

Render Unto Caesar: Bewaring The Ides of March
Luke 20:22-25

Illustration: Today is the Ides of March. We usually remember this because of a phrase that inspired part of my sermon title “Beware the Ides of March” which occurred in Shakespeare's play from 1601: *Julius Caesar*. 'Beware the Ides of March' is the soothsayer's message to Julius Caesar, warning him of his death.

It begins in Act I, Scene II CAESAR Who is it in the press that calls on me? I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music, Cry 'Caesar!' Speak; Caesar is turn'd to hear. Soothsayer: Beware the ides of March. CAESAR What man is that? BRUTUS A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March. Later in the pivotal Act III, Scene I Caesar is about to enter the capitol whereupon he sees the soothsayer to whom he says: “The ides of March are come. Soothsayer Ay, Caesar; but not gone.” Caesar thinks all is well, until shortly thereafter he is rushed and several Senators plunge their daggers into him, then comes his dear friend Brutus and adds his dagger to bring about the death of Caesar. Shocked and astonished Caesar cries out: Et Tu Brute!? Then fall Caesar....” Soon in Act III, Scene II Marc Anthony will call out another set of famous word: “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.”

Now, that my theatrics are finished, remember that the soothsayer (one who predicts the future) warned Caesar: Beware the ides of March. The Ides of March didn't signify anything special in itself - this was just the usual way of saying "March 15th". The notion of the Ides being a dangerous date was purely an invention of Shakespeare's; each month has an Ides (often the 15th) and this date wasn't significant in being associated with death prior to 1601. Months of the Roman calendar were arranged around three named days - the Kalends (the 1st day of the month), the Nones (the 7th day in March, May, July, and October; the 5th in the other months) and the Ides (the 15th day in March, May, July, and October; the 13th in the other months) - and these were reference points from which the other (unnamed) days were calculated.

The play *Julius Caesar* commemorates the actual assassination of Caesar which happened in 44 BC about 40 years before Jesus was born. Now when Jesus entered His public life and began His ministry there were many who wanted Him dead. Unlike Caesar, Jesus knew who would betray Him. Now, I want you to look with me again at Jesus' words in Luke 20....notice His enemies are trying to trap Him so that they can discredit Him, find Him guilty of treason and have Him put to death. Notice what they bring up: paying taxes to Caesar (v.22) and Jesus asks for a “penny” that was the *denarius* (or 1 day's wage. 16 cents in 1959 or \$1.28 today!) and issued one of the best rebuttals in v.25 “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things which be God's.”

Most preachers will approach this passage and preach on paying taxes, or being a good citizen or a dutiful christian. I however want to approach this passage from a different angle of application.

First off think of what the term Caesar means today. Today we find it was used by the Germans (Kaiser Wilhelm) the Russians (Tzar Nicholas) the Spaniards (Cesar) the US Government (Drug Czars) and of course the most well known to us is a Caesar Salad and Little Caesar's Pizza! It was used by Empires and nations as a title for their king or Emperor. Caesar's great-nephew Octavian (who Caesar named as his adopted son in his will) eventually became sole ruler over the Roman Empire. The Senate gave him the title Augustus Caesar (whom the Bible calls: Caesar Augustus in Luke 2:1). When the title of Caesar was given to Augustus he called himself: "Commander Caesar son of the deified one" for on January 1, 42BC the Senate decreed the dead Caesar “to be a god.”

In the Bible we are told that the lost are “the living dead” Ephesians 2:1 “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”

Also, anyone (lost or saved) who seeks to define their “own right and wrong standards” or “good and evil” apart from God's Word is called a “little” god. Genesis 3:5 “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” and

Genesis 3:22 “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:” Since the beginning, Satan has sought to deify man or make man into his own god.

That being said, there's a lot of self-crowned little Caesar gods running around out there today. While the Bible condemns Witchcraft, Divination and Soothsayers (Ex. 22:18 and Deut. 18:10) recall that the basic definition of a Soothsayer is “one who tells the future.” While no man - by himself - can tell the future, you and I can know about the future from God's inspired Word. Thus that being said, lost people then are Caesar and we the Saved and especially the Preachers and Evangelists are the “Soothsayer” and who then is Brutus? We shall see.

Jesus said to render unto Caesar. So what are we to give the Lost “little god” Caesars out there? Well if you're gonna render anything to Caesar you might ought to know how to identify him or her.

1. The Caesars Are Self-Righteous Scoffing Mockers

- a) If the Bible is not your spiritual and moral authority then you do not have God as master over your life or in your life. Then you are your own authority- self is master and you will live by your own opinions. You are a little god.
- b) Jesus said in Luke 11:28: “blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” Do not think this cannot apply to you if you are saved! If you are not conducting our spirituality from “The Word” but from other ways we are not living the Christian life. We cannot mix opinions with Christ's teachings. Jesus said, *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*
- c) They do not care what the Bible instructs, showing their unbelief and disrespect in the word which is God's testimony to man. And whose testimony would they would like us to idolize? We are to respect Gods word, He did communicate truth to us and it is preserved to all generations. If you do not believe this – don't call yourself a believer or a Christian because YOU ARE NOT! The Bible is called “the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15), Daniel called it “the Scripture of Truth” (Dan.10:21), Psalm 119:160 “The entirety of Your word is truth.” Prov.30:5 “Every word of God is pure.” Psalm 138:2 states that His Word is exalted above His name. God honors His Word in greater ways than He honors His own name.
- d) These Caesars are called Scoffers. To scoff refers to an expression of mockery, derision, doubt, or derisive scorn; jeer.
- e) A lot of times people cherry pick what to believe or what to mock.
- f) 2 Pet 3:3 *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*
- g) *Jude 1:17-19 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*
- h) Here are just a few statements about scoffers and how they react when they are shown their waywardness.
 - i. Proverbs 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.
 - ii. Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.
 - iii. Proverbs 14:6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.
 - iv. Proverbs 15:12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.
 - v. Why BECAUSE THEY ARE CAESARS
 1. Exodus 5:1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith

the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2. Exodus 5:4 And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.
3. THE MIND OF CAESAR HEARS THE WORD OF GOD AND THEY DO NOT RECOGNIZE GOD – BUT THEY SAID THAT'S YOUR OPINION!!
4. Wherever there's a “Caesar” in the Bible there will be a “soothsayer” or rather a “REAL man of God” who will WARN, REBUKE....

2. The “Soothsayers” Are To Warn

- a) 2 Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
- b) NOAH PREACHED A 120 YEARS AND BUILT an ARK.
- c) How does Faith come?
 - i. Romans 10:8-14 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
 - ii. Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
- d) Jude 1:22-23 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.
- e) LET THIS SOOTHSAYER WARN YOU
 - i. THERE IS A HELL
 - ii. JESUS HAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD
 - iii. JESUS IS COMING BACK
 - iv. HERE'S YOUR BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH! BEWARE OF HELL. BEWARE OF BEING LOST AT YOUR DEATH. BEWARE OF BEING LOST WHEN JESUS COMES BACK!

3. The “Brutus” Should Be Ashamed

- a) Let me introduce you to a Brutus
 - i. Philemon 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.
 1. Here Demas (POPULAR) is noted as a FELLOW-LABOURER.
 - ii. Colossians 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.
 1. When Paul first mentioned Demas, he called him a fellow worker. Here he simply says, "and Demas"; I think this may indicate that Paul isn't really sure about him at this time. Later on Demas will forsake Paul. How tragic that is.
 - iii. 2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.
 1. Demas forsook Paul “having loved this present world”
 2. He loved the PRESENT WORLD. Remember Peter's words about the scoffers?
 3. 2 Peter 3:3-10 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (UNIFORMATARIANISM – THEY BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION. IRVING W. KNOBLOCH PROFESSOR OF NATURAL SCIENCES AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY SAYS EVOLUTION IS AN ACT OF FAITH.) STEPHEN JAY

GOULD (BIOLOGIST) SAYS THESE TALES OF EVOLUTIONARY NATURAL HISTORY DO NOT PROVE ANYTHING.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

(MODERN SCOFFERS DENY THE FLOOD. THE EVIDENCE IS THERE! LOOK AT GRAND CANYON. FORMED IN PROBABLY 30 MINUTES AS A MUDFLOW NOT MILLIONS OF YEARS.) THEY LIVE IT UP AND TAKE PLEASURE IN THIS PRESENT WORLD EVEN THOUGH THE BIBLE SAYS:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

b) A BRUTUS IS A CHRISTIAN WHO IS NOT A FELLOW-LABORER. WE ARE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

i. Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

ii. Matthew 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

iii. Remember Julius Caesar's Words? ET TU BRUTE? SHOCK KNEW THE TRUTH!

iv. THE RICH MAN IN HELL.

1. Luke 16:22-31 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

v. One day all Brutuses will see their "slain Caesars"

1. Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

2. Revelation 20:14-15 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

vi. Jesus said Render Unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. What do we owe him.

vii. ARE YOU RENDERING TO CAESAR THE GOSPEL?

