

Matthew 22:15-22

Outline: Caesar to Caesar, God to God

“Because coins are stamped with the image of Caesar, they belong to Caesar. But because man is made in the image of God, man belongs to God.”¹

1. Where is Caesar’s name? On the coin Where is Caesar’s image? On the coin.
2. Where is God’s name? On me. Where is God’s image? On me.
By creation and baptism, I am remade into the image of God through Christ and He has put His triune name on me.
3. Where is God’s name? On Christ. Where is God’s image? On Christ.

It’s Holy Week. What will Jesus be doing in a few days? Rendering to God what is God’s. “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

1. Jesus was going to die as the Lamb of God, and it was necessary for the lamb to be examined before Passover (Ex. 12:3–6). If any blemish whatsoever was found on the lamb, it could not be sacrificed. Jesus was examined publicly by His enemies, and they could find no fault in Him.²

¹ Courson, J. (2003). [Jon Courson’s Application Commentary](#) (p. 163). Thomas Nelson.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 79). Victor Books.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation is the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew the twenty-second chapter, verses fifteen through twenty-two.

Boys and girls, I pray that you are doing well today. Do you know what I have here? I have a quarter, right! Whose face is on it? It is the face of George Washington with the motto E Pluribus Unum, Out of Many, One. It is one of the government coins, created by taking a design and pressing it into the metal, a process called stamping. This coin is a bit like the coin that the Pharisees would have had to pay the Roman tax back in the days when our Lord walked the earth. Jesus makes the point that just as Caesar has an image stamped upon his coin, so too do you and I. Whose image do we have stamped and pressed into us? How do we get that image? Ponder those questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

1. Where is Caesar's name? On the coin Where is Caesar's image? On the coin.

The Pharisees despise our Lord. They are seeking a way to trap Him in His words. So they get together with the Herodians. The Herodians are the people who want a rule by Herod or one of his descendances rather than Rome. They prefer a semi-Jewish rule rather than a fully non-Jewish rule. The Pharisees desire pure Jewish rule based upon the Old Testament laws and regulations. The Pharisees were ardent nationalists who opposed Roman rule and despised the Herodians for their cooperation with the Roman government³ Usually these two do not get along at all. Yet, they have banded together in one common cause, to trap our Lord in His words. They ask a very simple question, even resorting to flattery at first. They ask, according to the Law, is it lawful

³ Albrecht, G. J., & Albrecht, M. J. (1996). [Matthew](#) (p. 313). Northwestern Pub. House.

to pay taxes to Caesar or not? A straight forward question. How would you answer it? Do any of you like paying taxes? No! I have yet to meet anyone that says Yay! I get to pay more taxes! Then you would have fallen into the trap.

Either way Jesus answers, He falls into the trap. If Jesus tells people not to pay taxes to Rome, the Herodians will report him to Pontius Pilate and have him executed for treason. And if Jesus tells people to pay taxes to Caesar, the Pharisees will spread the word that Jesus is unpatriotic.⁴

“Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s...” Jesus asks for the coin used to pay the tax. Whose image and inscription is on it? The image of Caesar. The inscription reads, “Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the Divine Augustus⁵. The coin belongs to him and so it is the legal tender of Rome, the same as a quarter with Washington is one of the United States. It is interesting that there is not wait to get the coin. These people who hate Rome, have the Roman coin on them already. They fall under Roman authority and control, even as they rebel against it. They are stamped with worldly power and authority, even as they desire it for themselves.

2. Where is God’s name? On me. Where is God’s image? On me.

How often do we likewise rebel against the image that we have upon us. Every single one of us has in image stamped upon us, on our very souls. The stamp of our sinful nature. We are made in the image of God, under His authority and His control. Our sinful nature rebels against God. We do not want to be under His authority, we want to be the authority ourselves! We do not want to be under His control, we want to be in control ourselves. Which is better to follow the rules that someone else puts into place or to make the rules yourself? I am sure many of us

⁴ Albrecht, G. J., & Albrecht, M. J. (1996). [Matthew](#) (p. 313). Northwestern Pub. House.

⁵ Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 72). Victor Books.

would say make the rules ourselves. It is good to be the one in authority rather than to be a mere follower.

Yet, as Christians, we are called to be stamped not by our sinful nature but by our Lord's nature. We are covered by His forgiveness, given and won for us on the cross by His suffering and death. God has stamped us with His image, and His very name. The stamp of the Cross upon our foreheads and hearts to mark us as those redeemed by Christ the Crucified. The name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, stamped upon us in our Baptism. A name which was placed on little Sapphira just a few moments ago, making her a member of His Kingdom. We have been stamped with God's image as we follow the one who renders to God everything that is God's, perfectly.

3. Where is God's name? On Christ. Where is God's image? On Christ.

“Render to God what is God's.” In the incarnate Son, we see revealed God's name and God's image. “He who has seen the Son has seen the Father.” (John 14:9). What will Jesus be doing in just a few short days? Rendering to God what is God's for the sake of sinful humanity and a fallen world. On Tuesday he tells the Pharisees to pay taxes to Caesar, and on Friday they haul him before Pilate and say, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king” (Luke 23:2).⁶ Jesus was going to die as the Lamb of God, and it was necessary for the lamb to be examined before Passover (Ex. 12:3–6). If any blemish whatsoever was found on the lamb, it could not be sacrificed. Jesus was examined publicly by His enemies, and they could find no fault in Him.⁷

Jesus dies to save you and me. He rises from the dead and ascends to the right hand of the Father that you might bear His name in all its

⁶ Albrecht, G. J., & Albrecht, M. J. (1996). [Matthew](#) (p. 313). Northwestern Pub. House.

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 79). Victor Books.

glory. That in the midst of a sinful world, you can resist your sinful nature, Satan, and all of his temptations. You can bear Christ's image in your thoughts, words, and deeds. You are stamped not with the image of the world and its kings or presidents, rather you are stamped with the image of Christ Crucified, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, now and forever. We get to proclaim that great name all our days, until the Day when He comes again.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.