

"the assistant"). It is used in Matt 5:25 ("court officer"), Mark 14:45 ("guards"), Luke 4:20 (synagogue "attendant"), Acts 13:5 ("helper"), etc. The verb form ὑπηρετέω ("serve," "be helpful") is not used in the Gospels but occurs in Acts 13:36, Acts 20:34, and Acts 24:23.

The results of hard and productive work, whether for good or bad, is seen through several Greek roots. From one root, μισθ-¹¹ ("payment for work done") comes the noun μισθός ("reward") Matt 5:12; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:23; Acts 1:18; ("pay," "wages") Matt 20:8; Luke 10:7; John 4:36.

Another noun, μίσθιος is used to indicate "day-laborer" (Luke 15:17,19), "hired sailors" (Mark 1:20), or "hired shepherds" (John 10: 12, 13). μίσθωμα (passive, "of what is rented") is used in Acts 28:30 (Paul's "rented house"), while the verb μισθόω ("hire worker") is used in Matt 20:1, 7.

From the root ἀγορ-¹² ("buy," "purchase") comes ἀγορά, (the place of purchase, the marketplace) Matt 20:3; Mark 12:38; Luke 7:32; Acts 16:17 and 17:17. The verb ἀγοράζω ("buy," "purchase") is used for purchases of various items: a field (Matt 13:44); food (Mark 6:36); oxen (Luke 14:19), etc. The ἀγοραῖοι are the unruly market people (Acts 17:5).

The verb ἀποδίδωμι is also used with commercial implication. In the active it means "to pay," "to pay back" (Matt 5:33; Mark 12:17; Luke 7:42). In the middle it means "to sell" as a property (Acts 5:8) or as a slave (Acts 7:9). πωράσκω also means "to sell" as possessions (Matt 13:46; Acts 2:45), as slaves (Matt 18:25), and as precious ointment (Mark 14:5; John 12:5), etc. πωλέω means "to sell" such things as fields (Acts 4:37), possessions (Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33), sparrows (Matt 10:29), cattle (John 2:14), and purple cloth πορφυρόπωλις (Acts 16:14).

The Inherent Nature of Work According to the Gospels and Acts

The Gospels and Acts teach something about the purposefulness of work, whether physical, mental, or spiritual. The words used to express this concept are ἔργον, ἐργάζομαι, ἀποδίδωμι, ὑπηρετής, ὑπηρετέω, and λειτουργέω. Sometimes the purposefulness involved is expressed; sometimes it is implied.

The works (ἔργα) of Jesus are divinely purposeful. In his high priestly prayer the Savior says, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work (ἔργον) you gave me to do (ποιεῖν)" (John 17:4).¹³ Jesus elsewhere speaks of the very work God has given him "to finish" (John 5:36). He says, "The miracles (works) I do (ποιεῖν) in my Father's name speak for me" (John 10:25); "anyone who has faith in me will do what I am doing" (John 14:12); and as his followers, the Lord challenges the disciples to let their light shine before men that they may see the believers' deeds (ἔργα) and praise God in heaven (Matt 5:16). Act 13:41 tells of God's wonderful works accomplished in salvation (cf. Hab 1:5). Purposeful work includes such as the act of anointing Jesus (Matt 26:10;