

17:24-27

When they had come to Capernaum, They had just entered Galilee in verse 22. **those who received the ⁹temple tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?”** Exodus 30 speaks of this temple tax and how it is accounted: Jesus and everybody else had to give a “1/2 shekel.”

25 He said, “Yes.” And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, Before Peter even had a chance to talk by answering the question behind the question.

26 Peter said to Him, “From strangers.” Romans citizens, then, don’t make taxes to the Romans. We see, then, that the Roman citizens loved kingdom expansion. This, of course, meant they needed to be at war all the time.

Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. Matthew 12’s closing verses show that the disciples are God’s children and are here included. **The sons are free** of the taxes on the Father’s house in Jerusalem. This is, by the way, **Jesus** promoting the children of God (already mentioned) above the “son of God” (known as “Israel” in Exodus 4 and Hosea 11).

27 Nevertheless, lest we offend them, or make them stumble. **go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a ¹piece of money;** Jesus is either omniscient and knows of a fish that swallowed a coin somewhere or He is omnipotent and made this happen. He made a coin which would not have had the proper impression on it? Maybe it was a mix? He drove a fish to swim to a dropped coin that He knew about: a good mix of both “omni”’s. He knows everything: in Matthew 9 and Matthew 12 (and so forth), and He can furthermore avoid everything at His will. So why not here? Simple: Jesus lives way below His rights to remove stumblingblocks from those who might think less of Himself. Phenomenal! He pays the stupid half-shekel, not because He owes it, but because people were watching. In other words (a la Matthew 5:16), some times we do things we don’t have to do because somebody is observing the Father...and His “sons.”

We pay the “half shekel” so that we don’t even offend the “little ones” (next chapter). “I don’t care what anybody thinks!” is not in keeping with the Spirit of Christ here demonstrated. Some of us have hard choices to make and we should be asking “what would Jesus think of this and what would the world see?”

take that and give it to them for Me and you.” Jesus always shares His lavishness with us (Romans 8:15; Titus 3:7). This is a glorious forecast for us (especially with Matthew 6:19-21 as a backdrop). He gave Peter, however, “daily bread” (Matthew 6); not tomorrow’s tax.

18:1-6

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” This is a great continuation from the last chapter. This question is probably prompted by those who are amazing! The disciples just called the “sons of God!”

⁹Lit. *double drachma*

¹Gr. *stater*, the exact temple tax for two

6 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe “receiving” (18:5) and **believing** in Christ are what is necessary to be saved. What must they **believe?** 17:22-23 and 20:28 tell us! In these fantastic contexts we see this chapter break is so unfortunate.

Me to sin, This is that same word “offend” in verse 27. We have transitioned from “offending” tax collectors to “offending” children. **it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.** This sounds a lot like the end of 2 Peter 2. Basically, we don’t want anybody stumbling on their way to be saved. 1 Corinthians 8-10, like the Gospel of 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 are both Paul-like and Jesus-like, as seen here.