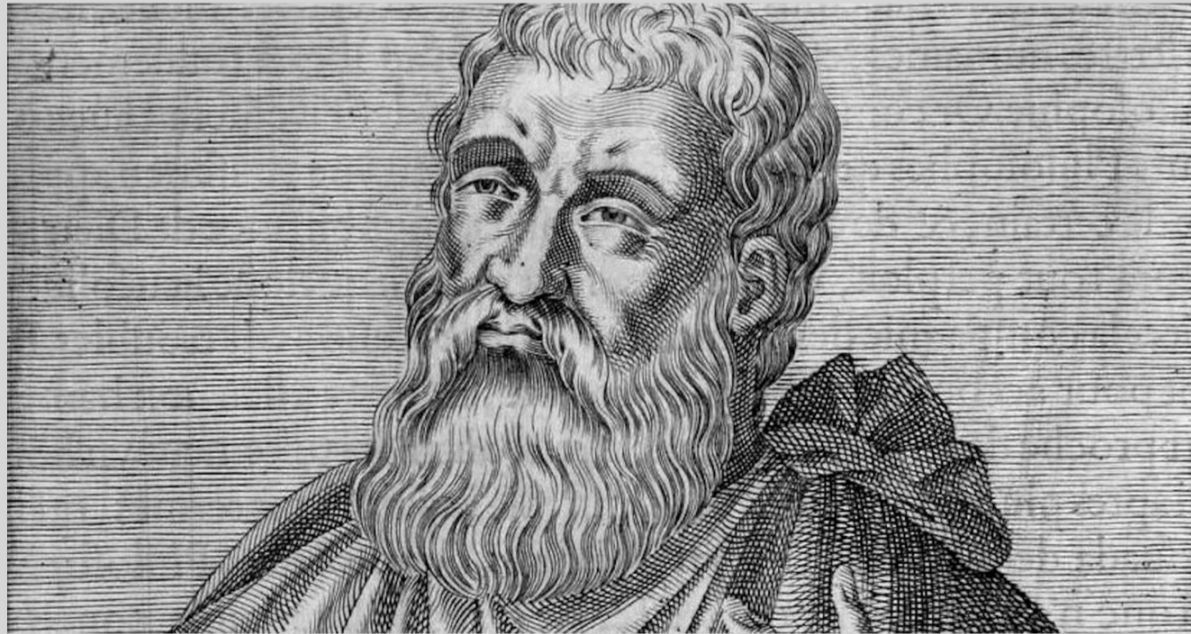


God and Government  
Matthew 22:15-22



Justin Martyr



Emperor Antonius Pius

Many Romans viewed Christians as . . .

Many Romans viewed Christians as . . .  
atheists

Many Romans viewed Christians as . . .

atheists

immoral

Many Romans viewed Christians as . . .

atheists

immoral

anarchists

“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21).

Justin Martyr

“To God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you,

“acknowledging you as kings and rulers of  
men,

“and praying that with your kingly power you  
be found to possess also sound judgment.”

Justin Martyr

“We shall suffer no loss.”

Justin Martyr

“To whom God has given more, of him shall more be required.” (Luke 12:48)

Justin Martyr

# 1. The leaders come to Jesus (15-17)

They come to him with . . .

They come to him with . . .

**falsity** - “plotted how to entangle him in his words” (15b)

They come to him with . . .

falsity -

**frenemies** - “And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians” (16a)

Pharisees = Jewish leaders who are experts  
in the Mosaic law

Herodians = Jewish leaders who partner with the Herodian family

\* The enemy of my enemy is my friend.

\* Intimacy based on negativity has a short shelf life!

They come to him with . . .

falsity -

frenemies -

**flattery** -

“Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone’s opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances.” (16b)

“true” - not fake

“true” - not fake

“teach the way of God truthfully” - accurately

“true” - not fake

“teach the way of God truthfully” - accurately

“do not care about anyone’s opinion” - impartial

“true” - not fake

“teach the way of God truthfully” - accurately

“do not care about anyone’s opinion” - impartial

“not swayed by appearances” - unbiased

“His speech was smooth as butter,  
yet war was in his heart;  
his words were softer than oil,  
yet they were drawn swords.” Psalm 55:21

“Let us remember these things, and be on guard.

“Peace often ruins nations more than war.  
Sweet things occasion far more sickness  
than bitter. . . .

“Let us beware of the flatterer. Satan is never so dangerous as when he appears as an angel of light.

“The world is never so dangerous to the Christian as when it smiles. When Judas betrayed his Lord, it was with a kiss.”

J.C. Ryle

“Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” (17)

If Jesus says . . .

pay -> he alienates the Jewish people

If Jesus says . . .

pay -> he alienates the Jewish people

don't pay -> he antagonizes the Romans

2. Jesus responds to the leaders.

“But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why put me to the test, you hypocrites?’” (18)

“Show me the coin for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius.

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ They said, ‘Caesar’s.’

“Then he said to them, ‘Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’

“When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.” (19-22)

\* Some things belong to Caesar,  
but all things belong to God.

# Implications

1. God is the **source** of government.



Tiberius Caesar Augustus  
son of the divine Augustus



Tiberius Caesar Augustus  
son of the divine Augustus



Livia, Tiberius's mother  
Augustus's wife

“Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

“Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

“They said, ‘Caesar’s.’”

“Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

“They said, ‘Caesar’s.’”

“render to Caesar”

“Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

“They said, ‘Caesar’s.’”

“render to Caesar”

“and to God the things that are God’s.” (20-21)

“Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?”

“Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.’”

John 19:10-11a

“Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,”

Acts 4:24b

“Let all the nations know that you are the only God.”

1 Clement 59

“Certainly societal problems, sin and death  
mar God’s world,

“but the most important theological prolegomenon [preface, starting point] for cultural engagement today is the transcendence and providence of God.”

Stephen Presley

“The originality of Christianity lies not in its so-called monotheism, but in the gigantic nature of its god, the creator of both heaven and earth:

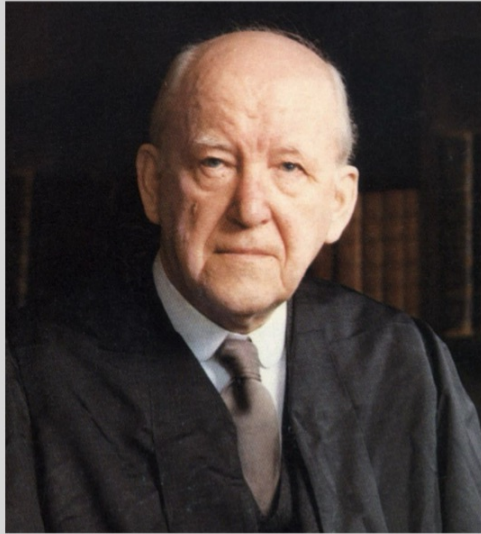
“it is a gigantism that is alien to the pagan gods and is inherited from the god of the Bible.”

Paul Veyne

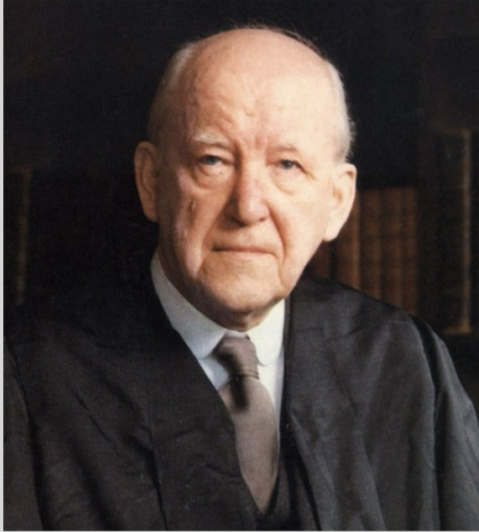
1. God is the source of government.
2. God is the **limit** of government.

“We must obey God rather than men.”

Act 5:29b



Martyn  
Lloyd-Jones



“Pay your dues to Caesar, but  
don’t be obsessed with them.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

These things . . .

“bring benefits but how limited, how passing and uncertain, they are! They give no help on the question: how to die?”

“The benefits of God are incomprehensible:  
He gave His only Son.

“Nothing is more glorious than the death of Christ for sinners. This makes a man independent of circumstances.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

1. God is the source of government.
2. God is the limit of government.
3. God is the **purpose** of our relationship with government.

pay taxes

pay taxes

honor civil authorities

pay taxes

honor civil authorities

pray for our leaders

pay taxes

honor civil authorities

pray for our leaders

pursue religious liberty

pay taxes

honor civil authorities

pray for our leaders

pursue religious liberty

promote public virtue

pay taxes

honor civil authorities

pray for our leaders

pursue religious liberty

promote public virtue

seek the common good

“Be subject **for the Lord's sake** to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

“or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

**“For this is the will of God,** that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

“Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but **living as servants of God.**”

“Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood.  
**Fear God.** Honor the emperor.”

1 Peter 2:13-17

“for the Lord’s sake”

“for the Lord’s sake”

“for this is the will of God”

“for the Lord’s sake”

“for this is the will of God”

“living as servants of God”

“for the Lord’s sake”

“for this is the will of God”

“living as servants of God”

“fear God”

“Live as people who are free,”

1 Peter 2:16

# Three Questions

1. Do you see God as the **source** of government?

2. Do you see God as the limit of government?

2. Do you see God as the limit of government?

- institutionally

2. Do you see God as the **limit** of government?

- institutionally
- personally

3. Do you see God as the **purpose** of our relationship with government?