



Rendering Their Respective Dues

“... Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's” (Matthew 22:21).

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The events in this scripture reminds us of the salient truth that no one is wise enough to trick our God, who searches the reins of man and declares the beginning from the end (Jeremiah 17:10; Revelations 2:23; Isaiah 46:10).

“Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. 16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way” (Matthew 22:15-22).

- 1) The Pharisees were determined to entangle Jesus. Instead of direct assault, they deployed their proxies, hoping that they can hide their trails and tantalise their bait. They set a trap with the preambles to their question, adopting an approach that could easily appeal to most people and trap them. However, they were wrong as Jesus was not just a man.
- 2) Set within the context of the time, where patriotic Jews held the view that it was disloyalty to the Jews to pay tax, they prefaced their question with the preamble **“Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men”** (vs 16). This was aimed at elucidating a specific type of response that they wanted, which would give them the opportuni-

“Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” (Matthew 22:17).

ty to accuse Jesus to Caesar. Anyone could have easily fallen for this, but not the God-man, Jesus.

- 3) “What do you think?” was the focus of their question, but Jesus chose not to express His personal views but rather declare the word of God. He did this because of His perception of their motives (vs 18);
- 4) Jesus made them to answer their question by using the image on the coin to expound a profound truth **“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's”** (vs 21);
- 5) Through excellent application of wisdom, He not only escaped their plot but rather also exposed their folly in a manner that silenced them (vs 22).
- 6) Many have misapplied Jesus's statement to inappropriate situations to their own hurt. It is important to note that Jesus, by this statement was not teaching people to compromise, be involved in double loyalty or have one leg in the church and another in idol's temples. He simply was stating a plain truth on the law of recognition and of rendering to each person their dues.

The entire episode reminds us of the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves”. We need the wisdom of God to safely navigate through the web of satanic wiles and human craftiness. It is for this reason, we need to constantly, seriously and earnestly pray as Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:13 “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen”. As they marvelled, left him and went their ways (vs 22), so will your enemies!