

Jesus Answers Two Trick Questions Mark 12:13-27

by David Servant

Jesus teaches us to respect and obey government as long as it doesn't require sin against God, and to believe in the resurrection as essential for salvation and obedience to God.

Scripture: Exodus 3:6, Matthew 22:21, Matthew 22:30, John 14:6, Romans 13:1

Topics: "Jesus' Teachings", "Resurrection"

Description

David Servant preaches about Jesus' interactions with the Pharisees and Sadducees, highlighting how Jesus navigated tricky questions about paying taxes to the Roman government and the concept of resurrection. Jesus emphasized the importance of giving respect and obedience to earthly authorities while also giving to God what belongs to Him. He debunked the Sadducees' disbelief in life after death by pointing to scriptural evidence and the eternal nature of relationships in heaven.

Transcript

In Jesus' time, Israel was under the domination of the Roman Empire, led by a king named Tiberius Caesar who lived in Rome. In Israel, one of the men who represented the Roman government was Herod Antipas. Among other things, he was responsible to see that the Jews under his jurisdiction paid their appropriate taxes to Rome, taxes that every Jew resented having to pay.

One day, some Pharisees came to Jesus, bringing with them some of Herod's supporters. They hoped to trick Jesus into saying something that would get Him in trouble with the Roman government. That way, He'd be arrested, tried and maybe executed. So they asked Him if they should pay taxes to the Roman government, hoping Herod's supporters would hear Him say that they shouldn't. They figured they had Jesus trapped, because they knew He always told the pure truth. Surely He wouldn't endorse paying unjust taxes to a cruel, dominating foreign power, a tax that everyone who would hear Him resented paying.

But Jesus saw through their trickery, and answered in a way they didn't expect. The Bible teaches that us that all government has been established by God (see Romans 13:1-2), and so our government deserves our respect and obedience---as long as our government doesn't require us to sin against God. On the other hand, some people look to governmental leaders as if they were God, giving them praise, honor and devotion that only God deserves. We, as Jesus said, should give to Caesar what belongs to him and give

to God what belongs to Him.

Next, a religious group called the Sadducees stepped up to ask Jesus a difficult question. They didn't believe that there was life after death or that people would one day be resurrected, even though those truths were taught in the Old Testament. (No wonder they were sad, you see!) So they posed a ridiculous question, hoping to make Jesus look foolish as He tried to defend the doctrine of the resurrection. Their question was about a woman who had been widowed seven times. Whose wife would she be when they were all resurrected, since she'd had seven husbands?

Jesus replied that she would be no one's wife, because in heaven, no one will be married. That is why, at Christian weddings, couples promise to be husband and wife only until death. In heaven, there will apparently be no exclusive relationships. We'll all be deeply devoted to one another and, of course, to the Lord.

Jesus then furnished scriptural proof that people live after they die, citing God's conversation with Moses at the burning bush. God said to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Notice God spoke using the present, not the past tense, indicating that all three men were still alive right then, long after they had physically died. The Sadducees had made a serious error in their understanding.

Q. If our government makes a law saying it is illegal to worship Jesus Christ, should we obey that law?

A. Although the government is an authority over us, there is a higher authority: God. If the lower authority tells us to disobey the higher authority, we shouldn't obey the lower authority.

Q. Why is it, as Jesus said, such a serious error not to believe that people live after their bodies die?

A. Because if there is no life after death, there is no judgment and no heaven or hell. If that is the case, there is no need to be saved and so there's no need for Jesus to save us. And there's no ultimate reason to obey God in this life. That is why believing in the resurrection is so important.

Application: If Jesus had ever answered someone's question by saying, "I'm sorry, but I just don't know the answer to that one. You've stumped Me," we'd be tempted to think that He wasn't God in the form of a human being. But Jesus never was stumped by anyone. One day, we'll get to ask Him all the questions for which we don't presently have answers. In the meantime, we can thank God for what He has revealed to us, and ask Him to help us understand everything He wants us to know in this present life.

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