

# Truth and Spirit Ministries

## Caesar or God?

*There is a part in the bible that says render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. What does this mean?*

It means that we have a responsibility to submit ourselves to the governing authorities on earth and give them what they require of us (like taxes) as well as submitting to God and giving him what he requires of us as written in his Word. The Jews to whom Jesus was speaking to at that time were responsible to obey what the Old Covenant or Law of Moses commanded in the area of giving, i.e. such as the tithes and offerings of the law. We must bear in mind that when the Lord had spoken these words he had not yet went to the Cross and the New Covenant had not yet been put into effect. Since the New Covenant has already been ushered in however, believers today should be obeying the manner of giving that the Lord has given to the Church under the New Testament. Saints today should not be giving according to the law because we are not under law but grace. (*Romans 6:14, II Corinthians chapters 8 & 9*)

These wise words of Jesus were not only spoken for our benefit but also to silence those that sought to entrap him during his days on earth. The interesting thing about this passage is what leads up to this statement made by Jesus. Although this account is in three of the four different gospels, we learn the most about it from Luke's gospel. (*Luke 20:20-26, Matthew 22:15-22, Mark 12:13-17*) Luke wrote that the teachers of the law and the chief priests were always looking for a way to trap Jesus so they could hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. *In short, they wanted to get rid of him.* In order to try to do that however, they had to get some incriminating evidence on him.

On one particular occasion, they sent spies (who had the feigned appearance of being genuine) to talk to him and try to ensnare him in some way. They asked him a question concerning whether it was lawful for them to pay taxes to Caesar or not. They were not sincerely seeking to be taught truth however but only to try to trip him up. A perfect way to do this would be to try to get him to say or do something that would be considered treasonous to the government. Jesus saw through their deception though and answered them with such great wisdom that it not only amazed them, it *silenced* them as well.

By Jesus telling them to give to Caesar what belonged to Caesar and to give to God what belonged to God, they could not accuse him of any wrongdoing. Though they tried to trick him on matters of authority, their plan backfired because the Lord is a perfect *expert* on authority. He not only humbly brought himself under the authority of the Father; in his divine wisdom he also brought himself under the authority of the law of the land while he walked the earth. He did this so that he could walk sinless and blameless before God *and* man. Jesus came not only to *say* but to *do* as well. He always led by example and we should emulate him. (*Matthew 17:24-27*) He, in turn, taught the apostles to teach the

Church to be obedient to the government of the land because their authority has been established by God. This most certainly includes our duty and responsibility to obey the laws concerning paying taxes as well. (*Romans 13:1-7*)

At the same time we should not neglect our responsibilities toward God and his Kingdom. The Lord taught in the Sermon on the Mount: **“But seek *first* his Kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given unto you as well.”** (*Matthew 6:33*)  
When we take care of God’s house, he will take most certainly care of ours. The Lord does not want us to worry about those things that we need in this life. He promises us that if we put God and his Kingdom first that all of our provisions will be met. We, in turn, need to have an obedience that accompanies our confession of Christ by giving to propagate the advancement of the most important work on earth-the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God. In doing so we are proving that we really do love God. (*II Corinthians 8:8, 9:6-15*)  
When we obey the Lord’s command to give both to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s, we will be following in the footsteps of our Master. We will not only be setting a good example but also walking blameless before God and man. –*answered by Denise Bostic*