

Greetings church,

In this first chapter, Cory Higdon plays less of a constructive role and more of a destructive role in his attempts to unpack the term *social justice*. While his critiques are fair, it is my opinion that he does not add to the conversation at all. Instead of trying to put the “progressive” definitions of social justice and the “conservative” definitions of social justice into conversation with one another, he focuses on attempting to entirely de-bunk the concept of biblical justice having any influence, ramifications, or impact on social policies. He seems intent on maintaining biblical justice as a personal matter; between individuals and God.

My critique in return then is the author’s complete overlooking of the entire Old Testament. In the Old Testament, God speaks to the *nation* of Israel. The prophets speak to the *nation* of Israel. When the prophets call the people to account they don’t call individuals to account; unless, as it oftentimes is, it is the king who is failing the people and leading the entire nation astray. The prophets more often warn the people that they are failing one another in carrying forth God’s justice. The prophets don’t come to individuals and say, “clearly, you haven’t properly heard the exposition of the good news of the gospel of Jesus, that your sins are forgiven so, you should quit sinning and harming others with your social policies.” The prophets said, “your social policies are harming people! People cry for help, but there is none. The evildoers profit and the humble and good are trampled on!”. The hope that the prophets offer the downtrodden is that the good news of Jesus is that the evildoers get their comeuppance! That the justice of God is superior to human justice in which we fail to hold people and systems that exploit and harm people to account! Unfortunately, as history has shown, biblical justice will not be fulfilled by simply having more “Christians”; “people who acknowledge God with their lips, walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle”.

Even if we can’t create specifically Christian social policies because our Constitution calls for freedom of religion and a historic separation of church and state has been implicit and observed since the nation’s founding, we *can*, from a biblical justice standpoint, legislate in terms of creating and sponsoring policies that work towards equity; that serve and care for the least of these; that explicitly outlaw and work against exploitation of any and all kinds. We can legislate such that the evildoers quit winning and the downtrodden quit getting ground further down into the very dust of the earth.

In Christ’s Service,
Pastor Eddie