

Theme: Government exists by God’s decree for protection and administering justice for the common good. The Church exists to worship and glorify the One in whose image we are made, to nurture the saints, and to bring the good news to the world. The great challenge for the follower of Christ is to honor those in authority over them while walking in absolute obedience to Christ.

Background & Introduction - The whole passage turns on

I. An Important Question – “Are we subject to ‘Rome’?”

- A. Asked with ulterior motives
 - They sent “spies” (20)
 - Give Jesus a question like he gave them!
- B. Setting the stage
 - 1. Flattery (21) (Proverbs 29:5)
 - 2. Speaking the truth!
 - a. Everything they say about Jesus is *true!*
 - b. They don’t realize the importance of their question
- C. The question and the trap - *Pay taxes to Caesar?* (22)
 - 1. Implying: We are citizens of Israel – not Rome!
 - 2. Inherent danger in the question
 - a. It could appear sincere
 - b. “Yes” – and he offends the people looking for deliverance
 - c. “No” – and he must face the wrath of Rome
 - 3. Yes or No is all they want

II. A Stunning Answer (23-25)

- A. Jesus instructs them
 - 1. Calls for a Roman coin
 - Not one of Herod’s but one with the Emperor’s image
 - 2. A very simple question: Whose likeness and inscription?
 - They are using his coins to their own benefit
 - They have “de facto” accepted his rule
- B. Jesus replies!
 - 1. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s
 - a. An *imperative* - It is a moral duty

- b. The offensive “poll tax” is likely in view
 - c. It is a power that was ordained by God (John 19:11; Rom.13:1)
 - 2. *And to God* the things that are God’s!
 - a. Whose image do you bear?
 - b. Arguing from the lesser to the greater
- C. The spies are silenced
 - 1. Jesus is not a political subversive or revolutionary
 - 2. Jesus’ answer has entered into the world’s vocabulary and mindset

III. A Continuing Challenge –

- A. Facing temporal powers
 - 1. A valid “Rule” and authority (Rom.13:1-7; 1 Pet.2:13-17)
 - The State is valid institution – but run by sinful men and women
 - It makes legitimate claims upon its people
 - 2. It has limitations
 - a. We cannot violate the commands of God
 - Whether *permitted* by government
 - Or *Forbidden* by government
 - Or *asked* to by those in authority
 - b. Cannot violate our conscience to obey the state
 - 3. But give honor where honor is due (1 Tim.2:2)
- B. Facing eternal power
 - 1. Jesus recognizes one God! It is *not* Caesar.
 - 2. We give to God that which bears his image!
 - We give ourselves!!
 - In total, not in part.
 - 3. That image has been marred – but not destroyed
 - 4. The Perfect Image Bearer has come
 - He came in our flesh
 - Bearing the image of the invisible God
 - Rendering perfect obedience
 - That *in Him* our obedience might be made acceptable

That we might “render to God what is God’s” and know His blessing!