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JUNE 29, 2026

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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

# Capitalism versus Communism



The difference between capitalism and communism is clear. One is based on scriptural truth, and the other is not. Can you articulate a pro-property rights position from Scripture? Would you be able to give a basis for capitalism via God’s Word? This study is designed to aid you in that regard and to help you form personal and political convictions based on God’s guidance as explicated in His revelation.

Read on, beloved.

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**WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES**

**White House Cabinet and Governors:** Wednesdays 8am (EST), light breakfast served  
**Senate Members:** Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served  
**House Members:** Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served



PUBLIC SERVANT  
ENDORSEMENT

## Tim Walberg

*U.S. Representative, Michigan*



“In-depth Bible studies have such an important impact on elected officials for many reasons, and one of the most important is in their personal lives. Fellowship with a band of brothers and sisters in accountability to the Word of God and to each other is a must.”

# Capitalism versus Communism

## I. INTRODUCTION

The 1992 movie *Far and Away* includes a powerfully emotive scene when Tom Cruise is riding a wild horse, racing westward on the morning of the great and historic Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889. To underscore the subject of this study, remember that at this time in history the American government granted to its citizens unassigned land that was open to settlement. All that to say, America has historically believed in private property rights, which is the single greatest reason this nation has grown to become the world’s largest economy in a relatively short period of time.

The Bible is pro-private property. Many passages support this view. Therefore, all governments should be pro-private property. Further, according to Scripture, personal private property ownership is fundamental to every person’s ability to express being created in God’s image (an idea developed later in this study). In addition, private property rights are fundamental to personal and national fruitfulness. (Examples of this view will be included in what follows.)

Biblically based private property ownership is the basis of capitalism. Capitalism stands in absolute and distinct contradiction to the ideology of communism. As Karl Marx said in his *Communist Manifesto*,

**“The theory of the Communists may be summed up in a single sentence: the abolition of private property.”**

Before building a scriptural case for private property and capitalism, let us first begin by investigating the precedent that God is the ultimate Owner of everything.

## II. PASSAGES ON GOD’S ULTIMATE OWNERSHIP OF ALL PROPERTY

Scripture teaches that God—not governments, be they communist or otherwise—is the ultimate Owner of the earth and all that is therein and that He desires individuals to be His stewards of what He possesses. Note this first point in the following Scriptures:

*The earth is the LORD’s, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it* (Psalm 24:1).

*“Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it”* (Deuteronomy 10:14).

In granting stewardship, He entrusts the responsibilities of management to the top of His creative order: man, whom He created in His image, unlike any other segments of His creation. This fundamental idea is conveyed in Genesis 1:26–28:

*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

To clarify man’s incumbent stewardship role over all of creation, God uses the descriptive verb *subdue* (*kabash*) to encompass what He specifically intends for man to do. This Hebrew word *kabash* specifically means “to bring into servitude.” In Numbers 32:22, 32:29, and Joshua 18:1, this same word is used in the sense of a



parallel contextual meaning, i.e., Israel was to *subdue* the land of Canaan so the land would serve Israel. Importantly, the contextual usage of *kabash* in Genesis 1 pertains to God’s instructing those in His creation who are made in His image to discover, understand, develop, utilize, and enjoy all the earth’s overabundant resources. Implied in God’s command to man is this: man is to carry out his God-appointed stewardship responsibility with respect and thanksgiving to God. Given this principle of God’s ultimate ownership of all creation, consider the following.

**In God’s ultimate ownership, Scripture repeatedly communicates that He intends for individuals—not His institution of civil government—to steward His property.**

In the Genesis passage, emphasis needs to be placed on the word *them*, the antecedent of which is *male and female*. There is no civil government in this Scripture. From this first book of the Bible all the way through to the book of Revelation, Scripture is clear that God conveys property ownership to individuals—not to totalitarian regimes, kingdoms, democratic civil governments, or any other kind of a nation as a whole.

### III. PASSAGES ON PERSONAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Reinforcing these principles, a myriad of passages evidence God’s expectation of personal ownership of His property—versus implications of governmental or societal ownership of His property. What follows is some of that evidence.

#### A. THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

*“You shall not steal”* (Exodus 20:15).

This verse presumes that people own something that can be stolen. For instance, you are not to take your neighbor’s cart because it *belongs to* your neighbor. If a person doesn’t own anything in the first place, *stealing* something from him is impossible. Or, as a modern example, you cannot search through your neighbor’s email files and give them to whomever you choose without his knowing; to do so is to *steal* intellectual property. Rightfully, capitalism necessitates title deeds, copyrights, trademarks, and patents in order to keep others from *stealing* what belongs to you.

#### B. THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

*“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor”* (Exodus 20:17).

This passage addresses the heart. Covet (*chamad*) in this Hebrew passage and *epithumeo* in Greek (cf. Romans 7:7) means “a strong desire; wantonness.” As used in this context, coveting is the desire to take from another what rightfully belongs to him. Note specifically that the passage does not say those things *belong* to the community or the government. Three times the passage uses the word *neighbor* (*rea*), meaning “a person, a friend, or a fellow.”

#### C. IRRESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP

*“If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death”* (Exodus 21:29).

VERSE OF THE WEEK



### Genesis 1:26

*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*



Scripture makes it clear that God conveys property ownership to individuals, not to totalitarian regimes, democratic civil governments, or any other kind of a nation as a whole.



MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE

## Christian Jara

National Ministry Leader  
Santiago, Chile



Pastor Christian Jara serves as Capitol Ministries’ National Ministry Leader in Santiago, Chile. Driven by a deep burden to reach men and women in positions of governmental authority with the Word of God, he began serving in this role in August 2024 and completed Capitol Ministries leadership training in Bogotá, Colombia later that year.

An ordained pastor with the Assemblies of God of Chile, Pastor Jara has faithfully ministered for more than 30 years at Catedral de la Alabanza in La Florida, Santiago. His pastoral experience, combined with extensive leadership in both the public and private sectors, has uniquely equipped him for ministry among government leaders.

On March 11, 2026, President José Antonio Kast appointed Pastor Jara as Director of Chile’s National Office of Religious

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## Capitalism versus Communism

This Scripture uses the word *owner* (*baal*) in relation to, in this case, being an irresponsible steward of what Moses (the author of Exodus and the first five books of the Bible known as the Torah) implies he already possesses. To *own* something means you are legally connected to it, to the extent that you can be found personally liable for damages. Such laws today, stemming from the Torah and its assumption of personal property rights, prove motivational to a person’s being a good manager! Moving beyond pride of ownership, such laws in turn elicit personal asset management skills and the creation of responsible value-added products, a biblical, economic virtue unknown in biblically ignorant or biblically defiant communist nations.

### D. MOVING A LANDMARK

*“You shall not move your neighbor’s boundary mark, which the ancestors have set”* (Deuteronomy 19:14).

This verse speaks in regard to the sin of moving the boundaries of land *owned* by another person. The following Scripture adds in this regard:

*Do not move the ancient boundary or go into the fields of the fatherless* (Proverbs 23:10).

Each of the two stanzas of this proverb serve to give insight into the meaning of the other. Private ownership is the object here: stealing another person’s property simply because he is unable to defend what is rightfully his is wrong.

### E. THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

*“You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family”* (Leviticus 25:10).

Our subject of study becomes increasingly interesting. As proud Americans, we are often guilty of thinking that capitalism is a perfect system of governance, but no economic system is perfect in a fallen world! Churchill once quipped, “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others!” Only when Christ returns and sets up His rule as the King of kings will there be a perfect government and a perfect, totally just economic system on the earth.

The Old Testament (OT) book of Leviticus informs us that every 50 years, Israel’s people were to hit the restart button on their capitalism-based economy. Similar to playing the game *Monopoly* today, wherein one or two players in time will monopolize all the properties, some people in our fallen world inevitably become economic juggernauts, while others who are less gifted, far less proactive, or less competitive can and will fall to the wayside. Some are not as strong or able as others and cannot compete, manage, or gain wealth, even though they live in a personal-property-based culture. This is one of those realities of living in a fallen world.

**It is not that capitalism is perfect; it is just that it is the best alternative in a fallen world.**

Personal property ownership is not a perfect cure-all, and no capitalist should try to make that argument as evidenced from Leviticus 25:10. But the point to be underscored relative to this study from this Scripture is: “*each of you shall return to his own property.*” As in the other aforementioned passages, God’s endorsement of an economy with “*his own property*” (even with its faults) is in view here.



## F. SUMMARY OF PASSAGES ON PERSONAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The Bible speaks repeatedly regarding the economic creation and well-being of a nation and how that best occurs in what will always be, until Christ returns, an unfair, disproportionately talented, fallen world. The best system, says God's Word, is via a government based upon, and one that respects, personal private property rights. With the inclusion of the Year of Jubilee (an occasional adjustment mechanism in a private property economic structure), we can safely say that God is a capitalist, not a communist.<sup>1</sup>

Given that summary, we can also extrapolate the following from the aforementioned five passages:

**One of God's fundamental principles is for civil government to respect and facilitate the private ownership rights of its citizens.**

The economic principle that stems from the Torah is this: necessary for achieving a properly functioning, fruitful, and prosperous nation in a material sense is personal property ownership. (The Bible does not deem material things as evil; such thinking is a faulty dualism and the subject of other studies.) To violate God's principle of private ownership and enact some form or level of communism in a state is patently unbiblical and will ultimately lead to the demise of a nation's motivation, economic engine, growth, and the overall material well-being of its people.

## IV. THE NATURAL TENDENCY OF GOVERNMENT TO OVERREACH

In a greater-than-just-material-concerns sense, God has ordained four other separate institutions that He intends to function simultaneously and independently of government in order to best achieve His purposes and herald the riches of His grace (cf. Ephesians 2:7) in a fallen world prior to His Second Coming. Government is only one of five coequal institutions. And within that five-institution spectrum of God-given responsibilities, government does what it does better than the other institutions: it suppresses evil. But keep in mind, the other four institutions—marriage, family, commerce, and the church—do what they do better than government! Government cannot accomplish for a nation what the other four can and do achieve much more expeditiously and efficiently: marriage *promulgates*; the family *cultivates*; commerce *invigorates*; and the church *translates*. Those theological pillars of institutional understanding are fundamental to a biblical worldview and serve to qualify the role of government. Given this contextualization and the focus of this study, what is also in view is as follows:

**The institution of government is always on the prowl to invade the sandbox of every other institution.**

But the government causes chaos whenever it does! Left to its predilection to roam, it soon wanders outside its God-designed purpose: perverting marriage, stymieing the family, encroaching on the church, and—left to its self-centered ways—overstepping commerce by eroding or attacking private property rights! Government tends to bloat!

Left unchecked, government will eclipse God's separate institution of commerce, which must function with personal property rights to flourish institutionally in order to invigorate a nation materially.

The dominating tendencies of government in a fallen world are nothing new. The prophet Samuel spoke to Israel about the increasingly pervasive nature of civil administrations when Israel first mentioned to him that they wanted their own king. Notice his sage response to the nation Israel in 1 Samuel 8:10–18:

*So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king. He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."*

Unchecked government begins to *take* from the people, confiscating more and more for itself. The word *take* appears *six times* in this passage! Be on guard: runaway government is ordinary in a fallen world! Therefore, as exegetically substantiated in the previous point—



Continued from page 4



Affairs, a position that provides significant opportunities to foster relationships with public officials and encourage biblical discipleship among national leaders.

In addition to his pastoral ministry, Pastor Jara is an accomplished academic, consultant, and speaker. He has advised organizations in Chile and internationally in the areas of leadership, communication, training, and organizational management. He has also served as a professor of strategic leadership in undergraduate and graduate programs at Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez.

Pastor Jara is a journalist and holds an MBA from Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, a Master's degree in Corporate and Institutional Communication from the University of Barcelona, along with postgraduate studies in finance and education.

For Capitol Ministries, Pastor Jara's appointment opens unprecedented opportunities to expand Bible study ministries among government leaders at both the national and local levels throughout Chile.

### God's blueprint is for a nation's people to possess the bulk of property and wealth of the nation—versus the government.

It follows that government, according to the Bible, must be kept in check lest it begin to think it can achieve for its people tasks that are better suited for fulfillment by God's other ordained institutions.

The role of government is limited to and most efficient when, according to 1 Peter 2:14 (ESV), it is about [praising] *those who do good* (i.e., in part, those who provide jobs for others due to their giftedness should be rewarded and not penalized so as to encourage them to create more jobs and wealth for the nation) and *punish[ing] those who do evil* (provide a strong judicial system internally and a strong military force externally) (cf. Romans 13:1–8). Any government that begins to step outside its biblically specific purposes becomes ghastly and monstrously inefficient, resulting in the eventual if not immediate eclipse of its citizens and their liberties, thereby lessening their motivation, personal abilities, and resourcefulness to reflect the attributes of God to others.

### V. PERU, PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND POVERTY

Peru has been a good example of how the violation of private property principles entraps a nation in poverty. The denial of private property rights is not exclusive to communist ideology; sometimes it takes place in countries that are presumably capitalist such as Peru.

The brilliant work of Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto substantiates the biblical principle that the absence of respect

for private property can cause poverty. A government that denies private property rights by making their attainment next to impossible stymies the creation of wealth among its own people. Such policies are extremely shortsighted. The root cause of poverty is this: with no ability to gain working capital due to a lack of collateral from property ownership, entrepreneurs do not have the means to enter the capital market and create a product or service. De Soto's team attempted to build a house in Peru. Here is what they went through:

To obtain legal authorization to build a house on state-owned land took 6 years and 11 months requiring 207 administrative steps in 52 government offices. ... To obtain a legal title for that piece of land took 728 [additional] steps.<sup>2</sup>

States Dr. Wayne Grudem regarding de Soto's similar attempt to obtain a permit to build a small garment workshop on the outskirts of Lima:

They worked at the registration process 6 hours a day, and it took them 289 days! The cost was the equivalent of \$1,231 U.S. dollars, or 31 times the monthly minimum wage equivalent (approximately 3 years' salary for the ordinary person living in Peru).<sup>3</sup>

In addition, due to a lack of integrity and corruption in the title industry, property titles have often been found to be illegitimate.

De Soto has documented similar roadblocks in Egypt, the Philippines, and Haiti. Property ownership is next to impossible in many developing nations, which trap their citizenry in poverty! It is as if these country's citizens are living in a communist country. *This is not God's*



*design for a nation!* Such backward, biblically negligent, manifest governmental ideology serves to contrast with the wisdom of God's ways. As the American government's 1889 land grants illustrate, when individuals prosper because of private property rights, so does the whole of the nation and its administration.

Unfortunately, however, as America jettisons its trust in the Torah, increasing threats to and erosion of private property ownership follow.

## **VI. AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTALISM, PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND POVERTY**

The much-needed San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant in San Clemente, California, took ten years to develop, and after only twenty-five years of operation, it is now closed. Blaming incessant lawsuits and subsequent delays caused by environmental groups, the executive of Southern California Edison, which championed the project, said the utility would never again create a nuclear power plant. As a result, the utility has not attempted to build another power plant on its own private property.

Environmentalists and their choking, imbalanced regulations descended on the logging industry in the Northwest, claiming the spotted owl was an endangered species (an owl that is identical to the California spotted owl, which is in abundant supply), and nearly destroyed the industry. Fifty thousand lost jobs later, owners can no longer harvest lumber at will from their private property.

In Santa Cruz, California, environmental policies make it impossible for homeowners to trim the trees on their own private property even when the overgrowth is a serious fire threat or quite often causes power outages during rainy, windy

weather after their heavy limbs fall on power lines.

**These three vignettes serve to illustrate the encroachment of government on commerce and private property.**

In California, where Capitol Ministries began, there has been a huge stagnation in development (especially compared to Texas) since the adoption and requirement of Environmental Impact Reports. The bottom line is that even though private property exists, the economic benefits God intends for private property ownership have been greatly diminished. Essentially, the government controls developable land by throttling landowners by imposing heavy requirements. What a huge philosophical about-face from the days of the Great Oklahoma Land Rush! The present overly regulatory policies of our nation's government, biblically speaking, pave the way for the road to poverty.

Additional erosion of private property rights occurred under President Bill Clinton, who issued executive order 13061, which seized ten additional rivers per year, making them federal property even if they flow through private land. Both Presidents Clinton and Barack Obama enacted orders that confiscate millions of acres of private land that will be effectively removed from private use forever. Fortunately, President Donald Trump has enacted orders to reverse this trend. In summary of this point,

**The private ownership of land best serves the continuing prosperity of any nation!**

We only need to study or visit regressive Russia or inalterable India. Both are lands of plentiful natural resources, yet the people are stuck in the plight of poverty due to the fact that their cultures are not informed by what the Torah teaches concerning private property rights! Israel, on the other hand, a much younger nation informed by the Torah, has experienced huge economic development in a relatively short period of time. Among nations of similar resources what makes a difference is the government's attitude toward private property. No wonder Thomas Jefferson said the United States would be different, stating, "The true foundation of republican government is the equal right of every citizen in his person and property, and in their management."<sup>4</sup>

It is hard to imagine that our nation would ever even contemplate changing horses after having ridden an Old Testament stallion for so long—and having experienced the absolutely incomparable thrill of riding it for so many years!

## **VII. BIG GOVERNMENT, PERSONAL LIBERTY, AND REFLECTING THE IMAGE OF GOD**

As government grows, it eclipses personal liberty. As personal liberty diminishes, so does the individual's ability to reflect the glory of God to others. Consider how personal wealth is affected, for example.

When an individual prospers, he has more to share with others: he has the opportunity to reflect, in this case, the grace of God by giving to others in need. Often, such expressions of love lead to the Gospel and salvation. Juxtapose this giving with government's taxing the wealth of individuals, limiting their personal resourcefulness because of the belief that government can meet the needs of others more effectively. But in truth, God did



not ordain government to play this role, and the institution is woefully wasteful and inefficient when it attempts to meet the needs of citizens especially their real spiritual needs for regeneration in Christ.

When government sticks to its God-ordained job description, *for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right* (1 Peter 2:14), it achieves what other institutions cannot and simultaneously empowers its citizens with individual liberty to reflect the glory of God to other people. The purpose, role, and limitations of civil government and its leaders must be informed by the Scriptures—not by human reasoning nor secularism. Civil government is to serve its citizens so they can best serve their fellow citizens.

further than what happened in Venezuela in only a few short years—once a prosperous, thriving capitalistic country, millions of its citizens were forced into exile to escape the resultant poverty of a communist takeover. Whereas the former leads to a prosperous nation, the latter leads to a poverty-stricken nation. Historic America serves as a positive illustration of this biblical axiom. Accordingly, as lawmakers and public servants, do not even consider making an ideological shift at this point in our history. Do not jettison our prosperous past that has been so beautifully informed and made possible by adherence to the Mosaic law contained in the Torah regarding personal property rights!

1. Historically and presently, Congress, in essence, enacts the principle of the Year of Jubilee every time it acts to bust up or curtail the formation of a monopoly.
2. Dr. Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).
3. Ibid.
4. Merrill D. Peterson, *Jefferson: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 1398. [Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval (July 12, 1816)]

## VIII. SUMMARY

The right to own personal property, also known as free enterprise or capitalism, is the governmental economic system supported by Scripture. Scripture does not support communism. We need look no



*Making Disciples  
of Jesus Christ  
in the Political Arena  
Throughout the World*



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, Capitol Ministries has started ongoing ministries in more than forty U.S. state capitols and dozens of foreign federal capitols.

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