

Luke 20:19-26

God and Country Part I

We are picking up today in Luke 20:19. It is the last week before going to the cross for Jesus, this passage takes place on Tuesday of Passion week, with the cross coming on Friday and the Resurrection on Sunday.

So we'll read today's passage and actually spend two weeks unpacking it, this week and next week, because the implications of this passage are so relevant and so important.

Luke 20:19 The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. 20 So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. 21 So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" 23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." 25 He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.

So things are heating up. Jesus is speaking some hard words against the rulers of the temple, which is making them angrier and angrier, so it says in verse 19 that the scribes and chief priests, the temple leaders, want to lay hands on Jesus. Which doesn't mean they want to ordain Him, it means they want to kill Him.

The forces of evil are ramping up against Jesus, which could be expected, because think what Jesus is going to accomplish this week. This Friday He is going to be crucified to put to death the sin of all who would ever believe in Him, to love beyond any kind of love

that has ever been expressed, to be our substitute on the cross, to seal the fate of Satan, sin, and death. And on Sunday He will conquer death and rise again. A productive week!

Martin Luther said, “*where God built a church, there the Devil would also build a chapel.*”

When the work of God is the greatest, the work of His enemy is the most intense.

Don't take the presence of opposition to the gospel, of opposition to the church, or of opposition to Christ to mean that God has somehow departed and is not doing His work. Don't let hard times serving Jesus ever convince you that you shouldn't be serving Jesus. When God is doing His best work, so is the enemy.

So the enemy here hatches a plan. The leaders have been put to open shame by the wise words of Jesus, so now they decide to try to undo Him from behind the scenes.

Luke 20:20 So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

So they watched him. Three times in Luke he tells us the religious leaders watched him. And this is never good - it is never because they're trying to learn about him. It's always so they can nail him for something.

They watched Him in Luke 6 to see if He would heal the man with the withered hand on the sabbath. They watched Him in Luke 14 to see if he would heal the man with dropsy on the sabbath. They're not objective observers, they're trying to nail Jesus.

And they send spies - literally those who lie in wait, those who lurk.

There are always lurkers around the work of God, even in our day. They pretend to be sincere, but they are eager to tear down. And you know that because they don't build anything, they only tear down. They criticize but don't construct. And it is easy to be them - it is so easy to tear down, and so hard to build. But anywhere people are building a ministry, building a church, building a family, the lurkers rise up. And they pretend to be sincere - I'm just asking questions, I'm just trying to be helpful. By their fruits you know them.

And these lurkers here are going to try to trap Jesus in His words, hoping to get him arrested by the Romans so that the Jewish leaders can get Jesus arrested but not be blamed for it.

For this whole passage it's important to know a little bit about their politics.

The Roman Empire had made Israel their territory. Emperor Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 62 BC and they had ruled over Israel from Rome ever since. At this time, Tiberius Caesar was the Roman Emperor and was the king over a huge empire which included Israel.

Tiberius Caesar had a couple of layers of authority under him - Herod the king and Pontius Pilate a military governor, who delegates power to rule the Jews to the Jewish high priest, Caiaphas,¹ who runs Israel day to day, and tries to keep peace for Rome, because Rome gave him his power. It was hard for a Jewish high priest to keep peace for Rome, because the Jews hated the Roman occupation.

They Jews had a right to self-rule. More than any other nation before or since. God had given them their land, God had done it in writing, they had an inspired deed to the property from God - no other nation has ever had that. God said the land was theirs and they ruled themselves under God. But Rome didn't care what their Bible said and they were ruling the place.

So this frustrated the Jews, and there was a group of nationalistic Jews called the **zealots** who kept staging rebellions against Rome. This was a big group of people, Jesus even had one of the zealots in his twelve disciples, Simon the Zealot was an apostle of Christ.

¹ The way Caesar governed the territory was by appointing a puppet king to be "a friend and ally" of Rome. That king's job was to keep the peace in that territory and keep them from rebelling, and to collect taxes for Caesar. He had two jobs - keep the peace, and extract taxes. And Caesar would be happy.

So when Jesus was born, Herod the Great was king. He was the king of the Jews under Caesar. Shortly after Jesus's birth, Herod died. His kingdom got gerrymandered up into five kingdoms, and it began decades of really intense times politically - heavy turnover of leaders, skirmishes, uprisings. It's remarkable how little Jesus addresses the empire's politics in his day when there was so much going on at all times.

But by this time, to oversimplify it - Tiberius Caesar is the Roman Emperor. Herod Antipas is the king of this territory. Antipas governs through a prefect, or governor, a Roman military leader named Pontius Pilate, who delegates authority to Caiaphas the high priest.

So Caesar is the king, Caiaphas is the Jewish high priest and day-to-day ruler of Israel, and it is a very uncomfortable relationship and unpleasant time politically.

It's a powder-keg if ever there was a powder keg. With only a little spark of provocation, the zealots might rebel again.

Caiaphas the high priest didn't want a rebellion, because if the Jews start to rise up and take a shot at Rome, that means Caiaphas wasn't doing his job, and Rome will replace the Jewish leaders and remove their license to run the temple. So the Jewish leaders want peace and quiet.

But the crowds love Jesus right now. So if the Jewish leaders take out Jesus, the crowds are going to be mad at them, that could be the spark that causes an uprising, and Rome could take them out. So the Jewish leaders can't directly take out Jesus.

But if they can trap Jesus in some anti-Roman speech, then Pontius Pilate (the Roman military guy) will arrest Jesus, take him out, and the Jewish leaders can wash their hands of the whole thing - we didn't kill Jesus, don't be mad at us.

So in come the lurkers.

They begin with flattery.

Luke 20:21 So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God."

Everything they say here is true, but they're totally insincere. Jesus does teach rightly. He doesn't show partiality or favoritism where he teaches one thing to one group and another thing to another group to make everybody happy. He's a straight shooter, teaching the ways of God. All true, but they don't believe anything they're saying

Because if they really believe Jesus is impartial and doesn't show favoritism, then surely He won't respond to their flattery. He'll see right through it. But they flatter him, because they don't believe in Him.

Cody showed us in last week's passage the insincerity of some questioners, where sometimes we know the answer but ask questions so we don't have to respond to the truth we know. And in this week's passage there's insincere praise.

Jesus, the true and sincere one, is assaulted by constant insincerity.

“Where God built a church, there the Devil would also build a chapel.”

Where God is at work, there’s opposition. Where there’s Gospel, there’s a counter-gospel and false gospel. Where there’s a Savior, there’s an alternative to the Savior being presented somewhere nearby.

So the lurkers pose a question, **“22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?”**

So they ask Jesus if they’re allowed to pay the tribute tax, or the poll tax to Tiberius Caesar? Are we allowed to pay this, or would it be sinning? Is it lawful?

This was a specific tax that went directly to Caesar. Caesar required this tax of all of his conquered peoples, but didn’t require it of the ruling Roman nation.² So if you were conquered by Rome, you paid the tax. It was a tax that was initiated by Emperor Pompey, who conquered Israel in 63 BC and ended their independence, and he was brutal with the Jews.

It funded the Roman rule over the Jews. And there had been a rebellion centered around this tax when Jesus was a child. There was a zealot named Judas Galilaeus, who staged a rebellion over this tax. He said, “This is God’s country, no taxes should be paid to Caesar.” There isn’t much written about him in scripture, it just says in Acts 4 that “he perished.” He staged a rebellion, and it got put down.

So in asking Jesus, “Should we pay the poll tax,” they’re trying to get him to say something to indicate he will lead a rebellion like Judas Galilaeus. They’re trying to get him to look like a rebel to get him in trouble with Rome.

Also, they want to divide His following: the people are strongly divided on this issue.

The Sadducees said “We don’t like it, but Rome is our government so we pay the tax.”

The Zealots, that probably made up much of the crowd, really didn’t want to pay it and were ready to fight they were so made about it.

² Stauffer 115

And the Pharisees were mostly indifferent to the state - they were synagogue rulers and synagogues were made to thrive in foreign lands, so they were kind of indifferent about it.

So it was a debated issue, and a heated issue, and they are trying to force him into an either-or. Choose a side politically, Jesus.

If Jesus says "Yes, pay the tax," then these crowds following him will probably disperse, because they want a Messiah who is gonna challenge Caesar, not one who is in bed with him.

If Jesus says, "No, don't pay it," then the Roman soldiers are gonna smell some Judas Galilaeus-style rebellion brewing and come arrest him. So the trap is set.

Luke 20:23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them

Jesus sees right through these flatterers. He perceives their craftiness, a word that means "willingness to do or say anything to gain an advantage." He's not fooled by the lurkers.

Luke 20:24 "Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's."

So Jesus asks to see a Denarius - a silver coin, worth a day's wages, the coin they used to pay the poll tax.

Here's a picture of that coin:



On the front is a bust of Tiberias Caesar, on the back is a picture of his mother Julia sitting on a throne of the gods.

On the front there's an inscription that reads something like "Emperor Tiberius, son of divine Augustus." It calls him the son of God on the front, and on the back it says "Pontifex Maximus," or "high priest."

So this coin is really offensive to the jews on every level. (Now, not so offensive that they don't have some in their pocket - they'll take it! But it's really offensive.)

It's a symbol of two things they hate - one is the authority of Caesar, the other is the worship of Caesar.

To print money means you have some authority. The one who is in authority establishes the currency, and each nation has their own currency. So to have to use this currency is to acknowledge the authority of Caesar over their nation. Which they can't stand.

And right on the currency is the worship of Caesar. Rome not only didn't separate church and state, they didn't separate God and king. The king was the national god.

They didn't like putting any images of people on their jewish currency, it was way too close to graven images, they didn't want to worship a person, and now they have to use this currency with a graven image right on it. Their commandments said not to make any graven images to bow down and worship, and they had a whole pocket-full of graven

images with worship inscribed on them. They hated this. But again, they took it. And if they paid a poll tax, they paid it to Caesar in this coin.

They also paid a temple tax every year, and they had to change their money into Jewish currency, so they could use that money to worship the God of Israel, the one true God.

So they hand him the denarius. Jesus asks, "Whose image is that?" (Greek eikona - where we get our word "icon.")

They say, "It's Caesar's."

Luke 20: 25 He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

This is such a profound answer, so profound that their response in verse 26 is

Luke 20:26 And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.

And what Jesus said here has shaped societies and guided the Christian's relationship to government for 2000 years. It speaks to many of the political questions we might have today, and it lays out the way we are to live under governments that don't rule as we would want them to rule and don't worship the God they should worship. It's so defining for Christianity that hundreds of books have been written about this one statement. And we won't do it justice, but we will spend the rest of today and next week unpacking some of the implications for this answer. It doesn't only tell us about whether we should pay taxes, but what it means to be a Christian in a world where the government is not.

So let's look at the obligation Jesus lays on us here: first the obligation to government and then the obligation to God.

First, it's subtle, but notice that Jesus changes the question a little. They ask, "Are we sinning if we pay this tax - is it lawful, is it ok to pay?" Jesus doesn't only say, "I'll allow it," He says "render it" which means pay a debt you owe.

He says, "You owe a debt to Caesar."

Yeah, you don't like Caesar. Yes, Caesar is wicked and godless. Yes, it would be better if

there weren't kings claiming to be god. That's all bad stuff.

But you owe him something.

He provides for your defense. He builds some of your roads. He establishes order in your land. Those all cost him something, so pay him what you owe him. Pay him what's his.

And Jesus holds the denarius and says, "this coin has the image of Caesar stamped right on it, it's his, so give it to him, it's his stuff." If your image is stamped on something, that thing belongs to you. So this is his coin anyways, give it to him.

They might say, "But Caesar does horrible things with it - he oppresses us with it." And Jesus says, "You owe it to him. It is his."

So this means that Christians owe a debt to the civil government, even wicked civil government.

Paul unpacked this statement in Romans 13 - if you want to turn there.

When Paul wrote Romans, a new emperor was in power, a guy named Nero. He was never a good guy - he was perverted, a sexual predator, murderous, he kicked his pregnant wife to death, he murdered his mother. Bad guy.

And soon after Romans was written, his personal corruption overflowed into the way he governed, he became the first Roman Emperor to persecute the Christians. He had a practice of impaling Christians vertically, dipping them in wax, and using them as big candles to light his dinner parties.

He demanded that people worship him, and was called "The eternal one" and the "sacred voice." And he was leading Rome, which was pictured as a great satanic empire in John's revelation. So that was the government.

And Christians had no political power at all. They were a disempowered minority. There weren't Christians in government, for a long time they couldn't be because if you didn't worship the emperor you weren't in. Nobody in high places was on their side.

And this is what Paul writes about Christians and their relationship to even bad

government:

Romans 13:1-7 “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”

What?

Nero's a murderous beast!

And Paul says, “But his authority was instituted by God. God put him there. So be subject to the governing authorities.

God has appointed them and if we resist them, we are resisting what God has appointed and will incur judgment - apparently from God - for doing so.

“Sure, the good ones, right? We submit to the good authorities?”

Paul wrote this when it wasn't good.

God has put the authorities in place. He said it three times “there is no authority except from God,” the authorities “have been instituted by God” and they are “what God has appointed.”

He's repeating what they knew to be true:

Daniel 4:32 “the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”

So as Christians, we are called to submit to even bad governments, because God has put them there. And in paying taxes to them, you are being on the side of what God is doing in history.

Paul says give them taxes, revenues, respect, and honor.

So our default posture toward the authorities is that we submit, we comply, we obey, even when the people in office are scum, even when the taxes seem wasted, even if we think the government is illegitimate (the jews thought that too), even when we disagree with their decisions. I'll get to the qualification soon, but stay with me.

And Paul's teaching in these chapters overlaps all over the place with the teaching of Jesus, in Luke 20, but also in Matthew 5:41:

Matthew 5:41 "And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

Under Persia and then later under Rome, government officials who were carrying official messages (carrying the government mail), could force an able-bodied man to carry that post for a mile. And the jews didn't like the Roman occupiers, their presence there was unjust and unwelcome. But Jesus didn't say, "Fight back against Rome when they ask you to carry the mail." He said, "Carry it twice as far as they ask you."

Christians aren't people who are by default quarrelsome with their government, they aren't scofflaws, they aren't anarchists, they aren't subversives.³ Some christians would have viewed submission to the state as incompatible with the lordship of Christ or their freedom in Christ, but Christ and Paul alike said, "Not only can you submit to the authorities, you should - you owe it"

So we want to be respectful of authorities (they're God's ministers), we want to be thankful for them (imagine the world without them), and to be eager to gladly submit to them (because God put them there and, after all, they do have weapons (v.4).)

And, we pay all of our taxes, because they fund the legitimate functions of government. Even though we could all find some government spending that we think is horrible, so could the Romans - making candles out of Christians doesn't seem like a good use of taxpayers' dollars, but Paul says pay them anyways.

³ John Stott, 340

So Jesus's answer to the lurkers, "Give to Caesar what you owe him, give him what's made in his image"

When the Westminster catechism attempted to sum up all that is required of Christians in their demeanor toward their authorities, it said, "The honour which inferiors owe to their superiors is, all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior; prayer and thanksgiving for them; imitation of their virtues and graces; willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels; due submission to their corrections; fidelity to, defence, and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places; bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honour to them and to their government." (Q127)

We don't go to war against government. We can speak, and pray, and protest, and vote, and organize, but we don't resort to violence. So if we are attacking police during a protest downtown, if we are attacking capitol police on January 6, we are doing what Jesus said not to do.

If the words of Jesus ruled out the nationalistic zealots who would attack Roman authority in a land that was rightfully theirs and under an emperor that was illegitimate, his words also rule out nationalistic zealotry that would attack the capitol here in a place that isn't the promised land. This is not a criticism of peaceful protestors, but breaking the windows of the capitol and assaulting the officers and then getting inside and praying in the name of Jesus isn't what we do.

So at this point, the Sadducees are hearing Jesus and saying, "Sweet, he's one of us. He said the coin has Caesar's image on it, so we give it to Caesar, just like we thought. Jesus is part of our political party. That works for us."

But that's not all that Jesus said.

Luke 20: **25 He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."**

The poll tax said something about the relationship of the people of God to the secular state, they owed Caesar something. They gave him what was stamped in his image.

But then he says, "But there's another image stamped on something here. And that's the image that's stamped on you."

We have an image stamped on us.

Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Just like a coin has Caesar's image stamped on it so it should be given to Caesar, we have an image stamped on us, the image of God, and we should give to God what is God's.

So give Caesar the money. But give only God your whole self.

You can give Caesar the stuff that's rightfully his: some money, some honor, some loyalty, some patriotism.

But we are stamped in the image of God.

So we belong fully and ultimately to God, not to the government. Our ultimate allegiance goes only to God.

This was world-shattering.

Caesar thought he had unlimited power. He thought he was to be worshipped as the Son of God.

But here is Jesus, the true Son of God, saying you can't give to Caesar what is rightfully God's. That's not his.

The coin had two meanings, the authority of Caesar and the worship of Caesar. Jesus accepts the authority of Caesar, God gave him his rule. But Jesus rejects the worship of Caesar. Because worship doesn't belong to Caesar, it belongs only to God.

Caesar isn't God. The government is not God. The government is not ultimate.

We are called to render to God what is God's. Which means everything. He gets our absolute obedience, because we have His image stamped on us. We belong to Him.

But it also means we only expect God to have ultimate power. We sometimes expect government to have the attributes of deity: they must know everything, guard us from every danger, protect us from every ill, solve every problem, bail us out of every bad situation. And there's rage when deity fails to deliver.

It also means that the state can call us to obey, and we go as far as we can in obedience. But when the state asks us to sin, we say no. Because we answer to a higher authority.

The power and authority of the state is limited, because Caesar isn't God.

And this belief is a big reason many early Christians were persecuted and put to death. Christians *were* very politically-minded people and they talked politics all the time.

Here's what they said, and it was a huge and offensive political statement: "Jesus is Lord."

For us that doesn't sound like an offensive political statement, because we often talk about how Jesus is our *personal* Lord and Savior. A personal Lord isn't offensive or troubling to anybody. But Jesus isn't just a personal Lord - He's Lord over everything. He reigns. And if Jesus is Lord, the Caesar isn't.

Jesus rejects the sovereignty of the state and asserts God's sovereign run over everything.

If Jesus is Lord then He is Lord over every earthly government. If Jesus is Lord, then when the law of Jesus and the law of government conflict, we follow the law of Jesus.

He is King even over the greatest kings on earth.

Revelation 19:16 says **"On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of lords."**

Romans 14:11 "for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

Jesus said **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18)**

He isn't just "your own personal Jesus"⁴. He's Lord over everything, which means he has authority even over Caesar, he is a higher authority than any human government. And to say that would have sounded like treason back in the first century.

So Jesus calls us to go as far as we can, the extra mile even, to submit to earthly government, but there is a limit. There are people we are supposed to submit to, but submission to a human leader is never absolute, because absolute allegiance goes to God. That's what worship is - absolute allegiance.

This means that **If God and Government Truly Conflict and we Must Choose, Then we Must Choose Obedience to God**

1 Peter 2:17 "Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

There's a higher respect, honor, and position given to God.

And the times when Caesar and God are in conflict, and the call on our lives is to fear God.

God's image is stamped on you, so give to God what is rightfully His.

Yes, it is a sin to not pay taxes and hold back from Caesar what is his. But it is also a sin to hold back anything from God, because God's image is stamped on you. You are God's.

Jesus says we give God our ultimate allegiance, and we give the state conditional allegiance. We try real hard to be good citizens, we're not after trouble, but when we have to choose, God gets ultimate allegiance - I'm stamped in his image, that means he has the ultimate claim on me.

So now they're all confused - should we kill Jesus or throw him a party? Jesus doesn't fully accept the system, but he doesn't say to overthrow it either.

The Sadducees hear him saying to give the coin to Caesar and they love it, now the zealots hear that Caesar isn't God, and they love it.

⁴ To quote a song by Depeche Mode

Whose party is Jesus a part of?

He cuts right through both political parties.

Jesus is not going to be a subset of a political party. He's not a partisan hack.

He is not undiscerningly choosing a side and saying everything that side does is right and everything the other side does is evil. He transcends their ideologies, doesn't check in to see if the party would approve of his words, He is truly above that. That's what it means that He shows no favoritism, just like the insincere lurkers said.

And for us, when we as Christians are undiscerningly loyal to a political party or a political leader, where we back them 100% no matter what they do, we are giving to Caesar what should only be given to God - absolute allegiance.

When we always believe what someone on one side says and always immediately dismiss everything said by someone on the other side, we are saying that the inspired infallible word of God comes from a party or a person.

And the fact that we are so willing to do that is the fruit of removal of God from His place. When you remove God from the throne, something else always applies for the position, and often it's politics. And our political ideologies on the throne tell us what word is true, what justice is, they tell us who we are and give us our identity (which is why we get so angry and defensive about them) - they really do become our God. When we doubt the infallibility and inerrancy of God's word, we find another word that we think is infallible and inerrant. EVERYBODY HAS A WORD THAT IS ALWAYS TRUE. We'll unpack that a lot more next week.

Some involvement in politics is good and necessary, but we are called to only give Caesar what is his and to give God our ultimate allegiance.

And if we're beginning to see the ways we've fallen short of giving to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's, we have one hope.

And our hope certainly isn't in politics.

It is in Christ.

Because when Christ saw the sins of the world, it compelled Him. He took on Himself a burden he didn't have to bear, and it was far worse than a Roman pack that He had to carry for a mile, it was a Roman cross that He carried to Calvary.

And there He died to put to death the sin, the animosity, the idolatry, of all who would confess their sin and trust in His redemption.

Study Guide

Luke 20:19-26 God and Country Part I

I. Encroaching Evil (Luke 20:19-21)

How is it significant that evil seems to ramp up its efforts when God is achieving great victories?

What does the use of flattery to try to trick Jesus tell us about a normal approach our enemy has to faithful people?

II. The Trap is Set (Luke 20:22)

They ask Jesus if it is lawful to pay a poll tax to Caesar. (This is the same tax that was paid by Joseph and Mary in Luke 2, incidentally.) What is on the line in Jesus's answer?

What will happen if Jesus says yes?

What will happen if Jesus says no?

How do you suppose Jesus sensed their craftiness?

III. The Profound Response (Luke 20:23-26)

What is the significance of Jesus using the term "render" in his response, instead of answering them directly when they ask about the "lawful"ness of paying the tax?

How is Caesar owed their taxes?

What is God owed?

We will discuss this much more next week, but when it comes to politics, what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God?

