

# Was Jesus a Socialist?

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What is socialism? Here's what it's NOT:

Good intentions, wanting to help people

Jack and Jill sharing stuff

Gorbachev: "Jesus was the first socialist because he was the first to seek a better life for mankind."

"If it works, it was socialism; if it doesn't, then it was capitalism"  
(example of Venezuela)

Here's what it is:

Girl Scout example (from my article, "Socialism: Force or Fantasy"  
accessible at [www.fee.org](http://www.fee.org))

FORCE! If it's voluntary, it's not socialism. Obamacare example.  
Socialists don't *request* your participation.

Socialism is the concentration of political and economic power to achieve one, two, or all three of these objectives:

- 1) Central planning of the economy
- 2) Government ownership of property
- 3) Redistribution of wealth

Under socialism, you can't practice capitalism. But under capitalism, you can practice socialism (at least a "pretend" socialism)

When I first heard "Jesus was a socialist" 50 years ago, I wondered how to reconcile:

- 1) Free will, even over the ultimate decision (choosing Him as savior)
- 2) A man of love and peace favoring welfare at gunpoint?

Nary a word in the New Testament endorsing the use of politics or compulsion for any sort of humanitarian purpose – NOT ONE!

Jesus said he came to fulfill the Mosaic Law, i.e., 10 Commandments

- 1) Eighth Commandment: “Thou Shalt Not Steal”
- 2) Tenth Commandment: “Thou Shalt Not Covet”

What about Jesus’s own words?

- 1) Luke 12: 13-15 (approached with request to redistribute)
- 2) Story of the Good Samaritan
- 3) Parable of the Talents
- 4) Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard
- 5) “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s”
- 6) Easier for a camel to go thru eye of a needle than a rich man enter Heaven

Jesus driving money-changers from the Temple (not from a bank or marketplace)

What about greed? – It’s socialists who are concerned with money. Christianity is concerned with your soul.

What about “Money is the root of all evil” – It’s *LOVE* of money!

What about the early Christians selling their possessions?

Finally, why would a man who preached love want you to live in tyranny, despair, and dependency? Contrast socialism and capitalism:

- 1) Index of Economic Freedom
- 2) Human nature: individuality; to be fully human, you must be free!
- 3) Free countries are the greatest donors, most compassionate people, always bailing out socialists

For further reference, see my essay, ***Rendering Unto Caesar: Was Jesus a Socialist?*** – accessible for free download at [www.fee.org](http://www.fee.org).

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"Rendering Unto Caesar: Was Jesus a Socialist?" by Lawrence W. Reed, available for free download at [www.fee.org](http://www.fee.org).

"Economics in Christian Perspective: Theory, Policy and Life Choices" by Victor Claar and Robin Klay

"For the Least of These: A Biblical Answer to Poverty" edited by Anne R. Bradley

"Counting the Cost: Christian Perspectives on Capitalism" by Art Lindsley and Anne R. Bradley