

Thinking Biblically About Socialism (Part 1)

Selected Scripture

A Referendum on Socialism

I. What is Socialism?

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“Any economic or political system based on government ownership and control of important businesses and methods of production.”

- dictionary.cambridge.org

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“Any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.”

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“A system of society or group living in which there is no private property.”

“A system or condition of society in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the state.”

- merriam-webster.com

I. What is Socialism?

“Socialism seeks as it’s premier goal the equality of wealth and equality of ownership within a society. To accomplish this, the government must be involved in the redistribution of wealth.”

- R.C. Sproul

II. How is Socialism contrary to God's design?

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A. God created human beings to be stewards of His creation.

The Bible begins by telling us that God created the world and everything in it:

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In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen.1:1)

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“The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.” (1 Cor.10:26)

God created human beings in His image to be stewards or managers of all that He created and owns:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Gen.1:26)

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen.1:28)

“The Hebrew word translated as ‘subdue’ means to make the earth useful for human beings’ benefit and enjoyment. God was entrusting Adam and Eve, and by implication the entire human race, with stewardship over the earth.”

- Wayne Grudem

B. God gave human beings the privilege and responsibility of having earthly ownership of private property.

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Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock (Genesis 4:2b-4a).

“Notice that their offering is validated in that it belongs to the one who offered it. The offertory system of the Old Testament makes no sense when divorced from the system of private property.

One of the basic stipulations of making an offering is that you present something which belonged to you.

The right of human ownership is something God has assigned as part of our covenant partnership with Him in creation.”

- R.C. Sproul

The 8th Commandment says, *You shall not steal.*

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The 10th Commandment begins, *You shall not covet. . . .*

God gave the commandments, *Do not steal* and *Do not covet* because people have the right to own possessions and have those rights protected by law.

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And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion (Gen.1:28).

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it (Gen.2:15).

You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

(I Thess.4:11b-12)

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Tim.5:8)

For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

(2 Thess.3:10-12)

“The sanctity of labor is the ground-basis for private property. In both the Old and New Covenants, the call to labor is an emphatic one, bringing fruit as its just reward. The avoidance of labor is regarded as sin. Paul commands labor as an ethical norm.”

- R.C. Sproul

But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth (Deut. 8:18)

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?
(1Cor.4:7)

“But what the Bible would teach us above all . . . is this: we should not put our trust in government, private industry, or economic theory, whether capitalistic or socialist. . . . We should not be looking to government to make us wealthy, or to deal with the sins that have led our nation to this point in history.

“Now, as never before, we should trust only
in *the name of the Lord our God*
(Psalm 20:7), the name of Jesus Christ.”

- John Frame