

Greetings church,

In chapter 9, John Wind does a good job of giving a broad definition of the overarching problem when it comes to trying to define and seek justice, and specifically social justice. “Sowell also believes that the adjective ‘social’ is redundant since ‘all justice is inherently social,’ necessarily in relationships between persons ... Antonio Martino also identifies ‘social justice’ as popular because it acts as a cipher upon which people can project their own ideas and can position themselves in the moral high ground.”¹ Wind is hitting upon something extremely important here that we have talked about and examined up to this juncture but not said outright or expressly; there is no dictionary-like definition for justice, nor for social justice, in the scriptures. There is no recorded direct word from God that says thou shalt practice justice and social justice in the following ways. “... Christians who look to Scripture authoritative answers encounter an additional difficulty in that ‘the concept of justice is not explicitly defined in Scripture,’ at least not in the sense of a detailed and comprehensive model.”² There are many places in scripture where God and the prophets accuse people of *not* practicing justice and give examples of what *not* practicing justice looks like but these are definitions in the negative. Hitting upon the point of the use of the term “social justice” as a moral cudgel, or a point of moral superiority, is also key to how these turns of phrases have continued to vex us as a whole and why the collective we are really not making any forward progress on proactively creating, serving, and comprehensively defining justice. It has become arbitrary, debatable when it must remain blind and above reproach to have any efficacy in the lives of all peoples.

Wind frames his discussion of justice through a covenantal framework which I do find helpful. “This ‘good deeds responsibility’ is shared with all humanity under the Noahic fallen creation covenant of Genesis 9, including a general human responsibility to ‘do justice’ in society with the *lex talionis* of Gen 9:5-6 revealing mankind’s ‘royal duty to champion justice’ and to pursue ‘proportionate retributive force with forbearance.’ The good deeds responsibility of all humanity is a responsibility to pursue human flourishing for individuals and communities, the experience of daily provision, care, health, peace, and blessing in this life.”³ Within the context of our fallenness, this sounds to my ears like a pretty reasonable foundation upon which to build consensus for a collective society to establish laws and practices in pursuit of justice. The concept of “good deeds” is universal and has no particular allegiance to, nor identity with, any religion or creed or belief system even if we, and our Jewish brothers and sisters, ground it in Genesis 9 and the story of Noah. Conceptually, these good deeds as further defined above are explicitly outlined in our nation’s founding documents broadly defined as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. Therefore it seems plausible to have a broader conversation about pursuing justice in terms of good deeds et al. in seeking to specify and clarify life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

But what about justice and social justice for disciples of Christ who function *both* under the Noahic covenant of “good deeds responsibility” and the Messianic covenant? Wind asks us to pursue proclamation. In my reading, his call for proclamation is broad enough to include *both* the reality of Christ’s imminent return to usher in perfect justice *and* holding our current people and systems to account for failing to pursue the “good deeds responsibility” of the Noahic covenant. This proclamation can *only* be done in light of the humility of the knowledge that “human (and Christian)

¹Wind, John. *Justice and the Mission of the Church* in Let Justice Flow Like Water: Toward a Theology of Biblical Justice. Editors Joshua M. Greever, D.A. Horton, and Justin McLendon. B&H Academic, Brentwood, TN; 2025. p244

²ibid, p235

³ibid, pp232-233

efforts to ‘do justice’ [are limited]. Recognizing the constraints of human justice under the Noahic covenant should also help Christians discern the difference between biblical and nonbiblical ideas of justice”.⁴ With humility and the guidance of the Holy Spirit who helps us to remember everything Jesus taught us we can pursue the general goodness and welfare of all persons, the world over, while we await, and proclaim, the consummation of God’s perfect justice once and for all.

In Christ’s Service,
Pastor Eddie

⁴Wind, John. *Justice and the Mission of the Church* in Let Justice Flow Like Water: Toward a Theology of Biblical Justice. Editors Josha M. Greever, D.A. Horton, and Justin McLendon. B&H Academic, Brentwood, TN; 2025. p254