

Jesus and Socialism

Dub McClish

Those who espouse certain social, moral, or political agendas sometimes invoke the Bible in general or Jesus in particular for their cause (notwithstanding their disavowal of both). They thus pander to the many believers who still believe in both.

From time to time, advocates of socialism and/or communism charge that Jesus taught, and the early Christians practiced such. Some brazenly averred that the New Testament is a sort of socialist “manifesto” and that Jesus was the first socialist. Let us examine some of their “Proofs”:

- **The rich young ruler** (Mat. 19: 16–22). Jesus told this wealthy man to sell all that he had and give it to the poor, then follow Him. Socialists cite this statement as an example of Jesus’ socio-political philosophy. However, He never gave this order to any of the thousands of others He taught. Simply put, Jesus knew that this man’s wealth was his god, and that as long as he possessed it, it possessed **him**. Jesus had/has to be first, or not at all.
- **The Judgment scene** (Mat. 25:31–46). In describing the final Judgment (incredibly, liberals call this literal description a “parable”), Jesus said He would separate the lost from the saved. Those who will be saved are those who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and such like. He condemns those who had failed to do so. However, socialists seek their agenda here in vain. Jesus is simply emphasizing the **personal** benevolence and helpfulness each one should practice toward another. They also fail to note that this passage is only one of many that state the bases of our final accounting (e.g., one’s words [Mat. 12: 37], one’s faith and baptism [Mark. 16:16], one’s faithfulness [Mat. 10:22], all of Jesus’ words [John 12:48]).
- **The practice of the early saints** (Acts 2:44; 4:32). Indeed, these disciples had “all things common,” not selfishly grasping their own possessions. However, this was a voluntary generosity, **willingly** performed to help the helpless. There is no hint that the apostles ordered such. Contrariwise, Peter told Ananias: “While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power?” (5:4).

Those who advocate centralized/collectivist government and a welfare state that **mandates** “benevolence” by forcing producers to support non-producers must seek their endorsement elsewhere. Paul wrote: “If any will not work, neither let him eat” (2 The. 3:10). Jesus’ “golden rule,” “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them” (Mat. 7:12), urges **voluntary**, not confiscatory “giving” of the property and possessions of others. **Jesus was not a socialist**

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it appeared in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, Denton, TX, May 25, 2012].

Attribution: From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner and administrator.