

Was Jesus a Socialist? Part 4 (Final)

This is part four of a four-part essay. Click these links for part one, part two, and part three. The empirical evidence today is overwhelming that, as Montesquieu observed two centuries ago, “Countries are well cultivated, not as they are fertile, but as they are free.” [7] Nations possessing the most economic freedom (and the smallest governments) have higher rates of long-term economic growth and are more prosperous than those that engage in socialistic and redistributive practices. The countries with the lowest levels of economic freedom also have the lowest standards of living. Free countries and their people are the greatest charitable givers, whereas on net balance, socialist ones are decisively on the receiving end. Why is this relevant? Because you can’t redistribute anything to anybody if it’s not created by somebody in the first place, and the evidence strongly suggests that the only lasting thing that socialist and redistributive arrangements do for poor people is give them lots of company. In Jesus’s teachings and in many other parts of the New Testament, Christians – indeed, all people – are advised to be of “generous spirit,” to care for one’s family, to help the poor, to assist widows and orphans, to exhibit kindness and to maintain the highest character. How all that gets translated into the dirty business of coercive, vote-buying, politically driven redistribution schemes is a problem for prevaricators with agendas. It’s not a problem for scholars of what the Bible actually says and doesn’t say. Search your conscience. Consider the evidence. Be mindful of facts. Ask yourself: *When it comes to helping the poor, would Jesus prefer that you give your money freely to the Salvation Army or at gunpoint to the welfare department?* Jesus was no dummy. He was not interested in the public professions of charitableness in which the legalistic and hypocritical

Pharisees were fond of engaging. He dismissed their self-serving, cheap talk. He knew it was often insincere, rarely indicative of how they conducted their personal affairs, and always a dead end with plenty of snares and delusions along the way. It would hardly make sense for him to champion the poor by supporting policies that undermine the process of wealth creation necessary to help them. In the final analysis, he would never endorse a scheme that doesn't work and is rooted in envy or theft. In spite of the attempts of many modern-day progressives to make him into a welfare-state redistributionist, Jesus was nothing of the sort. **ENDNOTES: 1.** *London Daily Telegraph*, June 16, 1992. **2.** David Boaz, "The Coming Libertarian Age," *Cato Policy Report* (January–February 1997). **3.** All Bible citations are from the New International Version (NIV). **4.** R. C. Sproul, Jr. , *Biblical Economics: A Commonsense Guide to Our Daily Bread*(Bristol, TN: Draught Horse Press, 2002), p. 138. **5.** Anne Bradley and Art Lindsley, eds., *For the Least of These: A Biblical Answer to Poverty* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2014), p. 110. **6.** Norman Horn, "New Testament Theology of the State, Part 2," , Nov. 28, 2008, **7.** Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). **Recommended Reading** Bandow, Doug. *Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Economics*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988. Bandow, Doug. "Biblical Foundations of Limited Government." Institute for Faith, Work, and Economics. Bradley, Anne and Art Lindsley, eds. *For the Least of These: A Biblical Answer to Poverty*. Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2014. Hendrickson, Mark W. "Christian Charity and the Welfare State." Vision and Values Paper (April 13, 2011). Horn, Norman. "Theology Doesn't Begin and End With Romans 13." , April 2, 2013. Mahaffey, Francis. "Socialism: Spiritual or Secular?" *The Freeman* (May 1, 1960). Reed, Lawrence W. "Cliché #20: Government Can Be a Compassionate Alternative to the Harshness of the Marketplace." Clichés of Progressivism (August 29, 2014). "Lawrence Reed on *The Platform*." (A short video interview on income redistribution, the welfare state, and Christianity, available online.) Richards, Jay W. *Money*,

Greed, and God: Why Capitalism Is the Solution and Not the Problem. New York: HarperOne, 2009. Sirico, Robert. "The Parable of the Talents: The Bible and Entrepreneurs." *The Freeman* (July 1, 1994). Sproul, R. C., Jr. *Biblical Economics: A Commonsense Guide to Our Daily Bread.* White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2008. Heritage Foundation. "The 2015 Index of Economic Freedom." *This is part four of a four-part essay. Click these links for part one, part two, and part three. The full article was originally published by the **Foundation for Economic Education**. The full book can be downloaded here.*