A Biblical Perspective on Wealth, Poverty and Prosperity; Concluding with Reference to Mission and Economic Justice in the Brazilian Context

Terry Lockyer, Latin Link, Brazil

Creation as Good

In Genesis Chapter 1 God declares creation 'good' no less than seven times. [1] These declarations indicate both “the perfection of creation and its conformity to divine will” [2] and whilst no direct conclusion can be drawn from them in relation to manufactured goods, [3] they indicate that the material world itself cannot be declared evil as other Ancient Near Eastern Cultures held. [4] In its original sinless state creation was inheritably good and according to Genesis 2:15, man was placed within this “perfect environment,” Eden, to work and take care of it. [5]

Despite the requirement to work, however, there is no indication that in Eden this work was arduous or that it ever resulted in poverty, exploitation or shortage. As such, it is reasonable to assume that afflictions such as these resulted from the Fall and sin’s entrance into the world. For, as Johnson concludes “disobedience leads to broken relationships, and greater pain in our experience of life.” [6]

God’s Promise to Abraham

With the call of Abraham, God launched His plan of redemption by instructing Abraham to leave his father’s household, his people, and his country (Gen. 12:1-3). [7] At the same time God promised Abraham that his descendants would be a great nation who would possess Canaan (12:7, 15:7), a land later described as ‘flowing with milk and honey’ as an expression of its abundance (Ex. 3:8).

Although Abraham never saw the complete fulfilment of this promise, as he never lived permanently in the Promised Land, for the most part Abraham and his descendants were blessed with abundance, materially (Gen. 13:2, 24:34-35).

Yet, despite this blessing, it is difficult to suggest that either their material abundance always resulted from their faithfulness to God, or that the lack of it always correlated directly to their unfaithfulness. Abraham’s acquisition of livestock and slaves in Egypt as a result of lying (Gen. 12:10-20), and Joseph’s attempt to do right which resulted in his unjust, and presumably impoverished, imprisonment (Gen. 39), are sufficient evidence that such a direct parallel cannot, and should not, be drawn. [8]
The Mosaic Law

During the wilderness years the Israelites were completely dependent on God. Each morning when they arose they found manna on the ground. During the same period, neither their clothes wore out (Deut. 8:4) nor did they lack anything (Ne. 9:21). It is therefore reasonable to assume that in the wilderness none should have gone without, or fallen into poverty.

With the introduction of the Torah came an attempt to regulate the life of a chosen, yet sinful people, who were to move from the above system to living in the Promised Land of abundance. The basic rule was that if they obeyed God’s Law, which included specific instructions in relation to finances and the use of property, they would enjoy God’s blessing in the form of prosperity, and freedom from illness (Deut. 6:1-3, 7:12-15). [9]

However, as the stark words of Deuteronomy 15 indicate, this would almost certainly never be the case. Whilst verse 4 portrays God’s ideal, “that there should be no poor among you”, verses 7-11 acknowledge God’s acute awareness that Israel would never fully obey the Law in the socio-economic realm, and thus there would always be poor among them. God commanded that such poor must be treated open-handedly (v.11) [10], the specific details of which the Law would subsequently spell out.

The Land

Despite God’s curse on the land after the Fall (Gen. 3:17-19), in the predominantly agricultural world of the Old Testament, land was essential to life. Its loss or infertility [11] could spell disaster. It is, therefore, not surprising that fertile land was considered a blessing, [12] nor that on entering the Promised Land God should instruct that it be divided fairly among the clans (Num. 26:52-56). This action ensured that each family, independent of social standing, had land and a Divine right to it. Despite the right however, the Israelites could never consider the land fully theirs to do with as they pleased. They were, at best, only ever tenants of that which God owned and as such were required to obey His commands in relation to it (Lev. 25:23, Ps. 24:1).

God Commands Days and Years of Rest and Restoration

Once a week on the Sabbath the Israelites and their households were commanded to rest (Ex. 23:12). Every seventh year, the Sabbatical year, the land was to be un-worked beyond collecting what grew naturally (Ex. 23:10), and every fifty years was to be a Jubilee year, during which time the land was to be returned to those to whom it had originally been allotted (Lev. 25:1ff).

As Blomberg rightly observes, such laws effectively limited the accumulation of material wealth by reducing the time available for work. [13] Work, though present in Eden and encouraged afterwards (Pr.12:11), was never to become an idol. Furthermore, even though some families would certainly fare economically better than others over time, the principles and practices of the sabbatical and Jubilee years should have ensured that these differences
never became excessive, as a continual system of redemption and redistribution should have operated. Periodically debts were to be cancelled (Deut. 15:1-18), slaves released (Ex. 21:1-11) and, as previously noted, land returned. Though some might fall into debt, landlessness, or even slavery, poverty among God’s people should never have been permanent.

Tithing

Despite the apparent simplicity of tithing which is often portrayed, the biblical concept is anything but simple. Whilst Leviticus 27:30-33 mandates that one-tenth of all produce belongs to the Lord, and Numbers 18:21-32 requires that this should be given to the Levites, Deuteronomy 14:22-29 states that the Israelites should consume their tithe at a special festival for two years and that every third year it should be stored and used to provide for the needs of the Levites, aliens, the fatherless and widows. [14]

Whilst clearly a full discussion of this apparent discrepancy is beyond the scope of this work, [15] it is appropriate to note that in all the texts mentioned there is one clear emphasis. Tithes were to be used to provide for the needs of those with little or no other means of support. The Levites received no allotment of land and thus were completely dependent on the tithe (Deut. 18:1-3).

The tithes stored every third year were to provide for society's most vulnerable and potentially impoverished members, the aliens, the fatherless and widows, (as well as the Levites). As Meeks suggests, the unlikelihood of a family being able to consume a full year's tithe in one festive event (Deut. 14:22-26) requires that “the abundance of the feast was meant for sharing with strangers and sojourners, as well as widows and orphans”, [16] as presumably other more affluent individuals would have had more than sufficient of their own.

The General Law

Alongside the above which should have worked in favour of the poor and marginalised, the Law also guaranteed for the Israelites’ day-to-day care. For example, interest was forbidden on loans made to them, as was profit on food sold to them (Lev. 25:35-77). They were to be paid promptly (Deut. 24:14-15) and items essential to their livelihood were not to be taken in pledge (Deut. 24:6). In short, their day-to-day situation was not to be worsened by the actions of others. Furthermore, the Law’s prohibition of farmers harvesting right to the edges of fields, collecting produce that fell to the ground or going over the field a second time (Lev. 19:9-10) should also have ensured that the land continued to provide, at least in some measure, for the needs of the poor through gleaning.

It is thus reasonable to conclude, as Wright does, that if the Israelites had upheld the Law “an impressive and systematic welfare program for those who were truly destitute” (italics his) would have existed. [17] Moreover, not only did the Law require the above but it also issued stark warnings of Divine judgement against any who flouted them through exploitation (Ex. 22:21-24).
The Wisdom Literature

As is evident from the above, obedience to the Law should have ensured that at least some form of equality existed among God’s people, by minimising the long-term effects of poverty.

In the early years, with most people working the land to some extent, this seems to have been achieved, as excavations of Tenth-century BC Israelite towns [18] reveal dwellings of uniform size and layout. [19] However, as excavations from just two centuries later reveal, something of a socio-economic revolution took place, as larger better-built dwellings of the affluent now occupied one sector, whilst the smaller inferior dwellings of the poor occupied another. [20]

Although it is impossible to investigate all the reasons for such changes here, one fact is generally accepted. It occurred and was strongly influenced by the establishment of the monarchy. [21] Historically, Israel had been a nation of peasant farmers [22] “without a central government, capital city [or] professional army.” [23] With the arrival of the monarchy all this changed as the differing socio-economic classes formed; [24] classes under which some lacked nothing at the King’s table (1 Kings 4:27-28), whilst others suffered and became poorer under the yoke of forced labour (1 Kings 5:13-18).

This was a situation that would eventually contribute heavily to the divided kingdom through the “bitter resentment on the part of the non-Judahite Hebrews, because their traditions of tribal freedom and equality were being trampled on through forced labor and heavy taxation”, [25] for, as Samuel had warned (1 Sam. 8:10-18) and, as Klein states, “a king would not bring justice at all, but [instead] both the people and their property would be appropriated to serve the king’s self-aggrandizement. [26] It is into the above backdrop that Wisdom and prophetic literature is written.

Even a casual reading of the book of Proverbs reminds its readers that wealth and prosperity do not normally simply appear. Instead, they generally result from hard work and diligence (12:11; 21:5) and that a lack of them, at least at times, results from the opposite. [27] ‘A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of hands to rest and poverty will come on you like a bandit’ (Pr. 6:10). [28] At the same time however, as the words of both Qoheleth (Eccl. 5:16) and Job (1:21) remind their readers, earthly wealth and prosperity should not be overvalued for ‘naked we came into the world and naked we shall depart’. The inference of this is that if earthly wealth has any value at all it is linked to how it is used in this lifetime and not the next.

Given the emerging upper classes, it is not surprising that the book of Proverbs also makes references to socio-economic injustice as a cause of poverty and oppression. What is surprising, however, is the extent to which it does so. For as Gottwald observes, over two thirds of the proverbs, addressing the issue of poverty, acknowledge socio-economic injustice as its cause. [29] This is a situation which God indicates He will neither ignore nor leave unpunished (Pr. 14:31; 21:13), and which also clearly indicates that sin has a corporate nature to it. The sins of one individual can, and do, affect the level of suffering experienced by others.
Finally, although Deuteronomy 15:11 suggests that some may never find relief from poverty and affliction in their earthly lifetime, the Wisdom literature in no way endorses the idea that a *laissez-faire* attitude should be adopted in relation to their situation. Like the Law, the Wisdom literature repeated the call for open-handedness and generosity to be shown to those in need (Ps.41:1; Pr.14:21).

**The Prophets**

As Wright argues, “[i]t would be difficult to exaggerate the extent of [the prophets’] engagement with the struggles of the poor in Israel” [30] because they indicated that, after idolatry, Israel’s failure to deal justly and generously with the poor and marginalized is the most significant factor in the two kingdom’s judgements. [31]

From those that coveted others’ possessions (Mic. 2:1-3), or accumulated numerous houses and fields (Isa. 5:8), to those responsible for dishonest business practice (Hos. 12:7-8, Am 8:4-7), or those who failed to ensure justice for the poor (Am 2:6-7; Isa 10:1-4), to those that took forbidden items in pledge or trampled on the poor (Isa. 1:21-26, Am. 2:7-8; 5:11-12), [32] the Lord condemned them all, as He deplored the accumulation of riches at the expense of others.

The Prophets, as God’s spokesmen, may have looked for, even expected, some form of equality under the Law but their message was clear, “people are in poverty because they are victims of the injustice of others” [33] (again emphasising the corporate nature of the effects of sin). Arguably, the most damning account is the book of Amos, where “Yahweh’s concern for the plight of the poor and the decadence of the rich pervades.” [34]

**The New Testament**

In the sermon on the plain (Lk. 6:17ff), Jesus pronounced a series of blessings on the poor and woes on the rich. Although, as Perriman observes, the nature of rhetoric requires that these verses are not taken as absolutes for all individuals, they do however, reflect a good general summary of Jesus’ position in relation to issues of wealth and poverty. [35] Whilst wealth and prosperity may ultimately not exclude individuals from entering the Kingdom, they are clearly portrayed as major obstacles.

The “tragic account of the crippling power of wealth,” as Hughes puts it, [36] found in the pericope of the rich young ruler (Mk. 10:17-31), vividly demonstrates the harsh reality that, in many cases it would be truly easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom. For whilst wealth in itself might not be sinful, the love of it certainly is, (1 Tim 6:6-10), a point that Jesus made blatantly clear to the Pharisees (Lk. 16:13-15).

It is, thus, not surprising that Jesus warned His listeners to guard against greed, that life does not consist of material abundance (Lk 12:15), that man cannot serve both God and mammon (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13; 2); and that treasures are better stored in heaven than on earth (Mt 6:19-
21). Furthermore, in the light of the Law and God’s concern for the poor shown throughout the Old Testament, it is also not surprising that Jesus should declare that after loving God, the love for one’s neighbour is of greatest importance (Mk. 12:31-32). It is also not surprising that Paul should instruct Timothy to command the affluent in Ephesus to be generous and willing to share (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

What is surprising, however, is that the teaching of Jesus appears to go further than the Law in relation to whom generosity must be shown. Whilst the Law required that generosity and care should be shown to the poor among God’s people (essentially the aim of the collection in 2 Cor. 8:1ff) [37], the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:25-37), and Jesus’ commands in Luke 6:27-36 necessitate that the scope of neighbourly love and generosity be radically extended to include complete strangers and even enemies. [38] “Only by these means can they [Jesus’ followers] live out their lives in the sphere in which they have heard from Jesus the good news to the poor.” [39]

It is also evident that Jesus’ teaching in the parables of the sheep and goats (Mt. 25:31-46), which fittingly ends Jesus’ formal teaching in the Gospel with the scene of the great judgement, [40] also goes further than the Old Testament in its teaching. Although due to the ambiguity of the term “the least of these brothers of mine” (v.40), commentators have vigorously debated to whom Jesus requires that generosity and compassion be shown (needy individuals in general or specifically needy Christians?), [41] an important new insight remains.

Whilst, like the Old Testament, the pericope requires, at the very least, that Christians demonstrate care and generosity to those in need among God’s people, the implications for those that fail to do so have now changed. No longer will God, as in the Old Testament, simply judge those that fail in this area, but now Jesus indicates that they may also suffer more severe consequences; for the Son of Man will judge all humanity and during that judgement those that fail in this area may experience devastating eschatological consequences (25:41-46).

It is a possibility which, as Santa Ana suggests, should at the very least “make us understand the importance of our concern for the poor.” [42] This is especially the case when one considers that the pericope does not indicate that those condemned to eternal punishment for their apparent inactions (v.41-46) were in anyway responsible for creating the needs that they overlooked. [43]

Having reached this conclusion however, it must also be stressed that whilst the above might appear to support ‘salvation by works’, which understandably most Protestants would reject, it need not necessarily be considered as such. As Rienecker [44] and Hagner correctly deduce, the pericope does not imply this but rather that “the deeds of mercy [mentioned] in the present passage are symbolic of a deeper reality,” [45] that of being a true follower of Christ. In the face of the needs mentioned, those that are truly righteous will naturally respond with appropriate deeds of mercy. [46]
The Early Church

Of all the texts that relate to the use of material possessions in the early Church probably the best known is that of Acts 4:32-36. [47]

All the believers were of one in heart and mind. No-one claimed that any of his processions were his own, but they shared everything they had. [...] There was no needy person among them. From time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sale and put the money at the Apostles feet and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Whilst some authors, such as Miranda, have suggested that these verses imply a form of communism [48] this proposition is unlikely; for if the early church was characterised by the communist ideal of collective ownership then Luke’s use of the term ‘from time to time’ (v.34), which implies an ongoing practice, [49] along with Peter’s words to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts. 5:1-11) in relation to their right to dispose of money gained from the sale of their property as they wished, would be inappropriate.

It is thus reasonable to assume that private property was retained in the early church; a proposition further supported by the fact that some of its members, such as the Ephesians mentioned in 1 Timothy 6:17, were apparently wealthy. Furthermore, it is also reasonable to suggest that New Testament teaching does not necessarily oppose the enjoyment of wealth. Jesus’ attendance at the wedding in Cana (Jn. 2:1-11) and His apparent approval of the lavish use of expensive perfume in Matthew 26:6-13 suggests that some extravagances (‘heart’ matters notably), even if only occasionally, are permissible.

This said however, Acts 4:32-36 does clearly demonstrate the early Christian church’s willingness to distribute resources, which came into its possession, to those in need (v.34b-35). This was something apparently done to such a degree that Luke could boldly use the language of Deuteronomy and claim, “there were no needy people among them” (v.34a).

It is also evident that whilst Paul, like the Law, encouraged (2 Cor. 8:7-15), and even commanded generosity (1 Tim. 6:17) in the early church, it was not his intention that its members should practise generosity to the point of becoming impoverished themselves. Despite the fact that Paul commended the Macedonians for doing so (2 Cor. 8:1-3), his words to the Corinthians clearly indicates that the underlying intention is that each believer, as an expression of love, should give in accordance with their means (2 Cor. 8:8-12) in order that there might be greater equality between them (2 Cor. 8:13).

Paul’s quotation of Exodus 16:18, ‘[h]e that collected much did not have too much, and he that gathered little did not have too little,’ (2 Cor. 8:15) directly after his challenge to the Corinthians to give, adds weight to this argument, as well as suggesting the futility of hoarding for an uncertain future. [50]
Summary and Conclusion

It is reasonable to suggest that despite the entrance of sin into the world, had the Law been upheld there should have been no long-term poor among God’s people. The Law provided, especially through the Jubilee and cancellation of debt, a continual system of redemption and redistribution that should have ensured that the poor enjoyed periodic chances of redemption from their situation as part of their divine right.

It is also reasonable to suggest that the originally good creation, given to humanity to work and enjoy, should always have provided for the basic needs of God’s people. For although, wealth and prosperity were not guaranteed to all, the Law required that those that were so blessed must practise generosity and live in such a way that the day-to-day needs of society’s most vulnerable members were met.

In relation to the causes of poverty and affliction, whilst Scripture acknowledges that they may result from an individual’s laziness, it, more commonly, attributes these problems to oppressive social structures and the sin of others. The sins of one individual clearly can, and often do, adversely affect the level of suffering experienced by others. Furthermore, Scripture indicates that God not only finds this situation deplorable but will also ultimately judge those responsible for it.

Whilst much of the New Testament teaching on wealth and poverty reiterates that found in the Old, it also goes further. Firstly, it requires that generosity and compassion be shown not only to the impoverished living among God’s people but also to complete strangers, and even enemies. Secondly, it suggests that those that fail in this area may not only experience God’s judgement but may also suffer eschatological consequences, even if they are not directly responsible for causing the needs they overlooked. It is thus reasonable to conclude that whilst ecclesiastical giving might be important, it can never replace the sustained Scriptural call for almsgiving and generosity to be practiced on a one-to-one basis as needs arise.

It is also evident from Scripture’s teaching on tithes, and the early churches’ use of its financial resources, that an important and appropriate use of the ecclesiastical funds is that of caring and providing for society’s most vulnerable members, both in order that poverty and affliction might be alleviated wherever possible, and also in order that the Scriptural goal of there being ‘no poor among us’ should move closer to becoming a reality.

Despite Scripture’s repeated call for acts of generosity it does not require that generosity be practised to the point of impoverishing the giver. Rather, as both the Old and New Testament indicate, as a result of such practice, there might be some form of equality in that none are poor. It is, thus, also reasonable to conclude that if impoverished individuals are expected to tithe or give offerings then some other system of redress must be in place to ensure that their situation and suffering are not increased as a result.

In relation to those that do prosper; whilst Scripture does not rule out wealth, the ownership of property or even the occasional extravagant use of the same, it clearly teaches both the ongoing need for generosity and compassion and also the potential peril of wealth. As such,
it is reasonable to conclude that if some individuals do prosper they should in no way feel completely at ease with their wealth, so long as poverty and suffering prevail, even if they have already participated in ecclesiastical giving.

Seen in the above light, perhaps John Wesley’s advice forms the most appropriate model for Christian Stewardship: Christians should earn all they can, save all they can, and give all they can. [51] By doing so, they might not only be encouraged to work hard and be generous but also escape the perils of wealth, whilst helping to ensure that the Scriptural goal of there being ‘no poor among us’ moves closer towards becoming a reality.

Mission and Economic Justice in the Brazilian Context

I turn now to consider some contextual application. As is so often the case in biblical studies, establishing a biblical perspective on a given subject is far easier than attempting to implement it. In the case of Brazil, where I have worked as a missionary for the last eleven years, this is almost certainly true when one considers the above conclusions in relation to the question of mission and economic justice.

At the dawn of the 20th Century Brazil, along with the rest of Latin America, was very much neglected in terms of mission. Considered by many to be already evangelised, due to the dominant presence of the Roman Catholic Church, Brazil did not even feature on the agenda of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference.

Thankfully, over time this situation changed and as a result of the often extraordinary efforts of early Protestant missionaries, who criticised and rejected Catholicism as an inadequate expression of the truth, many small churches, and later denominations, were born. From these humble beginnings a century ago, it is now estimated that there are as many as twenty six million evangelicals in Brazil today and the number is still growing. [52] Evidently, since the beginning, evangelism has been seen as being of paramount importance both to missionaries serving in Brazil and those that have been led to Christ.

Yet, despite the continued criticism by many evangelicals, Brazil’s Catholic Church has certainly left its mark in the country in terms of caring for the poor and marginalised; not least through its extensive network of Santa Casa hospitals and clinics.

This is not to say that missionaries and Brazilian Evangelicals have not also played their part. In fact there are many good social projects set up and run by them. Projects such as Instituto Cristão Evangelico in Anapolis, central Brazil which continually cares for around seventy impoverished and orphaned children [53] and the outstanding work of Monte Horebe [54] among the poor of Itaperuçu in southern Brazil, are examples of this.

Yet one cannot help but make a comparison between the scale of poverty and suffering in Brazil and the alleged number of Evangelicals that now exist as a result of missionary efforts, both by nationals and non-nationals; surely there is more that could be done.
Perhaps, historically, this has been justified by the impoverished nature of the country and its runaway inflation. [55] However, in recent years Brazil has gone, economically, from strength to strength. Only recently Brazil was acknowledged as the 6th [56] largest economy in the world, thereby overtaking the size of the UK economy, and whilst unjust levels of inequality still prevail, Brazil has also finally begun to make some advances in this area too. [57] Brazil can no longer be considered a poor country even if many of its inhabitants are still impoverished; it is, by all accounts, now a very rich nation.

It is true that these economic changes do not mean that all Brazilian Evangelicals, or Evangelical churches, have suddenly become wealthy overnight, but, put simply, it does mean many Brazilian Christians and churches are, or soon will be, in a better economic position than they have been for a significant number of years, and here, in my opinion, lies the challenge both for missionaries and national Christians; for with new found wealth comes new found responsibility. This responsibility, furthermore, lies not just at an individual level, but also at an ecclesiastical level. The Biblical mandate that *there should be no poor among us* (Deut 15:4) is as relevant for Brazil today, as it was for Israel over 3,000 years ago; not just within the church but also outside it.

As the country’s wealth continues to grow, as most economists predict it will, there is going to be a greater-than-ever urgency to practise, preach and inspire others to live out a more appropriate biblical model in relation to wealth and prosperity in the midst of a country that continues to be plagued by poverty, corruption and economic injustice.

The key words for missionaries in the Brazilian context, will need to change from the likes of *church planting* and *evangelism* (both of which, as the numbers of Brazilian Evangelicals clearly demonstrates, the national Christians are already experts at) to those that reflect and inspire *generosity* and *social reform*; for those sending missionaries to Brazil, and those that answer that call, this may well mean a paradigm shift in both their thinking and training.

No longer should the primary focus be on the missionary’s ability to *preach the Gospel and evangelise* in the Brazilian context. Instead, perhaps, their ability to foster, teach, practise and preach a more biblical understanding of wealth, prosperity, poverty and suffering may now, and in the future, be of greater importance.

To some extent this may already be happening, as during my time in Brazil I have seen an increased move away from what might be called ‘traditional mission,’ with many missionaries now choosing to serve full-time in social projects, rather than churches. However, what I am suggesting and what I am praying for goes beyond this.

My hope and my prayer, is that missionaries will not just come to serve the poor in Brazil, but rather that God will raise up individuals and missionaries that have the ability to inspire Brazilian Christians and churches not only to care more passionately for the poor and marginalised but also to seek to change the very systems and structures that cause their suffering in the first place, so that, like the community in Acts 4:32-37, one day Brazil might also be able to boldly make reference to Deuteronomy 15:4 and state *that there are no poor among us.*
This might seem like an unattainable dream, but reflecting on recent events in Brazil and how the relatively small Brazilian gay movement has managed to force changes in Brazilian law and practice in relation to marriage and other issues, [58] one just cannot but wonder what might be possible if all the vast number of Evangelicals spoke out with one sustained voice against social injustice, corruption and poverty.

Notes
[1] Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25 and 31
[10] ibid
[11] See the book of Ruth for a vivid example of this
[14] Cf. also Deut. 26:12-14
[15] For further discussion on this subject see Blomberg C., (1999), Neither Poverty nor Riches, (NSBT), No 7, Leicester: Apollos, pp.46-49
[18] For example the Israelite town of Tizar
[20] ibid. p.73
[24] ibid


[31] ibid, p.164


[39] ibid. p.301


[41] Cf. Hagner on Matthew, p. 744, for more information relating to this debate


[43] ibid p131-132


[46] ibid. p.743

[47] Cf. also Acts 2:42-47


[53] The Instituto Cristão Evangelico currently has no web site however it can be contacted at the following address: Av Bernardo Sayão, 300 l 99999, Jd das Américas - Anápolis – GO, Brazil
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