

**Mark 12:13-17**

Sec 4: “It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute or other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake.

A. In **Mk 12:13f**, when asked if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not, Jesus asked for a denarius.

1. **“And He said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ And they said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to them, ‘Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they were amazed at Him.”**

2. Some zealous Jews may have been opposed to paying taxes to Caesar because in so doing, one was supporting an oppressive, pagan government.

a. Some today use this same argument saying, look at all the sin our government promotes.

1) Abortion.

2) Our taxes are used for “grooming” or the persuasion of children to embrace homosexuality & gender confusion. Some of our tax dollars pay for advertisement & books in elementary schools & in public libraries which confuse & corrupt children. It clearly undermines the Bible’s teaching on marriage.

3) Marxist, socialist, critical race theory

4) The wicked lie of evolution.

5) There is outright corruption in governments.

b. What about the Roman government during Christ’s earthly ministry or when Paul wrote **Rom 13:5-6** concerning secular rulers: **“it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. <sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes”**

1) Taxes supported breaking the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment for entertainment (i.e. gladiators in the coliseum).

2) Pagan, state-supported idolatry.

3) Persecution of Christians.

a) **1 Cor 7:26-17**: **“I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. re you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.”**

b) Dr. Jay Adams said this was because Christians at the time were being impaled on tall spikes & lit on fire during Roman persecutions.

4) Paul’s instruction in **Rom 13** did not get negated because the Roman magistrates persecuted and even killed Christians! If Christians were required to pay taxes to pagan Rome; we cannot be excused from paying taxes even when our government supports sinful practices.

a) Even under Roman oppression, Christians were still required to pay taxes. They were not allowed to withhold paying taxes as an act of civil disobedience or protest.

b) The one area Christians were NOT to submit to was any government saying they could not witness or preach the gospel to others (**Acts 5:29**).

Sec 4: "...Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted,..."

- A. The atheist looks at **Mk 12 & Rom 13** & throws both passages "out of the window" along with the rest of Scripture. The language in this section says that such unbelievers are still required to pay taxes & submit to the "just & legal authority" of magistrates. They are to give "due obedience to them."
1. Whether a Christian or unbeliever, both are guilty of the sin of theft by not paying taxes.
  2. **Rom 13:5-6 "it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. <sup>6</sup>For because of this you also pay taxes"**
    - a. A person who steals from a local, state, or federal authority should have a conscience that bothers them.
    - b. God's word says they are breaking the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment.
    - c. Pay your taxes for conscience' sake.
- B. The next portion of sec 4 speaks against the way the Roman Catholic Church sought to exercise authority or jurisdiction that was not given to them by God. Regarding "their due obedience to them [civil rulers] ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the pope any power & jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; &, least of all, to deprive them of their dominions, or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever."
1. An example of such over-extended Roman Catholic authority was the counter-reformation which included horrible persecution known as the Roman inquisition which was established in the year 1542.
  2. Such practices used torture & even deprived many of their lives because they were judged as heretics for opposing Roman Catholic doctrine.
  3. This section needs to be owned by Protestants as well. A Protestant church if given power and authority in a particular territory should not deprive others men, women, and children of their lives or properties because they are judged as heretics.
- C. In conclusion of chapter 23, keep in mind that this chapter has been modified by American Presbyterians. It is the vow of ministers, elders, & deacons to uphold these revised Standards as adopted by our denomination.
1. Our Standards reflect a desire for American religious freedom of various Christian groups.
  2. The 18<sup>th</sup> century revisionists likely did not have the notion of Muslims in America teaching & preaching Sharia law & Jihad [holy war] against any non-Muslims.
    - a. Such laws & supposed holy war is radically against our Declaration of Independence upon which our country was founded.
    - b. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
      - 1) It is hard to enjoy such beautiful freedoms if someone wants to take your life for not believing Muhammad is the true prophet of God.
      - 2) On the basis of this founding document, such Muslim teaching should not be allowed in the United States. The FBI has even rightly investigated mosques when Jihad has been promoted in our country.
- D. There is a degree of due obedience we are to give to rulers; however, ultimate obedience is to be given to our Triune God.