

# Does the Bible Support Socialism?

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Some people assume that the Bible supports socialism because it advocates looking after the poor. However, this does not mean that Almighty God is a socialist. In fact, it will be shown from scripture that He does not support socialism. Some of the reasons for His position will be explained along the way. Before starting this subject, a brief definition and explanation of socialism is essential.

“Socialism is any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership, and administration, of the means of production and distribution of goods. A system of society, or group living, in which there is no private property” (MerriamWebster Dictionary).

There have been many forms of socialism in recent history. For example, in France socialists began to agitate and organize in the 1830s and '40s and Louis-Auguste Blanqui was among them. His position was that socialism cannot be achieved without the conquest of state power. He argued that this conquest must be the work of a small group of conspirators who, once in power, would form a temporary dictatorship that would confiscate the property of the wealthy and establish state control of major industries.

Presumably, the goal would be to confiscate the property, businesses, and accumulated wealth of the ruling class, and then distribute these to the collective population in some manner. In societies today, this redistribution of wealth can be achieved in a number of ways including higher taxes being applied to those who work hard, and then using their money to support

those who are deemed by the government to be disadvantaged.

With this brief summary, a number of scriptures will be examined to see whether socialism is supported or encouraged by Almighty God. To begin with, God's word states that property is to remain in the hands of its owner and, even if it is confiscated as a result of bad debt incurred by its owner, the property is to be returned to its owner at the commencement of a Jubilee year. One exception to this law is that a family member could purchase it back sooner, provided the intent is to return the property to its rightful owner. Therefore, any permanent confiscation of property by a government, or group of self-appointed rulers, is regarded as theft, which is a sin, and carries the death penalty unless the perpetrator repents and makes restitution (Ezekiel 18:4b; 20a; Rom. 6:23; cf. Ex. 22:1-15; Lev. 6:1-7).

And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year (Jubilee), and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and **each of you shall return to his possession**.... (Lev. 25:10a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

In this Year of Jubilee, **each of you shall return to his possession** (Lev. 25:13; emphasis added).

If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his kinsmanredeemer (family member) comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold (Lev. 25:25; Ed. note in parenthesis).

If a family member does not pay the debt of his poor brother, the land can remain with the

creditor until the Jubilee, at which time it must be returned to its original and rightful owner.

But if he (the poor land owner) is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and **in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he** (the poor land owner) **shall return to his possession** (Lev. 25:28; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Because Almighty God was responsible for the creation of this planet, He is the owner. Everyone else is just a temporary resident. Consequently, mankind is expected to manage the land according to His commands, which do not permit a socialist system of government to confiscate property in perpetuity.

**The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine;** for you are strangers and sojourners (temporary residents) with Me (Lev. 25:23; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

As Creator and owner of this planet, only God can permanently remove someone from His property. According to numerous Biblical examples, God has done this when any nation persisted in rebelling against His law and commandments, regardless of ethnicity.

And I (God) will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite (Ex. 33:2; cf. Lev. 20:22-23).

But if you (Solomon) or your sons at all turn (back) from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and

worship them, <sup>7</sup> then I will cut off (destroy) Israel from the land which I have given them... (1Kgs. 9:6-7a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

After examining scriptures dealing with property confiscation, the next aspect of socialism deals with the transfer of business ownership to a state government. As mentioned previously, this can be accomplished by creating laws that are hostile to privately owned businesses. By increasing taxes and creating onerous regulations, business owners can be forced to sell out. When this occurs, a number of business owners can leave a state or country that has adopted this form of governance, and set up their business in another state or country. This has been referred to as a "brain drain" because those who have business skills and are willing to take the risks necessary to succeed in business, have gone elsewhere. So what does the Bible say about the leader of a government that burdens its people with unfair taxes and regulations?

Now Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king (1Kgs. 12:1).

Then Jeroboam and the whole congregation of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, <sup>4</sup>"Your father (Solomon) made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." (1Kgs. 12:3b-4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Then the king answered the people roughly... saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!" (1Kgs. 12:13-14)

Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king,

saying: "What portion have we in David (family of Judah)? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!" So Israel departed to their tents (1Kgs. 12:16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

By King Rehoboam stating that he would make the lives of his citizens more burdensome, he lost control over ten large families within the nation of Israel. He ended up ruling only the family of Judah (referred to as the Jews) and the family of Benjamin in the city of Jerusalem (1Kgs. 12:21). The remaining ten families moved their capital to the city of Samaria, which is north of Jerusalem. Then King Rehoboam decided to force the ten families to submit to his authority, but God intervened and prevented this from happening.

Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, saying, <sup>24</sup> Thus says the Lord, "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel... (1Kgs. 12:23-24a).



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*Deuteronomy 23:19*

By attempting to place more burdens upon ten families in Israel, King Rehoboam caused the previously united country to split apart. This separation became permanent years later when the ten families of Israel were taken into captivity by the King of Assyria (2Kgs. 17:5-23). Unfortunately, those who espouse the supposed advantages of socialism fail to understand the lesson of Rehoboam, which is that increased taxes and onerous regulations result in

discouraging innovation, business, and investment. Also, when taxes increase there is little incentive for the population to improve themselves through study, sacrifice, and hard work. So instead of building up a state or county, the tenets of socialism gradually break it apart. Inherent in a socialist system is the proclivity for more and more government programs that can lead to greater debt and the necessity to raise taxes even further. According to God's law, every citizen is to pay a tax to the central authority of 10%, whether they are poor or rich (Ex. 30:15). This law was known generations before the time of Moses (Gen. 14:20), and it was still in effect when Jesus Christ appeared on earth.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, but have neglected the weightier matters of the law; justice and mercy and faith. These (tithes) **you ought to have done**, without leaving the others undone (Mt. 23:23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The argument that no country could function on a flat 10% tax ignores a number of important facts. First, the ancient nation of Israel did function and prosper when they obeyed the law of the tithe. Combined with this, they did not have to purchase land for their homes because it was given to them at no charge by God. Next, land speculation did not occur because the value of land decreased each year until the Jubilee was reached, at which time it returned to its original value based on the crops it produced (Lev. 25:14-17). This alone can help to keep inflationary trends in check. Also, interest charges were not to be applied to citizens of the country.

You shall not charge interest to your brother – interest on money or food or anything that is lent out at interest (Dt. 23:19).

Any nation that trusts (has faith in) Almighty God, does not have to spend huge amounts of money for military equipment because any battles that come their way will be won through His intervention.

**The Lord will fight for you**, and you shall hold your peace (Ex. 14:14; cf. Dt. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; emphasis added).

Another command that would make a significant difference to any nation's economic well-being relates to borrowing money.

For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but **you shall not borrow**; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you (Dt. 15:6; cf. 28:12; Prov. 22:7; emphasis added).

Borrowing money, with interest added, puts any nation under the influence of its lender(s). Therefore, the sovereignty of such a county is at risk. The ideal situation is to balance the budget every year and not rely on borrowing money from other nations in order to maintain government programs that often impede economic growth.

As mentioned previously, socialism discourages individual development through study, sacrifice, and hard work. In other words, why should anyone apply themselves in these areas if they are going to end up losing a large portion of their income through government taxes that will be mismanaged as they have been for generations? In contrast, Jesus Christ made it clear that

anyone who sacrifices and works hard should be rewarded; not punished.

So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas (each worth about three months' salary), and said to them, "Do business till I come." (Lk. 19:13; Ed. note in parenthesis) And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. <sup>16</sup>Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' <sup>17</sup> And he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." <sup>18</sup> And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' <sup>19</sup> Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' <sup>20</sup> And another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. <sup>21</sup>For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow' (Lk. 19:15-21).



**THE LORD WILL FIGHT FOR YOU,  
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Exodus 14:14; cf. Deuteronomy 1:30; 3:22; 20:4;  
emphasis added

This last servant did not agree with his Master's business model. He felt it was unfair that others would work hard to grow the Master's business while he was away. This attitude was condemned by the Master.

And he (the Master) said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what

I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. <sup>23</sup> Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' (Lk. 19:22-23; Ed. note in parenthesis).

This wicked servant was not prepared to do the bare minimum. Instead, he was willing to let others work hard while he did nothing. Then he justified his bad attitude by saying his Master was unfair. In socialism, the wealthy are viewed in the same manner. In other words, they invest their money in businesses, take risks that may or may not pay off, and employ workers to produce a profit for them. Strangely, this bothers those who embrace socialism. The Master in this parable dealt with the wicked servant by removing the mina he had, and then rewarded the most diligent worker by giving it to him. This clearly indicates that God rewards those who are willing to sacrifice, work hard, and obey the instructions of their Master.

And he (the Master) said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (Lk. 19:24; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Although this parable appears to deal with physical matters, its real value is in the spiritual message it portrays. Simply stated, when God calls someone to serve Him, that individual needs to be willing to sacrifice, work hard, stay focused, and obey His commands in order to grow and become a more valuable citizen of His kingdom.

But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' (Lk. 9:62).

As far as the poor are concerned, God's laws consider the poor, but they are still expected to work. In the next scripture, landowners are commanded to leave food for the poor, but the poor are not going to have this food delivered to their door. Instead, they have to go out to the fields and work to gather what they need.

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap; nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. (Instead), you shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God (Lev. 23:22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In addition to this legislation, God commanded a tithe to be collected once every seven years. Specifically, it was to be gathered on the third year during each seven-year cycle, and used for those who are struggling financially.

At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. <sup>29</sup> And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands which you do (Lev. 14:28-29).

Because it is more likely that the poor will accumulate debt, God created a year of release



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Luke 9:62

during which all debts were to be forgiven completely, with no strings attached.

At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release of debts. <sup>2</sup> And this is the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord's release (Lev. 15:1-2).

Under God's system of governance, the poor are not to be denied equal justice with the rich.

You shall do no injustice in judgement. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. But in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor (Lev. 19:15; cf. Ps. 140:12; Prov. 29:14; Jer. 5:28; emphasis added).

However, in man's justice system, the rich can employ the most successful and expensive lawyers who are usually better qualified to win a legal battle, which can often do the following;

To rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of My people, (so) that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless (Isa. 10:1-2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

These are just some of the laws and commands that God created to lighten the load of the poor, which apparently is the goal of socialism. However, comparatively speaking, socialism is a more radical form of surgery to correct the issue of poverty because it can kill the patient in the process. The patient in this case refers to an entire state or country.

In many cases, the poor are in this condition because they have learned bad habits that can be generational.

He who deals with a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes one rich. <sup>5</sup> He who gathers in the summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame (Prov. 10:4-5).

In practice, socialism encourages laziness which is the point of Proverbs 10:4-5, and one of the lessons in Christ's parable mentioned previously in Luke 19:12-26.

In conclusion, the application of God's law and commandments, in any state or country, is so far from becoming a reality that mankind will continue to create new and different forms of governance, including socialism, that will ultimately fail. There is only one method of governing nations that will be successful, but it will have to wait for the return of Jesus Christ to implement it (Isa. 2:1-4; cf. Rev. 11:15). Although the majority of mankind is currently incapable of recognizing it, they have dug a hole which is impossible to get out of (Prov. 14:12). It will require God's intervention because no humanly devised form of government, including socialism, will solve the complex problems we have created by ignoring God's clear instructions for a peaceful and prosperous planet (Isa. 58:8; cf. Rom. 3:10-18).

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