear to be logical, nevertheless they violate fundamental principles of Scripture.¹⁰⁴

The Bible's final command not to tamper with the text is found in Revelation 22:18-19. Much of the book of Revelation relates to the revealing of Christ in all of his glory. A significant portion of the book is provided to John by angelic means. Yet, it is Christ in all of His glory who

¹⁰² Keener and InterVarsity Press, Revelation.

¹⁰³ Keener and InterVarsity Press, Revelation.

¹⁰⁴ Keener and InterVarsity Press, Revelation.

is introduced at the beginning of the prophecy. In Revelation 1:9-20 Christ is the one that initially addressed John and commanded him to write in the book all of the things that he is about to witness. Furthermore, it is Christ who addresses each of the seven churches individually in Revelation 2-3. Ultimately, it is Christ who speaks again at the closing of Revelation 22. The message of the book is that Christ wants believers to know that He is personally aware of their individual conditions.¹⁰⁵

He wants Christians to know that He is with them and that He is evaluating them. He wants the church to be faithful and conduct themselves appropriately. There is not anything that happens to the church that Christ does not know about. Moreover, there is not any situation that the church is dealing with that Christ will not sustain them through. Frequently individuals struggle to obey because they fear persecution. Some Christians struggle because they are simply embedded in a less than faithful local church body.¹⁰⁶

Christ declares that every believer that remains true to Him will enjoy the blessings of His future kingdom. In the meantime, Christ has left us with a vision of God's holy city demonstrating that all of the events that are transpiring are part of his divine plan. One day Christ will bring in the fullness of God to His elect people. Revelation 22 also speaks of wrath and judgment. Other chapters speak of the wrath of God that will be poured out upon the wicked. Revelation 22 describes the wrath and plagues that will be poured out upon the people that corrupt and pervert Christ's prophecy.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Bryan Murphy, "The Unalterable Word," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 165–77, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAI BCA160705002047&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁰⁶ Murphy, 165–77.

¹⁰⁷ Murphy, 165–77.

The wicked will one day be punished right alongside the devil and his evil angels. Believers will be ushered from the millennial kingdom into that eternal kingdom built especially for God's beloved people. The final words of Christ prophecy instruct readers to give credence to all of the words that are written in the book of Revelation. Jesus closes by once again affirming the surety and eminence of his return. Revelation 22:20 is clearly a word from Christ himself.¹⁰⁸

Spurgeon believed that the church should recognize that Christians are living and worshiping in the midst of a spiritual battleground. Both in Spurgeon's day and in the modern era many evangelical Westerners merely see the church as a haven from the world rather than a place to glean knowledge and receive instruction on how to engage contemporary social systems to bring glory to God and benefit His kingdom.¹⁰⁹ Spurgeon knew in his heart that God imparts the excellency of his power to believers. He explained that God does this for two reasons. First, so that it may advance the gospel. Second, God knew that in humanity's weakness the excellency of his power could only be recognized as a divine gift.¹¹⁰

Spurgeon once suggested that there is a path to gaining the whole world through riches. He said, "Many a man would be happier if he had walked the pavement in racks, than if he rode through the streets in his chariot." He went on to explain that there was once a man that gained the whole world in a higher sense. Spurgeon declared, "His name was Solomon. His treasures were not so much those of wealth or power (though he had both), as the treasures of wisdom and the pleasures of the body Solomon had all things that could delight the mind, please the eye, and charm the body."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Murphy, 165–77.

¹⁰⁹ Perry, 103-104.

¹¹⁰ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume II*.

¹¹¹ Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 2.

Spurgeon went on to ask the question, “Solomon, what did you find?” He said in response Solomon declares, “all is vanity.” Spurgeon provided a pronounced response by stating, “Thus says the preacher. Oh! my friends, if we can have all the pleasures of the flesh we desire, I question whether they would be, in themselves, a profit. But of this I am certain that compared with the loss of our soul, it would, indeed, be a dreadful loss.”¹¹²

Conclusion

The first section deals with wealth in the book of Matthew and elaborates on the problem of temptation as it relates to wealth. The study delves deep into the New Testament and connects wealth with the need for diligent study and proper exegesis. The research then turns to the book of 2 Corinthians where Paul deals with a number of preachers that were corrupting the word of God for monetary gain. The paper then focuses on the topic of wealth as presented in the book of Revelation. The study explores biblical wealth as it connects with God’s future kingdom. It explains to the reader how an interpretation of wealth that is based on the text is trustworthy and true. This chapter offers facts that allow the reader to better understand how a proper perception of wealth might easily be obtained. It provides a foundation from which one may begin to discern the truth about wealth. It relates a number of problems that may at any given time connect with the misrepresentation of biblical wealth in Western culture.

The chapter offers a biblical summary of some of the problems relating to wealth and the interpretation of Scripture and presents a solution to those problems. Paul explained that one should be careful when interpreting the word of God. He went on to declare that believers should avoid those who are teaching falsely and abstain from vain disputes. He explained that Christians

¹¹² Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 2.

must diligently work to lead those that have gone astray back to Christ when the opportunity arises. The child of God is to be set apart for God's cause. Individuals that want to be used by God will find that there are certain actions that are to be adopted. In contrast, there are a number of cultural behaviors that are likewise to be avoided.¹¹³

If one is to take up the cause of Christ, there must be careful consideration given to the interpretation of God's word. Those seeking wealth ought to cautiously approach the work of expounding the Scripture and consider every word that God has proclaimed. Many of the lessons learned in studying this topic might well be studied and employed in one's day-to-day ministry with the prospect that improvements may be achieved. The aim is to become better interpreters so that Christ's will may be executed according to His plan. Doing God's work calls for the believer to exert great effort. The dedicated Christian's thoughts must be focused in order to avoid ungodly distractions and disruptions. The overall goal is to seek the Kingdom of God and accomplish Christ's commands with enthusiasm and joy.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Lea and Griffin, 213.

¹¹⁴ Dunnam, MacDonald and McCullough, 140.

Bible Interpretation and Wealth

Introduction

This section will serve as an introduction to the chapter. The chapter will recognize Charles Spurgeon's approach to communication and interpretation and connect with his teaching on the topic of wealth. Spurgeon emphasized the need for Christians to abandon materialism and embrace the richness of God's grace. He believed that miscommunication was often the cause of misunderstandings about spiritual blessings.¹ Hence, the research in this section will discuss modern interpretation as it relates to biblical wealth. It will discuss how a proper biblical approach to interpreting wealth may be achieved while considering new and developing languages.²

The chapter will deal with interpretation problems stemming from cultural issues that are blatant and obvious. It will look at how some of the problems have developed over the years. The research will connect with issues relating to translation and interpretation and discuss cultural misgivings that have ensued. These issues are those that will most likely cause interpreters to misunderstand or mishandle the text with a large degree of error. It is these problems that are typically the most visible. They are likely going to be the easiest to recognize and correct.³

Charles Spurgeon often denounced poor stewardship and encouraged his congregation to veer from the open sins to which individuals in the community were so often culpable. He said, "I am inclined to think that our class sins are the most grievous. Behold this day the sins of the

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 25 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

² E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blindspots to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), chap. 3, Kindle.

³ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 3.

rich. How are the poor oppressed! How are the needy downtrodden! In many places the average wage is far below their value to their masters. In this age there is many a great man who looks upon his fellows as only steppingstones to wealth.”⁴

The Bible teaches in Luke 16:11 that monetary stewardship is fundamental. The text begs the question, “If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches” (Lk 16:11). Here Luke suggests that there are things far greater than money. However, if one is not prudent in managing their monetary affairs it is unlikely that they would be allowed to oversee processes relating to greater riches. Being faithful in a little thing like managing money illustrates that the individual is ready to oversee more important matters or “true riches.” The consensus is that “true riches” equates to the spiritual blessings of future service in God’s eternal kingdom (Lk 16:11).⁵

Modern Language

The research will now discuss modern language and its impact on perceptions of wealth. It will analyze data that has been compiled for review. This section will discuss Spurgeon’s thoughts on Bible exposition and translation as they relate to biblical wealth. The research will interact with innovations of the Victorian era and deliberate on Spurgeon’s personal approach to Bible interpretation. Spurgeon highlighted the need for responsibility and faithfulness in connection with the attainment of biblical increase.⁶ Consequently, this section will discuss modern language and its impact on perceptions pertaining to spiritual and earthly blessings. It

⁴ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 03: 1857* (Ontario: Devoted Publishing, 2017), 319, Kindle.

⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke Volume 2: 9:51-24:53*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 1335–1336.

⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 25.

will analyze data that has been compiled for review. It will examine nuances within existing languages that raise important questions.⁷

For instance, believers are commanded to abstain from “filthiness” in Ephesians 5:4 (Eph 5:4). However, what is “filthiness” (Eph 5:4)? Who determines what is filthy or obscene and what is proper? Modern culture may view something that is deemed to be an abomination in the text as proper and fitting. Yet, Christians are called to avoid these obscenities in light of God’s word. Cultural differences recognized in this section will become easily discernible once interpreters become aware of them. However, if left unattended cultural presuppositions connecting with language, race, or philosophical misgivings may lead interpreters to misunderstand Scripture relating to wealth.⁸

Spurgeon lectured on the topics of understanding and enlightenment when preaching on the riches of heaven described in the text found in Ephesians 1:18-19. The passage reads, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Eph 1:18-19). The writer goes on to name the source of this power in Ephesians 1:20 when the writer states, “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph 1:20). Spurgeon believed the believer’s power was derived from Christ. As such, he believed that Christ should be the primary object of one’s affection and worship. He suggested that even a mere beloved keepsake could be an obscenity.

⁷ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 3.

⁸ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 3.

He said, "It may have little intrinsic value, but if you have long set your heart upon it, how dear it becomes to you."⁹

Spurgeon lived and preached during the Victorian era. This was a time of industrial and technological expansion. Many advancements were made that revolutionized industry. Horse-drawn transportation was replaced by the engine, light bulbs took the place of oil lamps, and sewing machines made hand stitching a thing of the past. Historical documentation advanced due to the development of photography.¹⁰

Railway systems were being expanded throughout the country. New transportation systems injected life into the nation's industrial complex. International travel became more available as steamships were introduced. Charles Darwin's publication of, *On the Origin of the Species* became the most controversial scientific speculation of the day. While the publication's implications were slow to become recognized in broader circles, heated debates were beginning to emerge. This literature certainly added to the growing problem of religious doubt that was beginning to take hold in the West during the latter part of the 19th century.¹¹

There are a number of people that may view something that is deemed to be an abomination in the text as proper and fitting. Yet, Christians are called to avoid these obscenities in light of God's word. Cultural differences recognized in this section will become easily discernible once interpreters become aware of them. However, if left unattended cultural

⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 25.

¹⁰ Alex J. DiPrima, "An Eagerness to be Up and Doing: The Evangelical Activism of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 75-76, In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feagerness-be-up-doing-evangelical-activism%2Fdocview%2F2465980128%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹¹ DiPrima, 75-76.

presuppositions connecting with language, race, or philosophical misgivings may lead interpreters to misunderstand Scripture relating to wealth.¹²

Spurgeon embodied the very essence of Victorian evangelism. He vehemently pronounced the Bible as the inspired and authoritative word of God throughout his ministry. He labored tirelessly studying, preaching, writing, and evangelizing. Christian service and religious activism were his passion. Spurgeon was keen to speak out on topics involving controversy pertaining to Bible interpretation and translation.¹³

Spurgeon was noted to have been a representative of 19th-century Protestant orthodoxy. A number of Puritan assumptions were adopted by Spurgeon. These assumptions were believed to have had a major impact on his approach to the interpretation of Scripture. Among those assumptions were that the Bible is inspired and authoritative, God is sovereign in creation, the Holy Spirit is active in the lives of believers, and the saints of God will persevere until Christ's return. These beliefs taken as a whole became part of Spurgeon's worldview and moved reliably, intentionally, and coherently across his entire hermeneutical method.¹⁴

It would be difficult to understand Spurgeon's heart toward the less fortunate without having a concise understanding of his approach to interpreting the text. He was a steadfast believer that both translation and interpretation should be faithful to the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. Spurgeon lived during a time when the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible dominated the English-speaking world. However, it was apparent that he was aware of

¹² Richards and O'Brien, chap. 2-3.

¹³ DiPrima, 82.

¹⁴ Robert Matthew Perry, "Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 58.

variant readings in the New Testament manuscripts. It has been suggested that Spurgeon's view of textual criticism was one that prevailed in the late 19th century.¹⁵

While Charles Spurgeon may have preferred the King James Version of the Bible, he did not advocate for a strict adherence to that rendering. On a number of occasions, he referenced textual variants in his sermons. Perhaps, his most notable departure from the King James Version of the Bible occurred in December of 1886 when he preached a sermon from the Revised Version of the Bible elaborating on the text found in the "First Epistle of John." In this sermon Spurgeon compared the two versions. While he found the King James Version of the Bible to be superior overall, he said of the Revised Version of the Bible, "It exhibits here and there special beauties, and has, no doubt, in certain places brought into notice words of sacred Scripture which had fallen out: we have a notable instance in my present text."¹⁶

His autobiography contained a paper that boldly proclaim his thoughts toward Romanism. He suggested that "the three most powerful and most apparent means used by Rome: to retain her power over the minds of her votaries are Ignorance, Superstition, and Persecution." In speaking of a charge against the church of Rome, Spurgeon explain that "The church which withholds the Bible from its members or takes away from them the genuine word of God, is guilty of bringing the most dreadful famine upon the minds of men and will be in a great measure guilty of their blood." He noted "We all know how violently the Pope was enraged against Wycliff for his undertaking to translate the Scriptures into English." Spurgeon proclaimed that, "Had the Pope had his will, the translator and his vision of the Bible would have

¹⁵ Perry, 59.

¹⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 54 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

been burned in the same fire; indeed, it was no uncommon thing, previous to Luther's Reformation, to burn heretics with the Bible about their necks."¹⁷

He believed that people that were engulfed by sin and extravagancies were often those who oppressed the poor and used their power to exploit the impoverished. While communicating to his church members about the poor, Spurgeon proclaimed that their earnings were "far below their value to their masters." He believed that the poor were merely steppingstones for the affluent. Yet, he encouraged the poor to confess their sins and repent along with the wealthy. He suggested that their misgivings were no less worthy of conviction. Spurgeon contended the multitudes worked diligently only when they were being monitored closely. He said, "Were men better workmen, their masters would be better."¹⁸

In the book titled, *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman discuss the problem of reading and interpreting texts in light of cultural presupposition. They describe the main goal of the study which is to produce a book that will teach Christians how to "get the theological lay of the cultural land." The authors explain that this process is not so much a matter of spying out new land, but rather becoming conscious of the land that one already occupies. Christian workers are encouraged to understand the biblical text as well as their cultural context. The writers claim that it is important for individuals to become bilingual in some sense of the word. They go on to

¹⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, Joseph Harrald, and Susannah Thompson Spurgeon, *C.H. Spurgeon's Autobiography* *C.H. Spurgeon's Autobiography: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1899), chap. 8, Kindle.

¹⁸ Tom J. Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth - the Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), chap. 10, Kindle.

suggest that if theology is the ministry of the world to all people, then it should follow that Bible expositors must know something about the culture that is being ministered to.¹⁹

Spurgeon did not leave off preaching God's word or sharing the renewing power of the gospel. It made no difference to him whether he was inside or outside the church. His work ethic toward hermeneutics served to prevent poor interpretation habits based on tradition or culture. Taking hold of such a foundation may aid the church in avoiding the interpretive problems that plague many Westerners in the modern age. Spurgeon's fervent attitude towards proper contextualization helped to keep his own denomination in England from falling prey to some of the hermeneutical pitfalls created as a result of the higher critical method and the welcoming of Darwinism and natural selection.²⁰

Much can be said about Spurgeon's thirst for knowledge and his desire to rightly interpret the word of truth. His words were converted into action which led him to become one of the premier theologians of his age.²¹ He believed that the wealth and wisdom that God provides for His saints was to be wisely utilized. Spurgeon said, "A material may be almost valueless that first, but when a wise man has exercised his thought and skill upon it, the value may be enhanced a thousandfold." He believed that enlightenment was conducive to leading a rich and productive life. He proclaimed, "everything depends upon the opened eye. The scene may be fair and the light may be bright, but if the site is gone, all is in vain."²²

¹⁹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman. *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*. 1st ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), Introduction, Kindle.

²⁰ Perry, 115.

²¹ Perry, 187.

²² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 25.

Spirit-Filled Interpretation

This section will discuss ideas related to how one might achieve a spirit filled interpretation of wealth and increase. It will make interpreters aware of spiritual issues that may cause readers difficulty when discerning matters involving wealth. This section will continue to expand on Spurgeon's writings and theology. It will elaborate on the topics of Marxism and Bible selection. Spurgeon emphasized the need for effective communication and godly living in connection with the acquisition of spiritual increase. This section deals with these issues. Believers are encouraged to consider what is right when it comes to communicating with others.²³

The Bible clearly connects one's behavior with their spiritual condition. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul declared that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. In Ephesians 4:29 Christians are warned to be careful about not becoming engaged in filthy conversation.²⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:33 teaches believers that poor communication corrupts good manners. Believers are constantly being bombarded by communication from all directions. As previously mentioned, modern learners may receive news and information from a number of sources such as, personal communication, television, radio, newspapers, the internet, computer databases or cell phone apps. This means that there is need for demonstrating care when approaching the matter of gospel communication. As such, this section will relate the importance of Spirit-filled communication and righteous living in relation to a spirit filled interpretation of wealth and increase.²⁵

²³ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 4.

²⁴ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 4.

²⁵ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 4.

While discussing interpretation it may be prudent at this juncture to discuss Spurgeon's theological consistency and variation. Having carefully examined Spurgeon's sermons on the topic of wealth it appears that his Christology remained consistent throughout with very little degree of variation. It was Spurgeon's own position that his theology endured and was primarily unchanged throughout the progression of his ministry. He stated, "I was happy to find that I had no occasion to alter any of the doctrines which I preached in those early days of my ministry." Robert Schindler and F. B. Meyer agreed with Spurgeon's assertion.²⁶

Robert Schindler said, "No change has come over Spurgeon, either as to his sentiments and the faith he is firmly held." Recent scholars such as Christian George and Eugene Hopkins have also acknowledged Spurgeon's doctrinal uniformity. George confirmed the consistency of his Christology by comparing the ontological, functional and exegetical similarities and differences in three sermons that Spurgeon preached on the text found in Hebrews 13:8 which states, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8). The sermons were preached during the span of time between 1858 and 1888. They were found to be similar soteriologically. They each exhibited comparable doxological dimensions stemming from Spurgeon's teachings that Christ's immutability brought about worship, adulation, and delight.²⁷

In addition, an eschatological dimension was evident in that it is apparent that Christ agrees to finish the work of salvation that He initiated before the world was created. George concluded that the three sermons were similar Christologically in their ontological, functional,

²⁶ Christian T. George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom 2011), 253-257, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/jesus-christ-prince-pilgrims-critical-analysis/docview/1512396084/se-2>.

²⁷ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 253-257.

and exegetical emphasis. Ontologically they were similar in that Spurgeon declares, “Christ’s person never changes” and that He is the “complete revelation.” Functionally they are similar in that Spurgeon sets aside sections of his sermons to discuss Christ’s work as a prophet, priest, and king. Exegetical he concludes that the sermons are similar in that Spurgeon references both Old Testament and New Testament passages.²⁸

While Spurgeon’s ontological, functional, and exegetical Christology is apparent in the examples presented by George, the weight given to each of them is not distributed equally throughout the sermons analyzed. Spurgeon had this to say in defense of his theological stance, “Theology hath nothing new in it except that which is false. The preaching of Paul must be the preaching of the minister to-day. There is no advancement here. We may advance in our knowledge of it; but it stands the same, for this good reason, that it is perfect, and perfection cannot be any better.”²⁹

This paper seeks to follow a similar pattern and will analyze three additional sermons preached by Spurgeon during the span of time from 1851 to 1888. This will be accomplished by examining the ontological, functional, and exegetical Christological similarities and differences found in three sermons that Spurgeon preached pertaining to wealth on the text from 2 Corinthians 8:9. This text states, “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor

²⁸ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 253-257.

²⁹ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 253-257.

8:9). Spurgeon preached his first sermon, “Condescending Love of Jesus” in 1851. This sermon is part of a newly discovered collection of lost sermons.³⁰

The second sermon that will be analyzed titled, “Christ’s Poverty, our Riches” was preached in 1880.³¹ The third sermon titled, “Poverty and Riches” was preached in 1888.³² This sermon was preached just before his death the same year.³³ The three sermons are perceived to be consistent in doctrinal similarity. Soteriologically, the first sermon demonstrates Spurgeon’s belief in the security of salvation that comes from and awareness of Christ’s immutability.³⁴

To illustrate Spurgeon declares, “that ye through his poverty may be rich” (2 Cor 8:9). He goes on to proclaim that Christ gives us “all things richly to enjoy” (1 Tm 6:17). He points his audience to the riches that will be received in “heaven.” Additionally, he states that there is, “Deliverance from sin” and “Pardon.”³⁵ In the second sermon, he declares that Christ’s guarantees the certainty of God’s saving accomplishments through his birth, death, resurrection, word, power, natural estate, and grace.³⁶ In the third sermon, Spurgeon explains that Christ’s saving work provides security in that Christ was forsaken “so that he might never have to forsake us.” Spurgeon said, “because Jesus was condemned, the believer never can be.”³⁷

He professed the believer’s security again by stating, “God hath absolved thee, O believer, from all thy guilt, and thou art absolved for ever!” He proclaimed, that because of the

³⁰ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

³¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

³² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

³³ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 254.

³⁴ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

³⁵ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

³⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

³⁷ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

atoning work of Christ that the believer's "stripes have fallen" upon Christ our substitute. He declared that not even the slightest bit of God's wrath would fall upon those who put their faith in Christ. He said, "Thy warfare is accomplished, bind iniquity is pardoned, four, in the person of thy great Substitute, thou hast received of the Lord's hand double for all thy sins, and thou art forever clear." He went on to say, "Oh, how secure thou art!"³⁸

The sermons present similar doxological dimensions and that Christ's immutability results in worship, jubilation, and bliss. The eschatological framework is present in each of the sermons in that Spurgeon preached that Christ with His enduring power is committed to finishing the work of salvation that He commenced prior to the world's inception. The three sermons are ontologically, functionally, and exegetically similar in their Christology demonstrating Spurgeon's theological uniformity. In 1851, in Spurgeon's second sermon an ontological element is present in the sermon in that Christ is that "glorious person" that "became poor" and "died a criminal." Spurgeon stated, "In the act of putting on humanity" Christ "was poor all his lifetime."³⁹

In the same sermon a functional Christological dimension emerges in that Spurgeon describes Christ's intercession as He advocates on behalf of the believer. An exegetical element is evident in Spurgeon's discussion of Christ's authority, power, felicity, crown, wealth, angels, and heavenly residents. He references these things in order to support his arguments.⁴⁰ In 1880, Spurgeon's sermon reveals an ontological dimension and that he describes Christ as an "Everlasting spring" with "never-withering flowers." This description is nuanced in that he

³⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

³⁹ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

⁴⁰ Spurgeon and George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I*.

describes Christ as the “omnipotent” and “eternal” God that through His incarnation “veiled himself in human flesh” as a “babe hanging in weakness.”⁴¹

Spurgeon’s second sermon exhibited a functional Christological emphasis in that he devoted a large portion of his sermon to deliberating on the enrichment and enjoyment gained by the believer through Christ’s incarnation and poverty. In addition, there were a number of New Testament and Old Testament references that highlighted an exegetical Christological emphasis. There are also Ontological Christological references that are evident. Spurgeon said when speaking of Paul’s encouragement toward the church, “Hence you will find that the apostle Paul, when he wants to urge the saints in Corinth to liberality, does not tell them what they are bound to do according to the requirements of the law, for they are not under the law; but he uses arguments suitable for men who have come under the blessed sovereignty of divine grace.” Spurgeon went on to say, “You know how much our Lord Jesus Christ loved by knowing how much he gave. He gave himself for us because he loved us with all the force and energy of his nature.”⁴²

In the third sermon, preached in 1888, ontological Christological references are evident. Spurgeon said, “You have no doubt whatever that there was a wondrous graciousness in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.” He went on to say, “Grace is an attribute of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost; and you know that there was infinite grace, favor, compassion, in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it was that, and not your merits, which constrained him to lay aside the royalties of heaven, and endure the sufferings and the griefs of our mortality.” Spurgeon’s sermon further revealed an ontological emphasis through his doctrine of Christ’s

⁴¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

⁴² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

immutability in that Christ's grace is an "ever flowing fountain." He describes Christ as "infinite" and "omnipresent."⁴³

Spurgeon elaborated on Christ's accomplishments on the cross when discussing his work as savior. He unveiled this hope by stating, "because Christ died, we live; because he died, we shall never die." He went on to say, "Christ being raised from the dead died no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Christ's salvation within the three sermons examined remains unchanged.⁴⁴

In this last sermon, as in the two previous sermons, Spurgeon provided exegetical emphasis by reflecting on the scriptural accounts of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. He expounded on the doctrines of Christ and Christ's immutable determination within the context of Scripture to, "make us eternally rich." Spurgeon's ontological, functional, and exegetical Christologies are deemed to be consistent throughout these three sermons. However, while there is consistency throughout, the emphasis on each is not equal in supply or delivery.⁴⁵ Scholars such as Kim-Hong Hazra and Christian George believed that Spurgeon's suffering as well as the controversy that surrounded his theological views played a role in the systematic and dogmatic presentation of Spurgeon's Christology within his sermons.⁴⁶

As the research dives deeper into discussion involving Bible interpretation the discourse moves into another topic that is much debated. That is the subject that deals with everything from Bible choice to word choice. Oftentimes people talk about their choice of Bible in terms of

⁴³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

⁴⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

⁴⁵ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 40.

⁴⁶ George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," 253-257.

what is most pleasing or works best for them. Other areas of interpretations work much the same. Extremists insist that only certain Bibles, terms, or words are fitting. However, one might rightly expect to hear an individual proclaim that their choice in these matters stems from what they believe is most pleasing to God.⁴⁷

For Spurgeon, the Bible was the very word of God brought about to pierce the heart of humanity and draw one's soul into the very presence of God. As such, he believed God's word was the unadulterated truth bringing the redemptive knowledge of Christ to all of mankind. This was the very cornerstone of Spurgeon's theology and the platform upon which he built his ministry. Spurgeon's ministry was based on the belief that the Bible is the impregnable, inspired, and living word. He preached confidently knowing in his heart that the Bible's unfailing purity and life-changing power would be on full display even in the midst of his human weakness. He believed that "when the Bible speaks God speaks."⁴⁸

Interpreting the Bible is a difficult procedure. For the interpreter expositional variations present unique problems that must be overcome. There are biblical requirements for accuracy in interpretation. In 2 Timothy 2:15-18 Paul deals with this problem. His attention here is focused on Timothy. From this point on to the end of the chapter Paul is concentrating his focus on how Timothy is supposed to perform as a leader in the church.⁴⁹

Paul explained to Timothy that church ministers should build up the church by presenting the truth of God plainly and honestly. They do not allow their imagination to lead them when expounding the Bible. Foolish and prideful speculation were the problems that caused

⁴⁷ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 4.

⁴⁸ Steven J. Lawson, *The Gospel Focus of Charles Spurgeon* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2012), chap. 20, Kindle

⁴⁹ Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1995), 206.

Hymenaeus and Philetus to stray from the faith. They rejected the truth pertaining to the future resurrection of the body. Apparently, they insisted that the resurrection was merely a spiritual awakening that took place at the time of conversion.⁵⁰

False teaching has no effect on God's firm foundation of truth. God protects and provides for those who trust in Him. However, in order to receive this protection and provision the Bible interpreter must in turn veer from any misconduct.⁵¹ Paul exhorts Timothy to absorb God's precepts and reject human philosophy. He encouraged his readers to avoid getting involved in foolish philosophical discussions as they may lead to great detriment. Timothy was taught that he should learn to correctly interpret God's word. The term "rightly dividing" suggests that the Bible expositor is encouraged to "carefully explain" or "cut straight" (2 Tm 2:15). Paul may have thought of his tent making experience when advising Timothy. There, each cut on the material impacted the strength of the finished tent.⁵²

Spurgeon suggested that human philosophy loses sight of the point of origin from which all things flow. He stated, "All that men have they must trace to the great fountain, the giver of all good. Have you talents? They were given you by the God of talents." He went on to say, "though our vineyards bear never so much fruit, yet the vineyard belongs to the King, and though we are to take the hundred for our hire, yet King Solomon must have his thousands. All the honor of our ability and the use of it must be unto God, because he is the giver." Spurgeon

⁵⁰ Donald C. Fleming, *Concise Bible Commentary*, Also Published Under Title: The AMG Concise Bible Commentary. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1994, c1988), 554.

⁵¹ Fleming, 554.

⁵² H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 741.

warned that in the end the believer will be accountable for how God's provision is allocated. He said, "You must be held personally responsible for your own wealth, for your own ability."⁵³

Spurgeon also believed that the word of God was something to be clothed in. He once said when talking about reading the Bible, "everywhere I find God speaking; it is God's voice not man's." Spurgeon believed that he could hear the glorious voice of God through his divine word. He longed to wrap himself in its warmth as though he was settling in for a long winter's slumber. It was the truth of God's word that Spurgeon labored so tirelessly to communicate.⁵⁴

Spurgeon warned that the way of humanity was broken. He alleged that from Adam's failures man was fallen, but he also suggested that believers could trust in the divine inherencies of the Scriptures, recognizing the absolute virtue and unfaltering certainty of the text. In declaring the Bible's wealth, he proclaimed, "This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz, or any earthly substance. This is a star without spec; a sun without blot; a light without darkness; a moon without its paleness; a glory without dimness."⁵⁵ Spurgeon suggested that the doctrines of the Bible were more than just a set of principles to be looked upon and admired. He advised that they should be lived out and "personally experienced."⁵⁶

When considering Spurgeon's approach to wealth in light of a spirit-filled interpretation, one may well be remiss not to look at how he approached the call for collecting individual wealth like we see in the book of Acts. There are some that claim that the early chapters in the

⁵³ C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit, Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by C.H. Spurgeon*, vol. 4 (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), Kindle.

⁵⁴ Lawson, chap. 24.

⁵⁵ Lawson, chap. 20.

⁵⁶ William Albert, "'When the Wind Blows Cold': The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 188-189, Boyce Digital Repository, https://digital.library.smts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5059/Albert_smts_0207D_10302.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

book of Acts teaches socialism or communism. In Acts 2:44-45 the Bible says, “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, And parted them to all men, as every man had need” (Acts 2:44-45). In Acts 4:32-34 the Bible discusses this matter in more detail. In Acts 4:32-33 the writer relates, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:32-33). The writer goes on in Acts 4:34-35 to relate, “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or homes sold them, and bought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need” (Acts 4:34-35).

At first glance it might appear that the text is describing some form of socialism. However, a closer look at the text reveals that early believers did not sell all of their property. When considering the many statements that might lead one to believe that the early church was engaging in some form of socialism, it is important to remember that believers continued to live and meet in their own homes. Therefore, when considering the context, it can be presumed that there were Christians that sold all of their property as well as those that were still maintaining personal property.⁵⁷ Spurgeon understood this well. As such, his teachings reflect the truth of the text. He said of the Scripture found in Acts 2:41-45, “What a notable instance this was of the power of divine grace! We should not usually suppose that the Jewish race would be given to any excess of making common property; but where grace came in the first flush of its dawn, see to what prodigies in liberality it excited the early believers.” Spurgeon suggested that the world

⁵⁷ Blomberg, chap. 5.

could use more of this kind of Christian care. He proclaimed, “Would that we had more of this generous spirit nowadays!”⁵⁸

Spurgeon advised that the presence of the Holy Spirit caused the early church to overflow with “striking generosity.” He acknowledged that there were some believers that poured all that they possessed into a common fund. Yet, he explained that it was the “Spirit of God” operating “powerfully” within the newly established Christian church that brought about such kindness. Spurgeon said, “There will be no lack of money when there is no lack of grace. When the Spirit of God comes, those who have substance yielded to their Lord! And those who have but little grow rich by giving of that little! And those who are already rich become happy by consecrating what they have!” Spurgeon believed that where there is a lack of joyful giving there is a lack of grace. He said, “There is no need to rattle the box when the rushing mighty wind is heard and the fire is dissolving all hearts in love!”⁵⁹

Spurgeon considered the abounding wants in connection with wealth when preaching on the text found in James 4:2-3 which states, “Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (Jas 4:2-3). Spurgeon hoped that these words would be made profitable to those around him through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. He said, “Man is a creature abounding in wants, and ever restless, and hence his heart is full of desires.” He suggested that “holy desires” would be provided if believers would go about

⁵⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible: Spurgeon's Bible Commentaries* (New York, NY: Amazon, 2015), Acts 2:41-45. Kindle.

⁵⁹ C. H. Spurgeon and Daniel Partner, *The Essential Works of Charles Spurgeon: Selected Books, Sermons, and Other Writings ...* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Pub., 2009), Acts 2:46, Kindle.

doing things the right way. Spurgeon encouraged others to heed the Savior's words, "seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."⁶⁰

He advised that Solomon and his interaction with God should be considered. He said, "God gave Solomon wealth, and fame into the bargain." Solomon sought wisdom. His heart's desire was to seek the kingdom of God and to have a righteous understanding in hopes that he might properly lead God's people. From the wisdom God provided Solomon he concluded that earthly wealth, apart from being used to further God's kingdom, is vanity. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, "Let us here the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl 12:13-14). Spurgeon said of the man whose heart is full of earthly desires, "He steers for which he thinks to be his port, but as yet he is tossed about on the waves. One of these days he hopes to find his heart's delight, and he continues to desire with more or less expectancy."⁶¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research presented in this section explores the problem of misinterpretation as it pertains to God's holy word. It focuses specifically on information pertaining to issues surrounding the Bible text, the translation of Scripture, and the interpretation of Scripture. The research delves into a number of issues connecting to the main topics that pertain to a clear communication of what biblical wealth is and how it is perceived by various groups within modern culture. The review offers facts that may allow readers to gain insight toward understanding how the Scripture might be better understood. The goal is to provide a firm

⁶⁰ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 28.

⁶¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 28.

foundation with which to work from for those that are looking to avoid cultural stumbling blocks in the modern era.

This chapter highlights some pertinent information presented in relevant sources. The work involved in discerning the truth about wealth may be accomplished through an exercise in “reading” cultural theology. The overall purpose of this chapter is to help people gain a Christian understanding of biblical wealth from analyzing the information taken from those things that are happening in our part of the world in the present day, why it is happening, and how people should respond. Understanding the many facets of Western culture and comparing those to alternative cultures may enable interpreters to better perceive the many presuppositions involved. This in turn may well allow for an enhanced sensitivity as it relates to the way biblical wealth is acknowledged and received.⁶²

⁶² Vanhoozer, Anderson, and Sleasman, Introduction.

Interpretation and Behavior

Introduction

This section will serve as an introduction to the chapter. The chapter will examine Spurgeon's approach to the topics of society and the social gospel in connection with biblical wealth. It will consider Spurgeon's thoughts on socialism as it existed during the Victorian era. Spurgeon emphasized the need for enlightenment and righteous behavior in relation to spiritual blessings. Therefore, the chapter will delve into social engagement issues in modern society and their impact on contemporary perceptions of wealth.¹

It will interact with the topics of relationships and behavior. Readers will be introduced to cultural issues that are less apparent than others. These are outlying issues that are much less obvious. As readers are introduced to the problem and begin to know what to look for, they may be alarmed by the degree of misunderstanding that may transpire. The study will examine cultural issues impacting specific groups within modern society. It will seek to identify the impact that cultural deviations have on contemporary perceptions of wealth.²

Spurgeon promoted spiritual growth throughout the year by focusing on God's covenant in sermons and devotions. He once said, "The covenant is a treasury of wealth, a granary of food, a fountain of life, a storehouse of salvation, a charter of peace, and a heaven of joy." He understood that true wealth could be found in the promises of God. His sermons often engaged the covenantal display of salvation as a component of his assertions. According to Spurgeon, the Bible text is a composition of covenant writings, and as such, all of its teachings are certain.³

¹ Tom J. Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth - the Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), chap. 5, Kindle.

² E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), chap. 4-6, Kindle.

³ Nettles, chap. 5.

The Scriptures makes it clear that God’s word is a tool that may be utilized to attain spiritual wealth. 1 Timothy 6:17-18 provides instruction. The writer proclaims, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (1 Tm 6:17-18). The writer goes on to describe the results of having a godly attitude toward the used of one’s earthly talents in 1 Timothy 6:19-21. In this passage the Bible proclaims, “Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen” (1 Tm 6:19-21).⁴

In his commentary on 1 Timothy 6:17-21, Spurgeon underlines the significance of using riches for good deeds and storing up treasures in heaven. He explains, "As the alchemist was said to transmute brass and copper into gold (though he did no such thing), so there is a real alchemy which can sublime gold and silver into everlasting treasure." Spurgeon urges readers to invest their wealth in the Lord's work and aiding the less fortunate, rather than squandering it on earthly pleasures. He reminds us that our financial decisions should be evaluated from an eternal perspective, as we accumulate treasures in heaven that are impervious to decay or theft.⁵

Spurgeon discussed spiritual wealth when preaching from the text found in Romans 8:17 which states, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:17).

⁴ Daniel C. Arichea and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to Timothy and to Titus*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1995), 160–161.

⁵ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament: Spurgeon Commentary Series* (New Zealand: Titus Books, 2014), 1 Tm 6:17-21, Kindle.

He explained that earthly wealth was limited and often elicited certain behaviors. Spurgeon declared, “There are some great lords who find that they can accumulate wealth enough to set up two or three sets of families and they do so. But in other families, there generally are some of the children who must remain a lien in order that the firstborn son may grow fat.” Spurgeon affirmed that these same behaviors do not apply to God’s provision. He stated, “It can never be said, in relation to human heirs, that each heir has all the inheritance, yet no one else has any less than all.”⁶

While writing a series of admonitions to Timothy, Paul included a section pertaining to those who were wealthy. He previously addressed those who aspired to become wealthy in 1 Timothy 6:6-10. While he did not completely condemn the acquisition of earthly riches, he did reveal the additional temptation that wealth places on the believer. Paul was concerned about the attitude that Christians take toward acquiring and using wealth. As such, he contrasted how one might properly or improperly utilize their earthly wealth.⁷

An improper response encompasses a “haughty” or arrogant attitude. This would entail making one’s wealth the center or “hope” of one’s life. While deterring this attitude, Paul describes the fleeting and uncertain nature of wealth. By using the word “uncertain” Paul makes it clear that one cannot be certain that their riches will continue to be available in the future. The proper response is to trust in the promises of God. Paul suggests that Christians should not take on an attitude of pride but rather use their earthly riches within the construct of God’s perfect will.⁸

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 51 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

⁷ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, vol. 34, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 175–176.

⁸ Lea and Griffin, 175–176.

In his sermon on 1 Timothy 6:12, Spurgeon emphasized the importance of prioritizing eternal life over trivial matters. He warned against the love of money and pursuing earthly wealth, which can lead to arrogance. Instead, Spurgeon encouraged Christians to trust in God's promises and use their wealth according to His perfect will. In his own words, Spurgeon said, "Brethren, you can go and interfere in all the controversies of the day if you like, but beware of the consequences. You can be a party politician if you like, or you can be a man of culture, loving speculation better than revelation, if you think fit; but, if you take my advice, you will do nothing of the sort, but 'lay hold on eternal life.'" Spurgeon urged Christians to focus on living a higher and eternal life in all aspects of society, with a focus on eternity rather than temporal concerns.⁹

Wealth and Cultural Relationships

This section will reflect on Spurgeon's thoughts on the topics of philosophy and personal identity as they relate to biblical wealth. It will connect with Spurgeon's lifestyle and personal approach to prosperity. It will also deal with the topics of interpretation, culture, servanthood, and various additional cultural orientations. Spurgeon underscored the need for cultural adaptation in connection with the furtherance of God's kingdom. He believed these were things that help to bring about spiritual blessings. As such, this section will discuss individualism, collectivism, shame, and honor. It will deliberate on cultural barriers such as race or ethnicity. This section will also deal with the cultural concept of time.¹⁰

⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 33.

¹⁰ Kevin Jerrod Williams, "Charles Spurgeon's Contribution to Preaching in the 21st Century" (PhD diss., Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, 2020), 59, <http://hdl.handle.net/1802/35706>.

Concepts such as individualism, collectivism, shame, and time may seem for many to be insignificant. However, these ideas may present significant interpretation barriers because of the enormity of the principles and beliefs that are represented by these concepts. Individuals often view these cultural obstacles as thoughts and behaviors that are universal. However, some non-Westerners often approach these matters in ways that are very different from a number of individuals in modern Western culture. These behaviors and approaches may be somewhat difficult to convey clearly and concisely. It is for this reason that a cultural misreading of Scripture may ensue.¹¹

The research will demonstrate how fear, guilt, and shame impact the worldview of cultures around the globe. It will explore the concepts of shame and honor and analyze how modern evangelists typically contextualize the gospel in shame-based cultures of the far East. It will compare and contrast how shame-based cultures differ from the guilt-based cultures of the West. The data will reflect on the perception of sin in shame-based cultures. Information will be analyzed so that readers may better understand the way fear of alienation may impact perceptions of wealth in these cultures.

The research will attempt to compare and contrast ways in which human identity in shame-based cultures relate to forgiveness and trust. It will provide an in depth look at what the Bible says about shame and honor. It will then discuss what Christ had to say about shame and honor and how these terms apply to the modern Christian. It will attempt to uncover instances when shame and honor are pictured in the Bible in a favorable light. It will demonstrate how the Christian is supposed to use shame and honor to glorify God.

¹¹ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 4-5.

Moreover, the research will illustrate how the believer may better relate biblical concepts connecting with shame and honor to others. It will provide some distinct advantages of using shame and honor to glorify God and in contrast it will present some problems that occur when people do not follow biblical teaching that relates to shame and honor. The Bible demonstrates that shame and honor are important functions for the believer and yet shame and honor are clearly perceived differently by Western and non-Western cultures. This paper will strive to bring understanding to individuals about contextual issues involving shame and honor and how they might impact the worldview of both Western and non-Western cultures. The research strives to demonstrate how the truth about biblical wealth may be conveyed in a way that is not only more meaningful but pleasing to God.

Spurgeon was constantly aware of cultural issues. While cultural critics were condemning places of worship for accepting tithes from the poor, Spurgeon responded humbly, ignoring the charges of corruption and greed. His living quarters and the way he dressed spoke volumes about his modesty and humility. He displayed both courtesy and compassion toward even the most impoverished members of his congregation. While his wealthy and distinguished colleagues donned elaborate robes, Spurgeon wore a dull matching outfit. He aspired to fit in with his church members and disregarded the lavish adorning of his peers. His understanding of culture and unique ability to develop harmony between himself and his congregation helped him to increase acceptance, cultivate unity, and gain admiration.¹²

Spurgeon taught about the honor of Christ's riches in connection with the chains that he throws off when it comes to his beloved brethren. He elaborated on this topic when preaching from the text found in Ephesians 3:8. This passage of Scripture states, "unto me, who have less

¹² Williams, 59.

than the least of all saints, is the grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8). He spoke about the substance of Christ’s humanity and the wealth of his very being. Spurgeon said, “Jesus our Lord, is also a man - made of the substance of his mother - bone of our bone. And here we may sing of the wealth of human love which is treasured up in him, and manifested to his brethren.”¹³

Spurgeon discussed the love of Christ in connection to wealth. He spoke of the Lord Jesus stating, “Because of the riches of His love He is not ashamed to call His redeemed one’s brethren. It is a wonderful subject, the wealth of pure manhood which dwelt in Jesus, for He both taught and spoke and acted as a man - with a richness of perfect manhood which never dwelt in any other Son of Man!” He described the infinite wealth preached by Paul. He said of Christ, “He was the true Adam - the sum of humanity’s best glory, made to have dominion over all the works of Jehovah’s hand. Thus, in two natures which make up His mysterious person, Son of Man, and son of God, there was a measureless wealth -and this Paul preached!” Spurgeon went on to say, “Calculate, if you can, the riches of that generous heart which detained him for years among a sinful and gainsaying generation!”¹⁴

Spurgeon considered it vital for those engaging in ministry to familiarize themselves with the people in their communities. He believed that in order to reach people for the cause of Christ it was necessary to understand their unique needs. Spurgeon encouraged his students to carefully examine the living conditions of those that were impoverished in their communities in hopes of devising a plan to address both the suffering and the causes of that suffering. He knew that if they became more engaged, that a number of his students would likely be surprised by what they

¹³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 20.

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 20.

would ultimately discover. In turn, they would become more devoted in their quest to address the needs of the less fortunate. Spurgeon once said to his students, “Go if you can with the city missionary into the poorest quarter, and you will see that which will astonish you, and the actual site of the disease will make you eager to reveal the remedy.” He was alert to the fact the even the small pockets of culture nearby were worthy of investigation.¹⁵

Charles Spurgeon was also very much concerned about connecting with people. He was quite sensitive to cultural behaviors. He detested the respectabilities connected with gentlemanly social status. He once said that believers must not be, “the lackeys of those who affect gentility or boast refinement.” He even commented on the lack of authenticity in the pulpit. He suggested that perhaps as few as one out of a dozen, “in the pulpit talks like a man.” The regal manners that were all but required in certain circles of society were objectionable to Spurgeon. He believed that sophistication or elegance should not replace one’s “manliness.” For him, communication was not about a claim to wealth or social status it was a matter of effective Christian ministry.¹⁶

Ethics and Morality

This section will discuss the impact of ethics and morality on how individuals perceive wealth in the modern era. It will reflect on Spurgeon’s approach to outreach, giving, and discrimination in connection with biblical wealth. It will analyze Spurgeon’s personal approach to connecting with others. It will interact with Spurgeon’s writings and the topics of charity,

¹⁵ Alex J. DiPrima, "An Eagerness to be Up and Doing: The Evangelical Activism of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 251, In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feagerness-be-up-doing-evangelical-activism%2Fdocview%2F2465980128%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹⁶ David W. Bebbington, "Spurgeon and the Common Man," *Baptist Review of Theology* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 63-75, https://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/brt/05-1_063.pdf.

distributionism, the Christian socialist movement, and racism. It relates some of the intricacies of wealth and its interpretation along with presenting some of Spurgeon's most notable critics.¹⁷

The research discusses textual criticism and the downgrade controversy in connection with the topic of biblical wealth. Spurgeon emphasized the need for an individual approach to affecting social change. He believed that sharing the gospel presented people with the greatest hope of impacting the world socially and politically. He suggested that sharing the gospel was essential to the process of bringing about spiritual increase. Accordingly, this section will discuss the impact of ethics and morality on how individuals perceive wealth.¹⁸

It will discuss matters related to wisdom and opportunity. The Bible presents many promises that are connected with commands or rules. Nevertheless, as Christians we are often doubtful about some of the biblical promises presented in the text. For many people, these promises may appear to be too good to be true.¹⁹

In this section readers will dive deep into cultural thought to consider essential underlying human values. Cultural differences are often difficult to discern. Moreover, cultural values are constantly changing. This part of the study will relate God's unchanging values and compare his value system with that of various systems impacting groups within modern culture. In Western culture one's value system is often based on individualism rather than collectivism. Therefore, a moral code for most Westerners is likely based on how one's actions impact the individual.²⁰

¹⁷ Richards and OBrien, chap. 1-5, Kindle.

¹⁸ DiPrima, 169-170.

¹⁹ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1-5.

²⁰ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1-5.

In more collective cultures their value system is based on how their actions impact the family or community. Individuals in Western culture may make decisions based on guilt, whereas in non-Western cultures decisions involving virtue might more likely be based on shame. This section will consider how misunderstandings may occur based on diverse cultural value systems. It will consider cultural differences that on the onset may seem vague or inconsequential. However, it is the unconscious thought or decision-making process that is often the most influential as it relates to interpretation.²¹

Spurgeon suggested that the responsibility to educate the outside world was not merely an individual directive but one that encompassed the church body cooperatively. Rather than focusing merely on the wealth or finances of the church, Spurgeon engaged the church in a fruitful evangelistic ministry planting nearly 200 churches and establishing more than 20 local missions. In addition, he established a viable educational institution, a flourishing Evangelical Association, and instituted 10 community Bible classes. Within the tabernacle Spurgeon oversaw an extensive network of Sunday school classes educating over 1400 children on a weekly basis. He once said, “I venture to say that as the salvation of men depended upon Christ, so, in another sense, the salvation of men at this hour depends upon the church of God.” Spurgeon stressed the importance that church members must individually embrace the imperative to spread the truth of God’s word.²²

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²¹ Richards and O’Brien, chap. 1-5.

²² DiPrima, 169-170.

shame. This section will consider how misunderstandings may occur based on different cultural value systems. It will consider cultural differences that on the onset may seem vague or inconsequential. However, it is the unconscious thought or decision-making process that is often the most influential as it relates to interpretation.²³

Christian conversions in shame-based cultures such as Asia present a problem for many Christian workers. In the West independence is a character trait that holds considerable value. However, in the shame-based cultures of the East independence is not a character trait that is very highly regarded. In the shame-based cultures of the East the understanding of sin is typically prone to distortion. One type of distortion is moralism which is characterized by a strict moral standard that is perceived as a way of avoiding shame. Some cultures choose to minimalize or attempt to diminish shame. Developing procedures and following rules have become a part of the regulating behavior in most evangelical churches. The rules and procedures illustrate clearly outlined operations that are put in place to help Christians avoid shame and sin. This promotes superficiality while categorizing various degrees of sin. External dysfunctions such as drinking and smoking are perceived as more sinful than internal failures such as greed and lust.²⁴

Spurgeon elaborated on the wealth of God's kingdom when preaching on the text in 1 Timothy 4:8 which proclaims, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tm 4:8). Spurgeon described the human barriers that may hinder one's ability to perceive God's promised riches. He said, "Man is like a prisoner

²³ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 1-5.

²⁴ Rafael Zaracho, "Communicating the gospel in a shame society," *Direction* 39, no. 2 (September 2010): 271-281, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001811921&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

shut up in a cell, a cell all dark and cheerless save that there is a window through which he can gaze upon a glorious landscape.” He went on to say, “Infidelity comes like a demon into the cell, and with desperate hands blocks up the window, that man may sit forever in the dark, or at best may have the boasted light of a farthing rush light called free-thinking.” He concluded, “strange as their mythology might be, and singular as were their speculations as to the regions of bliss and woe, even barbarous nations have had some glimmering light concerning a region beyond the river of death.”²⁵

Spurgeon suggested that the promise of earthly provision pertained to a contentment brought about by a resolute faith in God. He explained that he had attempted to demonstrate that “the promise” of this life including “beauty and excellence” is a result of the peace of mind that comes from a commitment to God. Spurgeon pointed out that “godliness did not ensure wealth, or health, or even a good name.” He asserted that even godly men are sometimes deprived of these things. Spurgeon contended that earthly wealth has no influence when it comes to eternal security. He stated this firmly in proclaiming, “And it is equally certain that no promise of the life that is to come is given to wealth.”²⁶

Spurgeon connected the common man with a sincere embrace of the victory at Golgotha. Furthermore, he saw the Bible text itself as true wealth. This may be seen in the way he treasured God’s word. For instance, there are the writings titled, *The Treasury of David*, *The Golden Key of Prayer*, and *The Golden Alphabet*. Spurgeon associated all of the text with Christ’s triumph at Calvary and the eternal treasures that await the believer in heaven. He might shift from a historical text about Israel’s military force to communication providing an application to the

²⁵ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 16.

²⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 16.

contemporary church, but eventually he would connect the object of his communication to Calvary. Whether it be the Old Testament, New Testament, historical narrative, or wisdom literature he maintained a connection to Christ and the riches of glory. He would often conclude his communication with an illustration depicting the crucified Christ ending with a powerful and energetic invitation. In his commentary on the Psalms in *The Treasury of David*, Spurgeon freely inserted Christ into his writings and liberally applied texts relating to Christ in the New Testament. Rather than being driven by wealth, Spurgeon was guided by his desire for sincere repentance and conversion.²⁷

In his ministry Spurgeon often encountered various forms of socialist or communist philosophy. During the late Victorian era competing wealth philosophies such as distributism and socialism became somewhat of a theological battleground within the realm of Christian biblical exegesis and interpretation. A number of popular religious entities took up varying degrees of Christian Socialism. Some scholars believe that the work of Christian socialists remains even to this day undervalued. The movement drove some proponents into exhausting efforts toward practical service to empower the working classes.²⁸

A number of Spurgeon's colleagues were involved in the Christian socialist movement. His contemporaries F. D. Maurice, J. M. Ludlow, and Charles Kingsley were all prominent figures within the effort. Later on, other celebrated church figures such as the Baptists John Clifford and the Methodist Hugh Price Hughes would embrace Christian Socialism as well. Spurgeon was critical of the movement itself, but there is little evidence to show that Spurgeon

²⁷ Kevin D. Zuber, "Tethered to the Cross: The Life and Preaching of C. H. Spurgeon," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 304–6, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIe8N210913001453&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²⁸ Philip N. Backstrom, "The Practical Side of Christian Socialism in Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 6, no. 4 (1963): 305–24, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3825857>.

interacted substantially with Christian socialist thought critically. He said, “great schemes of socialism have been tried and found wanting; let us look to regeneration by the son of God, and we shall not look in vain.” His individualist ethic drove his thoughts on social reform. Spurgeon believed that society would be reformed through individuals exuding Christlike servant hood rather than through socialist systematic changes.²⁹

While Spurgeon was hesitant about criticizing his colleagues, he was not reserved about criticizing socialist doctrines. His lack of communication on the topic makes it difficult to discern why he opposed Christian socialism to the extent he did. Perhaps, he did not like the idea of taking from the wealthy to give to the needy. In place of required compliance, he may have favored the biblical approach of cheerful giving. In any case, he was certainly opposed to the movement. When preaching on the text found in Matthew 18:12-13, he suggested that the advocates of Christian Socialism, “may soon have too much of it.” He told his parishioners, “I would not have you exchange the gold of the individual Christianity for the base metal of Christian Socialism.” Spurgeon believed that the idea of a national regeneration without a personal regeneration was not feasible. He suggested that it was like, “erecting a house without separate bricks.”³⁰

He rejected the idea of working in a way that would hinder one from working in detail. Instead, he inspired the church by saying, “Let us settle it in our minds that we cannot do better than obey the example of our Lord Jesus given us in the text and go after the one sheep which has gone astray.” Spurgeon suggested that it was the business of the church to hold to the method of individual conversion established by Christ. He believed that to take up socialist

²⁹ DiPrima, 138-139.

³⁰ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons on The New Testament: Book by Book Sermons by Spurgeon*, Kindle Edition. (Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2016), Mt 18:12-13, Kindle.

methods would cause the church to engage in unsound business which would eventually cause members to be “wrecked upon the rocks of hypocrisy.” Spurgeon explained that the gospel would run its freest course only after individual conviction, conversion, and sanctification was achieved.³¹

Spurgeon’s message regarding the widow, impoverished, fatherless, alienated, and displaced was clear. He stated, “we ought never to be moved by the supposed superiority of a race.” He suggested that disadvantaged people groups such as the degraded Africans or the Campbells of New Guinea ought to be sought after as much as any other people group. He said “They are men. That is enough.”³²

The most prominent work in recent years detailing the history of the evangelical movement in Britain was written by David Babington titled, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. Within his writings Babington deals with the topic of evangelical activism. He argues that it was this new zealous commitment toward activism that gave evangelicalism its definitive shape. Ultimately, it would result in the transformation of the role of the minister. The activist spirit was on full display during the Victorian era. This was the time of historical figures such as William Booth of the Salvation Army and Lord Shaftesbury a renowned politician and formidable activist. They provide readers with some prominent examples of this new unprecedented social movement.³³

Babington believed that a commitment to biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism were essential to the evangelical. Charles Spurgeon embodied Babington’s quadrilateral description of the apex evangelical. Spurgeon’s ministry certainly fits within the context of

³¹ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons on The New Testament*, Mt 18:12-13.

³² Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons on The New Testament*, Mt 18:12-13.

³³ DiPrima, 39-54.

evangelicalism. His commitment to evangelicalism allows onlookers to perceive and appreciate his approach to activism. Spurgeon was an advocate for the infallibility of God's word throughout his life. He was devoted to the preaching of the cross.³⁴

For Spurgeon, the atoning work of Christ at the cross was what was at the very center of the gospel and this theme was prevalent in his ministry. One of the most recognized characteristics of Spurgeon's ministry was his passion toward the winning of lost souls for Christ. He once said, "Our great object of glorifying God is, however, to be mainly achieved by the winning of souls. We must see souls born unto God." Speaking of Spurgeon's care for lost souls It has been stated that, "his greatest concern was becoming a soul winner."³⁵

Moving into the realm of evangelical activism, it could be said that Spurgeon is perhaps one of the greatest examples in history of evangelical activism. Ian Randall once referred to Spurgeon as, "a classical evangelical activist." Throughout his ministry Spurgeon labored vigorously to promote the causes of gospel preaching, evangelism, track distribution, church planting, ministerial training, writing, and publishing. In addition, he committed himself to raise money for the care of orphans and widows. He supported charities that provided advocacy for the oppressed and disenfranchised.³⁶

His personal philanthropy and other forms of social activism are well documented. Not only was he committed in his personal life toward the pursuit of benevolence for the needy, but he led his church and others toward the pursuit of charity as well. During his tenure at the Metropolitan Tabernacle the church housed as many as sixty-six benevolent ministries. Many of

³⁴ DiPrima, 54-60.

³⁵ DiPrima, 60-62.

³⁶ DiPrima, 63.

these ministries Spurgeon either founded, chaired, or personally funded and endorsed.³⁷

Spurgeon recognized the responsibility of both the individual and the church within the developing capitalist economy. He provided guidance to those around him that were troubled by industrial giants who participated in the development of production models that depended on labor exploitation. He publicly denounced social and economic influences that hindered the spiritual development of individual parishioners, congregations as a whole, and the population at large.³⁸

Spurgeon taught that adults should continue to study and become educated remaining open to spiritual growth and social progress. However, one might ask the question, was it enough? His personal, professional, and social approach to earthly wealth, personal and industrial reporting, and the exploitation of people and property required creativity and thought as he dealt with these issues both in dialogue and his active ministry.³⁹ His actions and his teachings on wealth distribution from the Bible text suggests that his approach to social reform was indeed adequate. Some would even consider him a leader of social reform within the confines of the church. The problem for many is that his intellectual engagement and social activism should be understood in relation to his New Testament placement of Christ as example and Savior. While addressing the Pastor's College Spurgeon once said, "Of all I would wish to state, this is the aggregate; my brethren, teach about Christ, dependably and ever more. He is the entire gospel. His individual, workplaces, and work must be our one awesome, all appreciating topic."⁴⁰

³⁷ DiPrima, 54-55.

³⁸ Williams, 44.

³⁹ Williams, 56.

⁴⁰ Williams, 74.

It has been noted that when analyzing Spurgeon's improvements to Victorian theology and associating them with 21st century social challenges that they still provide solutions to these problems nearly two hundred years later. He worked tirelessly to solve universal religious and social problems making him arguably not only the most popular church figure in English history, but perhaps the most important.⁴¹ In a 1982 study titled, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preachers Progress*, by Patricia Kruppa, the writer analyzes Spurgeon within both the social and historical context. One notable contribution Kruppa makes involves her review of Spurgeon's political endeavors. While it has been argued that Spurgeon's role as a political dissident has been overstated due to a lack of available evidence, Kruppa and others rightly view his preaching, theology, and approach to social justice as an integral part of his political stand.⁴²

Some scholars may perceive Spurgeon as having missed the mark and not adequately pushing home the dangers of industrialized hoarding as compared to other classes of writers and teachers of his day. While there is little evidence to show that he attempted to skirt the necessary structural confrontations and capitulate to teaching that wealth is mostly an individual accumulation to be shared once individual needs are secure, it could be said that he failed to hit the social gospel head on with a robust call for intense collective distribution of wealth like we see in the Jerusalem church. Those that are passionate about the social gospel may instead view Spurgeon's approach as more of a kind of wedding between capitalistic hoarding and the preaching centered evangelicals that we see in the modern era. However, such individuals may be missing the truth found at the heart of Spurgeon's work. He provides believers with a third option. His method focused on proper exegesis of the text coupled with a straight-forward

⁴¹ Williams, 99-100.

⁴² DiPrima, 14-15.

system of personal conversion. He believed that individual, church, and institutional transformation would come only as a result of the life changing power of the Gospel. While Spurgeon never provided a detailed critique of church socialism, he adamantly denounced socialism including the Christian socialist movement in favor of straightforward conversionist individualism.⁴³

Spurgeon believed that only the gospel could truly transform lives, whether it be individually or collectively. He thought that by leading people to Christ he could bring about the kind of change that would transform communities into those like the early New Testament or the properly working period of the Jewish Monarchy. Preaching from the book of Acts, he proclaimed, “It is very difficult for you who are rich in nominal devotion to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is hard to get the robe of Christ’s righteousness upon the man’s back who believes that his own coat is as good as it needs to be - he has worn his own rags so long that they cling to him! He is too proud to beg, for he has lived so long like a gentleman on his own income.” He went on to describe the wretched condition of those that placed their trust in earthly riches. He said, “He has been rich and increased in goods so long - and in need of nothing - that he has grown so used to his own way of external and superficial religion, that you cannot get him, without a miracle of grace, to seek after that which is deep and true.”⁴⁴

Those that most opposed Spurgeon’s view of wealth were the same people that opposed his view of the Christian socialist movement. A number of these individuals also disapproved of his approach to textual criticism. Within the Christian socialist movement Spurgeon’s contemporaries were at times quite critical. Perhaps, Spurgeon’s most notable critic was the

⁴³ DiPrima, 258.

⁴⁴ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons on The New Testament*, Acts 9:11.

Baptist John Clifford. During the Downgrade controversy Clifford became especially vocal. Clifford embraced Christian socialism and challenged Spurgeon. He desired to connect socialist economic and political thought with the teachings of Christianity. He was perceived by some to be Spurgeon's primary sparring partner during this historic religious dispute.⁴⁵

Clifford seemed to rotate toward textual criticism and Spurgeon was staunchly opposed. Clifford said, "systems of doctrine are trifles light as air to souls that see God face to face and intimate fellowship with the eternal spirit." Spurgeon believed that "theological laxity among the nonconformists, and especially the Congregationalists and Baptists, was undermining the faith." He said, "We have toyed with the light, but we have forgotten the lightning." He believed that a number of his colleagues including Clifford had veered from what was orthodox. Alexander Mackennal, who was chairman of the Congregational Union during the time, conceded that Spurgeon's allegations were well-founded but refused to acknowledge that the offenders were culpable.⁴⁶

Spurgeon was less critical than his contemporaries. He refused to make personal denunciations. Eventually the Council of the Baptist Union accused him of bringing charges without evidence. This was obviously an ad hominem attack as no individuals had been charged. Some have observed this as a meaningless dispute. Yet, there was great meaning behind the dispute as doctrinal integrity was at stake. Rather than disputing the facts, the opposition attacked Spurgeon's character and called into question his integrity. In the end Spurgeon withdrew from

⁴⁵ Willis B. Glover, "English Baptists at the Time of the Downgrade Controversy," *Foundations* 1, no. 3 (July 1958): 41–51, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000664875&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁴⁶ Glover, 41–51.

the Baptist Union and the dispute ended surprisingly with what appeared to be little animosity.⁴⁷ He demonstrated his Christological resolve during the Downgrade Controversy when he left the Baptist Union over what Spurgeon believed was a progressively lax approach to interpretations that were fundamental to Christian beliefs.⁴⁸

A number of scholars and popular authors appear to oppose Spurgeon's approach to biblical wealth today. Among them are both individuals that fall into the categories of those taking a regressed or simple approach to biblical wealth. Those taking a regressed approach are famed individuals such as Dave Ramsey and Frederick Price. While Dave Ramsey appears to be somewhat conservative in his methodology, his writings suggest that he prefers a regressed design when it comes to instructing others on the intricacies of biblical wealth. He infers that God's way of dealing with money is to reward those who follow his program financially without prejudice.⁴⁹

Among those taking a simple approach are Bible scholars such as Francesca Stavrakopoulou, Bart D. Ehrman, and Richard Carrier. Each taking up their own unique brand of naturalism. For those holding to a simple approach to biblical wealth people like Spurgeon may be considered fanatical. This is because for those taking a simple approach Spurgeon might be seen as embracing a variety of "virus like memes" such as a strict adherence to theological

⁴⁷ Glover, 41–51.

⁴⁸ Christian T. George, "Jesus Christ, the 'Prince of Pilgrims': A Critical Analysis of the Ontological, Functional, and Exegetical Christologies in the Sermons, Writings, and Lectures of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)," Order No. U605460, University of St. Andrews (United Kingdom), 2011, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <https://go.openathens.net/redirector/liberty.edu?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/jesus-christ-prince-pilgrims-critical-analysis/docview/1512396084/se-2>.

⁴⁹ Dave Ramsey, *The Legacy Journey: A Radical View of Biblical Wealth and Generosity* (Brentwood, TN: Ramsey Press, 2014), chap. 1, Kindle.

doctrine or a stern patriotism. His conservative approach to Biblical wealth was unwavering.⁵⁰ According to those holding to a simple approach wealth, disease, slavery, and every other topic alluded to in the text should be reconsidered in light of visible discoveries.⁵¹

The Battle for Power and Purity

This section will expand on Spurgeon's thoughts related to the topic of society in connection to biblical wealth. It will also interact with Spurgeon's personal approach to Bible reading. Spurgeon emphasized the need for individuals to shed their earthly value system and take hold of the eternal riches of Christ. As such, this part of the dissertation will move from considering virtue in the decision-making process to discerning how the text impacts the reader individually. Westerners tend to consider themselves individually rather than view the text as speaking to others.⁵²

Spurgeon discussed the topic of obedience and the earthly boundaries of wealth when preaching from the text found in Romans 8:32 which states, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Rom 8:32). He declared that the ancient Jews were required to pay half a shekel as a ransom for their poor souls on the day that they were numbered. God declared to Moses that the price would be the same for the poor and the rich alike. Spurgeon said, "I'm going to make it my business, in a very simple but earnest manner, to try and exhort the children of God to cast aside all thoughts of there being poor, and to rejoice now in their boundless riches in Christ Jesus."⁵³

⁵⁰ Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know about Them)* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2010), chap. 6-8, Kindle.

⁵¹ Richard Carrier, *Sense and Goodness without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2005), chap. 2-8, Kindle.

⁵² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 56.

⁵³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 56.

Spurgeon was unique in his presentation of Christ's atoning work at Calvary. He associated the entirety of the Bible text with Christ's triumph on the cross and the eternal treasures that await the believer in heaven. At times he would shift from a historical text about Israel's military force, to communication providing an application to the contemporary church. Whether it be the Old Testament, New Testament, historical narrative, or wisdom literature he maintained a connection to Christ and the riches of glory. Spurgeon preferred a summation that incorporated an illustration depicting the crucified Christ followed by a spirit filled invitation. In his commentary on the Psalms in *The Treasury of David*, Spurgeon freely inserted Christ into his writings and liberally applied texts relating to Christ in the New Testament. Rather than being driven by earthly wealth Spurgeon was guided by his desire for sincere repentance and conversion. In his approach he drew on the individuals understanding of sin and guilt and was keenly aware of the impact of shame on the church.⁵⁴

The homiletics of rhetoric scholarship may play a part in misconceptions pertaining to biblical wealth. Its justification is derived from its ability to help readers fill in gaps in order to better understand different times in which certain Bible expositors or theologians lived. Mr. J. Clark Roundtree, III wrote an article reviewing Charles Spurgeon's attempt to reestablish God's direct authority which provides an example of this kind of rhetoric. The majority of new studies on homiletics focuses on contemporary or future biblical communications. However, a study of historical homiletics, especially that of retort scholarship, might provide insight into how certain groups of Westerners have arrived at modern views of biblical wealth. Publications within this field attempt to provide some perspective. Gobble and Ridenhour suggest that Bible expositors

⁵⁴ Zuber, 305-306.

are progressively being, “called to engage in an interpretive, hermeneutical process” when participating in the process of proclaiming the biblical truth.⁵⁵

That is not to say that money and possessions have no place in the believer’s life. Spurgeon discovered that earthly riches were beyond his control. He believed that earthly riches easily lead to dependency. Therefore, he sought to focus his attention elsewhere in an effort to restrain his desire for material possessions. Matthew 6:21 explains that “if you have a man’s money, you have the man’s heart” (Mt 6:21). Spurgeon desired that his heart be free from such burdens and strived to be content regardless of his economic situation.⁵⁶

He argued that many look to wealth as their comfort. When their possessions are increased, they are reassured. He believed that a person’s comfort was a test of their character.⁵⁷ When teaching on the rich fool in Luke 12:13-22 Spurgeon said, “Many a miser’s heirs have lived to ridicule him.” He said, “Thou fool” and stated, “That is God’s opinion of a man who means to build bigger barns in order that he may himself enjoy what is about to be taken away from him.” Spurgeon realized that the wealthy that hoard earthly riches are only keeping up treasures for others to scatter about.⁵⁸

Luke reflected on the problem of embracing earthly possessions in Luke 12:21. This passage of Scripture states, “So is he that led up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God”

⁵⁵ Michael C. Souders, “A God of Wealth: Religion, Modernity, and the Rhetoric of the Christian Prosperity Gospel” (dissertation, PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, 2011), 9-16, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Fgod-wealth-religion-modernity-rhetoric-christian%2Fdocview%2F916426509%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

⁵⁶ William Albert, ““When the Wind Blows Cold”: The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 90, Boyce Digital Repository, https://digital.library.smts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5059/Albert_sbts_0207D_10302.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

⁵⁷ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *My Sermon Notes: Complete - Genesis to Revelation* (Yuma, CO: Jawbone Digital, 2013), chap. 51, Kindle.

⁵⁸ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Lk 12:13-22, Kindle.

(Lk 12:21). Spurgeon wrote, “Here our Savior shows us the frail nature of the tenure upon which we hold all earthly goods, and how it is not worthwhile to make these the chief things of our life; for, while they may leave us, we are quite sure by and by, to have to leave them.”⁵⁹ In Luke 12:22 the Bible states, “And he said unto his disciples, therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on” (Lk 12:22). Spurgeon said this really means, “make it not a matter of anxious care. Take no inordinate thought.” He believed that material possessions should not be a priority in the believer’s life.⁶⁰

Spurgeon’s understanding of the Bible text dealing with wealth, wealth acquisition, and wealth distribution reflects a deep knowledge of what the Bible teaches about earthly riches as well as an understanding of what Christ taught about the mishandling of wealth. Jesus said in Matthew 19:24, “And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mt 19:24). There are a number of interesting interpretations of this text. However, one must conclude after a thorough study of the Scripture, that what Christ was communicating was that it is virtually impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Spurgeon suggests that wealth is such a hindrance with regards to entry into the kingdom of God that it renders the matter “practically impossible without divine interposition.” He went on to say, “Those who are rich in this world, in the vast majority of instances, scorn to become subjects of the kingdom in which faith is riches, and holiness his honor.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Lk 12:13-22, Kindle.

⁶⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Commentary on The Bible: Spurgeon's Bible Commentaries* (New York, NY: Kindle Publishing, 2015), Lk 12:22, Kindle.

⁶¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew* (Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2017), Mt 19:24, Kindle.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the facts provided by this chapter seek to allow for a better understanding of how interpretation and behavior might impact one's understanding of the text. This section of the paper strives to aid in enabling readers to develop a comprehensive picture of behaviors involving shame and honor and how these behaviors affect the lives of those who live and minister in different cultures and sub-cultures throughout the western world and abroad. This study has connected with the topic of shame and honor, its usage in the Bible, its relationship to atonement, and its impact on how the Bible text regarding wealth is perceived. This is a topic that when studied may well be developed to help Bible expositors in their efforts to rightly divide the word of God. The overall desire is to better serve others and bring people to Christ. Perhaps, the research in this section may be employed to equip and empower individual readers to edify the church as a whole. The study of shame-based cultures throughout the world might very well be coupled with other systems to provide structure for pastors, missionaries, and other Christian workers who desire to better understand how to communicate the gospel to people cross-culturally.⁶²

This section seeks to demonstrate that Christians must work diligently to understand how interpretation and behavior impact the worldview of people from various cultures. The goal is to reach others in a way that is not only more meaningful but pleasing to God. Understanding the way that wealth should be communicated to people of different cultures allows for a more intricate and complete understanding of the workings of God's plan for salvation and how it relates to intercultural evangelists, individuals, and groups worldwide. This study endeavors to

⁶² Marshall Shelley, Vol. 3, *Building Your Church Through Counsel and Care: 30 Strategies to Transform Your Ministry*, Library of leadership development (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1997), 247.

enable the faithful believer to better understand that biblical wealth is about pleasing God, accomplishing His goals, and opening hearts up to others for the purpose of glorifying Him.⁶³

⁶³ Shelley, 247.

Christian Writings on Wealth

Introduction

This section will serve as an introduction to the chapter. The chapter will expand on Spurgeon's thoughts on the social gospel. It will reflect on Charles Spurgeon's life and teachings in connection with communication and instructional discernment. Spurgeon emphasized the need for attaining wisdom and developing patience. He suggested that the believer, no matter what their status, could benefit spiritually from more study.¹

This chapter deals with these issues. It will consider modern modes of communication and methods of learning. It will discuss different approaches to wealth and review a number of relevant studies relating to this topic. Apart from looking at relevant Christian writings on the topic of wealth, readers will be introduced to cultural issues that are very difficult to discern. These are subtle cultural nuances relating to values and assumptions. Because they are often times the most difficult to perceive, they may prove to be the most challenging for modern interpreters to overcome.²

Charles Spurgeon believed that there are two kinds of riches. There are earthly riches, and there are the true riches in Christ Jesus. He once said, "Christian men and women, you do not know your great master yet. Here have some of us been nearly 40 years in his service, and yet we could not describe him to our own satisfaction. Why, we hardly know the power of the hem of his garment yet." He went on to explain that Christians do not yet fully comprehend the riches of glory that await the believer in heaven. He said, "We have not descended far down into

¹ Charles Spurgeon, *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 34: Sermons 2001-2061* (Baltimore, MD: Delmarva Publications, Inc., 2015).

² E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), chap. 7-9, Kindle.

the mines of his perfections. How little we know of our hidden wealth in Christ Jesus! Oh, that we studied Scripture.”³

Solomon discussed the feebleness and fleeting nature of earthly wealth in Proverbs 11:28. The text reads, “He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; But the righteous shall flourish as a branch” (Prv 11:28). Solomon was explaining that those that rely or depend on their wealth to protect or deliver them in times of trouble will “wither” or “fall down.” This statement seems to connect well with Proverbs 11:5 which states, “The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way; but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness” (Prv 11:5). Considering the use of the flourishing branch it may be proper to understand this verse in that context. For instance, one might say, “if you trust in your riches, you will become like a dry leaf, but good people will grow like healthy plants.”⁴

The structure of this text is intricate. Proverbs 11:28-29 and Proverbs 12:3-4 instruct the believer in the principles of right and wrong as it relates to providing for the security of the family. Instead of concentrating on creating as much material wealth as possible, people are encouraged to be prudent when making life choices. In this text Christians are encouraged to spend time learning how to create and develop a family and behave with integrity instead of prioritizing the things in life that are temporal. This section teaches that submission to God is to be treasured above earthly riches. Violence or selfish behavior will certainly be punished. This passage of Scripture highlights the truth about how one might elicit the “favor” or “disfavor” of God.⁵

³ *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 34.*

⁴ Ralph D. Winter, and Steven C. Hawthorn. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. 4th. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 441-443.

⁵ Duane A. Garrett, vol. 14, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 128–130.

Wealth and Modern Writings

This section will review a number of relevant modern studies on the topic of biblical wealth. The section will focus on modern thought on topics surrounding biblical wealth and interact with Spurgeon's views on the various subjects discussed. It will deliberate on Spurgeon's thoughts on issues involving servanthood and orthodoxy. The research will weigh in on Spurgeon's approach to outreach. Spurgeon emphasized the need for believers to prioritize things so that the people, places, and things of God come first.⁶ As such, this section will delve deeper into issues relating to cognitive selection and endeavor to teach individuals to recognize and embrace the intricacy of the problems that are involved.⁷

It will look to discover how biblical writers, modern scholars, and popular Western writers have approached the topic of conformity. It will attempt to ascertain ways to identify cultural presupposition and how to deal with challenges that may be uncovered. Most people in Western culture embrace structural learning. Rather than receiving instruction through storytelling, Westerners learn through lectures and reading outlines. People develop cultural habits such as this over a lifetime. Therefore, it is not sensible to imagine that one might simply overcome cultural obstacles that hinder a proper interpretation of wealth overnight. This section deals with this important issue.⁸

In recent years there has been the most profound transfer of monetary wealth since the beginning of human history. It will be interesting to see how God's people will appropriate this newly found wealth. Some have speculated that it may simply be that God's people will engage

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 43 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

⁷ Ralph D. Winter, and Steven C. Hawthorn. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. 4th. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 441-443.

⁸ Winter and Hawthorn, 441-443.

in the most decadent consumer campaign ever. However, it is unlikely that individuals will choose to pay off the substantial debt that has been amassed during the last few decades. As the debt piles up it is probable that Christians and churches will be made to bear the burden of caring for the impoverished. It seems as though many have lost touch with the long-standing Western tradition of Christian stewardship.⁹

Spurgeon called upon the men and women of the Metropolitan Tabernacle to go out into the highways and hedges and show compassion to the impoverished, the afflicted, and the alienated in the community. Instead of being focused on gaining wealth, Spurgeon was focused on demonstrating Christ-like servitude. He rightfully proclaimed that it would not be very difficult to locate needy people around the church. Spurgeon preached on the priest and the Levite that passed by the victim that had fallen prey to thieves. He brazenly condemned this activity and rebuked those that would be like them disregarding the plight of the impoverished. Spurgeon said, “So you do know that there is poverty and sickness around, and if you pass by on the other side you will have looked at it, you will have known about it, and on your heads will be the criminality of having left the wounded man unhelped.”¹⁰

He described the need for diligence and conformity when preaching on biblical wealth from the passage found in Matthew 6:33 which asserts, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt 6:33). Spurgeon believed that people often fail to receive the many blessings that God has in store for them

⁹ Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Alex J. DiPrima, "An Eagerness to be Up and Doing: The Evangelical Activism of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 168, In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feagerness-be-up-doing-evangelical-activism%2Fdocview%2F2465980128%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

because they do not properly prioritize the things of God. Spurgeon said, “So men have pursued wealth - they have toiled and labored till, when they have gained the wealth they sought, their health has gone, or their mind has failed them, and they have not been able to enjoy it.” He explained that true wealth comes through God’s mercy and grace. He said, “But that which comes to us in the golden barque of infinite mercy, brought across the sea by a better Pilot than our prudence, comes most sweetly, and we bless and praise and magnify the Lord for it all.” Spurgeon warned that the believer should be careful to focus on the things of God. He proclaimed, “If you want wealth, seek it in that moderate way which is allowable to you, but first of all let your treasure be in heaven.”¹¹

Kevin Vanhoozer has written much on the topics of theology and hermeneutics. During an interview while discussing this topic he said, “My work in hermeneutics leads me to say that Western Christians often do read the Bible through certain cultural presuppositions.” When contemplating the intricacies of biblical wealth, he asserts that if one were to dive deep into a study of this topic there would be a need to pay special attention to what it means to be “biblical.” It is his contention that to understand wealth in a biblical sense a great deal of research would be involved. He alleges, “I think it involves more than using proof texts. You’ll also need to be alert to the question of continuity/discontinuity between Old Testament and New Testament references to wealth, which is to say, to questions concerning biblical hermeneutics.”¹²

¹¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 43.

¹² Kevin Vanhoozer, Interview by author. Mississippi, December 30, 2021.

Spurgeon also believed in doing more than simply working through the proof texts. He was an advocate for textual criticism and often consulted commentaries.¹³ According to Spurgeon, Christians should be motivated by the gospel, not by legalistic arguments. He believed that attempting to persuade a believer to perform a gracious act through the use of an argument from a non-Christian philosopher is futile. Similarly, trying to encourage a child of God to perform a service of love with an argument that only applies to a captive is equally ineffective. For this reason, Spurgeon emphasized the importance of understanding the true meaning and purpose of Scripture within its context, rather than relying solely on proof texts. When preaching on the text in 2 Corinthians 8:9 he said, "It is well to notice that believers are to be constrained to Christian duty by gospel motives, rather than by legal arguments. It is poor work to try to stir up a Christian to perform an act of grace by an argument fetched from a heathen moralist, and it is equally poor work to try and lead a child of God to perform a service of love by an argument which is applicable only to a slave."¹⁴

He went on to point out that there are a number of explicit statements pertaining to wealth throughout the Bible. One in particular that came to mind was Christ's command relating to this topic. He said, "I'm thinking about Jesus' exhortations not to lay up treasure on earth (Matt. 6:19) in particular, a teaching that also raises the question; what does he mean by heavenly treasure?" Therefore, he suggests that interpreters might well be encouraged to discern what Christ means when he says, "treasures in heaven" (Matt. 6:19). Considering Christ's command in Matthew 6:19, believers are persuaded to discern precisely what kind of wealth is it that a

¹³ Robert Matthew Perry, "Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 59.

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

Christian disciple should pursued. Spurgeon sought to discover and relate the meaning of biblical wealth in his sermons by delving into the text and studying the topic in a way that demonstrates the kind of special attention that Vanhoozer suggests. Spurgeon often demonstrates continuity between Old Testament and New Testament references to wealth calling attention to various texts throughout his sermons.¹⁵

Evidence of this continuity can be seen in Spurgeon's sermon on riches from the text in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Spurgeon's teachings emphasize the connection between Old and New Testament references to wealth. Spurgeon cited Psalm 8:4-6 and explains how it relates to Christ's poverty and the riches that believers receive through him. He said, "Well may we say, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? . . . Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." He believed that through our union with Christ, we share in his inheritance and his victory over sin and death. By connecting the Old Testament passage to the New Testament reference in Paul's writings, Spurgeon highlights how Christ's poverty and exaltation fulfill Old Testament prophecies and promises, and how believers partake in his triumph and inheritance. Spurgeon's attention to this continuity underscores the importance of understanding the full scope of Scripture in relation to the topic of wealth, and how various passages can be used to illustrate important points.¹⁶

Andreas Köstenberger has written much on the topics of theology and Bible interpretation. He has stated that he takes a similar approach to the topic of wealth. It is his contention that in order to address the many questions that may arise when pondering the topic of

¹⁵ Vanhoozer, Interview.

¹⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 47.

biblical wealth, one might first seek to establish a firm understanding of what biblical wealth is. Moreover, he concludes that an ever-important factor to consider has to do with the way that biblical wealth is perceived by various groups. He suggests that it is hard to know how to approach that topic without knowing how wealth is communicated in the Bible and how it is perceived by differing groups within modern culture.¹⁷

Geoff Chang took some time to elaborate some on Charles Spurgeon and his biblical view of wealth. Chang currently serves as an assistant professor of church history and historical theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as well as the curator of the Spurgeon Library in Kansas City, Missouri. He mentioned the lost sermons discovered by Christian Geoge at the Spurgeon College Heritage Room in the United Kingdom. He suggested that the many newly discovered sermons written by Charles Spurgeon may help to shed light on his approach to wealth. He went on to discuss new research in the area of “Spurgeon activism” as well as his “ethic towards the poor and vulnerable.” Chang advised that examining Spurgeon’s approach to wealth would help “in situating his in this 19th century context.” He said, “With the rise of Marxism, Industrialism, the social gospel movement, and all kinds of other factors, all these things will play into Spurgeon’s views.”¹⁸

Matthew Perry who recently published a new study on Charles Spurgeon’s Christ-centered ethic toward the vulnerable set aside some time to share some of his thoughts pertaining to Spurgeon’s approach to wealth. Perry inferred that his upbringing in Kelvedon, Essex along with time spent with his grandfather and Stambourne in the Finland’s may have played the chief role in establishing motivation as it relates to his approach to wealth, his quest to reach out to the

¹⁷ Andreas Köstenberger, Interview by author. Mississippi, December 30, 2021.

¹⁸ Geoff Chang, Interview by author. Mississippi, March 16, 2022.

common man, and his care for the poor. He said, “This rural area provided him his values in an area that did not have much regarding money or resources.” Later on, when Spurgeon moved to London to start his ministry in 1854, he found himself in the wake of the Irish famine. During this time the population grew as people moved into the area to start a new life.”¹⁹

Perry went on to say, “Orphans were roaming the streets with no one to provide “consistent systematic help.” Furthermore, there was a cholera outbreak during the same year devastating homes and communities in causing a large number of deaths. Perry suggests that Spurgeon realized that there was great need and was led by the Spirit to ponder how wealth might be allocated biblically. His conviction became an outgrowth of his commitment to Christ. Spurgeon found solace in the word of God and those who might clothe themselves and his righteousness.”²⁰

Perry explained that Spurgeon was staunchly opposed to the Marxism of his day. He said, “As you may know, Spurgeon and Marx lived in London at the same time.” In Marx’s Communist manifesto, he wrote, “communism abolishes eternal truths. It abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis.” It is no wonder that Spurgeon so opposed the anti-Christian views of Karl Marx. Perry declared, “Spurgeon believed in eternal truths, religion, morality, and the family.”²¹

He believed that one’s gifts and talents should be used to “take care of the family.” He had some internal conflicts with the class system of his day and was encouraged to help those who were deemed by some to be social outcasts. He believed in giving even the lowest person on the social scale their human dignity as “image bearers of God.” Perry did not elaborate in great

¹⁹ Matthew Perry, Interview by author. Mississippi, March 6, 2022.

²⁰ Perry, Interview.

²¹ Perry, Interview.

detail about Spurgeon's approach to industrialization. He believed that it was Spurgeon's desire that those who were in positions of authority would treat the common laborers with care.²²

When speaking of Spurgeon's commitment to the common worker Perry quoted William Estep in saying, "He lent his support to the fledgling labor movement, persuading members of his church to contribute to the relief of the striking workers who were struggling to survive." Perry described Spurgeon's view of the Social Gospel Movement as one that prioritized Christ's command to preach the gospel to every nation. He quoted Tom Nettles saying, "When benevolent work could be justified on the basis of the second great commandment alone, and should support all secular efforts at social betterment, the first great commandment combined with the gospel knowledge justifies the involvement of a minister and a church in these activities." Perry described the sociopolitical economic context in which Spurgeon ministered. He described the era as one that was driven by political agendas.²³

There were those that believe that the son should never set on the British Empire. This impacted their interaction with countries such as India, Africa, and the United States as well as others. There was a great divide between the wealthy aristocrats and the common people. Individuals that were not part of the upper-class had little or no pathway to success. They were excluded from universities and refused well-paying opportunities.²⁴

Spurgeon realized this great divide and assigned resources to create the Pastor's College. This offered new opportunities for ministers who were previously financially unable to attend college or who were excluded due to their unorthodox religious traditions. In the end, Spurgeon would start at least 66 different organizations. The most well-known of these were likely the

²² Perry, Interview.

²³ Perry, Interview.

²⁴ Perry, Interview.

Pastor's College and the orphanage. Spurgeon endeavored to help individuals that were overlooked by the government and the established church.²⁵

Perry went on to briefly state how he perceived Spurgeon's approach to wealth. He said, "Spurgeon's sermons (published in newspapers), books, and magazines (the sword and the trowel) brought in a huge sum of money but he was continually giving this away to help others in their need, in ministry, and many other things. He believed that God blessed him in order to bless others."²⁶ Spurgeon's life events and theological convictions appear to have worked together to shape his approach to ministry and preaching. For example, his struggles with physical, mental, and emotional ordeals may have influenced his empathy for the vulnerable and marginalized. Additionally, his biblical interpretation of the gospel as a message of hope and redemption for all people likely reinforced this empathy and informed his approach to ministry. One example of this can be seen in his opposition to slavery, which was rooted in both his personal experiences with suffering and his theological convictions about the inherent value and dignity of all human beings. These factors likely led Spurgeon to speak out boldly against injustice while also ministering with compassion toward those who were suffering.²⁷

Craig Blomberg has written a great deal on the topic of money in the Bible. He currently works as a professor of New Testament studies at Denver Seminary. He recently set aside some time to be interviewed and discuss the topic of wealth in the Bible. He explained that most of the explicit teachings about the advantages of being obedient to biblical commands are found in the Old Testament. He went on to suggest that understanding the extent to which the Old Testament

²⁵ Perry, Interview.

²⁶ Perry, Interview.

²⁷ Robert Matthew Perry, "Constructing Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward the Venerable Through and Analysis of His Preaching" (PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 60-64.

commands and blessings carry over into the New Testament age is a major failing of the so-called prosperity gospel in that they do not properly address this matter. Blomberg explains that the prosperity gospel connects poorly with biblical teachings on wealth. When commenting on those who embrace the prosperity gospel, He went on to say, “They start from genuine Old Testament principles that were given to Israel and no one else, were intended more corporately or communally than individually for application, and don’t all carry over into the New Testament, and they apply them to Christians today (sometimes even within certain nations) individually.” Blomberg commented on the problems that arise when believers do not follow sound biblical teachings that relate to wealth.²⁸

He presented Proverbs and other wisdom literature as sources of information that may be utilized to derive potential negative outcomes. He described the collections of wisdom literature as generalizations. They are not absolute statements of what is always certain but broader statements pertaining to what typically occurs. When contemplating how Christians might begin to apply biblical instruction in order to approach wealth in a godly manner, he communicated that it would be prudent to carefully consider one’s personal situation. He explained that there are “budgetary concerns between what is essential and what is discretionary.” Moreover, in order to communicate wisdom relating to biblical wealth to others the question of credibility comes into play. Therefore, Bible interpreters endeavoring to teach biblical principles relating to wealth are encouraged to be living out those principles themselves.

Much like Paul, Spurgeon taught obedience and humility to his congregation. This teaching was also present in his writings. In addition, he lived a life that was modest as well. While Spurgeon’s annual income at the height of his career fell somewhere between 20,000 and

²⁸ Craig Blomberg, Interview by author. Mississippi, March 6, 2022.

30,000 pounds, at the time of his death his estate was only worth a meager 2,000 pounds. His income could have afforded him not only a London estate but a country estate and servants as well. Only about 250 of the wealthiest people in London had incomes of more than 30,000 pounds a year. Spurgeon seemed to identify more with the average clergy in the area which made approximately 1,000 to 2,000 pounds annually. He appeared to have a strong desire to remain meek in the midst of his considerable success.²⁹

Spurgeon believed in making God a priority. He described his financial life in terms of devotion. He explained that when he prayed, he would go to God just like he would go to a bank clerk when he had a check to cash. He did not ever recall stopping to talk with the bank clerk more than about five minutes. He would enter the bank, placed the check on the counter, and as soon as the clerk provided funds then he would take up the money and go about his business. That is the way Spurgeon liked to pray. He desired that his business with God and the business he undertook for the church would be meaningful and accomplish the specific task to which he felt drawn.³⁰

For him, the promises of God were to the child of God a boundless source of wealth. In speaking of the promises of God, he referred to them as an “inexhaustible mine of wealth.” When elaborating on the promises of God, Spurgeon once said, “Happy is it for him if he knows how to search out their secret veins and enrich himself with their hidden treasures. They are to him an armory containing all manner of offensive and defensive weapons.” He went on to say,

²⁹ William Albert, ““When the Wind Blows Cold”: The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 44, Boyce Digital Repository, https://digital.library.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/5059/Albert_sbts_0207D_10302.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

³⁰ John Piper, *A Camaraderie of Confidence: The Fruit of Unfailing Faith in the Lives of Charles Spurgeon, George Müller, and Hudson Taylor* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016) chap. 1, Kindle.

“Blessed is he who has learned to enter into the sacred arsenal, to put on the breastplate and the helmet, and lay his hand to the sphere and the sword.”³¹

Spurgeon encouraged believers to cast off the ungodly quest for earthly wealth. He declared this truth when speaking of the Savior’s command in Matthew 6:33 which urges believers to seek the things of God first (Mt 6:33). He said “There is just as much need of this exhortation today as there was when our Savior first uttered it. These are times in which fretful care is often apt to enter into the hearts of believers, and if our Lord were here in person now, He would admonish us to be rid of such care, for fretful care is not becoming in a child of God.” Spurgeon went on to suggest that to seek earthly wealth without godly direction is a detriment to the soul. When speaking of the covetousness of man he proclaimed, “It is so opposed to faith and to the life of God in the soul, that it ought to be struggled with and driven out. None of us who are trusting in Christ ought to allow ourselves to become the victims of it.”³²

Wealth and Culture

This section will discuss and evaluate various groups within modern culture and their impact on Christian perceptions of wealth. It will analyze Spurgeon’s thoughts on the topics of worldview and cross-cultural communication. It will connect with Spurgeon’s approach to social interaction. It will discuss the topics of oral strategy and contextualization. It will elaborate on cultural measuring systems. Spurgeon emphasized the need for individuals to shed their earthly value system and take hold of the eternal riches of Christ.³³

³¹ Randy C. Alcorn and C. H. Spurgeon, *We Shall See God: Charles Spurgeon's Classic Devotional Thoughts on Heaven* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2011), 42, Kindle.

³² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 43.

³³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

This section of the paper engages with this issue. It will relate the importance of understanding the Scripture and how it applies to the masses. Readers are encouraged to recognize that individuals all over the world have their own cultural obstacles to overcome. Expositors are urged to overcome these barriers and study the Scriptures not only for themselves but others as well. After all, Christ's followers are commanded to encourage and edify one another.³⁴

The emphasis in this section is on understanding the Scriptures and their impact on the community. It will focus on the need to put emphasis on kindness and compassion in one's Christian study as it relates to wealth. It will highlight the need to avoid reading the Scripture without contemplating the bigger picture. It is important to consider how past generations have interpreted the text. Believers are compelled to reflect on how the world community understands the Scripture. Because of the vast number of different worldviews, it is important to consider past, present, and future discoveries and utilize every tool available at one's disposal.³⁵

Charles Spurgeon constantly studied. His personal library contained more than 12,000 books. His deep voice could be heard in large audiences of more than 23,000. By the end of his career, it is estimated that he had baptized more than 14,692 converts.³⁶ For approximately 40 years he preached to a congregation of 6000 or more members. It is believed that he composed and preached more than 3600 sermons during his famed career.³⁷ At least 70 of those sermons directly relate to wealth, money, or spiritual blessings. It has been estimated that in an average

³⁴ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 2.

³⁵ Richards and O'Brien, chap. 2.

³⁶ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian T. George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. I (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), Forward and Introduction, Kindle.

³⁷ C. H. Spurgeon and Daniel Partner, *The Essential Works of Charles Spurgeon: Selected Books, Sermons, and Other Writings ...* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Pub., 2009), Introduction, Kindle.

week he would write more than 500 letters and he had authored more than hundred and 50 books before his death.³⁸

Spurgeon was aware that many worldviews are rooted in scientific speculation. Cultural incongruity is embedded in the ever-increasing theories that scientists develop as a result of mastering the scientific method of research. Innovations in the fields of medicine, technology, mechanics, and numerous other areas of study are also employed to fortify theoretical assumptions. Spurgeon personally observed these tendencies. He was known to have fostered a sincere appreciation for science and for those engaged in scientific scholarship, yet he was not impressed with the philosophical ontology of his day.³⁹

Spurgeon explained that “The most absurd theories will have their admirers” especially if they are derived “from men of great scientific attainments.” He noticed that the process in the scientific world was very similar to that found in the world of finance. He explained that hard work, thrift, and sound investment strategy often leads to wealth but then fuels “ruinous speculation.” Likewise, he suggested that “real scientific knowledge often leads to more than ordinary folly.” Spurgeon recognized that the very scientists that people look to for “real acquisitions and clear reasonings” in the field of science were actually “the first to overleap its boundaries and to substitute their own reveries for established facts.”⁴⁰

Replacing one’s own hopes for established truths seems to be a problem that has carried forward. The problem of evangelical Westerners misrepresenting biblical wealth appears to have

³⁸ C. H. Spurgeon and Christian Timothy George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume II: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*, vol. II (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2017), Forward, Kindle.

³⁹ Tom J. Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth - the Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), chap. 13, Kindle.

⁴⁰ Nettles, chap. 13, Kindle.

become a mainstream issue. According to a recent study 4 in 10 evangelical westerners are taught the prosperity gospel. The survey demonstrates that a vast number of church congregants have been led to believe that God wants them to achieve financial prosperity. According to the study conducted by LifeWay Research a vast number of churchgoers believe that giving to God will yield financial increase. Among those surveyed, two-thirds believe that God wants them to prosper. Out of the 1010 Americans that were surveyed 1 in 4 say that God requires them to do something in order to receive material blessings.⁴¹

Scott McConnell who serves as the executive director of LifeWay Research stated, “A significant group of churches seem to teach that donations trigger a financial response from God.” While a vast number of Americans believe that dropping money into the offering plate is somewhat equated to acquiring a Discover card with a generous cashback bonus, views seem to diverge on whether or not a tithe is required.⁴² The study reveals that a vast number of people attending churches in the West are taught that if they give more money to the church and other charities then God will bless them in return. Kate Fowler, a professor of American religious history at Duke University, advises that the belief that God gives financial rewards in exchange for offerings is a central part of the so-called prosperity gospel, which offers a “direct path to the good life.” This research suggests that the belief that God provides money in exchange for obedience is not only a topic of much controversy but has become somewhat commonplace in Western culture.⁴³

⁴¹ "Prosperity Gospel Taught to 4 in 10 Evangelical Churchgoers," Christianity Today, July 31, 2018, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2018/july/prosperity-gospel-survey-churchgoers-prosper-tithe-blessing.html>.

⁴² "Prosperity Gospel Taught to 4 in 10 Evangelical Churchgoers," Christianity Today.

⁴³ "Prosperity Gospel Beliefs Draw Widespread Support," Lifeway, July 31, 2018, accessed October 10, 2022, <https://research.lifeway.com/2018/07/31/prosperity-gospel-beliefs-draw-wide-support-from-churchgoers/>.

According to Spurgeon, religious liberty and the sovereignty of God suggest that obedience should be driven by a personal relationship with God rather than a desire for financial gain. For Spurgeon, giving should be a personal choice, not something that is imposed or expected. He also believed in reaching out to the vulnerable and marginalized in society through the preaching of the gospel. Overall, Spurgeon viewed the gospel as transformative, creating new ethics and transforming individuals into new people with different priorities and beliefs. While Spurgeon's views do not directly address the controversy surrounding obedience and financial gain, they highlight the importance of personal motivation and transformation in Christian faith.⁴⁴

Sharing the biblical truth concerning wealth both in modern Western culture and cultures around the world requires a precise degree of contextualization because cultural values vary to a great extent. Learners must understand that ancient biblical culture differs much from that of modern society. Many people from various cultures around the globe have different value systems, traditions, and rules. What is even more interesting is that they often communicate through an unfamiliar body language. The task of communicating even the most basic message becomes difficult when corresponding inter-culturally. Communicators are encouraged to work diligently toward overcoming difficulties in communicating biblical wealth through a continued study of the critical elements that can be used to facilitate communications. Likewise, learners are persuaded to work tirelessly to understand the text surrounding this topic.⁴⁵

For most people it is difficult to learn a second language. Many people believe that after they have mastered a new language that they have learned how to communicate properly in the

⁴⁴ Perry, 24-92.

⁴⁵ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 103.

corresponding culture. Unfortunately, this simply is not the case. Each culture has a silent language that consists of attitudes towards things such as time, personal space and property, methods of control, sharing of resources, kinships, community, work, individual orientation, learning, recreation, and social interaction. These message systems all have different rules that govern personal interaction and communication. Structural patterns and variations must be learned. Learning a cultures language only opens up about one-tenth of the information that can be understood about a culture.⁴⁶

The task of reaching people with the truth concerning biblical wealth may be accomplished in a number of ways. Generally, communicating biblical truth falls into two categories. The first of which is called confrontational evangelism. This approach is aggressive and for many can be intimidating as in many instances people become confrontational in return. The second category of outreach is the bridge building method. This is a method that is more relational and emphasizes reaching out to people. It replaces confrontation and aggression with internal friendship and kindness. This method suggest that we are going to be most successful in reaching people with the biblical truth by bringing up eternal issues only after discussing social issues. For this reason, it has been suggested that the evangelist might do well to socialize before they evangelize.⁴⁷

Spurgeon struggled at times with his communication. Social interaction was especially difficult in the beginning of his ministry at the New Park Street Chapel. He believed himself to be ill prepared as he looked fearfully around the sanctuary. He said, “It seemed to my eyes to be a large, ornate, and imposing structure, suggesting an audience wealthy and critical, and far

⁴⁶ Lingenfelter, 28-29.

⁴⁷ *Growing Your Church Through Evangelism and Outreach*, 1st ed., Library of Christian leadership (Nashville. TN: Moorings, 1996), 88–90.

removed from the humble folk to whom my ministry had been sweetness and light.”⁴⁸ Spurgeon desired an audience with people from every social class. He was privileged to find himself among those that desired to reach the lost and uplift the impoverished.⁴⁹

As Spurgeon grew in faith he communicated to others about the perils of prosperity. He expanded on this topic when preaching on the text found in Hosea 13:5-8. In this passage of Scripture, the writer declares, “I did know you in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me” (Hos 13:5-8). The text suggests that as God’s people grew prosperous, they became inclined toward their riches.⁵⁰

Spurgeon went on to say, “The danger of worldly wealth lies in this, that a man at last gets to be nothing better than oxen yoked to the plow, clogged with thick clay.” He then described the breakdown of communication that often accompanies great earthly wealth. When speaking of those that embrace earthly wealth over the things of God He asserted, “They thought not of blessing the name of God for enabling them to get wealth, nor of making every mercy to be a wing upon which the grateful soul should soar on high. No, their whole mind was given to filling and being filled again.” Spurgeon suggested that the wealthy are frequently unable to properly communicate to others about their gratefulness or describe the blessings of their increase. He inferred that the wealthy often go from “faring sumptuously” to “suffering eternally.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Dan Harmon, *Charles Spurgeon: The Prince of Preachers* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Pub Inc, 2013), chap. 5, Kindle.

⁴⁹ Harmon, chap. 12.

⁵⁰ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

⁵¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

The writer goes on to describe God's reaction to the indifference brought on by wealth. In Hosea 13:7-8 God declares, "Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them" (Hos 13:7-8). Spurgeon suggested that the burden of wealth may be a hindrance to those in search of spiritual enlightenment. He said, "It may be that you would never have known the holy joy and sacred peace which you now possess if you had been allowed to climb to those heights of wealth which you have longed to reach." He suggests that oftentimes wealth is metered because of one's inability to manage the increase. Spurgeon announced, "God, who knows your frame knew that you were not able to bear the trial of prosperity, and therefore He has kept you where you are - safer and happier, though less enriched."⁵²

Spurgeon believed that time was precious and that rational arguments should be used in order to communicate one's assertions successfully. He felt that such arguments were necessary so that barriers could be removed. Once while preaching, Spurgeon put forth his appeal stating, "Tell me what it is, my brother, that keeps you from Christ." He wanted to know if his audience had found a joyful path. He quoted Isaiah 55:2 asking, "Wherefore dost thou spend thy money for that which is not bread, and of labor for that which satisfieth not; harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Is 55:2). Predicting the answer, he asked his audience about the barriers that were keeping them from the riches of Christ. People will often argue that time is either the problem or a contributing factor that separates them from serving God.⁵³

⁵² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 24.

⁵³ Steven J. Lawson, *The Gospel Focus of Charles Spurgeon* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2012), chap. 4, Kindle.

Spurgeon communicated that process of being “melted and tried” less than a year before he died. He said it was only by the process of “melting” or being tried that often allowed him to arrive at a true assessment of things. He said have you ever been in a “melting pot, dear friends?” Spurgeon alleged that being tried allowed the believer to be “poured out into a new and better fashion.” Spurgeon believed that no earthly substance would allow the believer to “get rid of the dross.” He suggested that only the trying of one’s spirit could lead one into a joyful Christlike servitude. He went on to advise that if one could only be made pure it would result in being “fashioned more completely like unto our Lord!”⁵⁴

Christ passed on to his followers that the gospel seed was merely a picture of God’s magnificent word. Reaching people with the Bible message pertaining to wealth is a very difficult task. The Bible truth has a mixed reception when it is not properly sewn into human hearts. Communicating in a way that is familiar to those in need enables the Bible expositor to break through barriers and find that fertile ground.⁵⁵ Learning to communicate in a way that encourages or edifies and helping others to learn to communicate through the art of storytelling is part of what allows Bible interpreters to cross cultural boundaries. Moreover, it allows them to build relationships that will eventually aid in multiplying their ministry efforts.⁵⁶

Spurgeon recognized that those seeking to understand the intricacies of wealth must navigate culture. Things such as individualism, collectivism, time, tradition, speculation, and rumor all come into play. Things are not always what they seem. For instance, it was rumored

54 Darrel W. Amundsen, “The Anguish and Agonies of Charles Spurgeon,” *Christian History* 29, no. 1 (1991), 22-25, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=33h&AN=99499&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

55 Andrew Knowles. *The Bible Guide*. 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 479.

56 Dean Merrill. *Fresh Ideas For Preaching, Worship & Evangelism*. (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Incorporated, 1984), 119.

that Spurgeon would die a very wealthy man, but the rumors were not accurate. He was very engaged in giving. He gave liberally both to the church and to the community. He believed that one's attitude toward money was a testament to their faith. While Spurgeon's judgment may have at times been misunderstood, his honesty was rarely ever questioned.⁵⁷

Spurgeon considered the problem of giving when preaching on the talents in Matthew 25:22-23. When speaking of the Baptist churches located throughout the region during the Victorian era Spurgeon said, "They are so little in the habit of giving, that their ministers are starved." He saw many of his fellow ministers living in poverty while their parishioners lived in prosperity. He reminded his listeners of God's eternal accounting. He said, "Remember, my hearer, in the day of judgment your account must be personal. God will not ask you what your Church did – He will ask you what you did yourself."⁵⁸

Conclusion

The information communicated in this section of the paper allows for a better understanding of culture and the many ways that it influences the way that individuals perceive biblical wealth. The data provides insight that enables the reader to understand the key components involved in transmitting Scriptural truth relating to how one might obtain lasting and enduring prosperity. It analyzes the basic ideas surrounding communication as it relates to cultural adaptation. It discusses the issues dealing with content and contextualization and touches on the main ideas associated with humility as it relates to conveying and receiving biblical truth. This section of the paper reviews the difficulties in communicating wealth and strives to provide an overall outline that may be utilized to overcome cultural barriers and remove presupposition.

⁵⁷ Harmon, chap. 17.

⁵⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 4.

Concluding Response

Introduction

This chapter will conclude the study. It will provide insight into how individuals may remove cultural obstacles relating to interpretations of wealth. It will consider observations made during the study and present relevant solutions to the problem. It will discuss how solutions may be received and utilized to enhance ministry efforts. It will deal with a proper approach to combating cultural misreading. Spurgeon emphasized the need for believers to remain faithful and watch for Christ's imminent return. He said, "If you are waiting for Christ's coming, untold blessings are wrapped up in that glorious hope."¹

As such, this chapter highlights the love of Christ and emphasizes the blessed hope found only in Jesus. It will highlight some of the ways that Charles Spurgeon communicated wealth as a spiritual commodity. Furthermore, it will interact with some of the key areas of Spurgeon's life and work that may point to a framework that one might be able to take hold of in order to correct unwarranted deviations from Christ's instruction as it relates to wealth. It will provide guidance that may allow readers to recognize and overcome cultural blind spots. It will seek to recognize God's love in relation to interpretations involving wealth.²

Spurgeon once explained that there were two words that help describe the difference between the behavior of the wicked and the behavior of the righteous. He suggested that the words "no" and "not" are decisive. On one side there will be those at the king's right hand to which the king will say, "I was an hungered, and you gave me meat." On the other side will be those to the King's left-hand, and he will say, "I was an hungered, you gave me no meat."

¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 39 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 39.

Spurgeon stated, “this omission on their part was no small matter; it was fatal, and it was visited with the eternal death sentence.” The death sentence will be expressed in one simple phrase, “depart from me.” When men think lightly of their approach to wealth, their love for Christ, and of their neglect toward the poor they failed to understand that their decision will impact their standing in the “blaze of the last great day.”³

The Bible clearly acknowledges that one’s approach to wealth will impact the end time judgment. This truth is detailed in Matthew 25:31-40. In the beginning of this passage in Matthew 25:31-33 the Bible states, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divided his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Mt 25:31-33). Christ goes on to describe the judgment in Matthew 25:34 when He proclaims, “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt 25:34). Christ proceeds to describe the cause for the separation that occurs when the redeemed will be lifted up in glory. In Matthew 25:35-36 He said, “For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Mt 25:35-36). In the next portion of scripture Christ begins to explain how all this took place by illustrating. Matthew 25:37 Christ proclaims, “Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we the an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink” (Mt 25:37).⁴

³ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew* (Seattle, WA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2017), Mt 25:42-43, Kindle.

⁴ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew*, Mt 25:31-46.

The text goes on to say, “When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Mt 25:38-40). Spurgeon explained that “our Lord does not mean to teach that men will be condemned because they have not been charitable to the poor and needy, or that they will be saved if they are generous and openhanded. That would indeed be salvation by works, to be boasted of, to all eternity.” He suggested that what Christ meant by those words is that only those that produce such fruit will distinguish themselves as having received the grace which separates them from the wicked. Spurgeon said, “all our future depends upon our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵

The Bible teaches interpreters that the love of money is the root of all evil in 1 Timothy 6:10. Bible expositors are encouraged to contemplate how money impacts the believer. If the love of money is the root of all evil then the love of giving money or giving of one’s increase is at the core of what is good. God is love, and charity is equated with love. Therefore, understanding charity as it relates to wealth is a critical part of becoming aware of a proper cultural interpretation of the text pertaining to wealth. The Psalmist described his approach well when he declared in Psalm 23:1, “The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want” (Ps 23:1). The child of God might do well to delve deep into God’s love and relate the importance of applying the test of good works and the test of brotherly love in relation to interpreting wealth in the Scriptures.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s approach to wealth appears to be one that was born from the Bible text. His approach to wealth, benevolence, and social activism was one that was representative of a number of evangelicals that lived and ministered in the Victorian era. Yet, his

⁵ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew*, Mt 25:45.

giving appeared to far surpass those that received similar compensation for their work. Both his life and his ministry seem to reflect that Spurgeon had an earnest desire to be forthright in connection with his Bible interpretation, ministry, and business dealings. Spurgeon's ministry was surrounded by a whirlwind of controversy connecting with Darwinism, Romanism, and adherence to proper translation and interpretation techniques.

This dissertation has sought to pursue the truth in relation to Spurgeon's approach to wealth. It has analyzed Spurgeon's life and work in an attempt to uncover his personal, professional, and public practice as it pertains to this topic. It has enquired as to the character and shape of Spurgeon's engagement in both proclaiming and living out his views pertaining to earthly and spiritual blessings. In addition, it sought to analyze the historical, social, and religious contexts of his approach. The study endeavored to determine what role money was meant to play both in the individual Christian's life and the overall mission of the church. It has sought to engage Biblical concepts of wealth throughout the history of the Old Testament, the early church, and early Western history proceeding to the modern era. There was an effort within the paper to discern how Spurgeon believed wealth should come to be expressed in church ministry.

The dissertation has argued that Charles Haddon Spurgeon's approach to wealth helps to demonstrate how misgivings about biblical wealth have crept into portions of Western culture. It has been inferred that Spurgeon's approach may offer a positive framework for correcting the many misgivings brought on by obscured cultural perceptions. Furthermore, the dissertation contends that biblical wealth is rightly perceived and understood in light of eternal treasures rather than earthly riches. Spurgeon's preaching, writings, and activism was in keeping with the

foundational truths of the Bible text. In his personal life, Spurgeon modeled a Christlike humility and longed not for the things of this world but the things eternal.

He taught the masses through ministries, sermons, books, papers, articles, and other published works. His message was that all believers are commanded to pay special attention to the dangers of earthly wealth. Moreover, he encouraged others into Christian discipleship so that the truth of these dangers could be advanced. Spurgeon surmised that earthly wealth had its good uses and he sought to integrate that message both into the mission of the church and his benevolence toward the alienated and impoverished. He sought to establish a practical construct for approaching the topic of biblical wealth and laid out a strategy to discern how one might formulate a plan for the use of earthly riches. Through Spurgeon's many publications he strived to provide a blueprint whereby godly men and women could root themselves in biblical truth pertaining to wealth.

Spurgeon immersed himself in social activism, establishing a truly benevolent ministry, founding outreach programs to reach those that were less fortunate in his community, and establishing educational programs including a college which he funded out of his own pocket at its inception. Spurgeon sacrificed so that others might be afforded free education, free books, clothing, and healthcare. He was involved in founding and funding the Stockwell Orphanage, which cared for hundreds of disadvantaged orphans throughout the country. He was involved in a number of ministries providing benevolence and believed that wealth was not to be hoarded but distributed back out into the community to help the needy.

A Combined Response to Misinterpreting Wealth

This dissertation has endeavored to contribute to both Spurgeon studies and Bible exposition as it pertains to wealth in a number of ways. First and foremost, it has presented the

first full examination of Spurgeon's handling of wealth. A number of studies have sought to engage Spurgeon's preaching and activism as it relates to his many benevolent ministries. Yet, the current research offers the first examination of the textual, theological, and pragmatic considerations that serve as the foundation for Spurgeon's approach to wealth. As such, this dissertation provides the most exhaustive study of this nature up to the present day.

While the content on Spurgeon's Christological approach to wealth and the content on interpretation may seem disconnected at first glance, they are actually closely related. Spurgeon's Christological approach to wealth is based on his interpretation of biblical texts, particularly those that deal with money and possessions. He believed that earthly wealth should be viewed primarily as a means of advancing God's kingdom, rather than as a divine right or a reward for obedience. This interpretation is rooted in his understanding of Christ as the ultimate example of selflessness and generosity. By focusing on Christology as a prime theme in his writings on wealth, Spurgeon was able to provide a theological framework for understanding how Christians should view and use their material resources. Thus, the content on Spurgeon's Christological approach to wealth and the content on interpretation are intimately connected, as one informs the other in shaping our understanding of biblical teachings on wealth.

This research offers key insights into Spurgeon's perception of the critical role that wealth plays both in the church and the life of the believer. The research has engaged and analyzed Spurgeon's approach to wealth examining his preaching, commentaries, autobiography, and a number of modern writings including obscure communications and lost sermons making it the very first study of its kind. In so doing, the dissertation proves to be one of the most complete contextual examinations of Spurgeon's approach to wealth. The paper offers another contribution to Spurgeon studies by fitting Spurgeon in the context of historical Romanism. While this study

is far from exhaustive as it pertains to the subject, it contributes significantly to understanding Spurgeon's approach to interpretation in the Victorian era. The information provided on Spurgeon's approach to wealth and placement in the historical development of Romanism will aid scholars as they endeavor to expand on these topics.

Spurgeon's work may serve to provide a framework to help others understand the problem of misinterpreting wealth through his teaching, preaching, and writing on the topic of wealth. He demonstrates a right understanding through his approach to the acquisition and distribution of wealth both in his ministry for the church and his personal life. Therefore, the framework is threefold. It involves Spurgeon's teachings, his acquisition and distribution of wealth through the church, and his personal handling of wealth. In his teaching, Spurgeon notes that God would not have His servants primarily seeking both physical wealth and spiritual wealth.⁶

He explains that God calls people away from the difficulties of this life to a peaceful and tranquil faith in Him. Spurgeon suggests that to live out one's life gathering earthly wealth without godly purpose would be "degrading" to the servant of God. He explains that earthly things decay or are eventually taken away. Spurgeon said, "to live for the sake of growing rich is a gilded death in life." He advises that one's desires and efforts should be directed toward heavenly things.⁷

These are things which will not decay, and they cannot be removed either by force or deception. He goes on to discuss "earthly possessions." Spurgeon explains that the money or treasure that is acquired on earth which is used for furthering the gospel will bring about increase

⁶ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew*, Mt 6:19.

⁷ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew*, Mt 6:19.

that will be laid up in heaven. He said, “What is given to the poor and to the Lord’s cause is deposited in the Bank of Eternity.” He describes the motivation for keeping one’s desires focused on the heavenly realm.⁸

Spurgeon said, “the heart must and will go in the direction of that which we count precious.” Individuals become a representation of that which they seek. He suggested that if our most prized possessions are earthly, then our heart will be bound to those possessions and will remain earthbound. He preached and taught about problems relating to the improper acquisition and distribution of wealth. He was a man of impeccable reputation. During his ministry Spurgeon was particularly careful with regards to the acquisition of wealth.⁹

His approach to the procurement of wealth was straight forward. This is evident in his teaching on usury. The topic of usury was one that became a profound economic concern during his lifetime. He suggested that the great Puritan scholars throughout history were virtually all against receiving interest in connection with the lending of money. Those that opposed his viewpoint were many, yet instead of confronting the opposition, he preferred to teach sound Bible hermeneutics and quote opinions from like-minded individuals.¹⁰

Spurgeon said, “The demanding of excessive and grinding interest is a sin to be detested.” He believed that lending to individuals in relation to those things that are needful was detestable to God. Spurgeon explained that in biblical times lending at interest was prohibited in Jewish communities even at the lowest rate when dealing with fellow farmers. This practice extended to areas of commerce within the covenant community.

⁸ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew*, Mt 6:20.

⁹ Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Expository Commentary on Matthew*, Mt 6:21.

¹⁰ Charles Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Spurgeon's Classic Work on the Psalms* (Grand Rapid, MI: Kregel Publications, 1968), Ps 15, Kindle.

Spurgeon was equally concerned about the distribution of wealth. While his concern for others was profound, his teaching was very different from those adhering to socialist philosophy. He taught that individual conversion was primary. When considering the multitude in Acts 4:32-37 Spurgeon said, “They loved each other so much that, if one was poor, his rich brothers helped him.” He went on to describe the blessed results of a brotherly love that brings about a godly distribution of wealth. He said of the early church, “They felt as if they were all fused into one body by the intense heat of love to Christ; and there are many, many, many similar cases now, (I speak what I do know,) in which believers have received help and succor, which they never would have had if it had not been for the name and love of Christ.” Spurgeon embraced and encouraged a biblical distribution of wealth. The church he oversaw was active in developing social programs for the needy, both collectively and on an individual basis.¹¹

Spurgeon lived what he taught. It has been estimated that he earned more than twenty-five million dollars during his lifetime. While he did live well, his accommodations were far below what his income could afford him. His wife, Susannah Spurgeon reported that he died with a relatively small estate leaving behind only two thousand pounds. Spurgeon died with little money to his name because of his well noted generosity. He gave almost perpetually providing for benevolent causes and charitable cases. On his deathbed, he continued to provide funds for benevolent purposes. His final act was to give money to the church as a “thankoffering.” It was to go toward the support of the church and its numerous ministries. Spurgeon’s last telegram read, “Self and wife, £100, hearty thankoffering towards Tabernacle General Expenses. Love to

¹¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Commentary on the New Testament: Spurgeon Commentary Series* (New Zealand: Titus Books, 2014), Acts 4:32-37, Kindle.

all Friends.” His secretary, Joseph Harold, wrote, “That was his last generous act, and his last message.”¹²

Spurgeon often encouraged others to be concerned with the heavenly riches that Christ spoke about. When one considers the passage of scripture found in Matthew 6:19-21 it becomes apparent that Christ was encouraging a financial system much different from the one found in modern day mainstream society. Christ commands His followers to abandon earthly wealth and store up treasures in the heavenly realm. Treasures in heaven appear to contrast those of the world. While the Bible points to spiritual blessings such as the pardon of sin, peace, Joy, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there are also the treasures that are reflected in the various crowns of reward promised to the believer. The treasures of heaven endure forever and maintain their luster for all of eternity.¹³

Spurgeon understood the partnership between churches in the gospel. His primary concern was reaching lost souls. He affirmed his stand when preaching on the text found in Isaiah 55:1 which proclaims, “Ho, every one that thirsteth. Come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Is 55:1). Spurgeon declared, “The gospel is not to be bought with gold; vein are your treasures if you should lavish them at the feet of Christ! What cares He for gold and silver? Neither are they to be procured by knowledge and wisdom, which are the minds wealth, the money of the soul.” Spurgeon believed that worldly knowledge would only carry an individual

¹² Alex J. DiPrima, "An Eagerness to be Up and Doing: The Evangelical Activism of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 119-120, In PROQUESTMS Religion Database, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdissertations-theses%2Feagerness-be-up-doing-evangelical-activism%2Fdocview%2F2465980128%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>.

¹³ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 9, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 344-347.

so far and that it could be a hindrance. He said, “A man may know much, but his knowledge may only puff him up, or increase his condemnation.”¹⁴

Spurgeon discouraged the social gospel while stating that individual Christians should acquire earthly wealth and use that wealth to bring glory to God. He believed that Christians could most impact society as a whole by sharing the gospel. One might trace much of what is wrong with adversely diverging groups of individuals within modern culture to what Spurgeon called “Theological Laxity.” He said, “We have toyed with the light and have forgotten the lightning.” While one may not agree with everything Spurgeon said or wrote, there is much truth at the core of his message. Perhaps, it is time to once again embrace Spurgeon’s style of ministry building and take hold of his approach to wealth. His ministry certainly attracted tremendous crowds and influenced a generation of believers. Spurgeon’s life serves as an example of what might be accomplished by individuals desiring to seek primarily to reach others with the truth of the gospel.¹⁵

Suggestions for Further Scholarly Inquiry Regarding Biblical Wealth

This dissertation is somewhat restricted in its scope. The research has sought to provide the first overall examination of Spurgeon’s approach to wealth. Therefore, a number of suggested paths for further research are recommended. A few scholars have explored Spurgeon’s social and political perspectives. Recent scholarship yielded by authors such as DiPrima,

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 20.

¹⁵ Willis B. Glover, “English Baptists at the Time of the Downgrade Controversy,” *Foundations* 1, no. 3 (July 1958): 41–51, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000664875&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

Kruppa, Meredith, and Perry have touched on Spurgeon's political, social, and evangelical perspectives.

However, a fuller and more nuanced treatment of Spurgeon's political, denominational, and interpretational views would be a wonderful addition to modern scholarship. Rather than a mere compilation of Spurgeon's activities, what is needed is an exhaustive synthesis of his approach to these matters. Specifically, what is needed is an exhaustive synthesis of Spurgeon's approach to translation and interpretation, how it came about, and its influence on Western culture from the Victorian era to the present. Spurgeon's ministries and benevolence have fetched considerable interest. A closer look at Spurgeon's financial engagement with these ministries and organizations would certainly contribute to the overall understanding of Spurgeon's approach to ministry and outreach.

This study has provided limited contextualization as it relates to Spurgeon's personal church finances. There is room for another scholar to build upon this study by comparing and contrasting Spurgeon's personal and professional approach to finance. One might look at Spurgeon's adherence and primary departures from both the financial consensus of Western culture during the Victorian era and the financial consensus of the biblical text. An investigation involving prominent pastors of the Victorian era comparing and contrasting their approach to usury may serve to help scholars better understand Spurgeon's approach to wealth, social justice, and benevolence.

Exploring Spurgeon's approach to biblical wealth touches on a number of critical points. Most importantly it highlights what it truly means to be a friend of God and a friend to the church. Paul highlights what it means to be a friend both in the church and to the church. His letters were saturated with Greco-Roman wisdom or ideals. One might observe Paul's

willingness to make cultural notations of friendship a principal means of relating the relationship between himself and the church. He presented Christ as the ideal friend and himself as Christ's retainer-friend. He described the relationship between Christians in much the same way that surrounding pagan cultures would describe their understanding of friendship. The Greco-Roman convictions about friendship are somewhat conspicuous. Spurgeon approached the matter in much the same way Paul did. His engagement with the culture around him is still relevant more than 100 years after his passing.¹⁶

Conclusion

There are a number of modern-day applications that could be made from Spurgeon's teachings on biblical wealth. The paper offers a unique look at some of the barriers that may cause a misrepresentation of the Bible text. The passage of Scripture found in Philippians 2:12-18 offers some keen insight into how one might deal with the acquisition and distribution of earthly wealth. Furthermore, it connects well with how the Bible expositor might rightly go about sharing the truth regarding this topic. First, the believer might do well to look out for others. Verses 1 through 11 highlight this thought. Christ is the model for all Christian life because He constantly thought of others and put them before Himself. Believers are encouraged to have the same servant attitude that Christ portrayed. Christians are urged to possess a willingness to sacrifice for others as Christ did. Believers are persuaded to develop a willingness to empty themselves so that others might be filled.¹⁷

¹⁶ George Lyons and William H Malas Jr., "Paul and His Friends within the Greco-Roman Context," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 42, no. 1 (Spr 2007): 50–69, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001619357&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁷ Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1991), Php 2:1.

Second, believers are encouraged to develop a willingness to work out God's plan. As people yield to the Lord, He begins to work in them. As a result, believers are able to work out God's plan for their life. God cannot shine through others until He is allowed to work through them. When the believer lets God have his way, they begin to be a light in the dark, or a runner holding forth the living word to a lost and hurting world. Third, Christians are prompted to acquire an eagerness to be poured out or give of themselves.¹⁸

Spurgeon cloaked himself in Christlike servitude. He taught others that giving was more blessed than receiving. He preached on this topic of giving when expounding on the text found in Philippians 1:21. This passage states, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain" (Phil 1:21). Spurgeon said, "I see many of you whose whole thoughts are engrossed with the things of earth. The mere giving of money, the amassing of wealth, seems to be your only object. I do not deny that you are liberal, I will not dare to say that you are not generous, and that your checkbook does not often bear the mark of some subscription for holy purposes." He recognized that there was some good intent. But he saw their failure in how they prioritized their earthly possessions over the people, places, and things of God. Spurgeon address this by stating, "I dare to say, after all, that you cannot in honesty say that you live holy for Christ. You know that when you go to your shop or your warehouse, you do not think, in doing business, that you are doing it for Christ."¹⁹

The illustration is that of the drink offering that was poured out on the altar in numbers 15:1-10. Paul was willing to pour out his very life for the Lord's sake. He was willing to give of himself for the church. More than that, he was willing to do it joyfully. Timothy and

¹⁸ Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary*, Php 2:1.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit, Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by C.H. Spurgeon*, vol. 3 (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), Kindle.

Epaphroditus had a similar attitude of service and sacrifice. They poured themselves out or gave of themselves to others. Spurgeon appeared to embody this teaching in that he seemed to strive to pour himself out for the church and give of himself to the people around him in a way that was jubilant and Christlike. His teaching on wealth as a spiritual commodity appeared to flow from Christ's heart into his heart and then out into the hearts of the people. His love for others was both contagious and empowering.²⁰

Table 1. Selected Approaches to Wealth

Approaches to Wealth	Conservative Approach	Regressed Approach	Simple Approach
Definitions	Those that hold to the Conservative Approach lean toward the belief that biblical wealth has to do primarily with the things eternal rather than earthly riches. Furthermore, those taking up this view believe that prosperity is not a guaranteed result of obedience to God and His commands.	Those that hold to the Regressed Approach are those that lean toward the view that biblical wealth primarily refers to riches including large possessions of money, goods, or land, and that health and earthly riches are a direct result of obedience to God and His commands.	Those that hold to the Simple Approach are those that lean toward the view that biblical wealth is not restricted primarily to any given definition. They believe that prosperity may or may not be contingent upon obedience to God and His commands. They consider themselves to be amendable.

²⁰ Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary*, Php 2:1.

Key Proponents	Charles H. Spurgeon, Craig Bloomberg, Randy Richards, and Keven Vanhoozer,	Dave Ramsey, Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen, Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, and Kenneth Hagin	Bart Erhman, Richard Carrier, and Francesca Stavrakopoulou.
Central Verses/Supports	Matthew 6:19-20, 1 Timothy 6:10-11, Hebrews 13:5, Luke 12:15	Malichi 3:8-10, Luke 6:38, Proverbs 3:9-10	Proverbs 14:15, Proverbs, 1:32, Romans 16:18

Source: Data adapted from, *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2009).

^a Item Placement data was produced by the subject dissertation paper author and copyright owner.

Table 2. Selected Terms Analyzed

Terms Indexed	Sermons Available for Each Term	Primary Text	Primary Use of Key Terms
Wealth: In the Old Testament it is referenced 85 times in 52 articles. From the Hebrew words הוֹן (<i>hôn</i>) and הַיִּל (<i>hayil</i>) used primarily in	Profit and Loss The Prosperous Man's Redeemer The Profit of Godliness in this Life	Mark 8:36 Hosea 8:5-8 1 Timothy 4:8-9	Profit: 5623. ὠφελέω <i>ōpheleō</i> ; from 3786; <i>to help, benefit, do good.</i> Reap: 7114b. קָצַר <i>qatsar</i> (894b); a prim. root; <i>to reap, harvest.</i>

<p>two forms. Referenced 9 times as הֶון (<i>hôn</i>) meaning “enough,” “riches,” “substance,” or “wealth.” Referenced another 9 times as הַיִל (<i>hayil</i>) meaning “forces;” “riches,” “substance,” or “wealth.” In the New Testament it is from the Greek word <i>mamōnás</i> meaning “wealth” or “mammon.” Referenced only by Christ in the New Testament signifying “property” or “earthly goods” and always used in a derogatory manner relating to materialistic, anti-godly, or sinful behavior.</p>	The Fourfold Treasure	1 Corinthians 1:30-31	Profiteth: 5624. ὠφέλιμος <i>ōphelimos</i> ; from 5623; <i>useful, profitable</i> .
	The Treasure of Grace	Ephesians 1:7	Glory: 2744. καυχάομαι <i>kauchaomai</i> ; of unc. or.; to boast.
	Ask and Have	James 4:2-3	Riches: 4149. πλοῦτος <i>ploutos</i> ; prob. from 4126 in an early sense of <i>to flow, abound; wealth</i> .
	The Profit of Godliness in the Life to Come	1 Timothy 4:8	Obtain: 2013. ἐπιτυγχάνω <i>epitugchanō</i> ; from 1909 and 5177; <i>to light upon, i.e. to obtain</i> .
	God our Portion and His Word Our Treasure	Psalms 119:57	Profiteth: 5624. ὠφέλιμος <i>ōphelimos</i> ; from 5623; <i>useful, profitable</i> .
	The Exceeding Riches of Grace	Ephesians 2:7	Portion: 2506. חֵלֶק <i>cheleq</i> (324a); from 2505a; <i>portion, tract, territory</i> .
	Possessing Possessions	Obadiah 1:17	Riches: 4149. πλοῦτος <i>ploutos</i> ; prob. from 4126 in an early sense of <i>to flow, abound; wealth</i> .
	Taking Possession of Our Inheritance	Joshua 1:2-3	Possessions: 4180. מְרֹשָׁה <i>morash</i> (440c); from 3423; <i>a possession</i> .
	Obtaining Promises	Hebrews 11:33	Give: 5414. נָתַן <i>nathan</i> (678a); a prim. root; <i>to give, put, set</i> .
	Filling Empty Vessels	Philippians 4:19	Promises: 1860. ἐπαγγελία <i>epaggelia</i> ; from 1861; <i>a summons, a promise</i> .
			Riches: 4149. πλοῦτος <i>ploutos</i> ; prob. from 4126

	The Fullness of Christ the Treasury of the Saints	John 1:16	in an early sense of <i>to flow, abound; wealth.</i>
	Poverty and Riches	2 Corinthians 8:9	Fulness: 4138. πλήρωμα plērōma; from 4137; <i>fullness, a filling up.</i>
	Christ's Poverty Our Riches	2 Corinthians 8:9	Rich: 4145. πλούσιος plousios; from 4149; <i>wealthy.</i>
	Zion's Prosperity	Psalms 102:13-14	Rich: 4145. πλούσιος plousios; from 4149; <i>wealthy.</i>
	The Overflowing Cup	Psalms 23:5	Favour: 2603a. נָחַן chanan (335d); a prim. root; <i>to show favor, be gracious.</i>
	Farm laborers	1 Corinthians 3:6-7	Goodness: 2896a. טוֹב tob (373c); from 2895 <i>pleasant, agreeable, good.</i>
	Harvest Joy	Isaiah 9:3	Reward: 3408. μισθός misthos; a prim. word; <i>wages, hire.</i>
	More and More, or Less and Less	Matthew 13:12	Spoil: 7998. שָׁלַל shalal (1021d); from 7997b; <i>a prey, spoil, plunder, booty.</i>
	Prosperity Under Persecution	Exodus 1:10-12	Given: 1325. דָּדַם didōmi redupl. from the root דָּן do-; <i>to give</i> (in various senses lit. or fig.).
	The Filling of Empty Vessels	2 Kings 4:3	Multiplied: 7235a. רָבָה rabah (915a); a prim. root; <i>to be or become much, many or great:</i>
	Peace at Home and Prosperity Abroad	Psalms 147:14-15 Isaiah 53:10	Full: 4392. מָלֵא male (570d); from 4390; <i>full.</i> Filleth: 7646. שָׁבַע saba or שָׁבַע saba (959b); a prim.

	Unmitigated Prosperity	Job 8:7	root; <i>to be sated, satisfied</i> or <i>surfeited</i> .
	The Beginning Increase, and End of the Divine Life	2 Corinthians 8:9	Prosper: 6743a. תִּלָּץ tsalach (852b); a prim. root; <i>to rush</i> .
	Condescending Love of Jesus	John 14:2	Increase: 7685. נִגַּץ sagah (960d); a prim. root; <i>to grow, increase</i> .
	Heaven's Preparations	John 4:35	Rich: 4145. πλούσιος plousios; from 4149; <i>wealthy</i> .
	The Harvest of Souls		Mansions: 3438. μονή monē; from 3306; <i>an abiding, an abode</i> .
			Harvest: 2326. θερισμός therismos; from 2325; <i>harvest</i> .
Money: In the Old Testament it is referenced 62 times in 42 articles. From the Hebrew word used primarily in one form. Referenced 9 times as מֹהָר (mōhar) meaning “wedding money” or “bride price.” In the New Testament it is from the Greek	Buying Without Money	Isaiah 55:1	Money: 3701. כֶּסֶף keseph (494a); from 3700; <i>silver, money</i> .
	Without Money and Without Price	Isaiah 55:1	Price: 4242. מְכִיר mechir (564b); from the same as 4279; <i>price, hire</i> .
	The Lost Silver Piece	Luke 15:8-10	Piece: 1406. δραχμή drachmē; from 1405; <i>as much as one can hold in the hand, a drachma</i> (a Gr. coin made of silver).
	Silver Sockets: or, Redemption to Foundation	Exodus 30:11-16	Money: 3701. כֶּסֶף keseph (494a); from 3700; <i>silver, money</i> .
	A Free Salvation		

word <i>chrēma</i> meaning “matter,” “affair,” “amount,” or “sum” (of money). In the plural meaning “objects of value,” “wealth,” or “capitol.”	The Servants of the Ten Pounds	<i>Isaiah 55:1</i>	Money: 3701. קֶסֶף keseph (494a); from 3700; <i>silver, money</i> .
	The Best Donation	<i>Luke 19:12-13</i> <i>2 Corinthians 8:5</i>	Pounds/Money: 694. ἀργύριον argurion; from 696; <i>silvery</i> , by ext. <i>a piece of silver</i> .
	The Two Talents	<i>Matthew 25:22-23</i>	Gave: 1325. δίδωμι didōmi; redupl. from the root δο- do-; <i>to give</i> (in various senses lit. or fig.).
	Unpurchasable Love	<i>Song of Solomon 8:7</i>	Talent: 5007. τάλαντον talanton; from a prim. root; <i>a balance</i> , hence <i>that which is weighed</i> , i.e. <i>a talent</i> (about 3000 shekels in weight, cf. [3603]).
	A Lesson and a Fortune of Christian Men of Business	<i>Hebrews 13:5</i>	Substance: 1952. ἡὺν hon (223c); from 1951; <i>wealth, sufficiency</i> .
	Unprofitable Servants	<i>Matthew 25:30</i>	Content: 714. ἀρκέω arkeō; a prim. vb.; <i>to assist, suffice</i> .
	The Wise Men’s Offering	<i>Matthew 2:11</i>	Unprofitable: 888. ἀχρεῖος achreios; from <i>I</i> (as a neg. pref.) and χρεῖος chreios (<i>useful</i>); <i>useless</i> .
	The Improvement of our Talents	<i>Matthew 25:19</i>	Treasuries: 2344. θησαυρός thēsauros; from the same as 5087 and a prim. root αυρ- aur-; <i>treasure</i> : Talent: 5007. τάλαντον talanton; from a prim. root; <i>a balance</i> , hence <i>that which is weighed</i> , i.e. <i>a talent</i> (about 3000 shekels in weight, cf. [3603]).

<p>Blessing: In the Old Testament it is referenced 352 times in 197 articles. From the Hebrew word used primarily in one form. Referenced 77 times as בְּרָכָה (<i>bērākā</i>) meaning either “a verbal endowment of good things” or “a collective expression for the good things awarded.” In the New Testament it is from the Greek word <i>eulogia</i>. meaning “to speak well of” or “bless.” Heavily influence by the Old Testament usage. Its rendering in Greek literature is “speaking well,” yielding “to extol.” In addition, there is also the rendering “advocacy” in the papyri.</p>	The Jewel of Peace	2 Thessalonians 3:16	Give: 1325. δίδωμι <i>didōmi</i> ; redupl. from the root δο- <i>do-</i> ; <i>to give</i> (in various senses lit. or fig.).
	Three Precious Things	1 Peter 2:7; 2 Peter 1:4; 2 Peter 1:1	Precious: 5092. τιμή <i>timē</i> ; akin to τίω <i>tiō</i> (<i>to value, honor</i>); <i>a valuing, a price</i> :
	Blessings for Blessing	Ephesians 1:3-4	Blessings: 2129. εὐλογία <i>eulogia</i> ; from the same as 2127; <i>praise, blessing</i> .
	The Lord hath Blessed	Joshua 17:14	Portion: 2256a. חֶבֶל <i>chebel</i> (286c); from 2254a; <i>cord, territory, band</i> .
	The Blessing of the High Priest	Numbers 6:22-27	Bless: 1288. בָּרַךְ <i>barak</i> (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless</i> .
	The Wide-open Mouth Filled	Psalm 81:10	Fill: 4390. מָלֵא <i>male</i> or מָלֵא <i>mala</i> (569d); a prim. root; <i>to be full, to fill</i> .
	Opening the Mouth	Psalm 81:10	Fill: 4390. מָלֵא <i>male</i> or מָלֵא <i>mala</i> (569d); a prim. root; <i>to be full, to fill</i> .
	The Lord Blessing His Saints	Psalm 115:15	Blessed: 1288. בָּרַךְ <i>barak</i> (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless</i> .
	Jesus: All Blessing and All Blest	Psalm 72:17	Blessed: 1288. בָּרַךְ <i>barak</i> (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless</i> .
	The Pastors Parting Blessing	Romans 16:24	Grace: 5485. χάρις <i>charis</i> ; a prim. word; <i>grace, kindness</i> .

	The Blessings of Public Worship	Luke 18:10	Exalted: 5312. ὑψόω hupsoō; from 5311; <i>to lift or raise up, to exalt, uplift.</i>
	Thou art now the Blessed or the Lord	Genesis 26:29	Blessed: 1288. בָּרַךְ barak (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless.</i>
	Believers as Blessed as the Blessed Virgin	Luke 11:27-28	Blessed: 3107. μακάριος makarios; from μάκαρ makar (<i>happy</i>); <i>blessed, happy.</i>
	Three Blessings of the Heavenly Charter	Job 10:12	Favour: 2617a. חֶסֶד chesed (338c); from 2616a; <i>goodness, kindness.</i>
	The Blessings of Following on	Hosea 6:3	Goodness: 2617a. חֶסֶד chesed (338c); from 2616a; <i>goodness, kindness.</i>
	Abrahams Double Blessing	Genesis 12:2	Bless: 1288. בָּרַךְ barak (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless.</i>
	Covenant Blessings	Psalms 111:5	Given: 5414. נָתַן nathan (678a); a prim. root; <i>to give, put, set.</i>
	Retrospect – “The Lord Hath Blessed”	Joshua 17:14	Blessed: 1288. בָּרַךְ barak (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless.</i>
	The Wholeheartedness of God in Blessing His People	Jeremiah 32:41	Good: 2896a. טוֹב tob (373c); from 2895; <i>pleasant, agreeable, good.</i>
	The Hunger and Thirst Which are Blessed	Matthew 5:6	Blessed: 3107. μακάριος makarios; from μάκαρ makar (<i>happy</i>); <i>blessed, happy.</i>
	The Blessing of Full Assurance	1 John 5:13	Give/Given: 1325. δίδωμι didōmi; redupl. from the root δο- do-; <i>to give</i> (in various senses lit. or fig.).

	Blessed Discipline	Psalm 94:12-15	Blessed: 835. אֶשֶׁר esher (80d); from 833; <i>happiness, blessedness</i> . ²¹
	God the Father of Lights	James 1:17	Gift: 1394. δόσις dosis; from 1325; <i>the act of giving, a gift</i> :
	The Curse and the Blessings	Proverbs 3:33	Blesseth: 1288. בָּרַךְ barak (138c); a prim. root; <i>to kneel, bless</i> .

Source: Data adapted from, *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2009).

^a Terms Indexed Greek rendering data adapted from, Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Translation of: Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament., (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995, c1985).

^b Terms Indexed Hebrew rendering data adapted from, R. Laird Harris, Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999).

^c Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermon data adapted from, C. H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit: Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon*, vol. 7-63 (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1969), Kindle.

^d New Park Street Pulpit Sermon data adapted from, C. H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit, Containing Sermons Preached and Revised by C.H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1-63 (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, 1981), Kindle.

^e Lost Sermon data adapted from, C. H. Spurgeon and Christian T. George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume I: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. 1-2 (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017), Kindle.

^f Primary use of key terms rendering data adapted from, Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998).

^g Terms indexed and primary use of key terms placement data was produced by the subject dissertation paper author and copyright owner.

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