

**The Attackers: Prosperity Testing: Biblical Concepts of Peace, 2 Pet 1:2, Prosperity of Soul v. Material Prosperity: Capitalism v. Corporatism or Socialism; Capitalism Is the Biblical System of Economics, Ex 20:15, 17; Luke 19:11–27; Matthew 20:1–16; Eph 6:5–9; & Col 3:22–4:1; Disorganized Evil: the Rise & Fall of Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, Carnegie, & Morgan; Organized Evil: Progressive Ideology**

**2 Peter 1:2** - Grace and peace [ εἰρήνη (*eirēnē*) ] be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." (NASB)

1. The Greek word *eirēnē* is almost always translated into English by the word "peace." However, it has several meanings, but all relate to the general idea of prosperity of soul.
2. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* offers these applications of *eirēnē*:  
 (1) In a civil sense, the opposite of war and dissension [the absence of war]; among individuals, peace and harmony [*exōteriké harmonía*]; metaphorically, peace of mind, tranquility from reconciliation with God [PSD #9]. (2) Health, welfare, prosperity, every kind of good, happiness [temporal tranquility]. (3) The present possession of the believer; peace acquires the technical meaning of the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, fearing nothing from God and consequently content with its earthly lot, whatever it is [prosperity of soul].<sup>1</sup>
3. In each of these individual applications the emphasis is on the relaxed status of the believer's soul related to his salvation, health, status quo, spiritual life, civic life, and family life.
4. These categories of peace reflect an inventory of doctrinal ideas that have maxed out in the sophisticated spiritual life.
5. This is soul prosperity! This status is developed over time as the believer utilizes the provisions of grace to grow spiritually.
6. This is accomplished systematically, indicated by the word "multiplied," the aorist passive optative of the verb *πληθύνω* (*plēthúnō*).
7. The aorist tense is constative which contemplates the action in its entirety. It begins at the moment of salvation and continues to the point of physical death.
8. During this time, one's grace and prosperity is to be multiplied through a cumulative process of spiritual growth.
9. Both grace and prosperity are not the products of *cosmos diabolicus*. Grace refers to the unmerited favor of God. The world's idea of favor is merit-based regardless of the prevailing ideology of the day.
10. Prosperity is, as we have noted, a disposition of soul that is free of discord. In America, the Dark Side's idea of prosperity vacillates between:
  - (1) **Capitalism**, in which the exchange of goods and services is carried out by free enterprise.
  - (2) Either **corporatism** or **socialism** in which the government regulates the exchange partially by the former or totally by the latter.

<sup>1</sup> *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed., gen. ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1993), 519–20.

These are defined as follows by Merriam-Webster and Encyclopaedia Britannica:

**Capitalism:** An economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.<sup>2</sup>

**Capitalism:** economic system, dominant in the Western world since the breakup of feudalism, in which most of the means of production are privately owned and production is guided and income distributed largely through the operation of markets.

In the ethic encouraged by the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, traditional disdain for acquisitive effort was diminished, while hard work and frugality were given a stronger religious sanction.

The ideology of classical capitalism was expressed in Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), which recommended leaving economic decisions to the free play of self-regulating market forces. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars had swept the remnants of feudalism into oblivion, Smith's policies, including free trade, sound money (the gold standard), balanced budgets, and minimum levels of poor relief, were increasingly put into practice.

World War I marked a turning point in the development of capitalism. After the war, international markets shrank, the gold standard was abandoned in favour of managed national currencies, banking hegemony passed from Europe to the United States, and trade barriers multiplied. The Great Depression of the 1930s brought the policy of laissez-faire (noninterference by the state in economic matters) to an end in most countries and for a time cast doubt on the capitalist system as a whole. The performance of capitalism since World War II in the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany, and Japan, however, has given evidence of its continued vitality.<sup>3</sup>

**Corporatism:** the theory and practice of organizing the whole of society into "corporations" subordinate to the state. According to the theory, workers and employers would be organized into industrial and professional corporations serving as organs of political representation and controlling to a large extent the persons and activities within their jurisdiction. In actual practice, however, as the "corporate state" was put into effect in Fascist Italy between World Wars I and II, it reflected the will of the dictator rather than the adjusted interests of economic groups.<sup>4</sup>

**Corporatism:** the organization of a society into industrial and professional corporations serving as organs of political representation and exercising some control over persons and activities within their jurisdiction.<sup>5</sup>

**Socialism:** Any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods; a system of society in which there is no private property; a system or condition of society in which the means of production are owned and controlled by the state; a stage of society in Marxist theory transitional between capitalism and communism.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed., s.v.: "capitalism."

<sup>3</sup> "Capitalism," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010), 2:831–32.

<sup>4</sup> "Corporatism," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 3:647.

<sup>5</sup> Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, s.v.: "corporatism."

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., s.v.: "socialism."

**Socialism:** A system of social organization in which private property and the distribution of income are subject to social control, rather than to determination by individuals pursuing their own interests or by the market forces of capitalism. The term is also applied to political movements whose aim is to put such a system into practice.

There are many different forms of socialism, depending on what is meant by “social control” and on the extent to which, as well as by whom, this control is exercised over civil society.<sup>7</sup>

11. Capitalism, and its principle of private property, is the divine system of economics. This is made evident by the Eighth and Tenth Commandments:

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

**v. 17** - “You shall not lust for ... anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

12. The profit motive in capitalism is emphasized by our Lord in the parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11–27.
13. The relationship between management and labor is illustrated in the parable of the Vineyard Workers in Matthew 20:1–16.
14. The attitude required of labor toward management and management toward labor is presented by Paul in Ephesians 6:5–9 and Colossians 3:22–4:1.
15. But this is the devil’s world. These antithetical systems of economics are implemented by fallen men.
16. No matter what system is chosen for exchange of goods and services, disorganized evil will always find a way to corrupt the system.
17. Organized evil occurs when the “free play of self-regulating market forces” are diminished or removed by excessive and onerous regulations.

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<sup>7</sup> “Socialism,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 10:926.