

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

The last week of Christ’s earthly ministry was a busy one. After Christ cleansed the temple on Monday the religious leaders very zealously started confronting Jesus and challenging His authority to do these things (Mt. 21:23). Jesus followed up with 3 parables that really served as an indictment against these religious leaders.

In the second parable Christ challenged them by quoting from Psalm 118:22-23 as found in Matthew 21:42.

Matthew 21:42 (NKJV)

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

Jesus then said the kingdom would be taken from them and on whomever the stone falls (Jesus Himself being the stone) it will grind them to powder. And then the text says when the chief priests and Pharisees heard these parables “**they perceived that He was speaking of them.**” (Mt. 21:44-45). This is the one thing they were right about!

Jesus then followed up with one more parable emphasizing their rejection of the invitation to the marriage of the son emphasizing the importance of a positive personal response and that those rejecting will be cast out into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

These parables of judgment targeting the religious leaders in Israel form the background to the remainder of chapter 22. The religious leaders then in earnest plotted to destroy Jesus (cf. Lk. 20:19). In doing so they unwittingly went about fulfilling the very prophecy in the parables that Jesus has just presented. He had shown how the wicked leaders wrongfully reject the chief cornerstone (21:41-42); He had portrayed how they violently reject the gracious invitation extended to them (22:1-14). Now their actions became a fulfillment of what Jesus had just said.

On three occasions they send delegations in an effort to discredit Jesus – all which fail miserably. In the chronological development of the passion week leading to the crucifixion these events happened on Tuesday.

Slide # 2

Sunday

Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
 Jesus weeps over Jerusalem
 Jesus observes Temple Activities

Monday

Jesus Curses Fig Tree
 Jesus Clears the Temple

Tuesday

Jesus Explains the Withered Fig Tree
 Temple Controversies with Religious Leaders

So, in terms of activity, in Matthew 22 and 23 we are still on Tuesday of Passion week and the center of activity is at the temple.

In terms of what is happening, the scrutiny (albeit with a very critical spirit) being applied to Jesus was part of God's sovereign master plan. As the Lamb of God Who was to die for the sins of the world He was to undergo a time of testing for 4 days before the sacrifice of Passover.

Slide # 3

Exodus 12:3 (NKJV)

3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: '**On the tenth** of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

Exodus 12:5–6 (NKJV)

5 Your lamb shall be **without blemish, a male** of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

6 Now you shall **keep it until the fourteenth** day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

These last 4 days were days of inspection to make sure there was no blemish in the sacrificial lamb. If any blemish whatsoever was found the lamb would not be a worthy sacrifice. But Jesus passed every test they gave Him. He didn't falter at all. Even His enemies could find no fault in Him. These challenges brought by the religious leaders amounted to an intense time of examination which is in keeping with the typology required for the sacrificial lamb as seen in Exodus 12.

The parallel passages to Matt. 22:15-22 are found in Mk. 12:13-17 and Lk. 20:20-26.

Matthew 22:15–22 (NKJV)

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.

Recall the Pharisees had perceived that Jesus spoke the preceding parables against them and so they are now actively plotting Christ's demise. Also, recall that while they wanted to lay hands on Jesus they did not do so because they feared the multitudes who took Jesus to be a prophet (21:45-46). So, the goal here was to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people by trying to trap Him in His words.

To “entangle” means to trap or ensnare as a hunter would set a snare for an animal hoping it would step into it and be caught. They were seeking to set a trap for Jesus!

Slide # 4

Luke 20:20 (NKJV)

20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.

They were definitely out to try and get Jesus to fall in a bad way.

16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.

Notice that the Pharisees did not go themselves – evidently because they would have been immediately recognized – but rather sent “***their disciples with the Herodians***”. In their plotting new faces were needed along with new deceptive tactics.

The old saying “***The enemy of my enemy is my friend***” applies here. The Pharisees and the Herodians were natural enemies, but here they made common cause because they were unified in their hatred for Jesus and shared the common goal of seeking His demise. As someone else has said, “***A common enemy makes strange bedfellows.***” Indeed, it does.

The Pharisees were the religious conservatives, and they hated the yoke of Rome believing that as the chosen people they should live free in their land of promise. The Herodians were more like a political party that consisted of Jews who had made peace with the Herodian dynasty and used this position for political favors and position. In that position they were really advocates for Rome of which the Herodian dynasty was a major player.

The Herodian family traced its roots back to Herod the Great. They were not Jewish but rather descendants of the Edomites – the ancient enemies of God’s people Israel. This family had long been in a strategic position in league with the Roman government.

Slide # 5



This combination of representatives of the Pharisees in league with the Herodians came to Jesus under guise of flattery. They said all kinds of flowery things that were absolutely true, but they were disingenuous. Herod Antipas really wanted Jesus dead as seen in Lk. 13:31; and the Pharisees had already been plotting to kill Jesus as seen in John 11:53.

They were trying to catch Jesus off guard by making Him think they are all behind Him and thereby have Him let down His guard and say something that was really politically incorrect and by this cause Him to fall.

The word “**Teacher**” showed honor which normally was reserved for distinguished rabbis. They said to Jesus, “**Teacher, we know you are true and teach the way of God in truth**”. Well, if that was really true then why were they challenging Him and trying to ensnare Him? If they really believed He was true, then they would have believed in Him as “**the Son of God**” which they did not.

This was pure flattery seeking to butter Jesus up so that He might let His guard down and get tripped up in His words. It is one thing to compliment people – that is fine. But flattery is feigned respect. It doesn’t mean it. It has ulterior motives and is deceptive.

Slide # 6

Proverbs 29:5 (NKJV)

5 A man who flatters his neighbor Spreads a net for his feet.

Although flattery often involves lying, it is most deceptive and despicable when it employs the truth to achieve its wicked purposes.

– **John MacArthur**

They said that they recognized that He did **not** “**care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.**” Very literally, what they said was, “*it is not of concern to you regarding anyone, for you do not see any person’s appearance*”.

In other words what they were saying is that they recognized that Jesus was a person of impeccable integrity who was not swayed by people one way or the other. He simply told the truth of God as it was without regard for what anyone thought. In this they were right, but the hypocritical spirit of it was completely wrong.

Ironically, they were the ones who lacked integrity and Jesus the One they were trying to ensnare on the basis of true integrity was about to expose them - thus proving that indeed He did always tell it like it is.

With great flattery they buttered Jesus up to ask this question. After all, with flattery that esteemed Him as such a great and true teacher that told it like it was no matter what – with that there was now great pressure on Him to answer. To not answer would almost be like saying they were wrong in their lofty assessment which would be very unbecoming for One Who claimed to be the Messiah. So, they really applied the pressure saying...

17 Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

They put a lot of thought into this “**trap question**”. It was a simple “Yes” or “No” question. No matter how He answered they figured they had Him on the horns of a dilemma.

It is sort of like that old trick question: “*Have you stopped beating your wife yet?*” A man can’t answer that with a simple yes or no without incriminating himself. If he says “yes” that amounts to an admission that he had previously been beating her. If he says, “no” that indicates he is still doing it. There is no way to answer that with a simple yes or no without incriminating yourself.

This question was like that - it was intended to incriminate Jesus no matter how He answered. And it was tricky because it was at once both a religious question but also a political question. Depending on how it was answered it could get Him into immediate trouble religiously or politically. "**Gotcha questions**" are always tricky and fraught with danger.

The Jews absolutely detested the annual poll-tax that was demanded by Caesar. Caesar at this point was a title for the Roman emperor who was considered a divine person and thus was considered to be the head over the multitude of gods and goddesses in his empire.

To pay him a tax ran against the religious scruples of the Jewish people. Here they were in their holy land paying taxes to a pagan ruler. It just didn't seem right, and they hated it.

And there is some history here. Earlier in A.D. 6 Judas of Galilee had led a rebellion against Rome with the rallying cry that God alone was the LORD of the Jews and therefore taxes should not be paid to Rome. In Acts 5 Gamaliel reminded the Jews that Judas of Galilee had perished in his endeavors making the application that if the apostles' endeavor was of men it would also come to nothing "**but if is of God, you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to fight against God**" (Acts 5:37-39). And in this Gamaliel was right!

But the point here is that the Jews for many years had resented paying the Roman taxes and they had a history of rebelling against paying them even though it had been crushed.

If Jesus said it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, He would immediately fall out of favor with the Jewish people generally. They would consider Him to be a traitor.

Remember the only reason that the religious leaders had not apprehended Jesus up to this point is because of His popularity with the multitudes who considered Him to be a true prophet (cf. Mt. 21:46). If they could discredit Jesus by getting him to be on record in favor of paying the Roman taxes then the multitudes would turn on Him.

On the other hand, if Jesus said it is not lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, then the Herodians would be all over this and immediately report it to the Roman authorities that Jesus was guilty of treason and sedition against the state which called for the death penalty. And as Herodians they would have great credibility with Rome because they were Roman sympathizers.

We know from Luke 20:20 that they were trying to catch Jesus in His words ***“in order to deliver Him to the power and authority of the governor.”***

Humanly speaking this seemed like a really good plan. No matter how Jesus answered the question He would be in trouble – either with the Jewish populous generally or with Rome.

Slide # 7

Their devised snare seemed foolproof: if Jesus said the Jews should pay taxes, the people would turn against Him; and if He said the Jews should not pay taxes, the leaders could turn Him into the Romans for insurrection. – ***Ed Glasscock***

With this question they thought they put Jesus between a Rock and a hard place. They thought they had a question that would put Him in an indefensible position – and so for One who taught the way of God in truth and didn't care what people thought the pressure was on to answer.

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?”

Here was the problem. These men completely underrated Jesus. They thought they had Him figured out, but they didn't really know Him. They didn't know Him, but He knew them. It is complete folly to take on the Lord. Only losers do this.

Slide # 8

Proverbs 21:30 (NKJV)

30 There is no wisdom or understanding Or counsel against the LORD.

1 Corinthians 3:19 (NKJV)

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, **“He catches the wise in their own craftiness”;**

Jesus in His omniscience saw right through their scheme. He knew their thoughts! (Jn. 2:25) He perceived their wickedness (Gk. *poneria*) which literally means ***“evil intent”***. You can't fool Jesus and only fools try.

In response to their “trap question” Jesus said, ***“Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?”***

The word “test” (Gk. Peirazo) can mean “to solicit to evil”, to evaluate, to challenge, or to try and have your way with someone. (cf. Jn. 6:6; Acts 5:9).

Here they are trying to have their way with Jesus and seeing if they can get away with it. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit Peter said, **“How is it that you have agreed to test the Spirit of the Lord?”** (Acts 5:9). The word “test” there is the same word. As is the case here they also were trying to pull one over on the Lord and in effect challenging the Lord. But again, the Lord is never fooled, and one never has their way with Him.

Right here Jesus totally exposed them. He made it clear to them that He knew exactly what they were doing. And He called them out as **“hypocrites”**. Jesus is not into “game players”.

The word hypocrite comes from the theater and was used of actors who played a part by wearing a mask. So, a hypocrite is one who plays a part – pretending to be something they are not. These hypocrites were hiding behind the mask of sincerity when in reality they were totally trying to destroy Jesus. Jesus in effect, unmasked them.

Jesus didn’t go along with their little game. Indeed, He called it just like it was, ironically just as they in their flattery He did not care about anyone’s opinion, nor was he swayed by anyone. He was showing them just how true this was! He was not afraid and was not concerned about offending them. He simply straight out told it like it was.

Jesus came down on the sin of hypocrisy perhaps harder than any other sin. In Matthew 23 Jesus totally blasts the Pharisees again and again for their hypocrisy saying seven times, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (Mt. 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).

In the context of religion, a hypocrite is a religious liar. This is how John uses the word **“liar”** and says that **“all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone”** (1 Jn. 2:3-4; Rev. 21:8).

Jesus, ever the Lord, ever in charge then told them...

19 Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius.

A denarius was the amount of the Roman poll-tax also known as a “head tax” which was a tax levied on every adult annually. A denarius amounted to about a day’s wages in the time of Christ (Mt. 20:2).

This tax was to be paid to Rome in the form of a denarius. The denarius was a silver coin specifically minted by the current reigning emperor named Tiberius who ruled from A.D. 14-37. The denarius bore an engraving of the emperor (called Caesar) on one side which ascribed divinity to him. Literally it said, “***Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus***”. On the other side was a picture of a Roman goddess of peace with the inscription “***High Priest***”, thus portraying peace personified.

Slide # 9

Emperor Tiberius - Denarius



20 And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?”

The Jews found this whole affair very offensive. Not only was it a constant reminder of Gentile Roman oppression, but also this was clearly an idolatrous coin deifying Caesar. In the minds of the Jews, it clearly violated the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd commands which said you shall have no other gods; you shall not make any graven image; and you shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain (cf. Ex. 20:3-17). This sordid thing was sacrilegious to them because it smacked of association with idolatry.

One thing the Babylonian Captivity did do is break the Jews from formal idolatry. They learned that lesson the hard way. So, this was exceedingly offensive to them.

I think at this point these Pharisees in league with the Herodians thought they had Jesus exactly where they wanted Him. They were expecting Him to now unload on the evils of the pagan Caesar and the idolatry he was all about which was exactly the trap they had set for Him.

And so...

21 They said to Him, “Caesar’s.” And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

You can almost hear them with anticipation say “**Caesars**” as if feeding the fuel that calls for a denunciation from Jesus which would get Him in trouble with Rome.

But then Jesus shocked everyone saying, “**Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.**”

What an incredibly profound answer with an economy of words. He did not need time to think about it. He was instantly ready! And in a succinct way drew the lines in a most profound manner that baffled all His critics.

Jesus here recognized the legitimacy of human government and in effect said to give to Caesar what is in his image – that is the tax due to him.

The Lord Jesus upheld the established government of the land, for the government was of God. The Romans were imperial successors to the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, whose rule was part of God’s judgment on the land. The times of the Gentiles were in force and those times were not yet fulfilled (Lk. 21:24). – **John Phillips**

So yes, the Jews should pay Caesar his taxes, but on the other hand, people are made in God’s image and their very souls belong to Him and should be given to Him.

Here Jesus made a distinction between the sphere of human government and the sphere that belongs to God alone. Yes, God has ordained human government and government needs taxes to operate. I know, the sentiment is that taxes are always too high, but that is not the issue Jesus made here. In effect, he said pay the taxes that Caesar demands.

The people did enjoy what was called “**Pax Romana**” or “**Roman Peace**”. They were generally free from war and had good roads to travel on throughout the empire. The government provided valuable aqueducts and provided a system of law and order. No government in this fallen world is perfect, but orderly government even with great deficiencies is preferable to anarchy and chaos.

Yes, the Roman government was idolatrous and anti-God to the core but yet Jesus said to render the taxes to Caesar that belong to Caesar. The NT is very consistent in this emphasis.

Slide # 10

Romans 13:6–7 (NKJV)

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Slide # 11**1 Peter 2:13–14 (NKJV)**

13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme,

14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

Slide # 12**Titus 3:1–2 (NKJV)**

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

I would remind us that both Peter and Paul served under the Roman government which was no friend of Christianity and yet they called on Christians to be good citizens, pay their taxes, and obey the government wherever possible, and pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-4). It was under the Roman government that Christ, Peter and Paul were all killed.

But don’t forget the last part of what Christ said, “**and to God the things that are God’s**”. People made in God’s image owe Him our very highest allegiance. Our number one loyalty is to be to God, and the things that belong to God are worship and faithfulness.

We ought to obey the government unless the government specifically requires of us to disobey God. In that case we are to obey the higher law of God and humbly accept whatever the consequences may be.

Slide # 13**Acts 4:19 (NKJV)**

19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.

Acts 5:29 (NKJV)

29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

In the Bible we have several precedents for the people of God defying human government. We have the midwives in Exodus 1 who refused to kill the Jewish babies at the command Pharaoh.

The Scripture says their defiance was motivated by a fear (or reverence) for God (cf. Ex. 1:17). In Joshua 2 Rahab protected the lives of the two Jewish spies and in the NT she is commended for her faith (cf. Heb. 11:31; James 2:25). When David’s men were desperate for food he ate the consecrated priest’s food which technically was not right, but Jesus defended his actions as seen in Matthew 12:3-4 (cf. 1 Sam. 21:6).

In the OT Daniel defied the government’s order to stop praying (Dan. 6). In the NT the apostles refused to stop preaching the gospel in defiance of the government’s orders (cf. Acts 4-5). In the future the Antichrist will be in charge of the government, and he will command the whole world to worship him but true believers will defy him (cf. Rev.).

In the Scriptures I see two basic reasons to defy the government. 1) When the issue of “life” is at stake it is appropriate to defy the government.

For example, when a communist country commands that its citizens have an abortion life is at stake. When any government commands citizens to do things that violate their conscience related to their physical well-being then we have a higher law that says we should honor the temple of God – which is our body. And my counsel is do your own thinking – after all this is what we will all one day give account for.

2) The other issue in Scripture is the matter of worship and obedience to God. The government is NOT God, and they have no right to dictate how or what we should worship. This is not government’s domain. When the government tries to play God and rule over our spiritual lives then we are obligated to defy the government. We see this in the N.T. in the matter of sharing the gospel. We saw it recently when certain government leaders forbade God’s people from assembling. That is overreach.

So, in general, where I see defiance of the government being appropriate is in the case where life itself is at stake; and also, in the case where the government interferes with the worship of God's people or our gospel mandate. In short, whenever the government commands us to disobey God then we ought to obey God rather than men. But we should do so humbly with the right spirit and not with a spirit of revolution or vigilantism.

Jesus clearly made the case here for what is commonly termed the separation of church and state. They are two different domains. When the church tries to run the state, it is always a train wreck. When the state tries to run the church it is a disaster. It is a biblical paradigm that church and state are to be kept separate.

Slide # 14

SOUTHVIEW BIBLE CHURCH STATEMENT OF FAITH

7. While maintaining a spirit of interdependence with like-minded churches, each local church, is independent and autonomous and **must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical or political authority.** Therefore, **Church and State must be kept separate** as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties **apart from the dictation or patronage of the other.**

Certainly, as good citizens in a representative government we want to be involved on an individual level as the Lord leads us. But this is not the mission of the Church. As a church we are a-political meaning we don't get directly involved in politics. But having said that we do speak God's truth and stand for what God says on the moral issues of the day whatever they may be. But the mainstay ministry of the church in relation to the world is that of a gospel ministry. And this gospel ministry is addressed to all people.

As Christians we have a dual citizenship. We have a citizenship on earth which comes with certain obligations in terms of human government; but we also have a heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20; cf. 1 Pet. 1:1; 2:11). For God's people ultimate allegiance is to God as we are created in His image and are here ultimately to glorify Him. The coin bearing the image of Caesar belonged to him; but people being made in the image of God should give themselves first and foremost to Him (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

Slide # 15

The Lord means that we are to give the civil magistrates all that is due to them, so long as it does not interfere with the honor due to God. – ***The Liberty Bible Commentary***

We are to honor the king (1 Pet. 2:17), but worshipful homage belongs only to God. We pay the king his taxes, but our souls belong to God alone!

Ironically, the One bearing the PERFECT image – the perfect representation of God stood before them and they did not recognize Him.

Slide # 16**Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV)**

3 who being the brightness of His glory and the **express image of His person**, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

What an amazing statement. Jesus reduced His enemies to marveling and silence. He hands down won this contest! They had nothing more to say. As they said in John 7:46; “***No man ever spoke like this Man!***” They weren’t believers but they did MARVEL.

Few chapters in the Bible give us a better glimpse of the Lord’s wisdom than Matthew 22. – ***John Phillips***

At every angle the proof of Jesus as Messiah-God was overwhelming. His life was a fulfillment of OT prophecy. And He prophesied details such as His coming resurrection on the third day – not the second day or the fourth but precisely on the third day. Jesus’ life is uniquely interrelated with prophecy at every point – so much so that Rev. 19:10 says, “***the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.***”

And then there was the unparalleled kingdom miracles that Jesus did in keeping with prophecy related to the coming King and His kingdom. No one ever came presenting the kingdom with proof like this (cf. Isa. 35).

And then there was His character. Jesus was sinless and without flaw. Hard as they tried, they really couldn't find any dirt on Jesus because there wasn't any (cf. 1 Jn. 3:5). He truly was the lamb of God ***“without blemish and without spot”*** (1 Pet. 1:19).

But then add to this mix His profound wisdom that never lost an argument and made even His enemies to marvel and walk away in silence. This was nothing short of deity on display – so awesome that it can only be described as a God-thing.

Slide # 17

Isaiah 11:1–2 (NKJV)

1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, **The Spirit of wisdom and understanding**, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

What other life in the history of the world has been so meshed with and matched with prophecy as the life of Jesus. There is nothing like this anywhere in all the annals of history. His life is a perfect fulfillment of prophecy; His sign miracles match perfectly what is predicted in terms of kingdom phenomenon; His character was in perfect alignment with prophecy; and then His wisdom was staggeringly profound so as to put to silence the most studied and intelligent minds on the planet.

In all this Jesus passed all testing with flying colors showing that indeed He is the qualified Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.

In the Roman empire Caesar was not only a political leader, he was also known as the PONTIFEX MAXIMUS which means that he was the CHIEF PRIEST over all religions. His position became so elevated that he became an object of divine worship.

The Roman government tolerated different religions, but it came to the place where once a year Caesar demanded his supremacy be recognized by every citizen. The demand was that every citizen once a year pay divine honors to Cesar by placing just a little pinch of incense on an altar to the divine Emperor and saying that “CAESAR IS LORD”. All Rome asked was that all her citizens confess with their mouth that CAESAR IS LORD at least once a year to show their loyalty and devotion to the great Caesar by saying CAESAR IS SUPREME! CAESAR IS LORD!"

You see, every time we mention the word “Lord” we are declaring a master over us. The word “Lord” means MASTER! We honor the governing authorities, but they are not our Master! ***How did the faithful Christians respond?*** They had no problem paying taxes to Caesar, but worship was reserved for God alone. They would never say “Caesar is Lord” but only that “***Jesus is LORD!***”

Polycarp (A.D 69—156 or 157) was a disciple of the Apostle John who became a prominent leader in the early church. One account says when the Romans came to arrest him they pressed him saying, “***what harm is there in declaring Caesar as lord?***” Polycarp responded, “***eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?***” And they led him away to burn him at the stake!

Yes, we honor the king, yes, we pray for our governmental authorities, yes we seek to be good citizens and obey the governing authorities; but we draw the line at LORDSHIP. Never will the faithful Christian say, “***Caesar is Lord***”. For the true Christian ***Jesus ALONE is Lord!***

Indeed, render to Caesar the things that are Caesars, but LORDSHIP belongs to Jesus alone.

The oldest confession in Christianity is “***Jesus is Lord***”.

Romans 10:9 (ESV)

9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Render to God the Lordship of Jesus that belongs to Him alone! This was the great issue in Jesus’ day; it was the great issue in the early Church and down through the centuries; and it is the great issue today. It is the great issue in time and for all eternity.

What say you? Who is Jesus to you?

Have you believed on Him and confessed Him as Lord and Savior?

The Bible says that every knee will and bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God (Phil 2:9-11). If you are a true believer, say it with me: “***Jesus is LORD!***” ***Indeed, Jesus is LORD!***