

1. Destroyers Deceive to Gain Allegiance for Themselves

- a. Members: Pharisees and Herodians/Sadducees and their hired spies
 - i. Conservatives and Liberals
 - ii. Nationalists and the Accommodators
 - iii. Uniquely unified to destroy Jesus
 1. Because He threatened their religious power (Pharisees)
 2. Because He threatened their political power (Herodians/Sadducees)
- b. Mission: to Spy surreptitiously
 - i. They actually hired spies to gather incriminating words of Jesus
 1. **The word, "they sent", indicates an official mission as a delegate**
 2. **They were "watching", seeking earnestly to uncover something to use against him**
 - ii. He had silenced them when He boxed them in regarding their view of John the Baptist
 1. **They knew that if they said John were God's prophet, they would be required to repent and acknowledge that He speaks the truth**
 2. **They knew that if they said John were not God's prophet, then the people would "stone them"**
 3. They are trying to put Jesus in the same box that they were just stuck in
 - iii. So that however he might answer, they might not only silence him, but have him killed
- c. Means: by Pretending to be something they were not
 - i. This deception is indicative of fear and of impotence
 - ii. They believed that Jesus was like them, one face in public and another in private
 - iii. Therefore, they worked by deception and pretense
 1. They call Him "Teacher"
 2. They claim to approve His teaching/speaking
 3. They call Him genuine and having integrity
 4. They approve His words as the "way of God"
- d. Motive: to Trap Him with His own words in order to see Him killed
 - i. Their desire was to use his own words against him and report to whomever he would offend
 - ii. They intended to use deception to get these words

2. They Try to Trap Jesus to Choose Allegiance and Thus Make Political Enemies

- a. They ask of case law - "Is it lawful?"
 - i. They use his own questioning against Him
 - ii. See his use of the phrase in 6:4,9; 14:3
- b. **They inquire of the legitimacy of the "tribute" tax imposed by Caesar**
 - i. The tribute tax was the tax imposed by Rome of its conquered territories
 1. **It funded Rome's wars and opulence, primarily, and was used to keep territories from building up their own armies to shake off Rome's rule**
 2. This oppressive tax was bitterly resented by the entire Jewish nation
 - ii. **If He answered, "Yes", that it was 'lawful' to financially support the blasphemous Caesar, then the people would stone him for such indolence and blasphemy**
 - iii. **If He answered, "No", that it was not lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, then they would run and tell the Romans, who would execute him for insurrection**
- c. **Thus, the question is still about authority, "Who has it?"**
 - i. They want him to answer either Rome or Not Rome
 1. They demand that He side with Caesar or with Israel
 2. The oppressor or the oppressed
 - ii. **They want Jesus to call Rome's tax legitimate or illegitimate and thus to justify the authority of Caesar's claim to deity or to justify insubordination to Rome**

1. They are trying to leave no room for a third option, "You are either pro-Rome or anti-Rome"
2. This would mean that he would be silenced or killed either way

3. Jesus Shows Us How to Arrange Our Allegiances Properly

- a. Jesus perceives their intentions
 - i. He sees the duplicity of their questioning
 - ii. They are not really wanting to know the lawfulness or acceptability of paying their taxes to **Caesar so that they might follow up with adherence to Jesus' teaching**
 - iii. **Thus, He really doesn't give them a very clear answer, certainly not an answer in accordance with case law**
- b. Jesus engages with His enemies shrewdly
 - i. This is an example whereby Jesus discerns between a question asked genuinely and a question asked simply to trap
 1. **"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. (Mat 7:6 ESV)." Cf. Prov 9:7-8; 15:12**
 - ii. See how brief his answer is here, in comparison with the discussion that he has with the woman at the well (John 4), for example?
 - iii. We, too, should be wise in our conversations with questioners
 1. Take the time to discuss and wrestle gently with true, genuine, questions
 2. **Don't take a lot of time trying to answer a fool, however, who is bent on foolishness and only looking to trap or fight for that is a fight that you cannot win, even if you win.**
- c. He provides a third option by delineating between authorities
 - i. He asks to see a denarius
 1. The denarius (Roman silver coin) bore the image of Tiberius and was inscribed, **"Tiberius Caesar, son of deified Augustus, Chief Priest"**
 - a. This inscription and image caused many Jews to consider the Roman denarius idolatrous
 - b. Jewish coins never had the image of a man upon them for this reason, let **alone an image and saying regarding Caesar's deity**
 2. It was the amount demanded for the privilege of existing as a nation and could only be paid to Rome as a denarius
 3. He asks whose image is upon the required tribute?
 - a. **"Caesar's"**
 - ii. Jesus responds with incredible wisdom: Arranged Allegiances
 1. **"Give to Caesar what is Caesar and to God what is God's"**
 - a. This is wise for a few reasons:
 - i. Ancient coins were seen to be the property of the one upon which his image was stamped
 1. **They couldn't argue that the denarius belonged to Caesar**
 - ii. **Jesus' words here may have been the most influential political statement ever made**
 - b. **Jesus' words here orders our allegiances in proper order**
 - i. We are to submit to earthly governments
 1. Paul expounds this point in Romans 12-13 whereby he shows that the earthly governments of the world are servants of God
 - a. Even the evil ones (Nero!)

2. And the people of God are to submit to their authority as to a servant of God, for God has placed them there for His own historical purpose
 - a. Thus, to submit to our human governments is to **submit to God's authority**
 - b. To pay taxes to our human governments is to give to God because they are His servants
 - ii. It means that we also are to submit to the laws of the state until they come into the realm of ultimate allegiance, i.e. worship and obedience to God
 1. The state has valid claims upon our behaviors
 2. That state also has limited claims upon our conscience and behaviors (Acts 5:29)
 - a. There are limits, when it imposes upon the conscientious obedience to the revealed Word of God (if you are ordered to sin, you must resist)
2. **Here is Jesus' primary point:**
- a. Give to Caesar what his image is stamped upon: a denarius
 - b. Give to God what His image is stamped upon: your life

4. Every Human Life is a Dual Dichotomy of Glory and Depravity

- a. Every human being is made in the image of God
 - i. Psalm 8 – **“man is crowned with glory and honor”**
 - ii. What are the implications of this?
 1. All life becomes something to be valued, cherished, and protected
 2. Soul import: No matter the assessment of your own heart, or the word of other people, there is a *rock solid objective* irreducible significance and glory about you. You are cosmically and infinitely valuable to God. No matter who you are, what **you've done, or how you're living right now. You are not merely important, but you are important and valuable, and loved, by God.**
 3. Social import:
 - a. undermines a caste system,
 - b. **eliminates a dichotomy between the “have's” and the “have not's”,**
 - c. racism, classism
 - i. **look at people's value morally?**
 - ii. **look at people's value economically?**
 - iii. **look at people's value biologically?**
 - iii. In the Biblical view every person is valuable, loved, and significant from the poorest beggar to the greatest emperor that ever lived
 1. This means the unborn child is glorious, valuable, beautiful
 2. This also means that every person who vehemently advocates abortion is also valuable, significant, and glorious
 3. Every person is created in the image of God (James 3:9) and therefore more glorious and valuable than we can dare imagine.
- b. Every human is also completely fallen and pervasively depraved in sin
 - i. Psalm 14 – **“there is nobody good, nobody who seeks God” for God's sake**
 1. **Those in Christ “were, by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest” (Eph 2:3)**
 - ii. the fool speaks from his *heart*, not merely his mind
 1. not merely the atheist, who speaks from his mind
 2. **all of us, who seek for God only for us...we seek us** from our hearts, as if we belong to ourselves
 3. We want to own the vineyard to do with as we wish, and we will use God to do it

- iii. no one does good
 - 1. relatively speaking people do beneficent things
 - a. we should celebrate these good things, but also look deeper
 - 2. for something to be truly good there must be two things
 - a. the selfless act of goodness
 - b. the selfless motive of **God's glory**
 - i. not from fear or from pride
 - c. When our hearts are given absolute power, that is without fear of punishment, they erupt into selfishness
 - i. **Homeless beating...abortion doctors...abusive language to a child**
 - 3. The Two Natures: we belong to God and yet are infinitely fallen into the sin which He cannot approve, accept, or draw near toward
- c. The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
 - i. Stevenson writes of Jekyll, who thought that is the competition of the two natures that was **the problem**, "I knew myself at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, 10 times more wicked, sold to slave to my original evil, and the thought braced and delighted me like wine."
 - ii. **He found that he was much more wicked and depraved than he really thought. It's a great picture, in a narrative form, of exactly what the Bible teaches: we are radically glorious and radically evil at the same time. The English word, Hyde, is the root of both "hideous" and "hidden" and until the potion brought out his true depravity it remained hidden, but it was always hideous.**
- d. Human nature is a dual-dichotomy of beauty and depravity, of significance and wretchedness, of value and of vulgarity. What are we going to do about it? This cannot go on:

5. We Must Look to Jesus Christ to Redeem Us from the Depraved Nature and Set Us Completely Free to Give Ourselves Wholeheartedly to God to Whom We Belong (Heb 2:6-9)

- a. Give to God what is God's – MY WHOLE LIFE
 - i. **This is what your soul was made for and it will not find rest until it rests in Jesus Christ's love for you and work on your behalf**
 - ii. **We aren't what we're supposed to be, yet**
 - 1. **If we were, this world would be harmonious and wonderful, but it's not**
- b. But we see Jesus Christ, the secret to human nature
 - i. He lived the life we were supposed to live, with all the nobility, wisdom, beauty that we were supposed to have
 - ii. He died the death that we were supposed to die, with all the hideousness, ugliness, rebellion, sin
 - iii. He, Dr. Jekyll, became Mr. Hyde, being made hideous *for us*
 - 1. all the beauty of God himself, all the wisdom, all the wonder, was (as Isaiah says) **beaten until he didn't appear human**
 - 2. was crushed as sin itself by God.
- c. **Here's the secret to finding the glory of God, to seeing the significance of all of humanity, and to finding grace and forgiveness for the depraved hearts, mind, and actions that we have: when you see the beautiful savior giving up his beauty for you and becoming hideous to save you, it becomes the most beautiful thing possible. In this, through the power of the Holy Spirit, understanding the Gospel, you are awed by His mercy and enveloped in His grace. This turns the mirror of our souls to image Him more fully and to give our whole lives to the One who graciously treasures us.**

Have you given your entire life to God whose image has been stamped upon you and who sent His Son to redeem you from your depravity and bring you all the way home?

