



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Responsibility to God and Government

MAY 5-7, 2010

David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / 804-796-9411 / www.capitolcom.org

Matthew 22:15-22 "Then the Pharisees went and plotted together how they might trap Him in what He said. 16) And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. 17) Tell us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?' 18) But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, 'Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? 19) Show Me the coin used for the poll-tax.' And they brought Him a denarius. 20) And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription is this?' 21) They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' Then He said to them, 'Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.' 22) And hearing this, they were amazed, and leaving Him, they went away."

BOTH CURRENCY AND MEN HAVE AN IMAGE OF THEIR AUTHORITY INHERENT WITHIN THEM. THEREFORE BOTH REQUIRE A RESPONSIBILITY OF RENDERING BACK TO THE ONE WHO MADE THEM.

How was the trap laid by the rulers for Jesus? Why did Christ call his questioners "*hypocrites*?" What is the relationship of God's people to the government? What does Jesus mean by the word "render?" How does God view the authority of governmental leaders?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > MAY 12-14: MATTHEW 22:23-33 *LIBERAL LEADERS QUESTION THE RESURRECTION*
- > MAY 19-21: MATTHEW 22:34-40 *LEADERS ASK JESUS FOR THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT*
- > MAY 26-28: MATTHEW 22:41-46 *JESUS ASKS THE LEADERS THE ULTIMATE QUESTION*

The leaders of Jesus Christ are now absolutely furious. Jesus has brought His truth to their home court both physically (through the cleansing of the temple), and

spiritually (through the parables of the sons, the vinedressers, and the wedding feast). He showed them to be usurpers of authority and hypocrites right in their own capitol and courtyard. His popularity with the people not only excites their envy, but requires that they act lawfully. Their warrant for His arrest had been foiled by His Triumphal Entry on Sunday, the cleansing of the temple on Monday, and His popularity with the crowds this Tuesday. So they decide to outsmart Him with a trap to destroy Him with His own words. Their question, they suppose, has only three options. It will prove Him to be a coward if he is silent, will prove Him to be an insurrectionist worthy of death by the Romans if He says "no," and will destroy His favor with the people if says "yes." So they disguise themselves by sending their flattering students as well as their enemies, the Herodians, to have valid accusers for the execution of Christ, if possible, by Pilate.

"THE KINGS OF THE EARTH SET THEMSELVES, AND THE RULERS TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER, AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS ANNOINTED." PSALM 2:2

I. THE TRAP MT. 22:15-17

The Pharisees, unwilling to praise Jesus in front of the people for fear that He would detect their trap, sent their disciples instead. These students present great words of respect: "*Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.*" They first praised His character, then his doctrinal integrity as being sincere and accurate. Then they praised Him for standing for truth with courage and conviction. What they had said of him could not have been more accurate, but they didn't believe a word of it. They thought that Jesus would be preoccupied in mentally basking in their flattery, so they sprang their trap. "*Tell us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?*" One of the greatest compliments is for a student

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – DENNY'S ON RT. 1, 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS AT NOBLEWOOD PLAZA
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –NATL DAY OF PRAYER: CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP PRAYER BREAKFAST AT ST. PAUL'S BAPTIST – CREIGHTON RD, RICHMOND
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GOLDEN CORRAL AT NORVIEW & MILITARY HWY – NEAR NORFOLK AIRPORT

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to ask a teacher for advice on an important dilemma. They hoped to balloon His ego so He would blurt out an unguarded answer to become His death warrant.

“INSTEAD OF TAKING JESUS’ WARNINGS TO HEART AND ASKING HIM HOW THEY MIGHT AVOID THE JUDGEMENT AND RECEIVE MERCY FROM GOD, THE ONLY WORD THEY WANTED FROM HIM WAS THAT WHICH WOULD BRING ABOUT HIS OWN DESTRUCTION.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

II. THE TREACHERY MT. 22:18

It was not possible for Jesus Christ, the Sovereign of the ages, to be blindsided by such schemes. *“But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, ‘Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites?’”* “Malice” means “wickedness.” These murders are immediately identified and then Jesus uses the same word for “*temp*” that is used of Satan in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1 (*testing*). Their shame should have been intensified when He called them “*hypocrites*.” He knew that their purpose was to trap Him, not to seek His wisdom. He knew who they were and their entire plot as if He had overheard it. This is another proof of His omniscience and a wonderful testimony to His deity. But in two days they will falsely accuse Him.

“AND THEY BEGAN TO ACCUSE HIM SAYING, ‘WE FOUND THIS FELLOW PERVERTING THE NATION, AND FORBIDDING TO GIVE TRIBUTE TO CAESAR, SAYING THAT HE HIMSELF IS CHRIST A KING.’” LUKE 23:2

III. THE TRIBUTE MT. 22:19-21

Jesus requests the coin required for the poll-tax. They eagerly give Him a denarius, still hoping He will fall in their trap. Showing the coin He asked, *“Whose image and inscription is this?”* Jesus was emphasizing what was most offensive to the Jews. The emperor’s picture was a reminder of Roman oppression and they believed it

unlawful to make any image (Ex. 20:4). The inscription was more offensive, “Tiberius Caesar son of the divine Augustus.” On the reverse was the Pax, the Roman goddess of peace, with the inscription, “High Priest.” The coin said Caesar claimed divinity and was high priest to a false god! Most importantly, their rabbi’s had taught, “He is king whose coin passes current.”¹ Jesus is relating that, in spite of their supposed offense to the coin, it was in circulation even on their Temple Mount.

IV. THE TAX MT. 22:21-22

Jesus gave the great principle, *“Render (give back) to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”* Caesar had authority over the coin and its circulation. They had it, a consent and use of the benefits of his authority, so they must submit to his tax. Romans 13:1-7 shows that God has delegated His authority to government leaders as *“God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil”* (v. 4), and *“for the praise of those who do good”* (I Peter 2:13-17). Most importantly, for peace, we must pray for our leaders’ salvation and be thankful for them (I Timothy 2:1-4). But the real issue was that they had not given back to God the things that were His. Their tax was temporal, but their final judgment would be eternal!

“HE IS NOT SEPARATING SECULAR HUMAN SOCIETY FROM RELIGION, SAYING, IN EFFECT, THAT ONE OWES ALLEGIANCE TO HUMAN GOVERNMENT IN REGARD TO MATERIAL THINGS AND ALLEGIANCE TO GOD IN REGARD TO THE SPIRITUAL. SCRIPTURE NEVER MAKES SUCH A DICHOTOMY, BECAUSE ALL THINGS AND EVERY AREA OF LIFE BELONGS TO GOD. JESUS WAS STILL TALKING ABOUT CAESAR, SAYING THAT THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD’S DO NOT BELONG TO CAESAR AND SHOULD NEVER BE OFFERED TO HIM, BUT ONLY TO GOD.” JOHN MACARTHUR

¹ A. Carr, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1881), 171.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you as a leader set yourself against the Lord and against His Anointed (Christ)?
- 2) Have you recognized that your authority was delegated to you by God to be used for His honor and glory?
- 3) Are you doing your responsibility of bringing wrath upon those practicing evil, praising the good, and praying for leaders?