

# Matthew 17:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

## Analysis

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**He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him** (λέγει, Ναί. καὶ ὅτε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν, προέφθασεν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς)—Peter's immediate 'Yes' (Ναί) affirms Jesus's practice of paying the tax. The verb προφθάνω (prophthānō, 'to anticipate, to come before, to prevent' in older English meaning 'precede') shows Jesus initiated conversation before Peter could speak. This demonstrates Jesus's omniscience—He knew the encounter Peter just had. His supernatural knowledge validates His subsequent teaching.

**What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute?** (Τί σοι δοκεῖ, Σίμων; οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τίνων λαμβάνουσιν τέλη ἢ κῆνσον;)—Jesus uses Socratic questioning. The terms τέλος (indirect tax, custom) and κῆνσος (direct tax, tribute) cover all taxation. **Of their own children, or of strangers?** (ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῶν ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων;)—the contrast is between υἱοί (sons, heirs, royal family) and ἀλλότριοι (strangers, aliens, foreigners). Jesus establishes the principle that kings tax subjects, not their own family.

## Historical Context

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Roman taxation in first-century Judea was extensive and resented. The temple tax, however, was Jewish self-taxation for worship, not foreign oppression. Jesus's analogy assumes understanding of Near Eastern monarchies where royal families enjoyed tax exemption—they controlled the treasury, making self-taxation absurd. Persian, Greek, and Roman practice all exempted rulers' families from taxes levied on subjects. Jesus applies this earthly principle to heavenly reality.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jesus's omniscience (knowing Peter's conversation) encourage you that He knows your circumstances before you pray?
2. What does Jesus's Socratic teaching method reveal about effective discipleship—asking questions rather than merely lecturing?

## Interlinear Text

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λέγων, Ναί καὶ ὅτε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν  
He saith Yes And when he was come into the house  
G3004 G3483 G2532 G3753 G1525 G1519 G3588 G3614

προέφθασεν αὐτῶν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, τίνων σοι δοκεῖ  
prevented him Jesus He saith What thou thinkest  
G4399 G846 G2424 G3004 G5101 G4671 G1380

Σίμων οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τίνων  
Simon the kings of the earth of What  
G4613 G3588 G935 G1093 G575 G5101

λαμβάνουσιν τέλη ἢ κῆνσον ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῶν  
do custom or tribute of children him  
G2983 G5056 G2228 G2778 G575 G3588 G5207 G846

ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων  
or of strangers  
G2228 G575 G3588 G245

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 22:21** (Parallel theme): They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

**Matthew 22:19** (Parallel theme): Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

**Matthew 22:17** (Parallel theme): Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

**1 Samuel 17:25** (Kingdom): And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

