

Notes for: Unto Caesar/Unto God

A Study of Matthew 22:15-22

Introduction:

The context of Jesus incredible answer in Matthew 22:21 involves “the damned if you do, damned if you don’t” question posed to Him about paying taxes to the Romans Empire. Our Lord’s answer confirms the all-important distinction and balance of John 17:14-18.

(1) The Discernment of the Situation (22:15-18)

■ Jesus Understood What He Was Facing

- >> He was omniscient (Matthew 22:18)
- >> We must be wise (Matthew 10:16)

(2) The Wisdom of the Resolution (22:19-22)

■ Jesus Established A Crucial Distinction

- >> It rescued Him from their entrapment (22:22)
- >> It rescues us from our bewilderment (Matthew 22:21)

(3) The Significance of the Application (Romans 13:1-7; John 17:14-18)

■ Understanding the Connection

- >> the prerogative of human government (Romans 13:1-2; “ordained of God”)
- >> the position of the Christian (John 17:18; “in the world”)
- >> the provision of the connection (Romans 13:5-7; “render unto Caesar”)
- >> the privilege of the right perspective (Matthew 17:24-27; “a means to an end”)

■ Balancing the Distinction

- >> the priority of the distinction (Acts 4:13-20; 5:27-30; “render unto God”)
- >> the peril of the distinction (John 17:14-16, Philippians 3:20; “not of the world”)
- >> the protocol of the distinction (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; “God’s will/God’s way”)

■ Receiving the Admonition

- >> the problem: **incompatible** (the world’s kingdom/God’s kingdom; Rev. 11:15-18)
- >> the precaution: **counterproductive** (John 18:36-37, 19:11: cf. Matthew 26:51-54)
- >> the promise: **unnecessary** (Christ’s authority/government’s irrelevancy; Matt. 28:18)
- >> **When American Evangelical Christians align themselves with a particular political party and go so far as to declare that God Himself is a member of that party, they are rendering unto Caesar that which belongs exclusively to God. When American Evangelical Christians go so far as to do back room deals with a particular political party, under the foolish notion that they are advancing the cause of Christ in this world, they are rendering unto Caesar that which belongs exclusively to God. And worst of all, when pastors would rather pontificate about politics than preach the the Bible and proclaim Christ, then they too are rendering unto Caesar that which belongs exclusively to God. As a result, American Evangelical Christianity, individually and collectively, has rendered itself guilty, of not only blurring the distinction established by Jesus in Matthew 22:21, but guilty, as well, of becoming “of the world.” In seeking to do God’s will in the world’s way, American Evangelical Christians have rendered themselves to be in dire need of repenting of their sin and seeking forgiveness from God; while repentance and forgiveness is still possible.**