

Doubtless Living!

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THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

That you may have certainty!

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1



3D Chess

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2



created by the Bible Project

JESUS

ON TAXES

TAX TRAP THWARTED

Luke 20:20-26

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3

OPEN THEOLOGICAL WARFARE

Five Contentious Controversies

1. The Source of Jesus' Authority (20:1-8)
2. Jesus' confrontational parable of the vineyard (20:9-19)
3. The dispute over Caesar's tax (20:20-26)
4. The Sadducees' trick question about resurrection (20:27-40)
5. Jesus' question about the interpretation of Psalm 110:1 (20:41-44)

Rapidly Escalating Tension

- Trying to catch Jesus in error, the leaders test Him in every sphere.
- Jesus embarrasses and silences them each time.
- All these events happen on the same day!

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4

Question About Taxes

Luke 20:20-26

²⁰ They watched closely and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, so that they could catch him in what he said, to hand him over to the governor's rule and authority. ²¹ They questioned him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly, and you don't show partiality but teach truthfully the way of God. ²² Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

²³ But detecting their craftiness, he said to them, ²⁴ "Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" "Caesar's," they said.

²⁵ "Well then," he told them, "give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

²⁶ They were not able to catch him in what he said in public, and being amazed at his answer, they became silent.

5

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ENTRAPMENT

- The furious religious leaders, humiliated and embarrassed by Jesus, don't give up they just regroup.
- Their previous attempt to trap Jesus had failed and he had turned it back on them making them look even more foolish.
- The direct confrontational approach had not worked, so they take a different approach.
- This time they come at him from the flank, with spies disguised as disciples.

6

3D CHESS

- Trying to trap Jesus again, they raise one of the most troublesome issues to a Jew – the Roman “poll tax.”
 - ❖ Tribute was an emotional issue for all Jews because it reminds them they are subjects of Rome.
 - ❖ The Leaders want to kill Jesus, but they fear the crowd!
 - ❖ So, they lay a multi-dimensional trap for Jesus this time, hoping catch Him and/or divide the crowd against Him:
 - If He responds yes, then the Jews who see Him as a political messianic hope will be disillusioned.
 - If He says no, then He will be charged with treason for revolting against Rome.
 - Either way; checkmate – they think.

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SPIES UNMASKED

- God’s ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.
 - ❖ Jesus is fully God and as such He operates on a superior plane to human logic.
 - ❖ His ability to understand and comprehend their tactics is infinite, and they cannot outflank Him.
- His reply is extremely clever!
- By asking them to show him a coin, he gets them to acknowledge Roman sovereignty even before he gives them an answer.

8

8

PLOT FOILED

- Roman sovereignty was a fact of life that they carried around in their pockets every day.
 - ❖ By asking them to produce a denarius, which they did, He had **disarmed their argument**.
 - ❖ If they challenged Him further, it would only serve to highlight their own hypocrisy!
 - ❖ He has humiliated them in public once again and this time He also exposed their attempted subterfuge.
- Jesus' reply acknowledges the state's right to raise support from its citizenry without denying the sphere of God's authority.

24...“Caesar's,” they said.

25 “Well then,” he told them, “give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”

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26 They were not able to catch him in what he said in public, and being amazed at his answer, they became silent.

SILENCED & AMAZED

- The Leaders tried to set another trap for Jesus, but it failed too.
- They marveled at his answer and they became silent, for now.
- They will make one more attempt to trap him with logic, and we'll look at that next week.
- But they will be silenced again, and after that they will not longer dare to ask Him anything.

10

10



DELIBERATE DISCIPLESHIP

- The efforts to nail Jesus took a variety of forms – they tried to get him to challenge Rome, and they tried to turn the crowd against Him.
- Jesus refused to walk into their trap and both attempts failed.
- He affirms that Caesar has a domain that should be served, and that God has a sphere where He should be honored.
- The religious Leaders are working frantically to catch Jesus, but they cannot. Soon they will give up trying and try another way.
- Jesus is in total control of events, and He is always a step ahead of the leadership. And that will remain the case, until the time is right.
- **Is Jesus in control of your life? How can you trust Him more this week to guide you through all the tricks and traps of life?**