

Evaluation of an Economic Crisis from a Biblical Perspective

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22/08/2023

Family Life Institute - BLS 200 Essay
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Throughout history, societies have experienced economic turmoil that have left individuals, families and entire nations in profound distress. These crises more often than not, reveal the flaws and consequences of the secular economic systems in place. In evaluating an economic crisis from a biblical perspective, we must turn to the teachings, parables and scriptures contained in the Bible to gain insight into specific originating causes, the evaluation of livelihood and economic impact, and solutions to address and ultimately nullify this crisis from originating. As disciples, it is crucial for us to understand the economic crisis from a biblical perspective in order to respond effectively. This essay aims to explore the subject, focusing on the lessons we can learn from a biblical perspective in the face of an economic crisis.

Secular teachings describe a financial crisis as an event when asset prices see a sharp decline in value, where companies and consumers are not able to pay their debt, and financial institutions face severe liquidity shortages.¹

The Bible identifies various causes of economic crises that have parallels to contemporary scenarios. One key factor is a lack of integrity and fairness in economic practices. Proverbs 11:1 state, *"A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight."* This verse emphasizes the importance of honest dealings in economic transactions.² Greed and exploitation, which are prevalent during times of crisis, can be attributed to the disregard for moral and ethical conduct. Dishonest business practice will not escape God's attention as all economic practices should be fair and just. Proverbs 22:16

¹ Will Kenton. 2023. Financial Crisis: Definition, Causes, and Examples. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/financial-crisis.asp>. 10 Aug 2023

² <https://www.bibleref.com/Proverbs/11/Proverbs-11-1.html>. 10 Aug 2023

states, "*Whoever oppresses the poor for his own increase and whoever gives to the rich, both come to poverty.*"

Another contributing factor is the accumulation of debt. Whilst Debt can be a source of funding which can be beneficial only when it is managed and effectively administered.³ Proverbs 22:7 clearly highlights the risk against being a borrower, as "*the borrower is slave to the lender.*" This scripture warns against the dangers of excessive borrowing that will lead to economic dependence and vulnerability. Careless borrowing practices, coupled with unrestricted spending, will lead to an economic crisis.

The Impacts of an Economic Crises have profound effects on individuals, families, and communities. Economically, such crises can lead to a rise in unemployment, poverty, and unrest. Proverbs 13:23 states, "*The fallow ground of the poor would yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.*" This verse highlights the problems that exist within societies during trying times. On a spiritual level, an economic crisis can expose humanity's misplaced trust in material possessions and riches. The Bible reminds us in Matthew 6:19-21, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*" Additionally, James 5:1-5 criticizes the rich for exploiting the vulnerable, saying, "*You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out.*" This passage serves as a reminder that worldly riches can be fleeting and can lead to the exploitation of others.

³ Van den Heever J. Adams M. 2015 Improving Public Sector Debt Statistics in South Africa IFC Bulletins chapters, in: Bank for International Settlements (ed.) <https://ideas.repec.org/h/bis/bisifc/39-40.html>. 11 Aug 2023

From a biblical perspective, economic crises provide an opportunity for self-reflection and societal reform. They can act as a catalyst for the evaluation of equity in existing economic structures and if this equity is fiat based.

Another lesson from Scripture is the practice of stewardship. The Bible emphasizes wise strategic financial planning and applying a multi-generational approach to this. Proverbs 21:5 states, *"The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance."* This verse serves as a reminder to be diligent in managing our resources, as it may serve as a buffer during times of economic uncertainty. In Luke 16:10-12, Jesus teaches about the responsible use of material possessions and the principle of the heart of a son, stating, *"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much."* This message reminds us that, throughout an economic crisis, we must remain faithful and wise with the resources God has entrusted in us. It encourages us to prioritize responsible financial management and avoid excessive borrowing or spending beyond our means and also to hold God's heart in carrying the commitment of wise management. Through practicing stewardship, we can build a strong foundation even in the face of economic hardships. In the parable of (Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus tells the story of a master who entrusts different amounts of money to three servants. The servants who invested and multiplied their resources were praised, while the one who did not were reprimanded. This parable teaches us that we are responsible for wisely managing the resources and opportunities that God has given us. It encourages us to use our relational skills and abilities (sphere of influences) to positively contribute to the economy and help others during times of crisis.

Biblically we are also encouraged to support one another in communities during a financial crisis and to work together relationally. Acts 2:44-45 describes the early Christian community, saying, *"All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need."* This example highlights the

importance of sharing resources and supporting those in need, promoting biblical economic solidarity and alleviating the impact of economic crises.

In evaluating an economic crisis from a biblical perspective, we recognize the significance of scripture, moral economic practices and the spiritual need for reliance on God rather than riches. The Bible teaches us that economic crises expose systemic flaws within society and secular economic practices. By heeding the biblical wisdom⁴ and lessons, we can strive to build a more just and equitable economic system that better serve all members and continue to grow Gods assets with a Christian worldview. Emphasizing morality, responsible lending, stewardship, and relational support, we can emerge from economic crises stronger and more resilient as a relational community.

⁴ GoBusiness200 | Lesson 3
Dr Gerald Chester. Walking in Financial Freedom.

References

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