

Matthew 17:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

Analysis

Peter saith unto him, Of strangers (λέγει, Απὸ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων)—Peter correctly answers that kings tax ἀλλότριοι (foreigners, non-family members), not their own sons. He grasps the earthly principle but hasn't yet applied it to Jesus's identity. **Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free** (ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἄρα γε ἐλεύθεροί εἰσιν οἱ νιοί)—the inferential ἄρα γε ('therefore, then, consequently') draws the conclusion. The adjective ἐλεύθερος (free) means exempt from obligation, not liable.

Jesus's point: as God's Son, He's exempt from temple tax supporting His Father's house. The temple exists for God's glory; God's Son need not pay to access His Father's dwelling. By extension, disciples as adopted sons (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:5-7) share this freedom—we're 'children of the King,' not strangers taxed for temple access. Yet Jesus voluntarily pays (v. 27), modeling both freedom and gracious condescension. Christian liberty doesn't demand rights but yields them for others' good (1 Corinthians 9:12, 19-23).

Historical Context

The temple represented God's dwelling among Israel. Its entire system—sacrifices, priesthood, taxes—maintained worship. Jesus's claim to exemption as 'Son' is either blasphemous (if false) or revelatory (if true). His willingness to pay despite exemption demonstrates the incarnation's humility—He voluntarily submitted to obligations from which His deity exempted Him (Philippians 2:6-8). This teaching

anticipates Hebrews's argument that Christ supersedes the temple as the true mediator.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does your status as God's adopted child free you from religious obligation while motivating voluntary service?
2. When have you voluntarily surrendered legitimate freedom for the sake of others' consciences (Romans 14:1-15:7)?

Interlinear Text

λέγει	αὐτῷ	ό	Πέτρος,	Ἀπὸ	τῶν	ἀλλοτρίων	ἔφη
saith	unto him		Peter	Of		strangers	saith
G3004	G846		G4074	G575		G245	G5346
αὐτῷ	ό	Ἰησοῦς	Ἄραγε	ἐλεύθεροί	εἰσιν	οἱ	νιοί
unto him	G3588	Jesus	Then	free	are	G3588	the children
G846		G2424	G686	G1658	G1526		G5207

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