

SOCIALIST IDEAS IN THE BIBLE

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Abstract

This paper is mainly focused on the comparative study to find out the relation between the concept of socialism and the Biblical teachings. The socialist concept put forward an idea of establishing socio-economic equality in the society. Socialism advocates for a classless society where one can see equal treatment among the people. The Biblical teachings also create a classless and egalitarian society. The central idea of socialism is to set up an egalitarian society and the Bible also propounds and teaches the concept of such equality. Christ instructs his followers to help the poor and downtrodden and that is what one can witness in socialism. Christ's teachings especially on wealth are revolutionary and such revolutionary deeds can be seen in the concept of socialism.

Keywords: Socialism, Bible, Equality, Wealth, Downtrodden

Socialism is a political and economic doctrine of social set-up which advocates that the method of manufacturing, distribution, and trade should be owned or regulated through the community as a whole. This has often been summarized as the public possession of the method of production. The socialist community considered everything as common. The Christian Socialism, a religious and political philosophy, is based on the Bible. The Biblical teachings create a casteless and egalitarian society. In the old and new testaments one can see the synthesis of spirituality and materialism. The book of Ecclesiastes in Old Testament says “Go, eat your bread with joy, And drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works.” (Ecclesiastes 9.7)

Similarly, the New Testament also gives an account on materialistic life. The miraculous deed of Jesus Christ at Cana proves that he was not against material life and he proposed a life which should be a combination of spirituality and materialism. The early Christian churches were against private property, “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common” (Acts 4:32). This proves that the early Christian believers were together and had everything in common. They voluntarily shared everything among them especially for the needy people. Therefore the revolutionary idea of ‘sharing’ is indebted to the Holy Bible.

The preaching and teachings of Christ repeatedly refer to an equal place in the Kingdom of God. Such teachings got attention from the common man since the then society was classified into different levels which was based on the profession of the people. Christ also said that he has come to save the poor and downtrodden people. “For He is the light that lightens every man” (George 3).

The central idea of socialism is to set up an egalitarian society and the Bible also propounds and teaches the concept of such equality. Christ instructs his followers to help the poor and downtrodden and that is what one can witness in socialism. Christ’s teachings

especially on wealth are revolutionary and such revolutionary deeds can be seen in the concept of socialism. He was against the greedy people and he opposed accumulating wealth or concentrating social wealth on a single person. He was an active social revolutionary who expelled the traders from Jerusalem church and accused them that they turned the holy place into the den of thieves. And he said to them, “It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves” (KJV 1024).

The basic ideology that Jesus propagated among his countrymen were to maintain humanistic values and society wanted to give special concern on the needy people. The special concern according to him is forgiveness, tolerance, sacrifice, mutual respect and so on. Luke chapter 3 verse 1 says “whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none and whoever has food is to do likewise.” His idea of Kingdom of God lies on such societies where people share the things among themselves. Here one can see the real happiness and can feel and experience the goodness of sharing also its happiness.

Similarly, James chapter 2 verses from 1 to 6 instructs the society to treat all human beings as children of God. The society should treat the rich and poor equally with the mercy of God and the basic concept *Love your neighbour as yourself* (Matthew 22:39) can also read along with this teaching.

The teaching of Christ concerned with the compassion and kindness towards downtrodden. The emancipation or freeing the outcaste means that “every individual should be free to gratify his impulses, that he should attain happiness, defined by his own desires and he should associate only with the persons who are akin to him in spirit” (Turner 156). The teachings of Christ are concerned with the liberation of mankind which means, the liberation from the poverty, economic injustice, out casting, inequality and so on.

The contemporary followers of Christ have forgotten the instructions given by him. They deviated the Biblical teachings regarding the egalitarianism. The Biblical approach towards wealth is to work hard for a long term basis to create a socialist-economic system and such system may give light to uplift the poor and downtrodden in the society without any discriminations.

Work cited

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