



## [Matthew 17:24-27](#)

(24) And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? (25) 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? (26) Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. (27) 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.

*King James Version*

The miracle of the coin found in the fish's mouth ([Matthew 17:24-27](#)) may be among the least dramatic of Christ's miracles, but it is certainly instructive. The context involves the paying of the Temple tax, and not surprisingly, only Matthew, the former tax collector for Rome, reports it. Although he did not collect this particular tax, it still interested him. His account of Christ's life tends to highlight the King and His Kingdom. Why, then, should the King be subject to a tax? Is He not the Son of [God](#), the Heir of all His Father's house?

Coming to Capernaum, the tax collector asks Simon Peter, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?" and Peter replies in the affirmative (verses 24-25). This tax was not a Roman civil tax but a religious one supporting the Temple in Jerusalem. God inaugurated this tax in the wilderness, instructing [Moses](#) to take a half shekel from every male twenty years and older ([Exodus 30:11-16](#)). It provided for the work of the Tabernacle and later of the Temple, including during the time of [Christ](#). This tax was not an evil one per se, helping to cover legitimate costs of the worship of God, but as with almost all taxation, the money was often misused.

— Martin G. Collins

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