

WEEK 1 OF 6

Christianity vs. Communism: A Christian Critique

Foundations: What Is Communism and Why Should Christians Care?

Christianity & Communism • October 25, 2026

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church • Tampa, Florida

Why Study Communism?

“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.....” — 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

~100 Million Dead

Communist regimes killed approximately 100 million people in the 20th century — the deadliest ideology in recorded history.

Roots Still Alive

Critical theory, socialist movements, and neo-Marxist cultural analysis derive directly from Marx’s framework.

A Rival Worldview

Communism is not merely an economic policy but a comprehensive worldview with its own theology, anthropology, and eschatology.

Christian Duty

1 Peter 3:15 calls us to give a reasoned defense. That requires understanding what we’re defending against.

Series Roadmap: Six Weeks

1	Oct 18	Foundations	What Is Communism and Why Should Christians Care?
2	Oct 25	Atheism & Materialism	The God of Scripture vs. the god of matter-in-motion
3	Nov 1	Image of God	The Communist view of man vs. the imago Dei
4	Nov 8	Property & 8th Commandment	Abolition of private property vs. “You shall not steal”
5	Nov 15	Sphere Sovereignty	Totalitarian statism vs. Kuyper’s limited government
6	Nov 22	False Eschatology & Hope	The classless utopia vs. the Kingdom of Christ

Marx and Engels: The Men Behind the Movement

1818

Born in Trier, Prussia; Jewish heritage, baptized Lutheran

1836

Studies law and philosophy at Bonn, then Berlin; absorbs Hegel

1843

Marries Jenny von Westphalen; moves to Paris; meets Engels

1848

Communist Manifesto published with Engels (Feb. 21)

1849

Exiled to London; begins research at British Museum

1867

Das Kapital, Vol. 1 published

1883

Dies in London; buried at Highgate Cemetery

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." — Communist Manifesto, 1848

Friedrich Engels

1820–1895

Manchester factory owner's son;
funded Marx

Co-author of the Manifesto

Edited Das Kapital vols. 2–3 after
Marx died

Co-developed dialectical materialism

Hegel's Influence

Marx "inverted" Hegel's dialectic: Hegel drove history by clash of ideas (Spirit); Marx drove by clash of mat'l/economic forces. "Dialectical materialism."

The Marxist Worldview

Dialectical Materialism

Reality is purely material — no God, no soul, no transcendence. History advances through the clash of opposing material/economic forces (thesis → antithesis → synthesis).

Atheism as Foundation

Religion is “the opium of the people” — a narcotic that pacifies the exploited. Atheism is not incidental to Marxism; it is the logical first premise of the entire system.

Historical Materialism

All of history is explained by economic structures: who owns the means of production, and who does not. Ideas, laws, religion, and culture are mere “superstructure” built on economic “base.”

Class Struggle & Utopia

The motor of history is conflict between oppressor and oppressed. The proletarian revolution will abolish private property, dissolve the state, and usher in a classless paradise.

“Within the philosophical system of Marx and Lenin, hatred of God is the principal driving force, more fundamental than all their political and economic pretensions.” — Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Templeton Address, 1983

From Theory to Terror: The Communist Century

~20M

Soviet Union
(USSR, 1917–1991)

~65M

Mao's China
(PRC, 1949–1976)

~2M

Cambodia
(Pol Pot, 1975–79)

Lenin — Russia, 1917

Russian Revolution overthrows the Tsar. Lenin establishes the Cheka (secret police), introduces Red Terror, and bans all opposition. Soviet Union founded 1922. Gulags begin.

Stalin — USSR, 1924–1953

Forced collectivization (Holodomor famine, Ukraine: ~3.5–7M). Great Purge (1936–38): ~750,000 executed. Gulag Archipelago reaches ~18M prisoners. Show trials, mass deportations.

Mao — China, 1949–1976

Great Leap Forward (1958–62): forced collectivization causes famine killing ~15–55 million. Cultural Revolution (1966–76): 1.5–2M killed; Confucian and Christian heritage destroyed.

Total (Black Book of Communism estimate): ~94–100 million deaths attributed to Communist regimes in the 20th century — more than both World Wars combined.

Why Christians Must Take This Seriously

Rival Anthropology

Communism says man is a purely material, economic being. Scripture says man is created in God's image with inherent dignity, conscience, and eternal soul (Gen. 1:26–28).

Rival Soteriology

Communism offers salvation through revolution and the abolition of private property. Christianity offers salvation through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24–26).

Rival Eschatology

Communism promises a classless utopia at the end of history through human political action. Scripture promises the return of Christ, the resurrection, and the new creation (Rev. 21:1–5).

"The real problem is not primarily a political problem but a problem of the mind and spirit — a spiritual problem. The basic issue is whether there is a God or not."

— Francis Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*

"Communism is what happens when, in the name of mind, men free themselves from God."

— Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*

The Christian Response: The Christian Worldview

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man? *A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. — Westminster Shorter Catechism*

Not Mere Anti-Communism

The Christian response is not simply "we oppose this." It is a positive, comprehensive alternative worldview rooted in Scripture — not in capitalism or libertarianism or any political party.

Kuyper's "Every Square Inch"

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" — Abraham Kuyper, 1880 inaugural address, Free University Amsterdam.

The Antithesis

Scripture teaches an absolute antithesis between the life-system built on the living God and all systems built on any other foundation (1 Cor. 3:11; Col. 2:8). The response to Communism begins here.

The antithesis between the Christian life-system and all materialist systems is not negotiable — it is confessional.

Discussion Questions

1

Communism claimed to liberate the poor and oppressed. Why did it produce oppression and death instead? What does this tell us about the relationship between good intentions and correct worldview?

2

Marx said religion is “the opium of the people” — a pacifier that keeps the oppressed from fighting for justice. How would you respond to this charge using Scripture? Are there ways the church has sometimes deserved this criticism?

3

Whittaker Chambers wrote that when he left Communism, he felt he was leaving the winning side for the losing side. What does it mean to hold a Christian worldview in a culture that often feels like it belongs to the materialist side? How does 1 Peter 3:15 speak to this?

4

WSC Q.1 says man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. How does this answer to the question “what is man for?” shape the way Christians should think about economics, work, and politics differently from both Communism and secular capitalism?

Next Week — Week 2 of 6

Atheism & Materialism vs. the God of Scripture

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Recommended Reading

Whittaker Chambers, Witness (1952)

Essential — a Communist spy's conversion to Christianity

Francis Schaeffer, A Christian Manifesto (1981)

The theological response to humanism and Marxism

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Templeton Address (1983)

A survivor's theological analysis of Communism (short essay)

Black Book of Communism (1999)

Harvard UP; the definitive scholarly death toll

Abraham Kuyper, Lectures on Calvinism (1898)

The Reformed life-system as the answer to materialism

Richard Wurmbrand, Tortured for Christ (1967)

Testimony of Christian persecution under Romanian Communism