Have you ever wondered why God doesn't do more to provide for and protect the powerless and the defenseless in this world? Have you ever wondered whether God cared? As I have been studying the Bible, I have noticed that this topic comes up quite often. So I did a word search and gathered up most of the verses that have something to do with this. I searched for the following words in the context of us or God caring for this class of people, so if a verse simply described someone with one of these key words, I didn't include it. I do not claim this is an exhaustive search, including every applicable verse.

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So, does this word search tell us if God cares about the plight of this class of people? In some of these verses, God says that He will protect and defend them, but I found that in most cases He asks us to do it, and He condemns those who do the opposite.

I think most of us have this idea that the ancient Israelites failed God because they forsook Him and worshipped idols. But what I found in many cases was that, God condemned them for the exploitation and mistreatment of this class of people and did not even mention idolatry.

So why doesn't God just step in and take care of and protect these people all the time? I think there are several reasons.

1. I think that God and Satan have some ground rules about when and where they can intervene and impose their will. If not, what would prevent Satan from just possessing or killing anyone he wanted? I think you can see that he often works by getting people to do his evil deeds. In the same way God wants to use us to do His good work.
2. We were created with free will to choose and to learn by suffering the natural consequences of our choices. In many cases, intervening would negate the consequences of choices that were made either by the oppressed or the oppressor.
3. Just as there are natural consequences of making poor choices, I believe there are laws of nature that govern the consequences of making good decisions. In other words, by choosing to care for and defend this class of people, good consequences will naturally come to us. Now I'm not trying to say that for each good deed we perform, one good thing will happen to us. I'm saying that if you live a life where your general pattern is to do good for others, to treat people as you would like to be treated, the same should come back to you.
I am also not saying that sinners and bad people will never treat you poorly, but as it says in Ecclesiastes, what you give will eventually come back to you.

1 Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. Ecclesiastes 11:1 NASB

Notice, that it doesn’t say you will immediately find it. I think I should also add that I don’t believe that the good that comes back will always be in the same form that you gave it.

So, if you wanted to allow yourself to become the eyes, ears, hands and feet of God, what are some things you can do?

- Can you go over to Africa and deal with the corrupt regimes who abuse their power and don’t seem to care if their people are starving? [what can you do?]
- Can you spend billions of dollars on research and development as Bill Gates does to try to end malaria in third world countries? [what can you do?]
- Can you feed all the hungry people in your city, let alone your country or the world? [what can you do?]
- Can you provide shelter for homeless people in your city? [what can you do?]
- Can you prevent bad parents from abusing or neglecting their kids? [what can you do?]
- Can you adopt an orphan? [what can you do?]
- What was the plight of widows in Bible times? [how does that apply today?]
- What is an alien and how are they disadvantaged? [how can you help them?]

Word search results:

22 “You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. Exodus 22:22 NASB

25 “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest. Exodus 22:25 NASB

6 “You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute. Exodus 23:6 NASB

35 ‘Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. Leviticus 25:35 NASB

39 ‘If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave’s service. Leviticus 25:39 NASB

17 For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. 18 He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. 19 So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. Deuteronomy 10:17-19 NASB

28 “At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town. The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NASB
7 “If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; 8 but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks. 9 Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,’ and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the LORD against you, and it will be a sin in you. 10 You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. 11 For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.’

Deuteronomy 15:7-12 NASB

10 “When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not enter his house to take his pledge. 11 You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. 12 If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge. 13 When the sun goes down you shall surely return the pledge to him, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it will be righteousness for you before the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 24:10-13 NASB

14 “You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns. 15 You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he will not cry against you to the LORD and it become sin in you.

Deuteronomy 24:14-15 NASB

17 “You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge.

Deuteronomy 24:17 NASB

19 “When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.

Deuteronomy 24:19-21 NASB

12 “When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. 13 You shall say before the LORD your God, ‘I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments.

Deuteronomy 26:12-13 NASB

19 ‘Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 27:19 NASB

12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand. Do not forget the afflicted.

13 Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, “You will not require it.”

14 You have seen it, for You have beheld mischief and vexation to take it into Your hand. The unfortunate commits himself to You; You have been the helper of the orphan.

Deuteronomy 27:19 NASB
15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer, Seek out his wickedness until You find none. Psalms 10:12-15 NASB

3 Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Psalms 82:3 NASB

17 He has regarded the prayer of the destitute And has not despised their prayer. Psalms 102:17 NASB

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted And justice for the poor. Psalms 140:12 NASB

7 Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry, The LORD sets the prisoners free. Psalms 146:7 NASB

9 The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, But He thwarts the way of the wicked. Psalms 146:9 NASB

31 He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him. Proverbs 14:31 NASB

25 The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow. Proverbs 15:25 NASB

17 One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed. Proverbs 19:17 NASB

13 He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered. Proverbs 21:13 NASB

9 He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor. Proverbs 22:9 NASB

16 He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty. Proverbs 22:16 NASB

27 He who gives to the poor will never want, But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses. Proverbs 28:27 NASB

7 The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor, The wicked does not understand such concern. Proverbs 29:7 NASB

14 If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever. Proverbs 29:14 NASB

20 She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy. Proverbs 31:20 NASB
17 Learn to do good;  
Seek **justice**,  
Reprove the ruthless,  
Defend the **orphan**,  
Plead for the **widow**. Isaiah 1:17 NASB

23 Your rulers are rebels  
And companions of thieves;  
Everyone loves a bribe  
And chases after rewards.  
They do not defend the **orphan**,  
Nor does the **widow**'s plea come before them. Isaiah 1:23 NASB

14 The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people,  
“It is you who have devoured the vineyard;  
The plunder of the **poor** is in your houses.  
15 “What do you mean by crushing My people  
And grinding the face of the **poor**?”  
Declares the Lord GOD of hosts. Isaiah 3:14-15 NASB

1 Woe to those who enact evil statutes  
And to those who constantly record unjust decisions,  
2 So as to deprive the needy of **justice**  
And rob the **poor** of My people of **their rights**,  
So that **widows** may be their spoil  
And that they may plunder the **orphans**. Isaiah 10:1,2 NASB

6 “Is this not the fast which I choose,  
To loosen the bonds of wickedness,  
To undo the bands of the yoke,  
And to let the **oppressed** go free  
And break every yoke?  
7 “Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry  
And bring the homeless **poor** into the house;  
When you see the naked, to cover him;  
And not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Isaiah 58:6,7 NASB

28 ‘They are fat, they are sleek,  
They also excel in deeds of wickedness;  
They do not plead the cause,  
The cause of the **orphan**, that they may prosper;  
And they do not defend the rights of the **poor**. Jeremiah 5:28 NASB

5 For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice **justice** between a man and his neighbor,  
6 if you do not oppress the **alien**, the **orphan**, or the **widow**, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin,  
7 then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. Jeremiah 7:5-7 NASB
3 Thus says the LORD, “Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place. Jeremiah 22:3 NASB

49 “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. Ezekiel 16:49 NASB

12 oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore a pledge, but lifts up his eyes to the idols and commits abomination, Ezekiel 18:12 NASB

17 he keeps his hand from the poor, does not take interest or increase, but executes My ordinances, and walks in My statutes; he will not die for his father's iniquity, he will surely live. Ezekiel 18:17 NASB

6 “Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood. 7 They have treated father and mother lightly within you. The alien they have oppressed in your midst; the fatherless and the widow they have wronged in you. Ezekiel 22:6-7 NASB

29 “The people of the land have practiced oppression and committed robbery, and they have wronged the poor and needy and have oppressed the sojourner without justice. Ezekiel 22:29 NASB

27 ‘Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.’ Daniel 4:27 NASB

3 “Assyria will not save us, We will not ride on horses; Nor will we say again, ‘Our god,’ To the work of our hands; For in You the orphan finds mercy.” Hosea 14:3 NASB

1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria, Who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, “Bring now, that we may drink!” 2 The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness, “Behold, the days are coming upon you When they will take you away with meat hooks, And the last of you with fish hooks. Amos 4:1,2 NASB

11 Therefore because you impose heavy rent on the poor And exact a tribute of grain from them, Though you have built houses of well-hewn stone, Yet you will not live in them; You have planted pleasant vineyards, yet you will not drink their wine. 12 For I know your transgressions are many and your sins are great, You who distress the righteous and accept bribes And turn aside the poor in the gate. Amos 5:11,12 NASB
“Thus has the LORD of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.’ Zechariah 7:9-10 NASB

Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 3:5 NASB

So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:2-4 NASB

Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” Matthew 19:21 NASB

Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” Mark 10:21 NASB

But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, Luke 14:13 NASB

When Jesus heard this, He said to him, “One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” Luke 18:22 NASB

My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? James 2:1-7 NASB