



About the Cover

The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus, but Jesus undoes their game. Though all things are certainly God's, Jesus shows that paying taxes has its place under God-given government but also that we ought to render ourselves to the Lord. God's likeness is on us as we were made in His image, and our whole lives belong to Him. He has purchased and won us by His own precious blood.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 45:1-7

- 1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
 whose right hand I have grasped,
 to subdue nations before him
 and to loose the belts of kings,
 to open doors before him
 that gates may not be closed:
- 2 "I will go before you
 and level the exalted places,
 I will break in pieces the doors of
 bronze
 and cut through the bars of iron,
- 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
 and the hoards in secret places,
 that you may know that it is I, the
 LORD,
 the God of Israel, who call you by
 your name.
- 4 For the sake of my servant Jacob,
 and Israel my chosen,
 I call you by your name,
 I name you, though you do not
 know me.
- 5 I am the LORD, and there is no other,
 besides me there is no God;
 I equip you, though you do not
 know me,
- 6 that people may know, from the
 rising of the sun
 and from the west, that there is
 none besides me;
 I am the LORD, and there is no
 other.
- 7 I form light and create darkness,
 I make well-being and create
 calamity,
 I am the LORD, who does all these
 things."

Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
 To the church of the Thessalonians
 in God the Father and the Lord Jesus
 Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

²We give thanks to God always for all
 of you, constantly mentioning you in

our prayers, ³remembering before our
 God and Father your work of faith and
 labor of love and steadfastness of hope
 in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know,
 brothers loved by God, that he has cho-
 sen you, ⁵because our gospel came to
 you not only in word, but also in power
 and in the Holy Spirit and with full con-
 viction. You know what kind of men we
 proved to be among you for your sake.
⁶And you became imitators of us and of
 the Lord, for you received the word in
 much affliction, with the joy of the Holy
 Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example
 to all the believers in Macedonia and
 in Achaia. ⁸For not only has the word
 of the Lord sounded forth from you in
 Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith
 in God has gone forth everywhere, so
 that we need not say anything. ⁹For they
 themselves report concerning us the
 kind of reception we had among you,
 and how you turned to God from idols
 to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to
 wait for his Son from heaven, whom he
 raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers
 us from the wrath to come.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plot-
 ted how to entangle [Jesus] in his talk.
¹⁶And they sent their disciples to him,
 along with the Herodians, saying,
 "Teacher, we know that you are true
 and teach the way of God truthfully,
 and you do not care about anyone's
 opinion, for you are not swayed by
 appearances. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you
 think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar,
 or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their mal-
 ice, said, "Why put me to the test, you
 hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin for the
 tax." And they brought him a denarius.
²⁰And Jesus said to them, "Whose like-
 ness and inscription is this?" ²¹They said,
 "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "There-
 fore render to Caesar the things that are
 Caesar's, and to God the things that are
 God's." ²²When they heard it, they mar-
 veled. And they left him and went away.