

GIVE TO GOD AND CAESAR
MATTHEW 22:15-22; MARK 12:12-17; LUKE 20:20-26

Do you remember whose head is pictured on a penny? Well, In Canada it's the head of Queen Elizabeth. In the United States it's the head of President Lincoln. But the Roman penny in Bible times would certainly be different wouldn't it? Let's find out about it in the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke in the Bible.

There was a time when the Pharisees and Priests wanted to kill Jesus. He healed people on the Sabbath (Saturday) and called Himself the Son of God. But they did not dare to harm Him. They knew that Pilate, the Roman Governor, would say, "You cannot put a man to death for calling himself the Son of God or for making sick people well on the Sabbath." So the Jews tried to trick Jesus. They tried to get him to say something against the Roman Government so they could tell Pilate that He had broken the law. They just did not understand who Jesus is. That He really is the perfect Son of God who never ever sinned. One of the religious leaders asked Jesus "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?" Now the Jews hated their Roman rulers and most of all they hated to pay taxes to Caesar and to Rome. The Pharisees thought that in order to please the people, Jesus would say "No you must give your money to God". If He said that, they would tell Pilate that Jesus told the people not to pay taxes to Rome and Pilate would arrest Jesus.

But Jesus knew they were trying to trick Him. He said "You are only trying to get me in trouble. Show me a penny." Someone brought Him a Roman penny. On it was the head of Caesar. "Whose head is this" Jesus asked? They answered "Caesar's". Then Jesus said, "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." No one could find fault with this answer. Even the Pharisees had to admit that no man had ever spoken as wisely as Jesus did. They were so awed by His heavenly dignity they did not dare to try to arrest Him. Beside, the priests and Pharisees were afraid of the crowds of people who came everyday to listen to Jesus as He taught them in the temple. Many of these people loved and believed in Jesus. They would never have wanted the Roman soldiers to arrest Jesus. The religious leaders though, were so jealous of Jesus' popularity with the people that they kept trying to find a way to get rid of Jesus. But Jesus kept right on teaching them about God.

What things do we have that belong to God that we can give to Him again? Why, God wants us to especially give ourselves, our lives to Him. Your life and mine comes from God and really belongs to Him. God will never make us give ourselves back to Him in loving obedience. But He asks that we do that.

When you ask the Lord Jesus to come into your heart and life, to forgive your sin and be your Saviour, that is giving your life to Him. This must be done in loving obedience to God. Why? So that He can make you His child forever and give you a life worth living. Jesus wants to forgive your sins and help you to live God's way. Take time to read today's Bible lesson in Matthew chapter 22 verses 15 to 22, and in Mark chapter 12 verses 12 to 17, and in Luke chapter 20 verses 20 to 26. You know, when God says something 3 times in the Bible He sure must want us to understand it. Ask God to help you to understand His Word and live His way.