

“Disciples and Taxes” (lesson #10)

Matthew 22:15-22; 17:22-27

1. The texts above relate to paying what kind of taxes?

Secular governments (Matt 22) – Rome

The Pharisees enlisted the **Herodians** due to their being primarily a political sect that would defend Roman law before spiritual law.

The Pharisees didn't much care how Jesus responded to their question; they thought they had Him on the horns of a dilemma either way.

Religious government (Matt 17)

Matt 17:22-27 – Explanation:

This was the 2nd time Jesus mentioned His death & resurrection.

The disciples were so grieved that it seems they didn't want to discuss the matter.

After the Lord's resurrection, the disciples had forgotten His promise to return to them (Mk 16:14), but His enemies did not forget (Jn 2:19; Matt 27:62-66).

I. Miracle was a lesson about the Lord's future Kingship.

- 1) **Kings** (God) do not pay taxes.
- 2) **Kings** do not take taxes from their sons (Jesus).
- 3) **Jesus** points ahead to the true freedom of His kingdom.

II. Only miracle Jesus ever performed to meet His own needs.

- 1) **Satan** tried in vain to get Jesus to use His power for His need (Matt 4:3-4).
- 2) **Jesus** did it this time so as not to cause others to stumble.

III. Only miracle involving money.

- 1) **It was used** to make silver sockets on which the Tabernacle poles were setup (Exo 38:25-27; 30:11 – origin of the Temple tax). The tax was later used for supporting the ministry in the Tabernacle/Temple.
- 2) **The tax** served as a reminder that the Lord had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt. It was a free-will offering & a symbol of equal rights in the kingdom, since all paid the same amount of tax.
- 3) **Jesus** would later want His disciples to know that they were redeemed from a greater fate than physical slavery, & by a much higher price (1 Pet 1:18-19).

IV. Consider the complexity of this miracle.

- 1) We go fishing for catfish & catch bass. **But** of all the variety of fish in the Sea Peter would find the one with the coin to pay the tax (1/2 shekel; didrachma paid for two: Jesus & Peter).

V. Miracle performed for Peter's benefit.

- 1) What did Peter learn (1 Pet 5:7)?
- 2) Also, not to unnecessarily offend the weak.

VI. Only miracle where the results are not recorded (1 Kgs 8:56).

2. Peter learned that paying taxes to Caesar (civil rulers) was lawful, but what if the ruler is corrupt & murderous?

Both the Caesars & the Sanhedrin were unworthy as objects of charity, but they served as channels for the peace & welfare of the general public.

3. Peter's discipleship made him make a choice in regards to civil rulers & their laws. What was it? (Acts 4:13-22) What lesson do we learn from this?

Respect should be shown to ruling officials.

However, God's authority & His laws take precedence over the human element.

4. What practices did Roman law provide for that are approved of God?

Acts 24, 26 – Court trials

Acts 24:19 – Facing accusers

Acts 25:10-11 – Right to appeal

APPLICATION:

5. According to (Romans 13:1-7)

- a. The basic role of civil government is...

Terror to the evil (judgment; avenger to execute God's wrath) – **Praise** to the good – **Ministers** of God in the ways mentioned.

b. The basic responsibility of the Lord's disciple is...

Render to the government their due: do not resist, be subject; taxes, customs, fear & honor due.

6. Paul cited in (1 Cor 6:1-7) the rule that stipulates the Christian cannot go to law with another Christian under any circumstance. Discuss this.

Civil disputes between Christians should be settled internally, within the church, so as not to bring reproach upon Christ.

Judgments are not to be made by some ecclesiastical body; one wise brother *could* render the judgment.

7. Does (Matt 5:33-37) prohibit judicial oaths? Prove your answer.

No! Jesus prohibits hypocritical oath taking such as was practiced by the Jews (Matt 23:16-22).

Compare: Common speech (James 3:17);

God & human beings “swear...as an oath for confirmation (Heb 6:13-16);

Paul basically said, “God is my witness that I tell you the truth” (2 Cor 1:23; Rom 1:9; Phil 1:8).

8. Should Christians serve on jury duty where the death penalty is being sought?

The court system is a lawful appendage (extension) of human government ordained by God, which is permitted to “bear the sword” of justice (Rom 13:4).

9. What should the Christian pray for in regards to rulers (1 Tim 2:1-2)?

That they may rule in such a way that we may lead a “quiet & peaceable life in all godliness & reverence.”

How would this principle apply say, for instance, during the War between the States, or during a reign of terror like Hitler, Stalin & Saddam?

10. Does the Matthew 17 text justify financially supporting error in a congregation by contributing to the treasury?

Christians are commanded to give willingly, bountifully, cheerfully & as they purpose in their hearts (2 Cor 9:1-7)

Christians cannot purpose in their hearts to support an unscriptural cause that is not only unlawful, but would also offend their consciences (Rom 14:23).