

## Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friederich ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Trans. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985),  
Testament frequently indicates widows and orphans as the most poor.

In common Greek usage, the word “widow”(Chera) derives from a root meaning “forsaken,” and it may thus refer to any woman living without a husband  
In the Old Testament the fate of the widow is bewailed (Ex. 22:25). Widowhood may indeed be a divine penalty (Ex. 22:22ff). Widows are associated with others who are disadvantaged, e.g. orphans, aliens, or day laborers. They suffer wrongs (Is. 10:2) or loss of rights (Is. 1:23). They are held in low esteem (Is. 54:4); cf. their special clothes (Gen. 38:14). Like harlots or divorcees, they may not marry the high priest (Lev. 21:14), or, in the program of Ezek. 44:22. “Widow,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friederich, Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.,1985), 1313.

The Old Testament enjoins all the righteous to be kind to widows. God is their refugee, and he helps them to their rights (Ps. 146:9; Deut. 10:18). He threatens judgment on those who wrong them and promises blessings to those who assist them (Ex. 22:21ff.; Jer.7:6). He witnesses in their favor (I King 17:20). The supreme disaster is when he no longer pities them (Is. 9:16). Their vows are valid (Num. 30:10), they have a share of the tithe (Deut. 14:29), they may glean (24:19ff), they participate in feasts (Deut. 16: 11), Their clothes may not be taken as a pledge (Deut. 24:17), and incidentally Levirate marriage grants them some protection (Deut. 25:5ff).

Judaism takes up the same motifs as the Old Testament widows suffer oppression, but God defends them, adopts them, hears their prayers, and judges on their behalf. Various laws assist them, e.g., the right to live in the house and on the estate of the late husband, the right to keep money in the temple, and the right to a share of tithes and war booty. For philo, the *chera* of God is, allegorically, the soul apart from God  
the program of Ezek. 44:22 Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friederich ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Trans. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1985), 1314.