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STUDENT HANDOUT

RED LEVEL
GO DEEPER

Whose Image Is This?

Grades 5–8 • Religion

James Tissot (1836–1902), Brooklyn Museum

ADMIT ONE

NAME _____

DATE _____

CLASS _____

In Jerusalem, a few days before he died, Jesus was handed a silver coin and asked whether God's people should pay taxes to Rome. His answer is one of the most famous sentences ever spoken about money, power and God.

“Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

MATTHEW 22:19–21

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

GENESIS 1:27

CASE 7 • MINISTRY AND PASSION

The Tribute Penny



COIN Silver denarius of Tiberius
DATE 14–37 AD
REFERENCE RIC I 30
SCRIPTURE Matthew 22:21

The face is the emperor Tiberius. The inscription calls him *son of the divine Augustus*, and the reverse reads PONTIF MAXIM — *High Priest*. To a faithful Jew, the coin itself was a provocation.

OI

PART 1

What is the answer really about?

Some readers think Jesus' answer is about taxes. Others think it is about idolatry, because the coin called the emperor divine. Others think it is about the human person, who carries God's image. Which reading is strongest? Use evidence from the coin and from both passages.

PART 2

O2 Two duties

The Catechism teaches that citizens should pay taxes and share responsibility for the common good (CCC 2240), but that conscience must refuse a command that goes against the moral order (CCC 2242). Peter puts it simply in Acts 5:29: *“We must obey God rather than human beings.”*

Describe a real or realistic modern situation where a law or an authority asks for something that belongs to God. What should a Christian give to Caesar, and what must be kept for God? Defend your answer.

PART 3

O3 Design a coin

If a coin declares who is in charge, what would a coin for the Kingdom of God look like? Sketch it, then explain the image and inscription you chose.



MINI MUSEUM CONNECTION

Compare the Tribute Penny with Herod the Great’s prutah in Case 6, which carries no face because Jewish law forbade it. What does each design say about its ruler?

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