

Mark 12:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.

Analysis

They send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words (ἀποστέλλουσιν πρὸς αὐτὸν τινὰς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ τῶν Ἡρωδιανῶν ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀγρεύσωσιν λόγῳ). The verb *agreuōsin* (ἀγρεύσωσιν) means to hunt, trap, or ensnare—revealing malicious intent. This wasn't genuine theological inquiry but a calculated trap. The Pharisees (religious conservatives opposing Rome) and Herodians (political opportunists supporting Herod and Rome) were normally enemies, yet united against Jesus—demonstrating the depth of their hostility.

The coalition's diversity reveals the trap's cleverness: whatever Jesus answered would alienate one group. If He endorsed Roman tribute, zealous Jews would reject Him; if He opposed it, Herodians could report Him to Roman authorities for sedition. This catch him in his words (λόγῳ, *logō*) anticipates Jesus' brilliant response (v. 17) that transcends their false dilemma.

Historical Context

This confrontation occurred during Passion Week in Jerusalem's temple courts, after Jesus' triumphal entry and cleansing of the temple (Mark 11). Religious leaders felt threatened by His growing popularity and authority. The Pharisees emerged after the Maccabean revolt (160s BC), emphasizing Torah observance and oral tradition. The Herodians supported the Herodian dynasty's collaboration with Rome. Their alliance against Jesus was politically expedient but theologically

bizarre—like modern progressives and traditionalists uniting against a common threat. This episode demonstrates how opposition to Christ can create strange bedfellows (Luke 23:12 records Pilate and Herod becoming friends through their shared rejection of Jesus).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does the unusual alliance between Pharisees and Herodians reveal about how religious and political factions unite against Jesus?
2. How does recognizing their malicious intent to 'trap' Jesus help us identify similar manipulative questioning today?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀποστέλλουσιν	πρὸς	αὐτὸν	τινας	τῶν	Φαρισαίων
And	they send	unto	him	certain	G3588	of the Pharisees
G2532	G649	G4314	G846	G5100		G5330

καὶ	τῶν	Ἡρωδιανῶν	ἵνα	αὐτὸν	ἄγρεύσωσιν	λόγῳ
And	G3588	of the Herodians	to	him	catch	in his words
G2532		G2265	G2443	G846	G64	G3056

Additional Cross-References

Mark 3:6 (Resurrection): And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

Luke 11:54 (Parallel theme): Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Mark 8:15 (Resurrection): And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

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