

## Matthew 17:24-27 – The King’s Omniscience!

Scriptures:

24 When they had come to Capernaum, those

who received the temple tax came to Peter

G1323 – literally double drachma. “temple tax n. — a levy of two drachmas collected from the Israelite males every year for the Temple.

and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the

temple tax?”

Notes:

This account is only recorded in Matthew’s gospel – the former tax collector.

‘temple tax’ – this is not a civil tax like our income tax. This was a religious tax. It was collected to provide for the temple services in Jerusalem. It is loosely connected to the tax collected whenever the people were numbered in Exodus 30. Over time it was modified to provide for the needs of the temple in Jerusalem and for the Levites.

Scriptures:

25 <sup>P</sup> He said, "Yes." And when <sup>P</sup> he had come into

Notes:  
'anticipated' – Jesus knew what Peter was going to ask Him. This is evidence of Christ's omniscience.

'strangers' – someone outside the family of the king. Kings do not tax their own children.

the house, <sup>+</sup> Jesus anticipated <sup>P</sup> him, saying,

G4399 –

"What do <sup>P</sup> you think, <sup>P</sup> Simon? From whom do

the <sup>+</sup> kings of the earth take customs or taxes,

from <sup>+</sup> their <sup>→</sup> sons or from strangers?"

Scriptures:

26 <sup>P</sup> Peter said to <sup>H</sup> Him, "From strangers."

<sup>H</sup> Jesus said to <sup>P</sup> him, "Then the sons are free." <sup>→</sup>

G1658 – not a  
slave.

Notes:

Is Jesus saying they shouldn't have to pay this tax? Was this tax from the Law of Moses or did it come from somewhere else?

The sons are free from taxation. Jesus is saying this tax does not apply to Him. He is the Son of the Father in Heaven. And since the tax is to service the temple for worshipping the Father, the tax does not apply to Him.

Another interpretation is that Jesus, King of kings is free from taxation and so are His sons, the disciples. In either interpretation Jesus is exempt from this tax.

Jesus is not saying that it was wrong to support the work at the temple, otherwise He wouldn't have paid the tax. He is saying that He is exempt from it. Jesus would soon go to the cross and make the temple obsolete. He was establishing His church as the way people approach God.

As Christ-followers, we are under no obligation to support the work of the ministry. But the New Testament encourages it and ties it directly to our faith. The apostle Paul said that if we have benefited in spiritual things from the ministry of the church we should be willing to share our material things with the church.

Scriptures:

1 Peter 5:6-7 - Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

1 Kings 8:56b - There has not failed one word of all His good promise...

Ephesians 3:20-21 - Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

27 Nevertheless, lest <sup>~ P</sup> we offend them, go to

G4624 -

the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that

comes up first. And when you <sup>P</sup> have opened

its mouth, <sup>P</sup> you will find a piece of money; <sup>\$</sup> take

<sup>\$</sup> that and give it to them for <sup>~ P</sup> Me and you.”

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Notes:

God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the animals of the earth, including fish. It is not clear how they were to exercise that dominion. Because of sin, they lost dominion. Jesus, though a man, was not touched by sin and therefore had dominion over all of creation.

Jesus could easily have stood on His authority and claimed the exemption that was rightly His. This was too small of a point to make an issue of it. Instead of drawing upon the resources of the disciples, He tapped into His own sovereign resources.

Jesus sent Peter out to do something he loved – he sent him fishing. How did this miracle work? Did Jesus attract a fish to Peter’s hook and then miraculously place a coin (of the exact amount needed for both) in its mouth? Or God caused someone to drop a coin in the water and caused a fish to take into its mouth but not swallow it, and caused that fish to swim over to Peter’s hook and take it. So many possibilities. However this miracle is explained, it proves Christ’s dominion over all creation. God can do what we need when we need it. And He is unlimited in how He does it.

By paying this tax Jesus was submitting Himself to the ruling authorities. There was not a spiritual law at work here. It was morally neutral. Because it was morally neutral Jesus choose to do what was best for others.

This is just one of many miracles Jesus performed for Peter alone. He healed his mother-in-law, helped him to walk on water, and freed him from prison, just to name a few. Peter would later write (1 Peter 5:6-7).

There is no verse 28. What happened? Did Peter go fishing? Did he catch a fish? Was there a coin in its mouth? Yes! How do we know? Because Jesus said it, we can trust it (1 Kings 8:56b).

Mature faith trusts in the bare word of God. We don’t need evidence or proof. We don’t demand witness testimony. We simply seek to know what God said and trust that His Word is certain – if God said it – it is!

“If we trust the King, He will meet our needs as we obey His Word.” (Wiersbe, 2001) page 64

One of the lessons of this account is our responsibility to the kingdom of this world while we wait for King Jesus to set up His kingdom on the earth. As citizens of heaven, we are still under the authority of human government.