

The Ideal City

Marxism in Acts or Something Else Entirely?

Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:41-47

De Plane, De Plane!

A professor sat down on his aisle seat on a Southwest Airline flight. He was hoping that no one would come and sit in the middle seat. If you know how Southwest works, you can understand that point. But right near the end of the boarding, a lady started walking the aisle and plopped down, right next him. She was somewhere in her 60s. “So what do you do?” she asked him, as she started making polite conversation.

Knowing it would likely shut down the exchange quickly, he said, “I teach ethics at a seminary.”

It didn’t phase her. “What do you teach in particular?”

“For the past few years, I’ve been working on economics – wealth and poverty issues,” he said.

“Oh, you’re a Christian, and you teach economics? So You’re a communist,” she said matter-of-factly.

“Well, no ... why would you think so?”

“Because it’s in the Bible,” she answered.¹

Two passages are usually on the tip of the tongue in this very common belief. Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-35. The first says, “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” The second is like it, “Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were

¹ David W. Jones, “[Does Acts Teach that Christians Should Be Communists?](#)” *Center for Faith & Culture* (Nov 16, 2015).

owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”

Rolland Boer begins the Introduction of his book *Red Theology: On the Christian Communist Tradition* by saying, “‘All things in common’ has been the slogan of Christian communists for some two millennia. It originally comes from **Acts 2:44**, with a variation in **Acts 4:32**. But it was actually a Marxist, Karl Kautsky, who established that there is a distinct tradition of this form of communism, inspired by these biblical texts and constituting the longest continuous form of communism in the world.”² That’s quite a claim and it’s popularity is eclipsed only by its boldness. Today we will look at it and investigate what exactly **what is going on with these Christians** in the early part of Acts.

Acts 2:41-47 in Context

The first of our two verses comes immediately after Peter’s first great sermon on Pentecost Sunday, after his command to repent and be baptized, and after we learn that

² **Rolland Boer**, *Red Theology: On the Christian Communist Tradition*, Studies in Critical Research on Religion 10, series editor Warren S. Goldstein (Boston: Brill, 2019), 1.

3,000 people were added to their number (120) that same day. It clearly is part of the last unit of text of Acts 2, but where does that unit begin? You can make a good argument that it begins with that statement of **numbers** found in **vs. 41** and returns in **47**, as both also have the word “**added**” and “**day.**” “... and there were *added* that *day* about *three thousand* souls” and “The Lord *added* to their *number* *day by day* those who were being saved.” This makes a nice inclusio.

Vs. 42 begins, “they *devoted* themselves,” while **vs. 46** begins, “**Day by day, attending ... together.**” Importantly, “**de-voted**” and “**attending**” are actually **identical verbs** in Greek (*proskarterountes*).³ Furthermore, both verses speak about “**the breaking of bread.**” So those match up.

From here, it gets **a little more difficult**. If you **compare words**, we find the emphasis being placed on “**all**” in vv. **43a** and **44-45**. “And awe came upon *every* soul,” “and *all* who believed were together and had *all* things in common. And they were selling their possession and belongings and distributing the proceeds to *all*, and *any* had need.” This gives you **a center**: “And many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles” (**43b**).⁴

³ This is brought out nicely by the Young’s Literal Translation, “And they were *continuing* steadfastly” and “Daily also *continuing* with one accord.”

⁴ This is the chiasm at the *Biblical Chiasm Exchange* on [Acts 2:41-47](#).

But you could also break it up *thematically*. So for example, you have *activities* (teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, prayers matching meeting in the temple courts and breaking bread), *results* (outward result was fear, wonders, and signs matching the results of selling and distributing to any in need). This gives a center of *everyone in the same place having everything in common*—which happens to be our main idea for this sermon.⁵ It seems to me that following the words is a slightly better alternative because it is more objective. If so, it gives us a *theological explanation* for why the Christians were doing all this. And as we move forward, you will see why I’m choosing to look at it this way, as it very much helps us understand both what is and what is *not* going on as it regards communism.

- A. “added” that “day” about “three thousand” (2:41)
- B. “devoted” (*proskarterountes*); “breaking of bread” (42)
- C. “every” soul (43a) in awe/fear
- D. “Many wonders and signs through the Apostles (43b)**
- C’. “all” and “any” (44-45) sold and shared
- B’. “attending” (*proskarterountes*); “breaking bread” (46)
- A’. “added” “number” “day by day” (47)

⁵ For example [Darrell G. Wolfe](#), “[Exegesis of Acts 2:41-47](#),” *Academia* (2022).

Communism

Let us look at this claim that these first Christians were actually proto-communists and that therefore communism is the biblical economic ideal. In order to get a handle on this, we need to define some terms. So let's begin with "communism." It is extremely important to ask, when people hear the word "communist" today, **what do they think of?** You probably have two groups of people. One thinks of the Soviet Gulags, the war machines of WWII in China, Russia, and so on that swept away as many as a quarter of a billion people through **starvation and incited revolution.** The other, not wanting to look at the history of the political movement, probably thinks "**commune,**" like perhaps a Jewish Kibbutz or the Medieval European ideas of a commonwealth or a mercantilism, which are not identical even to one another.

According to the modern Oxford Languages dictionary, Communism is "**a political theory derived from Karl Marx, advocating class war and leading to a society in which all property is publicly owned and each person works and is paid according to their abilities and needs.**" This isn't terrible, but of course, it isn't (probably deliberately so) making

it crystal clear that it is [the state that coerces all of this](#). Communism is a political idea *of state control* over property and wages and so on.

Importantly, as the [Google Ngram Viewer](#) demonstrates, the word didn't even exist until the 1840s.⁶ And I'll come back to that point a bit later when we talk about language. Essentially coined by Marx and Engels, [Karl Marx](#) put it like this, "[From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.](#)"⁷ But of course, the questions become, what ability? What needs? And [who gets to determine those?](#)

At this point, you must understand that the communism of Marx and all of his followers was [radically anti-Christian](#). His entire program was designed to create an entirely new kind of world for an entirely new kind of human being by altering our economic and political institutions. It's a [utopia forced](#) and/or manipulated upon the masses for their own good. This would in turn create less selfish and inquisitive, more altruistic and communal people.

It was [money](#), however, that ruined this goal, so he would take that temptation away from everyone. This is the

⁶ It shows one blip from 1643-52. This could be an actual usage but more likely it is Google misidentifying when later books were written, which happens regularly.

⁷ I'm following here the nice little video, [C. Bradley Thompson](#), "[Understanding Marxism: From Each According to His Ability](#)," *PragerU* (Jun 6, 2022).

world Gene Roddenberry tried to create for us in his Star Trek utopia, but he quickly found out that this makes for really bad TV as the heads of NBC forced him to make changes to actually create a storyline with bad guys and greed and so on. Of course, his Federation would always be above all that. *Or ... would it?* Marx thought that as you **took away the greed** created by those nasty capitalist overlords, and **gave him his need**, that man would be transformed. This follows one of his few literary mentors, Jean-Jacques Rousseau who said, “**He who dares to undertake the making of a people’s institutions must feel himself capable of changing human nature.**”⁸ This is itself rooted in the “**great principle that nature made man happy and good, and that society depraves him and makes him miserable.**”⁹ Thus, we will create the New Society where the individual finds his life and his being in the collective. But is that like in the Federation or the Borg? This is a fundamental denial at the most profound and basic level of human depravity as taught in Scripture.

Now of course you **can’t just persuade people** to give up their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Only the “**ruthless application of state power would be up to the**

⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* Book II. Ch. VII.

⁹ Rousseau, *Collected Writings*, cited in John T. Scott, “Politics as the Imitation of the Divine in Rousseau’s Social Contract,” *Polity* 26.3 (Spring 1994): 473.

task.”¹⁰ Private property, wage labor, competition, profits would all have to go. The state would now be run by the “dictatorship of the proletariat” (workers unite!) who would control it all through the state’s newly found benevolent wisdom and omnipotence. *Harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding.*¹¹

So how has this worked out every time it has been tried anywhere in on earth? It **always ends in utter failure** with ruined lives, massive deaths, exploded economies, and obliterated civilizations. It is the single most destructive political force the world has ever known—bar none, because it attacks Christianity and thus reality at the core.

Early Communism

In Plato’s Republic?

But a claim was made earlier that the church was actually practicing communism. In fact, when you read these kinds of arguments, they usually go back further to **Plato and his Republic**. So let’s spend a minute on this. The first thing to

¹⁰ Thompson’s words.

¹¹ **The Fifth Dimension**, “Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In,” *The Age of Aquarius*, Soul City (1969).

mention is the obvious. It is simply **anachronistic** to use the term “**communism**” (a 19th century totalitarian political theory) for older ideas. Plato wasn't a communist *or* a capitalist. This is important, because one of the tricks of all this is to redefine older ideas by using modern terms. It's part of the language game that modern communists through Postmodernism are especially good at employing. To that I want to say, they have no business imposing this word onto anything found earlier than Marx, even if there are resemblances, because this word is loaded with very specific meaning and they know it. Their purpose, of course, is to downplay the destruction real communism always brings by coopting better examples as their own.

That of course doesn't mean that **seeds of communism** weren't present long before Marx, at least in some aspects of it. Clearly, **communal societies** have existed since nearly the beginning. Plato's *Republic* does in fact give an ideal communal city. But Plato is also simply doing a thought experiment (This city ends up becoming Atlantis in the *Timaeus* and *Critias*, and we all know what happened to it.) where he is trying to figure out if there is a **balance** between justice in a group and justice for the individual. **Can how** you treat

other people rightly exist simultaneous to fair treatment of oneself?¹²

Yes, Plato ends up describing a perfect city that has deeply communal ideals. However, to get there he also shows that you must have a balance with a free market society, including division of labor, free markets, stable money supply, and private ownership. Vitally, his ideal city is made up of **three classes of citizens**. It has **ruler guardians**, a larger group of **warrior guardians** who defend the city, and a **producing class** made up of everyone else.

Those who **cannot own property or accumulate any wealth** at all are *the guardians*,¹³ the ruling class—*the exact opposite of what happens in modern communism and socialism* where it's actually the ruling class that has taken over power from the evil authorities before them, that ends up owning everything! All you need to do is look at any modern politician—especially but not exclusively on the left—to see that in action. These people go from having maybe a million or two

¹² A great discussion of this is **Duane Patterson**, "[Dr. Larry Arnn And Dr. Thomas West On Plato's Republic](#)," *Hugh Hewitt* (Mon, May 20, 2013).

¹³ Discussed in **Rubén R. Dupertuis**, "[The Summaries of Acts 2, 4, and 5 and Plato's Republic](#)," in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, J. A. A. Brant, C. W. Hedrick, & C. Shea (eds.), (Society of Biblical Literature, 2005): 281.

before holding office, to often a net worth well into the nine digits. It's a **criminal syndicated money laundering racket**.

Plato shows further that if you have a society that is only devoted in totality to the common good with no emphasis on the individual, that you must end up of necessity in a tyrannical, oppressive society where no individual can be happy. That's something you never hear modern champions of communism in Plato discuss. It doesn't fit the narrative.

In Acts?

Acts is very obviously presenting us with **something related to communal society**. Yet, all this necessarily means is that there is some kind of shared participation by members of a group. Which, of course, is very much a Christian ideal! But this is “**Not an example of true communal sharing**,”¹⁴ as Acts 2-5 is about a *spirit* of communal sharing, rather than an actual commune. As Blomberg,¹⁵ Stott,¹⁶ and others recog-

¹⁴ Art Lindsley, “[Does the Book of Acts Command Socialism?](#)” TGC (May 28, 2013).

¹⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 7, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL; Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 1999), 165.

¹⁶ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 83.

nize, the verbal tenses here do not reflect a once-for-all action (the aorist tense), but **imperfect tense** verbs, reflecting periodic acts of charity as needs arose. This will be reflected in **Acts 4:34b-35** (NIV), “*From time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them...*”

But we might be able to explain even better what Luke is thinking as he writes this history for us. Curiously, scholars have argued that [Luke] is shaping the narrative here after **Plato’s Republic**, specifically **the guardians of the city** (not the producing classes who alone could own property).¹⁷ This includes the *koinōnia* (fellowship) that is found in the distinctive communal arrangements of the guardians. In fact, I would argue that this would be why **the center of this story** is *not* the communal sharing, *but the many wonders and signs being done through the Apostles*. This establishes *their* authority as God’s “guardians” over this brand new “city” if you want to call it that—the “new Jerusalem” as John will call it.¹⁸ It is this sharing of both power and lack of goods that in the *Republic* makes the guardians’ unity possible.

¹⁷ Dupertuis, 282-95.

¹⁸ Dupertuis (p. 284) makes this same point with regard to the dropping of the community of goods entirely in Acts 5:12-16, “**focusing on the apostles’ miracle-working powers.**”

But Luke is doing something more than Plato. For in his structure, the **sharing** and having all things in common **pairs up with *the motivation*** for it all. Most importantly, this sharing is not a totalitarian state imposing by fiat and force the redistribution of wealth. *That's* communism. What's going on in Acts is utterly different. The pair is that “**Awe came upon every soul**” because of the **wonders and signs being done by the apostles**. We could put it this way. God was continuing to do signs through his apostles—the guardians of this new city, in order that the **voluntary**, sharing of goods and redistribution to any who are in need is arising out of ***the fear of God***, not the fear and force of the state!

We can see a kind of **picture of this** in the OT when all the people freely gave whatever was needed to the collective in order that **the tabernacle** of God might be created to be in their midst. The LORD commanded Moses, “**Take from among you a contribution to the LORD. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring to the LORD's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze; blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen,**” etc. (**Ex 35:5-9**). “**And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used**

for the tent of meeting ... all who were of *a willing heart* ...” (20-22). Luke uses the identical language: “glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46). Think of all the graces God had just shown this people through all those events of the Exodus. Think of the graces God is now showing these Christians in Christ at Pentecost. In both, they had *more than enough*, because the fear of God and the love that it generated for him changed their hearts. Indeed, just like with the Levites who were not to own property, and in the *Republic* with the guardians where it was the same, Luke is presenting us (and we will see this much more clearly with Ananias and Sapphira) with a leadership that receives what it lives on by the producing class! This is the kind of communal setting we find in Acts, not Marxism, not communism!

This would seem to include *the food aspects* of Acts (Acts 2:46), which in both the Levitical law and the *Republic*, are given for the guardians and Levites only as is needful, as an agreed upon stipend, or as the contributions from animal sacrifices. This *outer rim* of the sharing and communal living that was practiced included “*attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes and receiving their*

food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people” (46-47).¹⁹

On the other end ([vs. 42](#)), we find them being devoted to the apostle’s teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers ([Acts 2:42](#)). In the *Republic*, it was the guardians’ job to concentrate on philosophy, training, and affairs of the state. That’s the parallel Luke appears to be setting up and will develop further as he tells us about the deaconate and elders later in the book. The leadership must all be educated, properly and wisely—the precise opposite of the communist ideal, which is rooted instead in propaganda, dumbing down, revising history, and reformed (actually deformed) education after the destructive ideals which deliberately supplant Judeo-Christian ethics and the God of the Bible. What we have in the church is the practicing of the only means of grace God has prescribed for a well-regulated worship of him in the ordinary means of grace. Why do we continue to do these simple things in church when we gather as they did at the temple daily? Because

¹⁹ I’m not going to be dumb enough at this point to say that what the earliest Christians were doing was actually capitalism, but I thought this definition by [Larry Schweikart](#) was interesting in light of what we’ve just said. Capitalism is “an economic system where individuals freely decide what they will produce and who they will serve.” I’ll be using this video when discussing Plymouth below. See [Larry Schweikart](#), “[America’s Socialist Origins](#),” *PragerU* (March 21, 2016).

that's what God requires (in other places) and has told us to do—for our good. It's part of creating the ideal city.

In Plymouth?

Having looked at what Acts is, I want to **change gears** and return to thinking purely about communism and why it is that I'm taking the time to spend a whole sermon on it. There are few things in this world that get me more upset that this mistaken idea that the early church was practicing communism, and it's because I understand **the devastatingly destructive nature** of this most wicked of all practical ideologies and how insidious it is as it fits itself to a new, unsuspecting generation. I want to tell you about something my great great (x13) grandfather was involved in back in 1620. **William Brewster** was the pastor on the Mayflower, a deeply religious man who came here seeking religious liberty with his friend William Bradford, from the persecution put upon him and the other Separatists by the Church of England.

The economic system in use at the time, especially in the colonies, was called **Mercantilism**. This is where businesses were operated for the benefits of the state. Yes, the business

could make a profit, but the main purpose was to increase the power of the state. This of course included imports and exports, which is the whole reason England allowed people to come over here in the first place.

The corporation that paid for the Mayflower expedition, the Merchant Adventurers of London, told the colonists that they needed to **set up a mercantile system**, a **commonwealth**, telling them to grow food together and share the produce equally. A common storehouse of grain was used, where all people were supposed to take what they needed and put back what they could. Land was held in common and worked in common. There was no private property. It didn't have a name, but it really was a kind of ideal socialist commune.

But **after the first brutal winter** in 1620, half of them were already dead. Over the next two years, the entire colony nearly starved to death. The same thing had happened ten years earlier at Jamestown, where they were forced to **eating shoelaces and rats**. Bradford, the leader of the colony, decided upon a course of action that saved them all. He did what **Capt. John Smith** had done at Jamestown. He simply

gave everyone his own parcel of land and using Paul's admonition said, "He who won't work, won't eat." The plantation almost immediately prospered and we celebrate them even to this day, [except in 1619 circles](#), which I'll come back to in a moment.

The problem was, under the commonwealth system, there was simply [no motivation](#) for anyone to do anything. It bred "confusion and discontent." And "retarded much employment that would have been to [the settler's] benefit and comfort."²⁰ Why? As someone has said, "When everyone is entitled to everything, no one is responsible for anything." If you go to bed early or wake up late, or even if you didn't work at all, you get as much food as the guy whose been working tirelessly all day long. It's an absolutely foolish thing to do, and its rooted in a profound misunderstanding of human nature and how it works.

[A great example](#) can be learned in a clever cartoon video created some years back where Ronald Reagan schools Obama on communism.²¹ He tells him about a class a few years back where the student (Obama) proudly told the

²⁰ [William Bradford](#), *Bradford's History of the Plymouth Settlement*, modern English by Valerian Paget (New York: John McBride Company, 1909). 114.

²¹ "[Reagan Schools Obama in Social Economics 101 – I Want Your Money Movie Clip](#)," *Youtube* (June 14, 2011).

teacher on behalf of the class (a bunch of other famous presidents and politicians) that “socialism works.” So the teacher said, “Fine. Let’s implement it. For the next test, all grades will be averaged and everyone will receive the same grade.” When they got their grades, they discovered that they all got a B. This made most of the students happy, but some it really ticked off, because they had worked hard for the A that they actually got. The result that was on the next test, those smarter and hard-working students decided not to study as much. Why should they? It wouldn’t matter anyway. Meanwhile, the other kids didn’t study at all, thinking that the smarter kids would pull them up again. The average grade this time was predictable, unless your name rhymes with Ernie Landers. They all got a D. The next test, they all got F! All that came of this utopian experiment was bickering, blaming, name-calling, and hard feelings.

In fact, everywhere that this kind of nonsense has been implemented, it has resulted in the same outcome. And everywhere that communism has been implemented, it has resulted in devastation, starvation, and death. So a natural question arises, if it always fails like this, why do people keep trying it? Even more to our point today, how is it that it has

crept into the church and our reading of Acts? While there are more reasons than what I will now give, let me give you two to think about. **Communism is both a temptress and a chameleon.**

What is so seductive about communism, and its more general label: socialism? Why or how is it a **temptress**? Well, **who doesn't want utopia**? As C. Bradley Thompson puts it, **"No more ego. No more self-interest. Everybody working for the benefit of everybody else. Peace. Love. Harmony."** It's the Fifth Dimension "Age of Aquarius" song I quoted earlier. **"Look around,' a Marxist might say. 'The powerful exploit the weak, crushing the majorities noble aspirations. Your aspirations. Just so they can have more. It's unfair and unjust. How much better if we just start over?"** So, **"Imagine,"** as John Lennon put it, **"... no possessions. I wonder if you can. No need for greed or hunger. A Brotherhood of man. Imagine all the people. Sharing all the world."**²² That's the Marxist dream. That's their utopia.

But the reality is, it is **a total dystopian nightmare**. Every time. Bradford summarized why when he said in his diary, **"The failure of this experiment of communal service,"** was

²² **John Lennon**, "Imagine," *Imagine*. Ascot Sound (1971).

because we “**thought we were wiser than God.**”²³ At the end of the day, that’s it. And there isn’t a single place in the Bible that even remotely promotes communist Marxism, because it’s entire foundation is **built on the hatred of God and the Bible!** That is the core of what it is, and if you take that away, you no longer have communism, but something else entirely. This is one more reason why it is so wrong to call earlier things “communism.”

This **temptress** is what I call a kind of **beastly millennialism**. It is a deeply perverted form of chiliasm where rather than God ruling on earth, the state which has become God is the Omnipotent Ruler. It’s the Second Coming of the State. The Third Reich (we’ll save the communists’ little leftist brother Fascism for another time). It is therefore a **deeply over-realized eschatology**, in that it thinks it can change human nature by ushering in the utopia, whereas in the Bible, the utopia comes because God has already changed human nature and he alone is able to rule over his already reconstituted and now glorified people perfectly through Christ.

²³ **Bradford**, 114.

But communism is also a **chameleon**. It changes its skin with the times. Too many people utterly fail to understand this. They naively think that Marxism and communism is simply an economic system that revolves around class warfare. But it isn't. It is an economic system that revolves around changing humanity, and the only way that can be done is through revolution. And when it sees that one tactic doesn't work (such as taking over nations via violent revolution), it changes, like a chameleon changes its skin, to fit the times.

No longer is it confined to class warfare in our day. It is now promulgated in terms of **race warfare**. **Sexual warfare**. **Word warfare**. Postmodernism is at its heart a Marxist ideology that has given to us critical race theory, queer theory, gender theory, and so many others. It redefines terms, infiltrates organizations, and seeks revolution in this case by winning the word-game. Thought police, Orwell called them. Thoughtcrimes. Newspeak—the official language of the totalitarian state with its highly abbreviated version of the English language, built chiefly by eradicating words so that you have nothing left to express any opinion but the

orthodox ideas of the state.²⁴ It changes history. [The 1619 Project](#) is a great example of this. It's pure unadulterated Marxism which has not so subtly chosen the year before Plymouth to tell its story. It does it through our [educational institutions](#)—*the long march through the institutions*.²⁵ It does it through the [media](#), through [government](#), through bribes and blackmail. It bribes or compromises morally weak and foolish people desperate to make a name for themselves by massively enriching them and promising them the world if only they will act as puppets in government (the exact opposite of the Republic). And it continues to do it through violence and subterfuge, as we see with ANTIFA and BLM, both profoundly communist organizations.

The Babylon Bee and my brother's good friend Jarret LeMaster, has recently done a great little short where "[woke Jesus](#)" talks to his disciples. Some of the gems include:

- "You have heard that it was said, 'Hate your enemies.' But I say to you, 'This is correct, and here's a handy little chart to help you understand who your enemies are based on Marxist

²⁴ A great little write-up is [Kenia Sedler](#), "[Orwell's 1984: On the Power of Words to Affect Thought](#)," [KeniaSedler.com](#).

²⁵ See [Nicholas A. Kennicott](#), "The Rotting Root: Critical Theory and the Destruction of Western Identity," (July 25, 2018).

Intersectionality Theory ... Cancel your enemies. Curse those who bless you. And burn down the whole country if you don't get your way.”

- “It’s a miracle. Jesus has multiplied the fish and the loaves!”
“No, no my son. I’ve merely stolen it from the village over there. It’s called wealth-redistribution. Pretty sweet, huh?”
- “Would you like to be healed my son?” “Yes, yes! Thank you Jesus.” “Fear not, for I have supported a new healthcare bill that will force you to buy insurance, because I... am a *good* person!”
- “The poor you will always have with you. This is because of capitalism. Eat the rich. Eat the rich! Eat the rich!!”²⁶

The *Bee* is rightly connecting wokism, intersectionality, critical race theory, and so much of the political nonsense taking place directly to Marxism and communism. And this is something that it truly astonishes me that so many Christians have not grasped. Indeed, it is gaining great **inroads into Evangelical and Reformed circles**. Whereas communism used to be the confines of the most liberal left in the church. Not anymore. People you never would have thought would buy into it are starting to do just that. It’s astonishing and deeply troubling. All because we have failed

²⁶ Jarret LeMaster, “[Woke Jesus](#),” *Babylon Bee* (May 6, 2024).

to understand that communism is a chameleon. (My hope, and I don't have much of it, is that it isn't worse than that though, and it is worth mentioning that we have government documents²⁷ that expand on Operation Mockingbird, which became a well-publicized covert CIA operation to secretly pay media to present a narrative of the news that they told them to say. These documents tell us that they also **deliberately infiltrated churches and pulpits** and I personally know a story of two well-known pastors who were doing a podcast, when in walked two men who promised them that a certain very rich and famous evil man would pay for their ministry until they died if they would simply compromise on a few things they were telling the public. I also know a Christian podcaster who had the same thing happen to him.)

Acts, Communism, and Today?

For the remainder of our time, I want to return to **the seminary professor** that I used to start this sermon. He's the guy who had the woman on the plane tell him that he must

²⁷ For example the United States; Congress; Senate; Select Committee on Intelligence, "[CIA's Use of Journalists and Clergy in Intelligence Operations](#)," 104th Congress, second session (July 17, 1996).

be a communist. Dr. Jones addresses in that piece several reasons that you should not take the examples in Acts as timeless models for us to follow. I'm ending this way because this is one of those mistakes that arises time and again from the reading of this history book and we need to have this mindset challenged throughout our reading of Acts.

First, in line with this, we've addressed already and will see it more and more as we go along that people take what they see in this book and make it normative for the Christian today rather than descriptive of what happened in those earliest days of the Christian church. But this is a narrative of history, not a prescriptive command of the law. There are no commands here at all in fact for us. He likens this history being turned into a command to the history that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. "Therefore, you and I should do that." No. It's history, not a command.

Second, the totality of Scripture, including Acts, is far more nuanced and in some places outright contradictory to a communist reading. What does the Bible actually tell us to do? Everywhere, people own property. Jesus tells many parables about economic wealth and personal responsibility re-

garding it. Nowhere does God force people to give everything to a commune, effectively legalizing theft, stealing from others. But the biblical ethic is that *out of the thankfulness of your hearts*, and because of what God has done for you, that when you see your brother in need, you give to him as if what you owned was his. How else could such love as Jesus has shown you personally respond? This is **the opposite of communism**, for it comes from a willing and thankful heart of the individual rather than the thunderous hand of the Omnipotent State. I think the reasons many Christians don't like this and opt instead for a more forced ethic is because they really don't believe that the Gospel changes anyone. And perhaps whatever the "gospel" is that they preach in fact doesn't!

Third, he notices that what was going on in Acts was actually **emergency aid**. It's like the ripping of a hurricane or tornado through a town and everyone is so moved that they collectively decide to do something to help. **Thousands of people had just come to faith** in Christ and so thousands of people who *were* going to go back home suddenly found themselves staying for a long time in Jerusalem. This would

have created great need as they had no way to make any income. As Jones says, “It’s one thing to provide aid in a time of need. It’s another to claim this is a timeless principle for us to follow all the time.”

Finally, and “most importantly,” he says, “Christians are not called to pursue economic equality. Rather, believers are called to promote economic justice.” This has been badly perverted by the “social justice” warriors of the neo-Marxist revolution. In typical Newspeak, they have taken a good principle and perverted it 180°. They talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion, inherently Marxist ideals that have wormed their way into the middle-management of nearly every level of society that we have including Christians colleges, seminaries, and churches. Christianity is diverse, not like this, but in an *E pluribus unum* kind of way: Out of Many: One. We are Christians, even though we may be Jew or Gentile, black or white, male or female.

This woke diversity is the exact opposite. Only in highlighting and magnifying differences can there be any unity. This is why you must talk about “African-Americans” or “White Christian Nationalists” or “LGBTQRSTUVWXYZ churches” in this Bizarro-Superman world. This

is coming from communism and it is not a biblical principle. Its purpose is to divide and conquer, to subvert and enslave a new group of people, not create unity. When you understand that these differences are the basis for **equity and inclusion**, then you really start to see how twisted this is.

Equity is not equality. It is forced, coerced redistribution of wealth and power, taking it away from supposedly group x who has it (they often don't!) and giving it to whatever group is popular that hour (the inclusion part). In the most up-to-date iterations of this, these groups are increasingly morally degenerate and deviant. This is all rooted in a form of politically forced **retribution**—getting even. It's the exact opposite of the forgiveness that Jesus tells us all to have. It's fueled by hatred, hard-feelings, holding and grudge, and punishment. It is a perverted forgiveness that is not only forced, but forced upon people who didn't do anything personally, because **the group identification** is all that matters. This is not found in Acts. This is not found in the Bible. This is not biblical. It is evil.

Christians are, however, to be **greatly concerned with promoting economic justice**, especially amongst the people of God. God doesn't really care how much money you have.

He knows that there are pitfalls that can befall both the rich and the poor. If you use your power and wealth to harm others, woe to you. If you have become rich because you stole from others, woe to you. If you've chosen a life of poverty to minister to others, good for you. If God blesses you with much wealth, then he expects you to be as generous with it as he has been in giving it to you. If you are poor because you have been marginalized, because others have held back wages or stolen from you, God wants his church not to behave like this. He would also have us as Christians involved in this world, in its politics and government, to **promote just laws** that prevent it from happening in the larger society. Yes, God wants Christians to get involved in society and transform it. It's called our cultural image mandate to have dominion. God has kept you in this world for a reason.

There is no such thing in the Bible as *we are all supposed to be the same*. There is self-sacrifice, selfless giving, and even some kind of legal tithe idea that he expects us to engage in. He wants this all done out of **love, not force, fear of God not fear of state** or institutions or political retribution.

Jones concludes, “If we read Acts 2 and 4, as my seatmate in the airplane did, as teaching that all Christians need to be socialists or communists, and that we should feel guilty if we have more or less share of the pie than our brother or sister in Christ, *we’re misreading the text*. I would encourage us not to focus on promoting some type of economic equality, but try to focus on biblical justice.” I concur.

Ronald Reagan once said, “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are, ‘*I’m from the government and I’m here to help.*’”²⁸ Eleven of the most comforting words are found, *if we will read them right*, as a *counter* to real communism in Acts 2:44, “All who believed we together and had all things in common.” Why? Because they knew the power and love of God and what he was doing in creating a new city—a new church through God’s ordained apostles who taught, led, and healed with wonders and signs-- the very power of Christ beginning that day at Pentecost.

In fact, the only the biblical ethic works is if *people are actually born again*, given new hearts to receive and new eyes to see the loving living God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For it is the Holy Spirit alone who changes a heart to

²⁸ Ronald Reagan, Press Conference Aug 12, 1986.

compel them through love to share like this. Nothing else works. Communism is an evil usurping god that tries to usher in utopia by force. Perhaps because the church has lost so much of the gospel in our day, communism has found a home here. But when the gospel is present, it is easily identified as [the chameleon temptress](#) that it is. Flee from this evil god and turn to the living God to know the power of helping and sharing and loving other humans from the heart of your own volition. It's the only thing that will save humanity from this continuing encroaching darkness. And remember, ours is a war not against flesh and blood and we are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and that includes vain philosophies that masquerade and prance around as if they are Christian. I pray you will see rightly and not through the perverted lenses of Marxist communist revolutions and warfare and not through the deceptions of do-gooders who try to make you think that a godless vile philosophy is something God has installed as his ethic anywhere in the Bible.

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