

Timeless Teaching for Turbulent Times: Part 6 “Impact of Citizenship”

S – Scripture (*Matthew 22:15-22*)

15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians¹. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. 17 Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax w to Caesar or not?”²

18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19 Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius³, 20 and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

21 “Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

22 When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

¹ Herodians – not much is known, presumably a group that was loyal to the rule of the Herods – Jewish rulers given authority by the Roman rulers.

² Jesus’ listeners likely recognized that the answer to those implicit questions lay on the same coin. The Roman denarius bore the likeness of Caesar. Thus the demonstration of ownership was also a direct breach of the second commandment, ‘You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.’ (Exodus 20:4) The denarius was the most common coin used in Jesus’ time, the standard wage for a day of labor (Matthew 20:2). It would have been a constant reminder of pagan Roman rule and infringements on the Jews’ religious freedom – raising the same uncomfortable question that the Pharisees asked every time it changed hands. (<https://evangelicalfocus.com/jubilee-centre/1478/caesar-cash-is-king>)

³ A Denarius with the inscription of Caesar Augustus



O – Observations

What do you notice? What is interesting? What is context? What questions does it raise?

A – Applications

How does this apply to you? What do you need to confess? Do? Change?

P – Prayer

Pray that the Scripture seed will take root and produce fruit.
Praise God for His attributes revealed in the passage.
Confess any sin that has come to light while studying.
Thank Him for His Word and His care.
Ask the Holy Spirit to grow you into a disciple of Jesus.