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BIBLICAL ECONOMIC ETHICS: SACRED SCRIPTURE'S TEACHINGS ON ECONOMIC LIFE

By Albino Barrera

"Most conventional church exposition of Scripture has tilted the text toward 'spiritual matters,' as though the Gospel were about 'saving souls,' most especially for 'the after-life.' Barrera offers a serious, sustained alternative to that propensity by a focus on economic issues that are at the center of the text. Barrera is well read and well-informed on this literature, and brings to his task a critical eye for the interface between the text and its various contexts; those contexts are regularly marked by precarious peasant agricultural work, most often in the midst of coercive imperial taxation. Readers will be invited by this discussion to reflect on our own contemporary interface between the good news of the Gospel and the acute economic crisis that we face. —Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary

"This finely argued book will enhance the use of the Bible in Christian economic reflection. By attending to the specific economic concerns of individual biblical books, and processing their messages through a careful theological, exegetical, and hermeneutical method, Barrera identifies important economic themes that can contribute to 'the fullness of human flourishing.' He shows how 'Biblical Economics' is yet relevant to modern Christian ethics."

—Douglas E. Oakman, Pacific Lutheran University

"Albino Barrera's comprehensive overview of biblical teachings on economic affairs provides a valuable resource for contemporary theological and ethical quests to foster more just and equitable practices within a complex and expanding global economy. Barrera directs attention to the persistent biblical emphasis on the importance of communal and social bonds for human flourishing and the urgent need to pursue practices that protect the well-being of those who are most vulnerable. These themes are examined in relation to the changing social contexts that structured the life worlds of the people of Israel and that subsequently shaped Galilean and Roman arrangements within which the Christian mission emerged."

—Thomas W. Ogletree, Yale University Divinity School

ABOUT THE BOOK

Contrary to most people's first impression that the Bible offers merely random economic teachings without rhyme or reason, there is, in fact, a specific vision undergirding these scriptural norms. Moreover, far from being burdensome impositions of do's and don'ts, this book finds that the Bible's economic norms are, in fact, an invitation to participate in God's providence. To this end, we have been granted a threefold benefaction—the gift of divine friendship, the gift of one another, and the gift of the earth. Thus, biblical economic ethics is best characterized as a chronicle of how God provides for humanity through people's mutual solicitude and hard work. The economic ordinances, aphorisms, and admonitions of the Old and New Testament turn out to be an unmerited divine invitation to participate in God's governance of the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Albino Barrera is professor of theology and economics at Providence College. His books include *Market Complicity and Christian Ethics* (2011) and *Globalization and Economic Ethics: Distributive Justice in the Knowledge Economy* (2007), among others.

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