

Introduction:

Mark 12:13-17 is the third of seven controversies (11:27-12:40) where the Jewish religious leaders try to trap Jesus into taking sides. But Jesus can not be trapped, and he turns the tables on those trying to corner him. You can find the sermon notes [here](#)¹ or listen to the sermon by clicking [here](#).²

Scripture:

Turn to Mark 12:13-17 in your bible or [click here](#).

So What?

Far too often, we believe that “our side” is the right side, the one which God is for. We want to pigeonhole God into our narrow perspective. More often than not, however, we ask the wrong question. The question is not, Whose side is God on? but rather, Who is on God’s side? In Mark 12:13-17 the religious establishment tries to trap Jesus by asking him a question about paying taxes. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”

The Pharisees reasoned that if Jesus gave a “Yes” answer, it meant he sided with the Herodians, and the Jewish people would reject him. The Herodians reasoned that if Jesus gave a “No” answer, it meant he sided with the Pharisees and would be arrested by Rome. Either way, both groups felt Jesus was trapped. Jesus would not be trapped. He calls for a coin to be brought to him, and pointing out that it is marked with Ceaser’s image he says “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” This ends the matter. While Caesar’s image was stamped on the coin, every Jewish male knew that God’s image was stamped on each person. Jesus went a step further in saying that we should give to God what belongs to him: ourselves. As Christian CITIZENS, we owe our allegiance to the state (Obey the law, pray for the leaders). As CHRISTIAN citizens, we owe our allegiance to God (We give him our whole life, worshiping and serving him). Give your allegiance to the state. Give your life to God.³

What Now?

1. As Christian CITIZENS, we owe our allegiance to the state. We are to obey the laws of the land (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-15), pay taxes (Romans 13:7), pray for the leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2), and perform our duty as citizens by voting.
2. As CHRISTIAN citizens, we owe our allegiance to God. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). We should practice spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, serving, giving, and sharing our faith.
3. In Acts 5:27–32 the apostles were ordered not to teach in Jesus’ name. Their response was, “We must obey God rather than men.” We must follow the law and obey those over us to the fullest extent possible, but when those in authority order us to break God’s law, our allegiance must be with God and his word.
4. We are to be loyal citizens (voting, participating in society, praying for our leaders, etc.) but our true identity and hope are in God. We are made in his image (Gen 1:26-17), we are his children (John 1:12-13), and our hope is in him (Rom 5:2), not in political power or the strength of man.

¹ <https://wheelsms.wordpress.com/2015/11/08/whose-side-is-god-on/>

² firstcentralbaptist.com/sermons/gospelofmark.html

³ This excerpt is from Pastor Mark’s sermon notes.



“The coin had the image of Caesar, but we are marked with the image of God. Give your allegiance to the state. Give your life to God.”