

“And he said unto them Whose is this image and superscription. They say unto him, Caesar’s Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s”.

Jesus escaped the entrapment instigated by the Pharisees regarding the giving of tribute to Caesar. They regarded themselves as so clever because they wanted to put him in opposition to one of two parties. If he said it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar this would have infuriated the Jewish nationalists. If he had said it was unlawful, this would have been evidence to give to the Roman authorities, whereby he would be arrested and possibly put to death as a traitor. However he sidestepped their plot by turning the issue back to the division between human authority and the divine prerogative.

Caesar provided the coinage and the paying of tribute in coin to the one who had set up the economic system was appropriate. Jewish zealots would not doubt pay the tribute to escape notice but then attack the Roman authorities during the night when they could escape detection. They would publicly argue to their contemporaries that the Roman oppressors should not be supported.

The Roman power was actually placed over the disobedient Jews because they had turned against God. He was sovereign but had placed the fourth beast power of Daniel’s prophecies over the people of Israel in their promised homeland. To say that God had not permitted this was to limit His power and control over human affairs. He had raised the Roman power who spake a tongue which they knew not, as a punishment for their sins. That they were merciless in their exercising of political control showed that the children of mammon got what they really wanted, a seat at the table of acceptance by other nations. Caiphas and Annas and the other spiritual compromisers with the pagan Roman Empire were the leaders that the children of Israel deserved.

In the same way the Jewish people have the dilemma of looking at recent history and being forced to accede that God had permitted to rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime in Germany which then persecuted the Jewish people. These hunters and fishers were those who demonstrated to Israel that they had no place of safety within even so-called civilised Europe and that therefore they had to seek their own homeland once more. The failure of Jews to face this harsh reality

It was this failure to confront the divine involvement in their own misery that was the issue which is the root cause of their predicament. This setting of their own alleged holiness against the Holy One of Jesus Christ the actual Messiah, shows the pauperism of their spiritual blindness. They rested upon their divine status regardless of personal merit as the children of the Book and argued that therefore evil could not come nigh to them. This is so like the blind orthodoxy of Christian thought today that it is pathetic to contemplate the parallels because there are so many. Multitudes condemn the Jews saying we would not have slain the prophets but by doing so they reveal themselves to be the children of hell which they are. If Jesus had come during the modern era he would have been crucified even quicker than he was two thousand years ago, written off as a bigoted prude do-gooder who refused to live and let live. His approach to sin is unacceptable to them because they preferred darkness because their deeds were evil.

In Mark the hypocrisy of their questioning of him is explicitly exposed. Mark 12v15 *"Shall we give or shall we not give? But he knowing their **hypocrisy** said unto them Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny that I may see"*. In Matthew it says he perceived their **wickedness**. In Luke it says he perceived their **craftiness**. All three accusations are of course true. They were hypocrites because they said and did not. They were wicked because they wished to tempt the Son of God to destroy the Roman people or to be destroyed by them forgetting that Daniel had taught that it was *"the people of the prince that shall come and shall destroy the city and the sanctuary"* 9v26. This evil Roman power were the people of the Nasi or Prince, which is their own Messiah. They were crafty because they reasoned as the serpent and not in accordance with the divine mind, they were so jealous of as seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. He on the other hand did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth! Why were they not looking for the sinless one who had been promised to take away sin rather than the freedom fighter they wanted to merely free them from the Roman yoke rather than the yoke of sin itself?

Whose image and superscription was written upon Jesus? Not the face of Caesar nor was it produced from the sweat and labour in slave mines where they extracted the silver they valued so much and were so reluctant to give to Caesar! No Jesus was made in the image of the Father, in character and behaviour. By manifesting these he showed that he was made in the express image of the Father, Hebrews 1v3. The superscription which was written on him was the living Word. He expounded Moses and the Prophets so well because he understood them, because he lived the divine principles they had been inspired to record.

Verse 22 *"When they heard these words they marvelled and went their way"*. In the face of such divine wisdom, what else could they do? Sadly however the marvel did not last but soon drained away by other distractions which loomed larger in their lives. Luke puts it differently *"And they could not take hold of his words before the people ; and they marvelled at his answer and they held their peace"*. Their serpent reasonings was too wary of remaining in the good graces of the people to seek Truth. Jesus portrayed truth too powerfully but they refused to be reformed by his light and instead retreated into the darkness of their own inadequacies.