

Render to Caesar: Jesus on the Role of Government Mark 12:13-17

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Render to Caesar!

- **Mark 12:13-17**
- **Proposition:** Jesus affirms the divinely ordained role and authority of human government and demands our submission.
 - 1) Through a loaded political question about the authority of government.
 - 2) Through a profound spiritual answer about the role and authority of government.

I. A Loaded Political Question about the Authority of Government (14)

- Luke 20:20 - So they watched Him, and sent spies [these men have been sent] who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they *could* deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.

The Poll-tax

- Called the *kensos*.
 - Latin from which we get *census*.
- The Romans levied two direct taxes on the provinces...
 - 1) *Tributum soli* – a tax on agriculture.
 - 2) *Tributum capitis* – literally “poll tax.”
 - The poll tax consisted of two parts...
 - a) A flat rate per head tax.
 - b) A property tax.

I. A Loaded Political Question about the Authority of Government (14)

- Cf. Acts 5:37 - "Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away *some* people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered.

II. A Profound Spiritual Answer about the Relationship of God and Government (15-17a)



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II. A Profound Spiritual Answer about the Relationship of God and Government (15-17a)

- On one side...
 - The image of Caesar's head.
 - Latin inscription: "Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus."
- On the other side...
 - The image of Caesar seated on his throne.
 - Latin inscription: *Pontifex Maximus*, or "High Priest."

1) Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

- God has established secular government, and it has a legitimate authority.
 - Cf. [Rom. 13:1-2](#)

The Role of Government

- (i) To Express God's Common Grace
 - [Rom. 13:4a](#) - for it [government] is a minister of God to you for good.
- (ii) To Restrain Evil
 - [Rom. 13:3a](#)
 - Deut. 17:13 - "[when the person who acted presumptuously is put to death] Then all the people will hear and be afraid, and will not act presumptuously again.
 - Eccl. 8:11 - Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

The Role of Government

- (iii) To Promote and Protect the Good
 - [Rom. 13:3](#)
 - Cf. [1 Pet. 2:13-14](#) – the praise of those who do right.
- (iv) To Punish the One Who Practices Evil
 - [Rom. 13:4b](#)

1) Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

- **a)** All men must obey its laws and its leaders, regardless of how odious.
 - Titus 3:1 - Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,
 - 1 Pet. 2:13-16

1) Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

- **b)** All men must respect and honor its leaders and officials, regardless of their own godlessness or how they came to power.
 - Rom. 13:7 - Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.
 - 1 Pet. 2:17 - fear God, honor the king.

Render to Caesar: Jesus on the Role of Government

Mark 12:13-17

1) Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

- c) All men must pay taxes required of them, regardless of how harsh and unfair, or how godless the ends for which those taxes will be used.
 - Mk. 12:17 - And Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.
 - Rom. 13:6-7b - For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom.

2) Render to God the things that are God's.

- God is the ultimate authority and He will always be over government.
- Our ultimate duty is not to government, but to God.
 - Cf. Acts 4:19-20 - But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;²⁰ for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."
 - Cf. Acts 5:27-29 - When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.