

Redemption 304: Priesthood & the Kinsman Redeemer



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Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer

Addendum: Alms-Giving

Section four above documents New Testament instructions for Christians to be involved in daily, intercessory prayer as a part of our priestly service in the New Covenant. Some of the passages discussed above indicated that financial support and giving to those in need were considered to be related to priestly service. In this addendum, we will explore in more detail the biblical indications of the necessity of charitable service and giving with regard to the New Testament priesthood and offering effective prayers.

In the section above, we mentioned 2 Corinthians 9:12 and Philippians 4:18. Both passages speak of charitable giving to those in need in terms of priestly service and acceptable sacrifices to God. The reference to acceptable sacrifices in Philippians 4:18 particularly infers the idea that such alms-giving is an important component of having our prayers heard by God. Below are the quotes from section four above pertaining to these two verses.

“2 Corinthians 9:12 refers to financial support given by the Corinthians church to other Christians using the same Greek word “leitourgia” (3009) that is used in Luke 1:23 to refer to John the Baptist’s father Zacharias’ performing the “tamiyd” offering in the Temple. In this way, we can see that Christians sharing with one another may parallel the gift offerings or other types of offerings from the Law of Moses... Similar to 2 Cor. 9:12, Philippians 4:18 refers to the material support received from another church. In this case the Philippians were providing support to Paul. In verse 18, Paul refers to their support as a sweet smell and sacrifice again using the Greek word for sacrifice (2378, “thusia”) that he uses in Romans 12:1. Here in Philippians 4:18 we see Paul again using the word “eaurestos” (2101) to refer to priestly service of New Testament saints.”

(Notice that the Greek word, “eaurestos” means “wellpleasing” or “acceptable.” Consequently, Paul may be connecting the idea of supplying others’ needs to the specific kind of priestly service that God accepts and, by extension, what is necessary for our intercessory prayers to be heard.)

To trace the connection between alms-giving, priestly service, and effective prayer a bit further, we will begin with a look at New Testament words related to charitable service and giving. The first Greek term we will look up is the word

commonly translated as “alms” in the New Testament. This word is the Greek noun “eleemosune” (1654.) As the definition below indicates “alms” conveys the idea of charitable giving to those in need.

1654 ελεημοσυνη **eleemosune**

from 1656; TDNT-2:485,222; n f

AV-**alms 13, almsdeeds 1; 14**

1) mercy, pity

1a) esp. as **exhibited in giving alms, charity**

2) **the benefaction itself, a donation to the poor, alms**

The Greek noun “eleemosune” (1654) comes from another Greek noun “eleos” (1656) which is always translated into the English word “mercy” throughout the New Testament. Both of these Greek words speak of charitable work and giving towards those who are in need.

1656 ελεος **eleos**

of uncertain affinity; TDNT-2:477,222; n n

AV-**mercy 28; 28**

1) **mercy: kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them**

1a) **of men towards men: to exercise the virtue of mercy**, show one’s self merciful

1b) of God towards men: in general providence; the mercy and clemency of God in providing and offering to men salvation by Christ

1c) the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life

For Synonyms see entry 5913

As the lexical entry for synonyms for “eleos” (1656) indicates, the Greek word “eleos” doesn’t simply refer to emotional support, sympathetic feelings, and pity. Instead, “eleos” is contrasted with the other Greek word for mercy (“oktirmos,” 3628) on the basis that “eleos” manifests itself through actions rather than just words.

5913

Mercy, compassion.

See definition for ελεος 1656

See definition for οκτιρμος 3628

Both words denote sympathy, fellow-feeling with misery, mercy, compassion. ελεος, however, manifests itself chiefly in acts rather than words, while οκτιρμος is used rather of the inward feeling of compassion which abides in the heart. A criminal might ask for ελεος, mercy, from his judge; but hopeless suffering may be the object of οκτιρμος, compassion.

The first reference to “alms” (“eleemosune” 1654) in the New Testament occurs in Matthew 6:1. In this single passage, we find Jesus giving instructions for both alms-giving (verses 1-4), prayer (verses 5-13), forgiveness (v. 14-15), and fasting

(v. 16-18). We can see the connections Jesus drew between these actions as he explained that if we do these things unto God in secret, God will reward us (v. 4 and 18). As he continues, Jesus also discusses the need to lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven (v. 19-20). The presumption is that we do so through these actions which he has just been instructing his disciples about. We will continue to see these same elements (alms-giving, prayer, and fasting) coupled together in the New Testament's discussion of our priestly service to God and the idea of effective prayer (prayers which are acceptable to and answered by God). (For additional reference, Luke 12:33-34 provides a brief parallel account of some of these same teachings.)

The next important reference to alms-giving (1654) in the New Testament occurs in Acts 10. Here we have the important account of the conversion of the first Gentiles to come to faith in Christ. It is critical to note that God singled out Cornelius and his household to receive the Holy Spirit on the basis of Cornelius' daily prayer and alms-giving to the poor (Acts 10:1-4, 30-31). These passages indicate the importance of alms-giving in terms of being Christ's disciple, receiving the Holy Spirit, and having our prayers heard and answered by God.

In addition, if we look up the Greek word "eleos" (1656) in the New Testament, we first come to Matthew 9:13 and 12:7, where Jesus quotes from Hosea 6:6 to instruct us that God desires mercy more than sacrifice. Both Matthew and Hoses connect with the New Testament's identification of charitable works with Old Testament offerings which are part of our priestly service in the New Covenant. Later in Matthew 23:23, Jesus chastises the scribes and Pharisees for leaving more important matters of the Law undone. Among these more important matters, Jesus specifically denotes "eleos" or charitable work for those in need.

In Luke 6:38, Jesus speaks about giving and explains that our receiving from God is based on the measure with which we give to others. The concept here is commonly understood, but the idea is that if we want to receive from God regarding our prayers and needs, then we need to exhibit that same behavior ourselves and give to others who are in need.

Elsewhere the gospels continue to connect being Christ's disciple with giving to those in need. Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, and Luke 18:18-30 record the account of the young ruler who had kept the commandments all his life. And yet he is said to not be perfect because he did not give to the poor even though he had great wealth. Afterwards, the disciples remark that, unlike this young ruler, they had given up all these things to follow Christ. Christ responds to this by again explaining that they will receive based on their having been willing to give up these things that the young ruler would not. In the context, Jesus is talking about giving to the poor. Likewise, the concept of being perfect is repeated in Matthew 5:48, where Jesus instructs his followers to be perfect even as God is perfect. This is the verse which immediately precedes Matthew 6:1 where Jesus instructs his followers regarding alms-giving, prayer, and fasting. In this way, we again see the connection of these activities.

Furthermore, just before he discusses the topic of asking and receiving (James 4:2-3) in his epistle, the apostle James touches on godly wisdom which is full of mercy and good fruit and without hypocrisy (James 3:17). Earlier in his epistle James mentions the idea of being double-minded (which seems potentially relatable to hypocrisy) as prohibitive of asking and receiving (James 1:3-11). In these verses, James reflects on Jesus' instruction for us to be "perfect," the same term already associated with alms by Jesus in Matthew 5:48-6:1 and Matthew 19. James continues this discussion of being perfect with a contrast to hypocrisy (double-mindedness), which he then connects with the ability to ask and receive from God. Immediately following these comments, James mentions the exaltation of the poor and the decreasing of the rich. This juxtaposition of the elevation of the poor and the lowering of the rich itself brings to mind 2 Corinthians 8:8-16. In this passage, Paul's quotes Exodus 16:18, which says, "he that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack" (2 Corinthians 8:16). Such language is even reminiscent of James initial phrase "wanting nothing." 2 Corinthians 8 is clearly a discussion of the church sharing its resources so that the wealth of the rich is given to the poor "that there may be equality" (2 Corinthians 8:14), which again very much seems to relate to James' comments. Likewise, while James speaks of such things as a "trying of your faith," Paul speaks of such charity as proving their love. It would seem that both men are talking about the general Christian teaching that mature Christians must care for the needs of the poor in order for their faith and love to be counted as complete and mature by God.

James concludes his discussion of these matters in his epistle by speaking of the effective prayers of the righteous and comparing this to Elijah (James 4:16-18). And in James 2:14-18, James explains that mere words without action do not profit us. In verse 15-16, he uses help for the poor as an example. If we do not actually act to help those in need, there is no value to us or to them in our words. If we are in faith, then we must act. We must not be hearers of the word only, but doers (Romans 2:13, James 1:22). Faith in Christ means following his instructions. And those instructions include caring for those in need, not just in words, but in deeds. According to James, such faith mixed with deeds (including charity) are necessary in order for our prayers to be effective.

In addition, Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4 recount the story of the widow who gave her last two cents into the Temple treasury. Despite the fact that the rich people gave so much more than this poor widow, Jesus explains that what she gave was more significant because it was a sacrifice for her to do so. The rich on, the other hand, only gave out of the extra that they didn't really need. This implies that if we want God to regard our giving, we must not always restrict such giving and service to what is comfortable or convenient to our lives. (While commenting on this incident with the widow in Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4, we should note the contrast to Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47 in which Jesus uses very strong condemning language to say that those who "devour" or "use up" widow's houses, wealth, or property will receive "greater damnation.")

Similarly, in Luke 14:13-15, Jesus instructs his disciples to feed the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. Because such persons cannot repay us for this kindness, God will repay us in the resurrection. Luke 19 records the account of Zacchaeus the tax collector. Verses 8-9 explain that Jesus knew that Zacchaeus had repented of his greed because of his pledge to repay those he'd stolen from and to give half of his goods to the poor.

As a result of these teachings, the New Testament church continued to make sure that those in need were cared for among them. In Romans 15:26 we learn that the saints in Macedonia and Achaia sent aid to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Likewise, in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul discusses the giving of the Corinthians to those in need in Jerusalem. He speaks of the need to give willingly and cheerfully (v. 7) and connects this to God providing for our needs (v. 8-12) and to prayer (v. 13-14). Again, verse 12 is the where we find Paul using the Greek word "leitourgia" (3009) which refers to "a service or ministry of the priests relative to the prayers and sacrifices offered to God" as first seen in Luke 1:23. In Galatians 2:10, Paul mentions the importance that he and the other apostles placed on remembering the poor. Finally, in 1 John 3:22, John explains that if we keep Christ's commandments, we will receive when we petition God. This relates to all of Jesus commands, but it also includes his commands regarding the need and importance of charitable works and giving.

Another interesting facet of New Testament charity that deserves note is that it does not include giving to our biological family or close relatives. 1 Timothy 5:3-16 discusses the necessity to care for widows, an activity that was generally associated with the church's communal living and charitable almsgiving from the beginning (Acts 6:1). In verse 16, Paul distinguishes the church's communal living and almsgiving from an individual taking care of a widow in their own biological family. Paul includes children (whether male or female), nieces or nephews, etc. (v. 4, 16) in the group he deems to have obligations to care for a widow in the family. Paul makes this sentiment even more clear when he states in the midst of this passage (v. 8) that "if any provide not for his own and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" or unbeliever. Once again, we find very strong condemning language. The phrase "his own and specially those of his own house" implies that this rule is not restricted to only those living in a man's own house but to any who are "his own," which is to say, "his own family." The church, by contrast, was a family comprised of people who took care of one another despite not being related by blood.

(NOTE: Beginning in the gospels, the New Testament places an emphasis on our obligations to our Christian "family" and breaks down obligations we have to non-believers or unrepentant persons among our biological family. For more on this topic see our study on "The Importance of the Family." Likewise, the New Testament provides instructions regarding our separation from unrepentant Christians who have been excommunicated as well as from unsaved persons. For more on this see our "Unity and Excommunication" study. Within the context of New Testament teaching on these matters, 1 Tim. 5 is not requiring us to provide

for unbelieving or unrepentant biological family members. If we have unbelieving or unrepentant family members, presumably we are not in contact with such persons. On the other hand, so long as we remain in contact and relationship with biological family members having not deemed them to be unbelievers or excommunicable, then Paul is obligating us to care for their material and financial needs. And as indicated above, this kind of obligatory care for members of our family is here distinguished from the kind of voluntary, charitable giving that is associated with giving to our non-biological, Christian family and the poor.)

Lastly, these New Testament concepts of effective prayer coupled with almsgiving and fasting are paralleled in the Old Testament as well. There are a few Old Testament passages on this topic which we will discuss next.

Daniel 9 contains the account of God's answering Daniel's prayer. According to the text of the chapter, Daniel was not only praying and asking God for forgiveness, but like Cornelius in Acts 10, Daniel was fasting (v. 3). Daniel 9 connects to Isaiah 58:1-14 where the prophet Isaiah discusses the kind of fast that God desires. According to Isaiah 58, the kind of fast God desires is not so much concerned with simply depriving ourselves (v. 5). Rather if we wish to have our voice heard on high (that is, in heaven, v. 4) we should do charitable works to those in need, feed the hungry, shelter the poor (v. 6-7). If we do these things God will answer when we cry out to him. (Such language parallels the idea of the widow crying out for justice in Luke 18 and the martyred saints in Revelation 6.)

Isaiah 58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and **shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.** **2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways,** as a nation that did righteousness, **and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.** **3 Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.** **4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate,** and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high. **5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?** **6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,** and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. **9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; 10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: 11**

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: **and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.** 12 **And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.** 13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Earlier in Isaiah, God explains that he will no longer hear the prayers of this people or accept their sacrifices and offerings because they neglected to help the widows, the oppressed, the fatherless, and the poor.

Isaiah 1:10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. 11 **To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD:** I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. 12 **When ye come to appear before me,** who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? 13 **Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me;** the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting. 14 Your new moons and **your appointed feasts my soul hateth:** they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*. 15 **And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear:** your hands are full of blood. 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 **Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.** 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 **If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:** 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Similar statements are reflected throughout the Old and New Testaments beginning with Deuteronomy where we find God instructing his people to care for the poor, the widows, and the fatherless.

Deuteronomy 14:28 At the end of three years **thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:** 29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) **and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.**

Deuteronomy 16:11 And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there... **14** And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* within thy gates.

Deuteronomy 26:12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and hast given *it* unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; **13** Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, **I have brought away the hallowed things out of *mine* house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me:** I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten *them*: **14** I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away *ought* thereof for *any* unclean use, nor given *ought* thereof for the dead: *but* I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, *and* have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. **15** Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Jeremiah 5:28 They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. **29** Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Jeremiah 7:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, **2** Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, **Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.** **3** Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and **I will cause you to dwell in this place.** **4** Trust ye not in lying words, saying, **The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.** **5** For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; **if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour;** **6** *If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,* and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: **7** **Then will I cause you to dwell in this place,** in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

Jeremiah 22:1 Thus saith the LORD; Go down to **the house of the king of Judah,** and speak there this word, **2** And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: **3** Thus saith the LORD; **Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor:**

and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For **if ye do this thing indeed**, then shall there enter in by **the gates of this house kings** sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people. 5 But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that **this house shall become a desolation**.

Zechariah 7:9 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, **Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:** 10 **And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor;** and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. 11 **But they refused to hearken**, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. 12 Yea, they made their hearts *as* an adamant stone, **lest they should hear the law**, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: **therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts**. 13 Therefore it is come to pass, *that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear*, saith the LORD of hosts: 14 **But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations** whom they knew not. **Thus the land was desolate after them**, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

Psalms 82:1 God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. 2 **How long will ye judge unjustly**, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. 3 **Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy**. 4 **Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked**. 5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course. 6 I have said, Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

In the New Testament we find passages such as Matthew 23:23 chastising the Pharisees in direct connection with Isaiah 1:17.

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and **have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith**: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

We also find these ideas in Matthew 25 where Jesus again prioritizes the need for his followers to help the poor, the sick, and the needy.

Matthew 25:31 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: 32 **And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:** 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 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: 35 **For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 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. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**

Conclusions on Alms-Giving

Throughout all of these passages similar themes are presented. If we want to have God receive us, answer our prayers, and respond to our needs, we need to do charitable works ourselves to those in need around us. This is the kind of fasting God desires. If we fail to do these things, then God will not hear our prayers or provide for us according to our needs and our petitions. The priestly service that God asks and expects from us includes daily intercession and prayer as well as charitable works and giving to those in need. If we neglect these things then God will not accept our service, answer our prayers, or respond to our needs. We must mirror the behavior we ask God for. If we want God to take action and help us in our needs and to hear our prayers and help those we pray for, we must first be willing ourselves to take action to do what we can to help others who are in need.