



# Daily Reflections

**October 22, 2017**

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## Scripture

### **Matthew 22: 15-21**

The Pharisees went off  
and plotted how they might entrap Jesus in speech.  
They sent their disciples to him, with the Herodians, saying,  
"Teacher, we know that you are a truthful man  
and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.  
And you are not concerned with anyone's opinion,  
for you do not regard a person's status.  
Tell us, then, what is your opinion:  
Is it lawful to pay the census tax to Caesar or not?"  
Knowing their malice, Jesus said,  
"Why are you testing me, you hypocrites?  
Show me the coin that pays the census tax."  
Then they handed him the Roman coin.  
He said to them, "Whose image is this and whose inscription?"  
They replied, "Caesar's."  
At that he said to them,  
"Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar  
and to God what belongs to God."

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## Our Scripture Reflection

The hypocritical Pharisees received a lot more than they expected from Jesus. Oh, they thought they would get Him arrested if He instructed them to

withhold payment of taxes. However, while Caesar may lay claim to the small coins with his image on them, God can lay claim to Caesar, the metal of which the coins are minted and the payer of the tax! All belongs to God, all was created by Him.

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## **Food for your Journey**

In Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan's book *The Last Week*, they ... quite rightly say that when Jesus asks the disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians to produce a coin, and they produce a Roman coin with an image of the Caesar on it, they show how guilty they are. Carrying around an image of a pagan god in their pocket, they are guilty of idolatry.

At this point in the encounter, Jesus has won. They have self-identified themselves as part of the pagan-religious-state. They have broken the first and second commandments.

At this point Jesus could just walk away, victorious. But, he doesn't. He has more. He raises the question: What then belongs to the Caesar, and what belongs to God?

If we reframe the question just a bit, the clear answer emerges. If we gave to Zeus the things that belonged to Zeus, and to God the things that are God's, what would WE end up giving to Zeus?

Hopefully nothing. He is a sham. A non-existent entity, with no more divine power than the average tsetse fly.

And, what belongs to God, then? Everything.

In the words of King Solomon, and echoed in many of our churches every week: "All things come of thee, O God, and of thine own do we give to thee."

Obviously then, this isn't a call for separation of state and religion. This isn't the establishment of a dual responsibility to God and country. This is a call to give all that we have and all that we are to God. And, I have to say, that both our religious and civic lives could use a little more of that these days.

--Rick Morley

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, You have given me everything, most especially, my life. Help me, Lord, to be truly grateful for Your goodness and to never miss an opportunity to thank You and praise You, Amen.