Mark 12:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it.

Analysis

Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy (δῶμεν ἢ μὴ δῶμεν; ὁ δὲ εἰδὼς αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπόκρισιν)—Jesus perceived their duplicity. The noun hypokrisin (ὑπόκρισιν) originally meant stage-acting, wearing a mask. Their question feigned respect while concealing malice. Jesus' omniscience penetrated their facade (John 2:24-25).

Why tempt ye me? (τί με πειράζετε;). The verb peirazete (πειράζετε) means to test or tempt—the same word describing Satan's wilderness temptation (Mark 1:13). This wasn't honest inquiry but spiritual warfare. **Bring me a penny, that I may see it** (φέρετέ μοι δηνάριον ἵνα ἴδω)—Jesus' request for a denarius was brilliant: requiring them to produce Roman currency exposed their own complicity in the system they questioned. Those carrying Caesar's coins already participated in Rome's economy.

Historical Context

Jesus' demand for a denarius was masterful strategy. The denarius bore the emperor's graven image and blasphemous inscription claiming divinity—arguably violating the second commandment's prohibition of graven images (Exodus 20:4). Yet His questioners possessed these coins, revealing their own compromise. The temple had money changers precisely because Jews needed to exchange 'unclean' Roman coins for 'clean' temple currency. Jesus' request forced His opponents to

publicly produce the very coin they implied faithful Jews shouldn't possess. This rhetorical move exposed their hypocrisy before answering their question.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' recognition of their hypocrisy teach about discernment regarding disingenuous questions disguised as sincere inquiry?
2. How does Jesus' request for them to produce the coin expose their own participation in what they're questioning?

Interlinear Text

δῶμεν	ἤ	μή	δῶμεν	ὁ	δὲ	ἴδω	αὐτοῖς
Shall we give	**or**	**shall we not**	**Shall we give**	G3588	**But**	**I may see**	**their**
G1325	G2228	G3361	G1325		G1161	G1492	G846

τὴν	ὑπόκρισιν	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς	Τί	με	πειράζετε	φέρετέ
G3588	**hypocrisy**	**said**	**their**	**Why**	**me**	**tempt ye**	**bring**
	G5272	G2036	G846	G5101	G3165	G3985	G5342

μοι	δηνάριον	ἵνα	ἴδω
me	**a penny**	**that**	**I may see**
G3427	G1220	G2443	G1492

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Hebrews 4:13 (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Acts 5:9 (Parallel theme): Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

Mark 10:2 (Parallel theme): And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

1 Corinthians 10:9 (Parallel theme): Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Matthew 22:18 (Parallel theme): But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

John 21:17 (Parallel theme): He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Luke 20:23 (Parallel theme): But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

Ezekiel 17:2 (Parallel theme): Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel;