**“Render To Caesar…”**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday April 10th, 2022

Text: Matthew 22:15-22

# Intro

1. Many things change over the years…
   1. There was a time when there was no TV, video game systems, computers, automobiles, airplanes, supermarkets, hospitals, or even the internet! *[shudder]*
   2. There has been much change.
   3. One thing has not changed: Paying Taxes!
2. Under the Roman Empire there was a poll tax everyone between 14-65 years of age had to pay simply for existing.
3. Those living in Judea paid two taxes: the Roman taxes and the Temple taxes!
4. Jesus was no exception – He had to pay taxes while on earth too.
   1. He understood that God moves governments as He wishes and that we must be in subjection to the ruling authority (*Romans 13:1-7*).
5. He was asked on a couple of occasions if He paid taxes.
6. Matthew 17:24-27: The first is about the Jewish Temple taxes:
   1. This was the Jewish annual half-shekel tax for the Lord’s Sanctuary, which in this case was the Temple, for each male 20 years old and older (*Ex. 30:13; 38:26; II Chr. 24:6-9*).
   2. This was known as the Temple tax *(Neh. 10:32).*
   3. The Jewish Temple Tax Collectors asked Peter if Jesus paid the tax. Peter answered “Yes” then went into the house with Jesus.
   4. Before Peter could relate what happened, Jesus asked him a question: “Who pays taxes, strangers or the ruler’s sons?”
      1. The question must be understood in the light of those days.
      2. A ruler taxed his subjects for the support of his kingdom and his family, but he didn't tax his own family.
      3. *Under our form of government, everyone is taxed, including the ruler and his household.*
   5. Peter answered, “Strangers.” Jesus replied, “Then the sons are exempt.”
   6. He then went on saying, “However, so that we do not offend them…”
   7. This could imply that they were of the Royal Household of God and as such were exempt *(Mt. 24:1-2: The temple would be destroyed soon),* but the faithful Jews were not *(Mt. 21:43: Their kingdom would be removed from them).*
   8. To not offend, Jesus instructed Peter to go fishing and the first fish he caught would contain a shekel in its mouth to pay their taxes (Half-shekel each)!
7. *If only paying our taxes were so easy, we would all be fishermen!*
8. Matthew 22:15-22: The second occasion was about the Roman taxes:
   1. We find in the Luke account (*Luke 20:19-26*) that the scribes and chief priests sent their “disciples” amongst Jesus’ crowd to pretend to be righteous, and to trick Him.
   2. They asked Him about paying taxes to Rome.
   3. The Jews hated the Roman government and hated paying taxes to it.
   4. Jesus’ answer was real simple: “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” He was asking, “Whom does the money belong to?”
   5. When they answered, “Caesar’s,” He said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”
9. The lesson for us is this: it doesn’t matter who the government is, we will pay taxes to keep it!
10. **One Can Know the Things That Belong to “Caesar”**
11. How would the people know what should be given to Caesar?
    1. Luke 2:1: Caesar would give instructions (in this case, a census).
    2. Caesar would say when, where, and how much.
    3. He had people who collected the taxes called “Publicans.”
    4. The Jews hated the publicans and considered them as sinners and as low as Gentiles.
    5. *The Jews paid taxes to their kings (I Samuel 8:10-18) – they must have forgotten that!*
12. Often when a new Caesar took the throne, his first order of business was to change the currency to his likeness (Matthew 22:20-21), which at this time it was Caesar Tiberius (A.D. 14-37).
    1. The money with the face of the old Caesar was still valid, but they tried to phase it out as fast as possible. *(The people would know to whom they were paying taxes)*
13. Taxes are still around today and as citizens we are expected to pay taxes! *(I Peter 2:12-20)*
14. **Jesus Said to Pay Taxes (“Render to Caesar”)**
15. There are those who teach that because saints are citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3:20) they are exempt from paying earthly taxes! *(Matthew 22:21: This is not taught in the word of God!)*
16. Paul said saints are to pay taxes for four reasons in Romans 13:1-7:
    1. Romans 13:5: There are consequences if one resists the government (“wrath”).
    2. Romans 13:5: The conscience of the Christian should be clear (Phil. 2:15; I Pet. 2:12-20).
    3. Romans 13:6: Governments are called “servants of God” *(“ministers of God” in 13:4)*.
    4. Romans 13:7: We are to render to all what is due them: taxes, custom, fear, & honor.
17. Even our Lord paid taxes while here on earth and expected it of His disciples *(Matthew 17; 22).*
18. To be above reproach, for a good conscience, to be in subjection to the authorities, and be in obedience to God, saints pay taxes!
19. **Jesus also Said, Give to God! (“Render to God”)**
20. Matthew 22:21: Note the word “things” – “The *things* that are God’s.”
21. How would the people know what belongs to God?
    1. *Psalms 1:1-2*: God has revealed His word (Law).
    2. *Ephesians 3:1-6*: The revelation can be understood.
22. In the same way, as we are to give back to the government that which belongs to the government, we are to give back to God the things that are God’s!
    1. I Corinthians 6:19-20: We are not our own but bought with a price. The blood of Christ purchased us (*I Peter 1:18-19*).
       1. A Christian belongs to God completely (Mark 12:30)
    2. We are to glorify God in our bodies:
       1. Romans 6:12-13: Can one do that if the body is made an instrument of unrighteousness?
       2. I Corinthians 6:18: If the body is used for fornication, we not only sin against God but against our own bodies.
    3. We are to glorify God in our thoughts/mind:
       1. Philippians 4:7-8: Think pure and holy thoughts (Let God dwell in our hearts).
    4. We are to glorify God in our giving back as He has prospered us!
       1. I Corinthians 16:1-2: Paul established a pattern of giving to God on the first day of the week as we have been prospered (As he directed the churches in Galatia, he also directed the church at Corinth).
       2. James 1:17: All good things come from God.
       3. As the Jews were once commanded to tithe a 10th of their goods *(Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:21-32),* we are to give back as we have prospered (I Corinthians 16:2) and as we purpose in our heart (II Corinthians 9:7).
23. The fundamental difference:
    1. One **must** pay taxes or suffer consequences.
    2. One must **choose** to serve God or suffer consequences.
24. Just as we are to give to earthly authority, we are to give ourselves to God in godly living!

**Conclusion**

1. Jesus taught His disciples to pay taxes.
2. Think of the people who “render to Caesar” his things, but who, as yet, have not “rendered to God” what rightfully belongs to Him.
3. Do we give to Caesar and leave God out? *(The ungodly, law-abiding citizens do that)*
4. The ungodly give to “Caesar,” but the righteous will give to “Caesar” and to God!
5. When we pay our taxes and live as upright citizens, we give unto God our obedience!
6. It’s about choices: what we choose to do with the things God has entrusted to us and how we give them back as pleasing service to Him.
   1. Romans 12:1; II Peter 3:10-14: We give back to God in the way we live our lives (sacrificially, holy, blameless, upright, above reproach!)
7. Do we give to “Caesar” the things that are Caesar’s?
8. Do we give to God the things that are God’s?
9. If not a Christian, now is the time. Render to Him what is due: fear, obedience, and honor. Repent and be baptized!
10. If a Christian who has not given to God ***ALL*** that is due Him, now is the time to make amends, repent and resolve to make Him your top priority in life!
11. Whatever your requests are, come forward ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!