



FRANKLIN ROAD

baptist church

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TAX DAY



TODAY IS THE DAY THAT UNCLE SAM WANTS TO MAKE SURE YOU AND I HAVE PAID OUR TAXES OR FILED FOR AN EXTENSION. COLLECTIVELY OUR NATION'S CITIZENS WILL PAY 5.2 TRILLION DOLLARS IN TAXES THIS YEAR. THAT IS 29% OF OUR TOTAL NATIONAL INCOME AND REPRESENTS MORE THAN WE PAY FOR FOOD, CLOTHING AND HOUSING COMBINED!

SO, WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT TAXES? THE WORD TAX OR TAXES APPEARS 12 TIMES IN SCRIPTURE AND TAX-GATHERERS OR PUBLICANS SHOWS UP SEVEN TIMES.

IN NEHEMIAH'S DAY WE KNOW THAT PEOPLE PAID PROPERTY TAXES TO THE KING. EVEN WHEN TIMES WERE TOUGH AND SOME HAD TO BORROW TO PAY THEM, THEY DID. (SEE NEHEMIAH 5:4). INTERESTINGLY EZRA 7:24 INFORMS US THAT "IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO IMPOSE TAX, TRIBUTE OR TOLLS" ON ANY OF GOD'S RELIGIOUS WORKERS.

IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES WE KNOW THAT MARY AND JOSEPH PAID TAXES. THEY TRAVELED FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM IN ORDER TO REGISTER FOR THE ROMAN GOVERNOR'S NEW TAX. (NOTE LUKE 2:1-5). IF THEY HAD BEEN TAX PROTESTORS JESUS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN BORN IN THE RIGHT PLACE! JESUS HIMSELF ALSO PAID TAXES. MATTHEW 17:24-27 TELLS OF A TAX COLLECTOR SEEKING PAYMENT OF POLL TAXES THAT REALLY WERE NOT REQUIRED OF JEWS, BUT JESUS AND PETER PAID THE TAX "LEST THEY GIVE OFFENCE." IN LUKE 20:22-26 JESUS FAMOUSLY DEFENDED THE COLLECTION OF NATIONAL TAXES BY TELLING THE PHARISEES WHO WERE TRYING TO TRICK HIM, "RENDER TO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESARS." AND IN ROMANS 13:6-7 PAUL INDICATES THAT WE ARE TO PAY TAXES TO THOSE WHO RULE OVER US FOR THEY MINISTER "AS GOD'S SERVANTS."

IT'S ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT DURING JESUS' MINISTRY HE ENCOUNTERS SEVERAL TAX-COLLECTORS OR PUBLICANS. MATTHEW 9:9 TELLS US OF MATTHEW, ALSO KNOWN AS LEVI, WHO WAS CALLED BY JESUS TO BE ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES. HE LEFT ALL AND FOLLOWED HIM. THEN TOO, JESUS USES A PUBLICAN AS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF GODLY HUMILITY AND COMPARES HIM TO THE WORKS-ORIENTED PHARISEE IN THE ACCOUNT COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE PRAYERS OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN IN LUKE 18:9-14. IN THE VERY NEXT CHAPTER OF LUKE WE MEET ZACCHAEUS, THE SHORT TAX-COLLECTOR IN A PROMINENT AND PROFITABLE POST AT JERICHO. AFTER HIS ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS HE COMMITTED TO PAYING BACK FOUR TIMES THE AMOUNT OF ANYTHING HE'D WRONGFULLY TAKEN.

PAYING TAXES ARE SEEN AS THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN'S RIGHTFUL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGHOUT SCRIPTURE. WE PRACTICE GODLINESS WHEN PAYING TAXES.

LOOKING UP!

PASTOR CHUCK CIRCLE