

Mark 12:13-17 **Is it Lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?**

¹³ Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. ¹⁴ When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? ¹⁵ Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it." ¹⁶ So they brought it. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at Him. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Attempt to trap Jesus in His words

- ✚ The Chief Priests and Pharisees have been seeking diligently to find a way to destroy Jesus and put Him put to death. [Matthew 12:10, 14, 24, 16:1, 19:3, 21:45-46, 22:15, Mark 3:1, 8:11, 11:18, 12:12, 13, Luke 6:11, 19:47-48, 20:19-20]
- ✚ The question about taxes is simply a ploy to trap Jesus, so they might have a perceived opportunity to arrest Him with the purpose of destroying Him to put Him to death. [Matthew 22:15, Mark 12:13, Luke 20:20]
 - ✧ The question of taxes to Caesar was a political question.
 - ✧ Caesar was the ruler over the occupying Roman army that had control over the land of Israel, and the taxes collected were for support of the Roman rulers.
 - ✧ The Jews hated the Roman oppression and resented the tax monies collected for their enemies.
 - ✧ If Jesus said that it was right to pay taxes to Caesar, the Jews would be offended in Him and count Him as a traitor.
 - ✧ If Jesus advised against paying taxes to Caesar, He would be in rebellion against the occupying force and in jeopardy from the Romans.
 - ✧ The Pharisees did not have the courage to confront Jesus directly, so they enlisted the help of their disciples along with the Herodians who were devotees of Herod. [Matthew 22:16, Mark 12:13, Luke 20:20]
 - ✧ It is interesting to witness how people use flattery in their approach, when their motive is to destroy the one they flatter. [Matthew 22:16, Mark 12:14, Luke 20:21-22]
- ✚ Jesus was not deceived by their flattery, and perceived the wicked motive of their question.
 - ✧ Jesus said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money." "Whose image and inscription is this?" [Matthew 22:16-20, Mark 12:15-16, Luke 20:23-24]
 - ✧ Jesus' answer demonstrated wisdom far above their pretentious challenge.
 - ✧ "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." [Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25]
- ✚ Jesus did not come for political purposes, but to reveal the heart of God, to draw men to understanding of God, and repentance to bring them back to God for the saving of their soul.
 - ✧ It is not wise to bring childish and foolish challenges to Jesus, but it is wise to draw understanding of God through the things Jesus has revealed about God.
 - ✧ Jesus had said, 'For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, **Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'** [Matthew 13:15, John 12:40, Acts 28:26-27, Isaiah 6:10]
- ✚ When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. [Matthew 22:22, Mark 12:17]

✠ But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent. [\[Luke 20:26\]](#)