

Rendering Tribute To God

(Mark 12:13-17)

A. Definitions.

1. **tribute**: A tax or impost paid by one prince or state to another in acknowledgement of submission or as the price of peace, security, and protection; rent or homage paid in money or an equivalent by a subject to his sovereign or a vassal to his lord. 2. *transf.* and *fig.* a. Something paid or contributed as by a subordinate to a superior; an offering or gift rendered as a duty, or as an acknowledgement of affection or esteem.
2. **superscription**: A piece of writing or an inscription upon or above something. arch. (after Matt. xxii. 20, Luke xx. 24).
3. **image**: *abstractly*. Aspect, appearance, form; semblance, likeness. (Now only in allusions to, or uses derived from, biblical language, esp. Gen. i. 26, 27.) 4. A thing in which the aspect, form, or character of another is reproduced; a counterpart, copy.
4. **render**: To hand over, deliver, commend, or commit, to another; to give, in various senses... To pay as a rent, tax, or tribute, or other acknowledgement of dependence. [OED cites MAR 12:17 here]

B. Observations.

1. There is a material rendering of tribute to God by which believers gratefully acknowledge their dependence upon Him according as God has prospered them and such is a return to Him of His own. **1CO 16:2; 1CH 29:14.**
 - a. This duty of rendering is relatively easy and mechanical compared to weightier spiritual duty. **MAT 23:23.**
 - b. One could give all to godly causes yet not have charity. **1CO 13:3.**
 - c. In this material sense, God has precedence over Caesar. **PRO 3:9.**
2. Adam was made in the image of God. **GEN 1:26-27.**
 - a. Adam was not God and lost the image of God by sin.
 - b. Jesus Christ is God and the *express* (truly depicted, exactly resembling) image of God. **HEB 1:3.**
 - c. Our salvation is owing to being predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, not Adam. **ROM 8:29.**
 - d. Sinless Adam did not retain righteousness nor could he pass it on to his generation but sinless Christ did both unto eternal life for us. **ROM 5:19-21.**
3. As Caesar's coin is issued to his realm and to be returned unto him, Christ has been issued to us to be returned unto God in tribute.

C. Because our hearts are corrupt by nature (**JER 17:9**), God gives us a new heart to make us new creatures. **EZE 11:19; 36:26 c/w GAL 6:15; EPH 2:10.**

1. He puts the Spirit of Christ in us by regeneration. **ROM 8:9-10; TIT 3:5.**
2. God has at great expense invested in us the Living Coin of His realm. This is Christ in us. **GAL 2:20; COL 1:27.**
3. This is the first step in God's plan to make us conformed to the image of his Son. **ROM 8:29.**
4. Since Christ is the express image of God, "Christ in us" is the image of God stamped on our inward parts.

D. Being thus enabled, the elect can by gospel submission, "...put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (**COL 3:10**).

1. This is the working out of what God has worked in us. **PHIL 2:12-13.**
2. We are thus to God and to the world bearing His image, a return on His investment. And God does expect interest. **MAT 25:14-30.**

3. Submitted believers not only bear His image: they bear His superscription, being named Christian. **ACT 11:26; JAM 2:7.**
 - a. If the world cannot see the image of God in us, claims of the superscription will only be a cause for reproach and blasphemy. **1TI 5:14; 6:1; TIT 2:5, 8.**
 - b. This would be spiritual counterfeiting.
- E. We should be paying our Sovereign His due in His own coin.
1. He gave us Christ Who made us legally righteous before God. **2CO 5:21.**
 2. He gave us the Spirit of Christ within to enable us to righteous living by faith. **EPH 4:17-24.**
 3. The return on His investment should be high-yield. **PHIL 1:10-11; EPH 5:9.**
 4. We should render thankful praise for His mercy. **PSA 56:12; HOS 14:1-2.**
 5. We should render unto Him in assembly. **PSA 116:12-14.**
 6. Not rendering to Him has a high cost. **MAT 21:41-44.**
- F. We can pray for God's help in overwriting our Adamic image with Christ's image, per the hymn, Hark The Herald Angels Sing:

Adam's likeness now efface
Stamp Thine image in its place
Final Adam from above
Reinstate us in Thy love.

1. The Spirit will help us via the assimilation of His words. **2CO 3:18.**
 2. Real image-management is possible and our Sovereign only requires tribute of what He has provided and produced. All we could by nature produce is filth. **ISA 64:6.**
- G. Resurrection day will clear up our presently mottled image. **1CO 15:49.**
1. His superscription will also be clear. **REV 22:4.**
 2. **ROM 8:29** will be fully realized.
- H. Render unto God the things that are God's.