

Matthew 17:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Analysis

Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them (ἵνα δὲ μὴ σκανδαλίσωμεν αὐτούς)—the conjunction ἵνα μή ('lest, so that not') introduces purpose: Jesus pays to avoid σκανδαλίζω (causing to stumble, giving offense). Though exempt, He accommodates weak consciences. This exemplifies Paul's later teaching (Romans 14:13-21; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13): don't cause others to stumble over non-essential matters. Christian freedom serves love, not self-assertion. Jesus models humility—voluntarily limiting freedom for others' spiritual good.

Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money (πορευθεὶς εἰς θάλασσαν βάλε ἄγκιστρον καὶ τὸν ἀναβάντα πρῶτον ἰχθὺν ἄρον, καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εὕρήσεις στατήρα)—The στατήρ (statēr, four-drachma coin) equals two didrachmas, sufficient for two men. This miracle demonstrates

1. Christ's omniscience (knowing which fish has the coin)
2. His authority over creation (directing the fish)
3. His supernatural provision. **That take, and give unto them for me and thee**—Jesus includes Peter in His provision.

God supplies our needs through unexpected means when we trust Him.

Historical Context

Fish occasionally swallowed shiny objects. Tilapia (common in Galilee) carry eggs/small fish in mouths, making mouth-fishing possible. But Jesus's specific prediction makes this supernatural—He orchestrated this provision. The miracle demonstrated to collectors (who likely heard about it) that Jesus possessed authority over creation, yet humbly complied with human customs. The statēr likely bore Caesar's image, ironically using Caesar's coin for temple tax, foreshadowing 22:21 ('Render to Caesar...').

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus's willing payment despite exemption model Christian freedom rightly used to serve others rather than self?
2. What does God's unusual method of provision (coin in fish's mouth) teach about His creativity in meeting your needs?

Interlinear Text

ἵνα	δὲ	μὴ	σκανδαλίσωμεν	αὐτούς	πορευθεὶς	εἰς
that	however	not	we might offend	them	having gone	to
G2443	G1161	G3361	G4624	G846	G4198	G1519
θάλασσαν	βάλε	ἄγκιστρον	καὶ	τὸν	ἀναβάντα	πρῶτον
sea	cast	a hook	and	the	having come up	first
G2281	G906	G44	G2532	G3588	G305	G4412
ἰχθὺν	ἄρον	ἀνοίξας	τὸ	στόμα	αὐτοῦ	εὕρήσεις
fish	take	having opened	the	mouth	of it	you will find
G2486	G142	G455	G3588	G4750	G846	G2147
στατῆρα	ἐκεῖνον	λαβὼν	δοῦς	αὐτοῖς	ἀντὶ	ἐμοῦ
a four-drachma coin	that	having taken	give	to them	for	me
G4715	G1565	G2983	G1325	G846	G473	G1473
καὶ	σοῦ					
and	you					
G2532	G4771					

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 6:3 (Parallel theme): Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

1 Corinthians 8:9 (Parallel theme): But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (Parallel theme): For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Psalms 8:8 (Parallel theme): The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

Romans 14:21 (Parallel theme): It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Jonah 1:17 (Parallel theme): Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

1 Kings 17:4 (Parallel theme): And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

Jonah 2:10 (Parallel theme): And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

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