

America has had 46 presidents. This nation has had some good presidents, bad presidents, weak presidents, and some strong presidents.

Jimmy Carter: He is known for being a moral and religious man but he failed as a president. "The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices."

John F. Kennedy: He was loved by many and was considered a good president. He said, "The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."

Ronald Reagan: He proved to be a good conservative president.
"If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

"A nation that cannot control its borders is not a nation."

Bill J. Clinton: He was a Southern Baptist. "We have the most religious freedom of any country in the world, including the freedom not to believe."

Harry Truman: He was the 33rd President when I was young. "We must never forget that this country was founded by men who came to these shores to worship God as they pleased. They did not come here to do as they pleased - but to worship God as they pleased, and that is an important distinction."

Why Tempt Me?

Matthew 22:15-22

INTRODUCTION: We are being tempted today in many different ways. Jesus was tempted by His religious enemies. As Christians, we must remain close to Jesus. We are being tempted by some to abandon our religious freedom and our freedom as Americans. Such governments as socialism and communism are a threat to us today. Jesus' enemies used a coin to trap Him.

I. ATTACKERS AGAINST JESUS

A. THEIR IDENTITY. v. 15-16,23 "Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees"

- 1. The Pharisees were conservative. They believed in the resurrection and immortality.**
- 2. The Herodians were wealthy, supported Herod and were politically motivated.**
- 3. The Sadducees were more liberal and denied life after death and the resurrection.**

B. THEIR INTENTION. v. 15 "CATCH HIM IN HIS WORDS"

The Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees were opposed to each other until they joined together in their hatred of Jesus.

C. THEIR INQUIRY. v. 17 "IS IT LAWFUL . . . SHALL WE GIVE"

In verses 14 and 15, we learn of these groups wanting the death of Jesus Christ. The Pharisees and Herodians joined together plotting to trap Jesus in His word, and then have Him killed.

II. ANSWER OF JESUS

A. JESUS' REACTION TO THE ATTACKERS.

Jesus knew of their wicked plot. He asked them, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" (Matthew 22:18) These individuals had put on a good front pretending to be sincere. The Lord knew their hearts and their intentions. Jesus knew they were aiming to kill Him.

B. JESUS' REPLY TO THE ATTACKERS.

Jesus asked them to bring a coin of tribute money. This was tax money collected for Pilate. The Lord used the coin as an illustration. He asked them whose image and superscription was on the coin. Their answer was Caesar's, the King of Rome. His image was on the coin. Jesus then answered these people by saying, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. (Matthew 22:21) In this statement, Jesus was making a plan for them to obey the government of Rome and God. They were to give their taxes to Caesar as a citizen of Rome, but they were to give to God the things which belonged to Him. They were not expecting this answer from Jesus. Jesus shattered the trap His adversaries were trying to set for Him.

Jesus stressed the importance of fulfilling our civic duties while also recognizing the sovereignty of God over all things. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the sovereign Creator and King. The coin bore the image of Caesar. Paying our taxes and obeying the laws of government is taught in the Bible. We are to obey those laws and be good citizens.

Every human being belongs to God. He created us in His own image. God expects us to fulfill our civic duties. Our greatest responsibility is to the sovereignty of God. He is ruler over all areas of our lives. In verse 17, Jesus made it clear to the Pharisees and the Herodias their responsibility to pay taxes. The Bible teaches that we are to submit to our governing authorities. We read this in Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-15.

Christians have the God-given responsibility to be good citizens and to pray for our government leaders. We are to be an example to the non-Christians of what it means to honor God and respect our government.

As Christians, we are first answerable to God and then to our government. Christians are to witness what it means to believe in God and follow Him as our Lord. Matthew 22:21 is a reminder that as Christians we can fulfill both our public and spiritual duties.

III. AUTHORITY OF JESUS

A. JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS.

The Bible teaches that Jesus created the nations. (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17) He appoints leaders for each nation. In Romans 13:1, the Bible says every soul is subject to God. On the Day of Judgment, every Christian will be judged.

This will include the United States and those who have led our nation. The United States operates as a constitutional republic, which is a form of government that involves representatives elected by the people. They perform their duties under the constitution. The citizens are to obey the government unless the government orders them to do something contradictory to God's law. Christians under this form of government have the freedom to vote for their leaders. We are given the freedom to seek the

mind and will of God concerning who would be our President as well as other leaders. Our choices to vote allow us to elect people who will best seek and follow God.

B. JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER THE CHRISTIAN.

As our Lord and Savior, our King has authority over us. America will be judged and every Christian will stand before the "judgment seat of Christ." We will give an account to the Lord according to our works if they be good or bad. Christians are to obey the laws of their country as long as the government does not demand Christians to do the opposite of God's law. Christians are to have a political view based on the Bible. This is called a biblical worldview. This means Christians seek to follow the teachings of God's Word under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Each Christian is to submit to the Lord Jesus. Christians are to follow the law of their government unless it demands that Christians break God's law.

These are a few things we are to follow. These are to be done to please the Lord regardless of which person is elected president:

1. The believer submits to the government that God has given him.
2. The believer acknowledges his President.
3. The believer prays for his President.
4. The Believer stands firm on the Bible and its truths.
5. The believer worships and honors King Jesus.

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

1. Stand firm during times of testing.
2. Be faithful to pray for your president in office.
3. Let the Word of God shape your worldview.

Why Tempt Me?

Matthew 22:15-22

Jesus was tempted by His enemies who wanted to kill Him. We are tempted today to forsake God and turn to other forms of government. Here are some things as Christians we need to practice:

- Pray for the election.
- Pray for the candidates.
- Pray for America.
- Pray for God to be glorified.
- Pray for the candidates' families.
- Pray for a spiritual awakening.
- Praise God and give thanks to Him for all our blessings.