

# Render Unto Caesar...

---

At this time of year, while preparing my taxes, I become somewhat “put out” that I have to send money to a government that does not always seem to have the agenda that would promote Christ. I always remember how the tax collectors were regarded by the Jews during the first century. The Jews did not like being subject to the foreign government of Rome. However, even though their hatred for the tax collectors ran deep, there was little they could do to avoid paying their taxes. The Pharisees, along with the Herodians whom they normally disliked, attempted to confuse Jesus in hopes of trapping Him into saying something that could be used against Him (Matthew 22).

Matthew 22:16-22 reads, *And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?” They said to Him, “Caesar’s”. And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”. When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.*

The Pharisees marveled as they left Jesus, not because they believed in what He was saying, but that their plan had failed. Paul also addresses the subject of paying taxes, incidentally, to the same government which Jesus speaks of: the Roman government.

Romans 13:5-7 reads: *Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

Paul instructs us, as Jesus told the Pharisees, to pay our taxes to our government. Human government is ordained of God. No matter how “put out” I may feel, I have a duty to pay taxes to the government God put in control. The government of today, even though they may seem to go against God’s word at times, is no worse than the Roman government, which once persecuted the church. God also put that government in control. We should be honest while filling out our forms, knowing that what we do is in fulfillment of God’s request.

For the elders, Tony Williams