



Miraculous Provision of Tax Money

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

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"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? 25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. 27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee" (Matthew 17:24-27).

- 1) Jesus going about His normal business returned to Capernaum, his local headquarter for Ministry, but they were others there who were also going about their business, but their business conflicted with that of Jesus.
- 2) "Beware, an eye is watching you!" The tribute collectors were watching Jesus, and were going to be influenced by what they observed. You cannot live as if no body is watching you, or as if your actions and behaviours have no impact on others. Your success in life and mission could be influenced by the opinions of others about you. Although we cannot please everybody, we cannot totally ignore them. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7).
- 3) Either due to fear or respect, they did not ask Jesus directly, but rather went to Peter to confirm their suspicions - a possible route for poisoning the minds of Peter.
- 4) Peter gave an honest answer though he knew it could spell trouble. We must be honest and truthful no matter the potential consequences.
- 5) Jesus either overheard the discussion or knew of it by supernatural means and confronted Peter about it. He did this for two reasons: (a) to expose Peter to revelation knowledge that would enlighten him that trib-

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17).

ute at the time were supposed to be levied on strangers, not on their children, and (b) to involve Peter as an agent in the miraculous process for the solution of the potential problem that was brewing.

- 6) From the dialogue between Jesus and Peter, it is obvious that Jesus was not liable to tribute. However, he knew that the tribute collectors were not interested in that truth, and that His failure to pay tribute could negatively poison their minds and hinder his reaching them for God. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (I Corinthians 10:23). It is for this reason that we are commanded to "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God" (I Corinthians 10:32):
- 7) Jesus did not allow His superior knowledge to hinder His mission through offences. He commanded Peter to pay the tribute so as to remove all possible sources of offences to the preaching of the gospel. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:19-21).
- 8) The miraculous provision of money in the mouth of a fish reminds us that God is able to provide for all our needs in life if we will (a) trust and obey Him, (b) refrain from worries and anxieties (Matthew 6:25-33), and (c) start from where we are by using what we have to get what we don't.