

SOCIALISM AND THE BIBLE, PT. 1

A. REASONS FOR CHRISTIANS TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIALISM

1. Socialism versus capitalism is a _____ issue that is _____ our nation and many believers in Jesus Christ. (1 Chron. 12:32; Luke 12:54-57; Eph. 4:11-15)
2. Socialism is _____ in _____ and acceptance in the West today, especially with younger generations, including younger believers.
3. Many genuine and professing Christians are claiming socialism is more _____ with the Bible and Christianity than capitalism.

B. BASIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT SOCIALISM

1. Brief history of Western economies: feudalism, mercantilism, capitalism, state intervention
2. Karl Marx viewed history economically, moving from feudalism, capitalism, socialism, communism.
3. Key terms and economic systems:
 - a) Capitalism: An economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned and development is proportionate to the accumulation and reinvestment of profits gained in a free market.
 - b) Socialism: 1. Any of the various theories or systems of social organization in which the means of producing and distributing goods is owned collectively or by a centralized government that often plans and controls the economy. 2. The stage in Marxist-Leninist theory intermediate between capitalism and communism, in which collective ownership of the economy under the dictatorship of the proletariat has not yet been successfully achieved.
 - c) Communism: 1. A theoretical economic system characterized by the collective ownership of property and by the organization of labor for the common advantage of all members. 2. A system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single, often authoritarian party holds power, claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally shared by the people.
 - *Where do these views fall on an economic spectrum?*

C. COMPARING CLASSICAL SOCIALISM WITH THE BIBLE

1. According to the Bible, ownership of _____ is a God-given right, rather than collective ownership under socialism and communism. (Exod. 20:15, 17; 21:28-36; 22:1-15; Deut. 22:1-4; 1 Kings 21:1-4; Prov. 23:10-11; Acts 5:4).
 - *Why wasn't the sharing of the Jerusalem church (Acts 2, 4-5) socialism/communism?*

2. According to the Bible, the increasing size of government and centralized control leads to a loss of individual _____ and _____. (1 Sam. 8:10-18; 1 Kgs. 12:4-15).

3. According to the Bible, individuals have the right to _____ their private property (capital) for purposes of production, to profit, and to enjoy the _____ of one's labors, versus state control and determination of production and distribution/redistribution. (Eccl. 2:24-25; 5:18-20; Acts 5:4)

4. According to the Bible, man is created in the _____, with an advanced intellect, emotions, and will (freedom of choice), which is more consistent with free market capitalism. (Gen. 1-4)

5. According to the Bible, _____ from one's decisions, investments, and labors is not inherently wrong or immoral but is spoken of _____ in Scripture as consistent with _____, whereas surplus or excess is a negative concept in socialism/communism. (Pro. 8:20-21; 10:4; 13:11, 22; 22:4)

6. According to the Bible, God _____ people in time and eternity according to their work (Num. 18:31; Job 34:11; Prov. 11:18; Jer. 32:19; Rev. 22:12), and He does so by _____ (Ruth 2:12; Matt. 25:14-29; 2 John 8), thus _____ greater productivity, which is more consistent with capitalism.

7. According to the Bible, legally coerced _____ between the rich and poor is unrealistic and unattainable (John 12:8), and it opposes God's sovereign, just plan to _____ some rich and others poor (1 Sam. 2:7; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:4-5; 60:5, 11; 61:6; 66:12; Mic. 4:13; Zech. 14:14), and it goes far beyond His stated _____ for human government (Rom. 13:1-6; 1 Peter 2:13-14).

According to the Bible, the causes of poverty include:

- physical disability and lack of resources (Mark 10:46; 12:44; Acts 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:9),
- greed, oppression, or the unjust business practices of the rich (Prov. 22:16; Ezek. 22:12-13; Jas. 2:6),
- personal laziness (Prov. 6:6-11; 10:4; 19:15, 24; 20:13; 21:17, 25-26; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:13),
- foolishness (Ps. 106:13-15; Prov. 10:14-16; 11:14; 21:5; 28:19; Hos. 4:6), and
- disobedience toward God (Prov. 13:18; 23:21; 28:22).

Taken together, all these causes of poverty versus wealth fit far better with capitalism's emphasis on individual _____ and taking personal _____ before God and others. (Prov. 16:26; 2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8-10)

- Does Acts 20:35 mandate Christians to financially support the poor? (John 5:3; Acts 9:37; Jas. 5:14)

- Does 2 Corinthians 8:14 mandate financial equality? (Rom. 15:25-27)

8. According to the Bible, _____ giving as a _____ act is more consistent with capitalism and the principle of grace-giving by believers versus the legally coerced redistribution of wealth by the state on the believer's behalf as a matter of supposed _____ and _____ under socialism. (Exod. 35:29; Acts 5:4-5; 2 Cor. 9:5, 7)

- *How does all of this relate to the gospel and you?*