



# RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FOR ECONOMICS SUSTAINABILITY: A RE-READING OF EXODUS 16:16-20 AND CLOSE EXAMINATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG) #12

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## ABSTRACT

Effective resource management is crucial for achieving long-term economic sustainability, especially in balancing human needs with environmental preservation for future generations. The convergence of faith-based principles and contemporary sustainability models provides important perspectives on equitable resource management. The biblical account in Exodus 16:16-20, which describes the provision of manna to the Israelites during their time in the wilderness, serves as an early illustration of divine instruction on resource management that promotes fairness, adequacy, and ecological harmony. Similarly, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12 focuses on responsible consumption and production, with the objective of minimizing waste and enhancing resource efficiency. This paper intends to explore the significance of the resource management principles found in Exodus 16:16-20 within the framework of modern economic sustainability, particularly in relation to SDG #12. By incorporating theological, ethical, and practical viewpoints, the research aims to provide a distinctive interpretation of biblical teachings as they relate to sustainable resource utilization and consumption in contemporary society. The paper delves deeper into how ancient teachings can inform and improve modern approaches to economic sustainability and responsible consumption. It utilizes a qualitative analysis through a two-pronged methodology, a detailed reading and theological assessment of Exodus 16:16-20, focusing on the principles of resource distribution and management present in the scripture, and a comparative study with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12 to assess the applicability of these principles in today's resource management practices. This analysis is further enriched by literature on sustainable development and economic sustainability, establishing a theoretical framework that illustrates the alignment of biblical values with contemporary sustainability efforts. The results reveal several significant themes within Exodus 16:16-20 that correspond with the principles of SDG #12, including equitable distribution, waste reduction, community-oriented resource management, and reverence for nature. The study concludes that the teachings found in Exodus 16:16-20 provide enduring insights that can enhance current practices in sustainable resource management. By prioritizing fairness, minimizing waste, and fostering community engagement, the narrative lays a groundwork for ethical resource management that promotes long-term economic sustainability. Furthermore, these principles are directly relevant to achieving the objectives outlined in SDG #12, offering essential perspectives for policymakers, communities, and individuals striving for economic sustainability. This paper advocates for the integration of ethical and moral teachings from religious texts, such as Exodus 16:16-20, into modern sustainability education and policies to promote responsible resource utilization and encourage collaboration among theologians, economists, environmental scientists, and policymakers in developing comprehensive strategies for economic sustainability.

**KEYWORDS:** Resource Management, Economic Sustainability, Equitable Distribution, Social Justice, Environmental Stewardship

## INTRODUCTION

Resource management and economic sustainability are interconnected concepts that are vital for achieving enduring economic and environmental stability. Resource management involves the strategic and sustainable utilization of natural, human, and financial resources to fulfill both current and future demands (Brown, 2020). The goal of effective resource management is to strike a balance between consumption and conservation, thereby reducing waste and preventing environmental degradation. Conversely, economic sustainability is concerned with fostering stable economic growth without exhausting resources or inflicting long-term

ecological damage. It underscores the importance of policies and practices that promote enduring economic stability, equitable distribution of wealth, and the preservation of the environment (Smith & Jones, 2019). The pursuit of economic sustainability is heavily reliant on sustainable resource management, as the overuse of resources can precipitate economic decline, resource shortages, and environmental crises. The principles of sustainable development, as articulated by the United Nations (UN), emphasize the necessity for responsible consumption, the adoption of renewable energy, and the implementation of circular economic practices to minimize waste and enhance efficiency (United Nations, 2015).



The roles of governments, businesses, and communities are crucial in enacting policies that foster resource efficiency and economic resilience. Initiatives such as green technologies, responsible supply chain management, and sustainable agricultural practices are instrumental in promoting long-term economic sustainability while alleviating environmental impacts (Taylor, 2021). The account presented in Exodus 16:16-20 provides significant insights into sustainable resource management through the narrative of manna bestowed upon the Israelites during their time in the wilderness. This scripture highlights key principles such as moderation, fair distribution, and the avoidance of waste, which resonate with current sustainability concepts (Brueggemann, 2018). Specifically, in Exodus 16:16-18, God instructs the Israelites to collect only the amount of manna necessary for each day, thereby preventing both hoarding and waste. This directive mirrors contemporary sustainability practices that promote responsible consumption and equitable resource distribution to avert depletion (Wright, 2020). Furthermore, the text illustrates that when individuals attempted to gather more than their fair share, it did not yield any surplus, while those who collected less still had sufficient provisions, thereby symbolizing economic equity and sustainability (Alter, 2019). Conversely, in Exodus 16:19-20, those who sought to store manna for future use discovered it had spoiled, highlighting the repercussions of mismanaging resources and succumbing to greed. This scenario reflects modern concerns regarding economic sustainability, where overconsumption and waste contribute to environmental harm and economic instability (Schneider, 2021). Ultimately, the passage emphasizes the necessity of trusting in a sustainable system that meets everyone's needs without excessive accumulation, a principle that remains relevant to contemporary economic policies and environmental conservation initiatives.

The contemporary world is confronted with significant challenges pertaining to resource depletion, economic disparity, and unsustainable consumption practices. These issues are intricately linked, as the excessive exploitation of natural resources, uneven wealth distribution, and high levels of consumption jeopardize both economic and environmental stability on a global scale (Sachs, 2020). To effectively tackle these challenges, immediate policy reforms, the adoption of sustainable practices, and international collaboration are essential. The exhaustion of natural resources, such as fossil fuels, freshwater, and biodiversity, represents a substantial threat to both economic and ecological systems. The overexploitation and poor management of these resources have resulted in environmental degradation, deforestation, and climate change, thereby diminishing the planet's capacity to support economic development (Rockström, 2009). The rising demand for non-renewable resources further intensifies this depletion, imposing significant burdens on future generations to seek sustainable alternatives. Economic inequality continues to be a critical global concern, with wealth and resources increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small fraction of the population. The divide between the affluent and the impoverished has expanded due to systemic economic factors, disparities in the labor market, and unequal access to education and healthcare (Piketty, 2014). This inequality not only heightens social tensions but also undermines economic

resilience by restricting opportunities for marginalized groups to engage in and benefit from economic growth (Stiglitz, 2019). The global economic landscape is marked by unsustainable consumption behaviors, fueled by consumerism, planned obsolescence, and excessive waste production. The prevailing "take-make-dispose" model of production and consumption leads to rapid resource depletion, resulting in environmental pollution and heightened carbon emissions (Raworth, 2017). Implementing sustainable consumption strategies, such as circular economy frameworks, responsible production methods, and ethical consumerism, is vital for alleviating the adverse effects of overconsumption (Bocken, 2016).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper addresses the increasing difficulty of managing resources in a manner that guarantees long-term economic sustainability. Although contemporary frameworks, such as SDG #12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), strive to minimize waste, enhance resource efficiency, and encourage sustainable practices, there frequently exists a gap between modern methodologies and historical or spiritual insights. By revisiting Exodus 16:16-20, this study investigates how ancient resource management principles such as responsible consumption, fair distribution, and waste minimization provide significant perspectives that can enrich the objectives of SDG #12. The challenge lies in merging these enduring teachings with current sustainability initiatives to develop a more comprehensive approach to resource management.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives outlined aim to foster a thorough comprehension of resource management principles derived from both an ancient religious text and a contemporary sustainability framework. By examining Exodus 16:16-20 in conjunction with SDG #12, this study intends to demonstrate how historical insights can serve as a basis for tackling modern issues related to resource consumption and sustainability. The overarching aim is to propose a practical model for resource management that is ethically sound, integrating spiritual wisdom with contemporary scientific understanding, thereby promoting both economic viability and environmental well-being.

- To analyze the biblical narrative of manna and its lessons on responsible consumption, fair distribution, and waste minimization in the context of resource management.
- To explore the aims and targets of SDG #12, emphasizing resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable consumption practices.
- To draw parallels between the biblical teachings in Exodus 16:16-20 and the objectives of SDG #12, underscoring their mutual emphasis on sustainability and resource stewardship.
- To assess how ancient wisdom, particularly from Exodus 16:16-20, can inform and improve contemporary resource management strategies aimed at achieving economic sustainability.
- To formulate practical recommendations for individuals, businesses, and governments to integrate both spiritual and modern resource management strategies in the pursuit of sustainable development.



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

To analyze Exodus 16:16-20 in the context of resource management and economic sustainability, several theoretical frameworks can be applied:

- a) **Stewardship Theory and Resource Management:** Stewardship theory plays a significant role in the field of resource management, promoting sustainable practices that reconcile present demands with the availability of resources for future generations (Block, 1993). Within this theoretical framework, resource managers are regarded as stewards who bear a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure the equitable and efficient utilization of resources (Davis et al., 1997). This viewpoint resonates with the teachings found in Exodus 16:16-20, which instruct the Israelites to collect only what is necessary, thereby preventing overconsumption and waste. Research indicates that organizations embracing a stewardship-focused approach to resource management often achieve superior outcomes in sustainability performance metrics (Donaldson & Davis, 1991). For instance, the work of Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999) illustrates that the application of stewardship principles in family-owned enterprises fosters long-term sustainability and resource conservation, in contrast to a focus on immediate profit maximization. Likewise, stewardship-oriented environmental management has been shown to improve resource efficiency and conservation efforts (Aras & Crowther, 2008).
- b) **Stewardship Theory and Economic Sustainability:** Economic sustainability necessitates the judicious management and allocation of resources to ensure enduring economic stability (Brundtland Commission, 1987). Stewardship theory underpins this concept by promoting decision-making that emphasizes sustainable economic development and fairness across generations (Hernandez, 2012). Caldwell, Hayes, and Long (2010) assert that leadership grounded in stewardship principles encourages ethical decision-making, which in turn enhances economic sustainability by mitigating exploitative resource practices and fostering equitable resource distribution. In a biblical framework, the tenets of stewardship are illustrated in Exodus 16:16-20, where the distribution of resources was directed by divine guidance, ensuring that individuals neither accumulated excess nor faced scarcity. This principle resonates with modern sustainability initiatives that advocate for fair distribution and responsible consumption to avert resource depletion and economic inequality (Schneider, 2002).
- c) **Sustainability Theory:** Sustainability theory examines the ability of human societies to exist harmoniously with their environment, ensuring the welfare of both present and future generations. This theory integrates environmental, economic, and social aspects to uphold ecological integrity, economic sustainability, and social justice (Brundtland Commission, 1987). The notion of sustainability became widely recognized following the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987, which articulated sustainable development as a process that fulfills current needs while safeguarding the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own requirements

(Brundtland Commission, 1987). This definition highlighted the interdependence of economic advancement, environmental stewardship, and social equity. As sustainability theory has progressed, it has adapted to confront intricate global issues. The emergence of the Triple Bottom Line framework has brought attention to the necessity for businesses to consider their social, environmental, and economic effects in their practices (Elkington, 1998). This perspective encourages organizations to adopt strategies that are not only financially beneficial but also environmentally responsible and socially equitable.

- d) **Biblical Economic Ethics:** Biblical economic ethics investigates the moral frameworks and principles regarding economic conduct as articulated in the Bible. This discipline analyzes how scriptural insights can shape modern economic activities, highlighting concepts such as justice, stewardship, and the responsibility to care for the marginalized. The biblical narrative presents humanity as caretakers of God's creation, charged with the responsible management of resources. This notion of stewardship suggests that while individuals may possess property, the ultimate ownership resides with God, which necessitates the utilization of resources in ways that reflect divine purposes and enhance the welfare of the community (Barrera, 2015). Scriptural passages place a strong emphasis on justice, particularly in economic transactions. The prophets of the Old Testament often condemned exploitation and economic inequities, advocating for the fair treatment of all individuals, especially the impoverished and vulnerable. This prophetic legacy highlights the necessity of just structures within society (Finn, 2013). A persistent biblical directive is the obligation to care for the poor and marginalized. Institutions such as gleaning laws and the Jubilee year, as outlined in the Old Testament, were established to combat systemic poverty and ensure that those in need had access to essential resources. The New Testament reinforces this focus, with Jesus promoting generosity and support for those who are less fortunate (Barrera, 2015).

### Biblical Context and Interpretation of Exodus 16:16-20

The book of Exodus narrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land, a journey marked by reliance on divine direction and sustenance (Hamilton, 2011). Scholars contend that the provision of manna was not merely a miraculous occurrence but also a means of testing the Israelites' obedience and faith. Stuart (2006) posits that the guidelines for gathering and consuming manna were reflective of ancient Near Eastern food security practices, where the availability of sustenance was a significant concern. The stipulation to collect only the necessary amount for each day (Exodus 16:16-19) served as an instructive lesson in placing trust in God's ongoing provision rather than in human accumulation. Enns (2000) elaborates that the Israelites' interaction with manna mirrored their overarching covenant relationship with God. Just as they were required to adhere to divine instructions concerning food, they were similarly expected to comply with God's laws in other aspects of their lives. Consequently, this narrative encapsulates Israel's





faith journey, emphasizing the importance of reliance on divine guidance over human endeavor.

A prominent theme in Exodus 16:16-20 is the adequacy of God's provision. The directive to collect an omer for each individual (Exodus 16:16) guaranteed that everyone received their necessary share, thereby reinforcing the concept of divine equity (Wright, 2004). This idea is subsequently reflected in the New Testament, especially in 2 Corinthians 8:15, where Paul cites this passage to highlight the importance of fairness in Christian generosity. Numerous scholars emphasize the theological link between Exodus 16 and the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:11, in which Jesus instructs followers to request "daily bread" (Childs, 1974). Hamilton (2011) observes that the Israelites' reliance on manna serves as a precursor to the Christian understanding of dependence on God for daily sustenance, both in a physical and spiritual sense. The theme of daily reliance on God is further developed in Jesus' teachings in John 6:31-35, where He refers to Himself as the "bread of life," establishing a connection between manna and the spiritual nourishment available through Christ. The prohibition against retaining manna overnight (Exodus 16:19-20) functions as a measure of obedience and faith in God's sustenance. Certain Israelites chose to disregard this command, attempting to hoard manna for future use, only to find it spoiled, which illustrates the ineffectiveness of relying on oneself (Stuart, 2006). Scholars view this incident as emblematic of Israel's ongoing challenges with adherence to divine commands during their wilderness journey. Enns (2000) posits that this narrative underscore the notion that disobedience results in adverse outcomes, a recurring theme within biblical law and prophetic literature. Wright (2004) argues that the implications of this lesson transcend the historical context of ancient Israel, serving as a pertinent reminder for modern believers to place their trust in God's provision rather than succumbing to avarice or fear-induced hoarding. Exodus 16:16-20 extends beyond its theological context to encompass ethical considerations related to economic justice and the welfare of the community. The manner in which manna was distributed ensured that individuals received neither an excess nor a deficiency, thereby exemplifying an early model of resource equity (Childs, 1974). This concept has been integrated into contemporary dialogues surrounding economic justice, particularly within Christian frameworks that emphasize equitable wealth distribution and support for the impoverished (Wright, 2004). Moreover, Paul's allusion to this scripture in 2 Corinthians 8:15 indicates that the early Christian communities embraced analogous principles of mutual support and generosity. Hamilton (2011) posits that this passage critiques current economic systems that promote accumulation and disparity, advocating for a revival of biblical stewardship ideals.

#### Principles of Resource Management in Exodus 16:16-20

The notion of divine provision is pivotal in this passage, as God directs the Israelites to collect only what is necessary for each day: "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent'" (Exodus 16:16, New International Version [NIV]). Scholars emphasize that this directive highlights God's role as the supreme provider, fostering a reliance on Him rather than on human endeavors or the practice of accumulation

(Hamilton, 2011). Childs (1974) posits that the passage creates a theological framework where the management of resources is intrinsically connected to faith in God. By limiting the gathering of manna, God illustrates that wealth and sustenance are not solely the results of human effort but are divine gifts that require responsible stewardship. This principle is echoed in Jesus' instruction in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11), which reinforces the concept of daily reliance on divine provision.

Exodus 16:17-18 exemplifies the principle of fair resource allocation: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little" (Exodus 16:18, NIV). This passage indicates that divine provision guarantees that every individual receives a sufficient share, avoiding both excess and deficiency. Scholars have noted similarities between this idea and subsequent biblical teachings on economic equity, such as Paul's mention in 2 Corinthians 8:15, where he applies this principle to the notions of Christian generosity and the distribution of wealth (Wright, 2004). Stuart (2006) views this verse as an early instance of communal resource governance, wherein divine oversight curtails both the accumulation of surplus and the experience of scarcity. He posits that this framework could contribute to modern debates surrounding economic justice and sustainable practices. In a similar vein, Enns (2000) emphasizes that the text critiques individualistic wealth accumulation and instead advocates for the welfare of the community, a tenet that resonates with biblical regulations on gleaning (Leviticus 19:9-10) and debt forgiveness (Deuteronomy 15:1-2).

A significant element of resource management in Exodus 16:19-20 is the explicit prohibition against hoarding: "Then Moses said to them, 'No one is to keep any of it until morning.' However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell" (Exodus 16:19-20, NIV). This directive functions as a divine examination of faith and self-control, demonstrating the inherent unsustainability associated with greed-driven accumulation of resources. Hamilton (2011) interprets this passage as a cautionary tale regarding the dangers of overconsumption, positing that it embodies a broader biblical principle of reliance on God rather than accumulating resources out of fear. The Israelites' disobedience to this command reflects a deficiency in their faith in God's ongoing provision, paralleling later biblical accounts where hoarding results in ruin, such as the parable of the rich fool found in Luke 12:16-21. Wright (2004) further elaborates on this theme by emphasizing the ecological implications of the text. He contends that the decay of the hoarded manna serves as a metaphor for the unsustainable consequences of excessive consumption, a lesson that resonates with contemporary discussions on environmental stewardship. This interpretation suggests that the biblical model of daily provision stands in stark contrast to modern practices of resource exploitation and waste, advocating for a more sustainable and balanced approach.

The principles articulated in Exodus 16:16-20 transcend mere theological implications, extending into significant ethical and



social realms. This passage underscores the importance of responsible resource utilization, equitable distribution, and the perils associated with material excess—principles that are vital in the discourse surrounding economic justice and poverty alleviation. Childs (1974) posits that this text establishes a divine imperative for ethical economic conduct, advocating for a societal focus on need rather than avarice. He contends that biblical guidelines for resource management necessitate the implementation of policies designed to safeguard vulnerable groups from systemic deprivation while simultaneously discouraging the accumulation of wealth. Stuart (2006) further asserts that the communal nature of manna collection exemplifies an early framework for cooperative economics, promoting the equitable sharing of resources rather than their monopolization by a select few. In contemporary Christian discourse, this passage has been employed to champion responsible wealth distribution and ethical corporate practices. Enns (2000) notes that the biblical tenet of collecting only what is necessary resonates with modern sustainability initiatives, urging individuals and communities to engage in responsible consumption and waste reduction. Likewise, Hamilton (2011) connects the passage to current debates on economic policies aimed at addressing income inequality, suggesting that faith-based initiatives could draw inspiration from Exodus 16 to foster equitable resource distribution.

### Exploring Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12 - Responsible Consumption and Production

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12, introduced by the United Nations in 2015, aims to "ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns," which is essential for attaining global sustainability by the year 2030 (United Nations, 2015). This goal highlights the critical necessity of dissociating economic growth from environmental harm, enhancing resource efficiency, and fostering sustainable lifestyles across all societal levels. Akenji and Bengtsson (2014) assert that global consumption trends are predominantly unsustainable, especially in developed countries, where excessive consumption significantly contributes to resource depletion, pollution, and climate change. Their research underscores that realizing SDG #12 necessitates comprehensive changes in policies, production techniques, and consumer habits. Moreover, the idea of a circular economy has emerged as a pivotal strategy for fulfilling SDG #12. Kirchherr (2018) defines the circular economy as a framework designed to eliminate waste through the continuous utilization of resources, thus minimizing the environmental footprint of production and consumption. The authors contend that although numerous governments and businesses profess support for circular practices, actual implementation often lacks depth without substantial regulatory and cultural transformations. Consumer awareness and behavior are pivotal factors in the realm of sustainability. Research conducted by Joshi and Rahman (2015) indicates that although consumers often voice concerns regarding sustainability, a significant disconnect frequently exists between their intentions and actual behaviors. Factors such as insufficient information, the elevated costs associated with sustainable products, and their limited availability can significantly impact consumer choices, thereby hindering the achievement of the objectives outlined in Sustainable

Development Goal #12. From a policy standpoint, effective governance mechanisms are crucial for promoting responsible consumption and production practices. Reisch (2016) asserts that successful policies should encompass environmental, economic, and social aspects while fostering innovation, encouraging public engagement, and implementing educational initiatives that advocate for sustainable values. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on ethical and value-driven strategies for sustainable consumption. Jackson (2017) emphasizes the necessity of redefining prosperity, shifting the focus from material wealth to well-being, community cohesion, and environmental balance. This perspective aligns with broader initiatives aimed at integrating spiritual and moral principles often derived from religious teachings into the discourse surrounding sustainability.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12, which focuses on Responsible Consumption and Production, highlights the importance of adopting sustainable consumption and production practices to alleviate environmental harm, minimize waste, and improve resource efficiency. This goal is in harmony with the overarching objective of promoting sustainable development across environmental, social, and economic spheres. Several fundamental principles support SDG #12, each contributing significantly to the advancement of sustainability.

- a) **Resource Efficiency:** Resource efficiency serves as a fundamental tenet of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12, which aims to enhance the effective use of natural resources to achieve higher outputs while minimizing environmental harm. Stern (2004) argues that enhancing resource efficiency is crucial for dissociating economic growth from environmental degradation. This principle entails the optimization of materials, energy, and water usage to decrease consumption and lessen environmental impacts during production processes (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2020). The European Commission (2020) highlights that fostering resource efficiency can stimulate innovation and yield significant economic and environmental advantages.
- b) **Waste Reduction:** A key aspect of SDG #12 is the emphasis on waste reduction, particularly concerning food, plastics, and electronic waste. The United Nations (2015) has established a goal to reduce global food waste per capita at both consumer and retail levels by 2030, recognizing the considerable environmental and economic repercussions of food waste. In addition, minimizing plastic waste and encouraging recycling are vital elements of this principle (Thøgersen, 2017). The issue of electronic waste, which has emerged as a pressing environmental challenge, is also tackled through initiatives aimed at enhancing waste management practices and promoting recycling technologies (Cucchiella & Gastaldi, 2018).
- c) **Circular Economy:** The advancement of a circular economy represents a fundamental aspect of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12. This model emphasizes the importance of reusing, recycling, and refurbishing products, thereby ensuring that resources are retained within the economy for extended periods (Geissdoerfer et



al., 2017). In contrast to the conventional linear economy, which adheres to a "take-make-dispose" framework that frequently results in waste and resource exhaustion, the circular economy presents a more sustainable alternative. Kirchherr et al. (2018) contend that the principles of a circular economy provide a viable route towards sustainability by mitigating the environmental repercussions of production and consumption, while simultaneously fostering new business opportunities and decreasing reliance on limited resources. As Stahel (2019) points out, the shift towards a circular economy necessitates comprehensive changes in business operations, infrastructure, and consumer habits.

- d) Sustainable Production and Consumption: Sustainable production and consumption form a central tenet that urges both industries and consumers to integrate sustainability into their practices. Sustainable production entails the implementation of cleaner and more efficient manufacturing techniques that reduce resource consumption and environmental impact (Jackson, 2017). In a similar vein, sustainable consumption advocates for the selection of goods and services that are environmentally responsible and socially just (Thøgersen, 2017). The United Nations (2015) promotes policies that encourage both producers and consumers to engage in sustainable practices, which include minimizing the consumption of non-essential items, prioritizing renewable energy sources, and choosing sustainable products.

#### Comparison of Exodus 16:16-20 with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12

Exodus 16:16-20 provides an essential account in the Bible that recounts the Israelites' encounter with manna while traversing the wilderness. This scripture imparts significant lessons regarding resource management, sustainability, and ethical consumption. When juxtaposed with the contemporary principles outlined in SDG #12: Responsible Consumption and Production, several important themes arise, underscoring the applicability of these concepts in both historical and modern settings.

**Exodus 16:16-20: Resource Management and Sustainability:** In Exodus 16:16-20, God supplies the Israelites with manna, a food source that miraculously appeared each day in the wilderness. The directives given to the people were explicit: they were to collect only what was necessary for each day, except on the sixth day when they were instructed to gather a double portion in anticipation of the Sabbath (Exodus 16:16-20, New International Version). Any surplus manna stored beyond the allotted time would decay and become infested with worms, illustrating the repercussions of excessive consumption (Exodus 16:20). This scripture can be viewed as an early example of prudent resource management. The emphasis on daily sustenance embodies a principle of sustainability, promoting the idea that resources should be utilized judiciously and without waste. The prohibition against hoarding resonates with the ethical obligation to prevent waste and overexploitation, which is a fundamental aspect of contemporary sustainable consumption practices.

#### SDG #12: Responsible Consumption and Production:

Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG #12) aims to establish patterns of consumption and production that are sustainable, highlighting the importance of efficient resource utilization, waste reduction, and the promotion of a circular economy (United Nations, 2015). A fundamental aspect of this objective is the reduction of overconsumption, which ensures that resources are utilized judiciously and waste is kept to a minimum. Furthermore, SDG #12 emphasizes the necessity for responsible management practices in both industrial and consumer sectors, encouraging countries to formulate policies that foster sustainable resource use while supporting economic development that is environmentally sound (UNEP, 2020). One of the primary targets of SDG #12 is to "reduce per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels" by the year 2030 (United Nations, 2015). This goal resonates with the teachings found in Exodus 16:16-20, where the Israelites were instructed to collect only the amount of manna they needed for each day. Similarly, contemporary society is called upon to avoid wasting resources, especially food. Food waste represents a critical global challenge, with approximately one-third of all food produced for human consumption being either lost or discarded (FAO, 2020). Thus, the biblical passage from Exodus serves as an ancient framework for the principles underlying SDG #12.

#### Key Comparisons Between Exodus 16:16-20 and SDG #12

- 1) Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction: Both Exodus 16:16-20 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #12 highlight the importance of resource efficiency and waste reduction. In the biblical account, the Israelites were directed to gather only what was necessary for a single day, which corresponds with SDG #12's emphasis on minimizing waste and promoting responsible resource utilization (Thøgersen, 2017). The act of hoarding manna, which would ultimately decay, serves as a parallel to the wastefulness that SDG #12 seeks to combat in today's resource consumption practices.
- 2) Sustainable Consumption: The narrative in Exodus advocates for a model of sustainable consumption by restricting individuals to collect only what they require for their immediate needs. In a similar vein, SDG #12 encourages sustainable consumption patterns by urging individuals and businesses to refrain from excessive consumption, embrace environmentally friendly products, and lessen their ecological footprint (UNEP, 2020). The limitations on overconsumption found in Exodus resonate with contemporary discussions surrounding ethical consumption, particularly in relation to food and resource management.
- 3) Social Responsibility and Equity: The provision of manna in Exodus was distributed equally among all Israelites, symbolizing a dedication to fair resource allocation. Likewise, SDG #12 underscores the necessity for responsible consumption that considers both environmental sustainability and social equity (Jackson, 2017). Ensuring equitable distribution and responsible consumption of resources is fundamental to both the biblical narrative and current sustainability initiatives.
- 4) The Significance of Temporal Cycles in Resource Management: The directive to collect manna solely for





daily consumption, with the exception of the Sabbath, highlights the importance of time-oriented cycles in resource management. This perspective on cyclical consumption aligns with the principles of a circular economy, as advocated by Sustainable Development Goal #12, which aims to maximize the longevity of resources through methods such as recycling, reusing, and refurbishing (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). The emphasis on daily sustenance in the book of Exodus reflects the cyclical and restorative characteristics of the circular economy, where resources are perpetually reused rather than discarded.

- Explain SDG #12's aim to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Highlight key targets of SDG #12, such as reducing waste, improving resource efficiency, and promoting circular economies.

### The Consequences of Resource Mismanagement

Resource mismanagement yields extensive repercussions, influencing economic stability, environmental sustainability, social equity, and ethical governance. Historically, societies have faced significant challenges due to the improper use, excessive consumption, and misallocation of resources, frequently culminating in poverty, environmental degradation, and conflict. The Bible illustrates the perils of inadequate resource management, as seen in Exodus 16:16-20, where the acts of hoarding and disobedience led to waste and deterioration.

- a. **Biblical Insights on Resource Mismanagement:** The Scriptures provide numerous admonitions regarding the improper management of resources, highlighting the importance of responsible stewardship and the perils associated with greed. In Exodus 16:16-20, God supplies manna to the Israelites, directing them to gather only their daily needs. Nevertheless, some chose to disregard this instruction and hoarded the manna, which subsequently spoiled: "However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell" (Exodus 16:20, New International Version [NIV]). Hamilton (2011) views this narrative as a lesson in divine reliance and the pitfalls of human avarice. The Israelites' effort to stockpile excess manna serves as a metaphor for the broader issue of resource hoarding, which frequently results in waste and corruption. In a similar vein, Wright (2004) links this account to subsequent biblical admonitions regarding the accumulation of wealth without consideration for the less fortunate, as illustrated in the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21), where excessive accumulation invites divine retribution. Moreover, biblical legislation cautions against the exploitative use of resources. Leviticus 25:1-7 prescribes a sabbatical year for the land, underscoring the necessity of sustainability. Ignoring such principles can lead to depletion and exile, as evidenced by Israel's captivity (Wright, 2004). This biblical perspective emphasizes that mismanagement of resources carries both spiritual and practical ramifications, affecting communities and future generations.

- b. **Economic Implications of Resource Mismanagement:** Ineffective management of resources can precipitate economic downturns, financial volatility, and systemic inequality. Enns (2000) posits that Exodus 16:16-20 serves as an early illustration of the economic principle that unregulated accumulation results in inefficiency and deterioration. He connects this to contemporary economic failures stemming from speculation, wealth concentration, and irresponsible financial behaviors, exemplified by the 2008 global financial crisis, which was driven by excessive risk-taking and insufficient regulatory oversight. Wright (2004) examines how economic inequalities frequently emerge from poor resource management, where wealth becomes concentrated among a small elite while the larger population endures hardship. He cites biblical principles advocating for equitable distribution, such as 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, in which Paul promotes economic equilibrium to avert severe poverty. The inability to manage resources fairly, particularly in nations plagued by high corruption and misallocation of public resources, often leads to prolonged economic stagnation and social discord. Additionally, Stuart (2006) emphasizes that biblical economic frameworks underscore the necessity of cyclical redistribution, as illustrated by the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25), which aims to mitigate generational poverty. Contemporary economic research corroborates this notion, indicating that countries with more equitable wealth distribution tend to enjoy enhanced long-term economic stability. In contrast, societies that disregard these principles, engaging in excessive consumption or economic hoarding, frequently encounter recessions, rising unemployment, and financial instability.
- c. **Environmental Impacts of Resource Mismanagement:** A primary outcome of resource mismanagement is the degradation of the environment. The excessive exploitation of natural resources results in deforestation, water shortages, and climate change, which jeopardize both ecosystems and human livelihoods. Stuart (2006) draws a comparison between the spoiling of hoarded manna in Exodus 16:20 and contemporary environmental challenges stemming from overconsumption. Just as surplus manna became spoiled, the unsustainable use of natural resources leads to pollution, loss of biodiversity, and soil degradation. Enns (2000) posits that the biblical principle of daily reliance on God promotes sustainable practices rather than the reckless depletion of the earth's resources. Furthermore, Isaiah 24:4-6 illustrates the suffering of the earth as a result of human disobedience, emphasizing that environmental degradation is a direct result of inadequate stewardship. Wright (2004) observes that current ecological crises, such as desertification and climate-induced displacement, reflect biblical admonitions regarding unsustainable land management. Countries that disregard sustainable practices frequently face natural disasters, food insecurity, and economic decline, underscoring the enduring dangers associated with environmental mismanagement.
- d. **Social and Ethical Implications of Resource Mismanagement:** The mismanagement of resources



significantly intensifies social disparities, resulting in increased poverty, conflict, and systemic injustice. Communities that do not ensure equitable resource distribution frequently face escalating crime rates, social turmoil, and diminished governance. Hamilton (2011) highlights that in Exodus 16, divine intervention addresses resource inequality by guaranteeing that each individual receives an equal share of manna. This notion suggests that the accumulation of wealth at the detriment of others constitutes a form of mismanagement. Childs (1974) further elaborates that the stability of society hinges on the fair distribution of resources. When authorities and institutions neglect equitable allocation, social rifts widen, culminating in political unrest and violence. Historical instances reinforce these concepts. Enns (2000) cites the French Revolution as an example where severe wealth disparity, stemming from resource mismanagement, incited widespread civil disorder. Likewise, modern movements advocating for economic equity, such as campaigns for fair wages and corporate responsibility, illustrate the ongoing battle against resource monopolization and misallocation. Beyond economic inequity, resource mismanagement fosters corruption and governance failures. Stuart (2006) asserts that societies plagued by high corruption levels often endure poorly allocated budgets, insufficient infrastructure, and pervasive poverty. Ethical governance, as underscored by biblical teachings, is essential to ensure that resources are utilized for the collective benefit rather than for individual gain.

### Modern Economic Sustainability and Biblical Principles

Economic sustainability represents a significant global issue, highlighting the importance of enduring financial stability, efficient resource utilization, and fair distribution of wealth. Researchers and policymakers frequently explore ethical frameworks to tackle economic inequalities, environmental harm, and financial instability. Insights derived from biblical principles can contribute meaningfully to sustainable economic frameworks, emphasizing the values of stewardship, equity, and responsible management of resources.

- a. **Biblical Foundations of Economic Sustainability:** The scriptures underscore the importance of prudent financial and resource stewardship, which resonates with contemporary sustainability principles. In Genesis 2:15, humanity is given the responsibility to tend to creation, thereby establishing stewardship as a divine obligation (Wright, 2004). This concept of stewardship is applicable to economic frameworks, promoting equitable wealth distribution and ethical economic conduct. An illustration of sustainable consumption is found in Exodus 16:16-20, where God instructs the Israelites to collect only the necessary amount of manna for each day. Those who attempted to hoard surplus faced spoilage, demonstrating the repercussions of mismanaging resources (Hamilton, 2011). This teaching is consistent with current sustainable economic practices that emphasize equitable distribution and the avoidance of overconsumption (Enns, 2000). Additionally, the biblical principle of the Jubilee Year (Leviticus 25:8-17)

fosters economic sustainability through systematic debt forgiveness and land redistribution. Stuart (2006) posits that this framework mitigated generational poverty and promoted enduring economic stability, serving as a precedent for contemporary debt relief and wealth redistribution initiatives.

- b. **Ethical Wealth Management and Economic Justice:** A fundamental component of economic sustainability is the principled management of wealth. The Bible cautions against the perils associated with the accumulation and misuse of wealth. Proverbs 11:1 explicitly denounces dishonest financial practices: "The LORD detests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him" (NIV). This tenet resonates with current issues surrounding corporate accountability, fair trade, and ethical investment (Wright, 2004). Furthermore, Luke 16:10-11 highlights the necessity of integrity in financial transactions: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much." Hamilton (2011) emphasizes that this scripture illustrates the significance of ethical financial stewardship, which is pertinent to contemporary corporate governance and responsible capitalism. Organizations that emphasize transparency and social responsibility are more likely to achieve long-term economic sustainability (Enns, 2000). Economic justice represents another essential biblical principle that is pertinent to sustainable development. In Micah 6:8, followers are encouraged to "act justly and love mercy." This principle aligns with modern discussions regarding fair wages, social welfare, and labor rights. Wright (2004) contends that biblical economic ethics advocate for equitable wealth distribution, a concept that can be integrated into modern economies through progressive taxation, corporate social responsibility, and initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation.
- c. **Sustainable Resource Management and Environmental Economics:** Contemporary sustainability initiatives prioritize the responsible management of resources, a concept that finds its roots in biblical teachings. The Sabbath Year, as outlined in Leviticus 25:1-7, mandated that the Israelites allow the land to rest every seventh year, thereby preventing soil degradation and fostering long-term agricultural viability. Stuart (2006) notes that this ancient principle resonates with modern sustainable agricultural practices, including crop rotation and soil preservation. Furthermore, the Bible cautions against the environmental harm caused by avarice and poor management. Isaiah 24:4-6 illustrates the suffering of the earth due to human exploitation, reflecting current issues such as deforestation, pollution, and climate change (Wright, 2004). Enns (2000) posits that biblical stewardship principles can inform present-day environmental economics, promoting the adoption of renewable energy sources, conservation initiatives, and environmentally responsible business practices. In the realm of corporate sustainability, there is a growing trend to incorporate biblical stewardship principles, which prioritize long-term ecological responsibility over immediate financial gains. Companies that implement green energy solutions, waste minimization tactics, and





sustainable supply chain practices are in alignment with the biblical ethic of caring for creation (Hamilton, 2011).

- d. **Wealth Redistribution and Poverty Alleviation:** Biblical scripture underscores the necessity of aiding the impoverished and promoting economic equity. In Deuteronomy 15:7-11, there is a directive for generosity towards those in need, embodying a principle of wealth redistribution that resonates with contemporary social safety nets and charitable economic frameworks. The New Testament further supports this notion in Acts 2:44-45, where the early Christian community practiced sharing their resources to ensure that all individuals had access to essential needs. Hamilton (2011) posits that although this sharing was voluntary rather than compulsory, it highlights the moral obligation of affluent individuals to foster economic sustainability through philanthropy, equitable wages, and social entrepreneurship. Wright (2004) links these biblical teachings to current economic strategies, including universal basic income, microfinance programs, and corporate social responsibility. He argues that sustainable economies are characterized by their commitment to equitable resource distribution and opportunities, thereby mitigating wealth inequality while fostering economic development.

## CONCLUSION

The comparison between Exodus 16:16-20 and SDG #12 reveals key insights into responsible resource management that remain relevant today. The biblical narrative emphasizes the importance of consuming only what is needed, avoiding waste, and ensuring equity in the distribution of resources. These principles align closely with the goals of SDG #12, which advocates for efficient resource use, waste reduction, and sustainable consumption patterns. Both frameworks call for mindful consumption to preserve resources for future generations, highlighting the timeless relevance of responsible stewardship in achieving economic sustainability. Thus, the lessons from Exodus provide valuable ethical guidance that complements and supports the objectives of modern sustainability practices.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of Exodus 16:16-20, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance resource management for economic sustainability:

- a. **Foster Responsible Consumption and Minimize Waste:** It is essential for individuals, corporations, and governmental bodies to implement policies that promote moderation and curtail excessive consumption patterns. Strategies aimed at waste reduction, including recycling initiatives, sustainable packaging solutions, and the adoption of circular economy principles, should be prioritized to mitigate resource depletion.
- b. **Ensure Fair Resource Allocation:** Governments are urged to develop and enforce equitable economic policies that prevent the concentration of wealth and guarantee access to vital resources for all citizens. Initiatives such as social safety nets, microfinance programs, and wealth
- c. **Promote Trust-Based Economic Frameworks:** Financial institutions and businesses must commit to operating with integrity, transparency, and ethical standards, ensuring fair pricing and sustainable investment practices. Additionally, faith-based organizations and community leaders should champion economic models that emphasize human welfare over profit maximization.
- d. **Integrate Environmental Stewardship into Economic Planning:** It is imperative for governments and corporations to embrace sustainable methodologies, including the utilization of renewable energy sources, sustainable agricultural practices, and conservation-oriented policies, to harmonize economic advancement with ecological integrity. Corporations should be encouraged to adopt Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks within their operational strategies.
- e. **Implement Regular Economic and Social Reassessments:** Drawing inspiration from the Jubilee principles outlined in Leviticus 25, it is essential to establish periodic debt relief programs and wealth redistribution strategies aimed at mitigating systemic poverty and addressing economic disparities. Furthermore, businesses ought to implement ethical labor standards that ensure equitable compensation and humane working environments.
- f. **Enhance Faith-Based and Community-Driven Sustainability Efforts:** Religious organizations should actively engage in initiatives that promote financial literacy, ethical investment practices, and resource-sharing to advance sustainability. Collaborative efforts among faith-based groups, governmental bodies, and the private sector can facilitate comprehensive economic development that serves the interests of all societal members.

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