

## Commentary — From the Margins *National Arrogance—*

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Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him [Jesus] in his words. And 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 [*for you do not look at people’s faces*]. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away. (Matt 22:15–22)

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### 1.

Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, thereby placing Caesar before God? If Jesus had answered in the negative, He would have been guilty of teaching sedition against Caesar. If he had answered in the affirmative, He would have been guilty of transgressing the first commandment. He was, as far as the Pharisees believed, in a no-win situation. Any answer He gave would leave Him condemned.

But Jesus stepped out of the Pharisees trap by asking to see the coin used to pay the tax ... this would have been a different coin than used in the temple—and it is this *difference* that Jesus exploited; for the coin of the temple could only be used in the temple where Roman coins had to be exchanged before an animal for a sacrifice could be purchased.

Whose likeness did the face of Osama bin Laden bear? The living God’s or the engraved Caesar’s? Did the face of the living Osama bin Laden not bear the likeness of the first Adam’s face, who was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 5:1)?

Whose inscription is on American coinage? And that is the context in which Jesus said, *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's ...* the inscription on U.S. coinage is, *In God We Trust*.

Is the United States of America the modern equivalent to Caesar?

Why couldn't temple officials kill Jesus themselves? The temple had its own coins, its own statutes and regulations. The temple had its own laws and customs, all of which differed from Roman law and customs. Yet, temple officials had to deliver Jesus to Roman officials—to civil authorities—for they could not kill Him themselves.

When lines are blurred between God and Caesar as in the case of the United States, with the nation publicly professing trust in God while, in reality, trusting in its secular might [i.e., trusting in munitions and the military], the God that America worships is the prince of this world, not the Most High God. The God America worships is the Adversary—and Americans have become a type and shadow of the people of the world that “will gaze at their [the two witnesses'] dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and ... rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth” (Rev 11:9–10).

Is that how you perceive yourself, one who stands opposed to the two prophets of God, making merry because your enemy has been slain? Do the prophets of God make merry when fire pours from their mouths to consume their foes (Rev 11:5), or rather, do they wear mourning garb [rough clothing] because of the dead that God has killed, that they have killed? By wearing mourning garb, they are not celebrating the death and destruction they can bring upon humankind. And no one of God will EVER celebrate with merriment the death of his or her enemy.

Before the Second Passover liberation of Israel occurs, this world has to be as far from God—as Light—as humankind can possibly get. This world will have to have arrived at a figurative midnight hour, when any movement by the peoples of this world will bring humankind closer to the dawn of a new day, of a new age, the return of Christ Jesus. And for American Christians to celebrate with merriment the assassination of Osama bin Laden, a man worthy of death—yes, he was worthy of death, but who isn't—is tasteless, classless, and an act of arrogance that God will quickly repay.

America doesn't trust in God, nor trust God, nor believe God, nor practice any sort of obedience to God. Rather, while professing faith in God, America practices open rebellion against God, tolerating the intolerable, celebrating the killing of an enemy who deserved to die, but whose death should have saddened the nation, not been a cause for celebration ... it's one thing to kill and to kill without hesitation when necessary, but it is never appropriate to rejoice in taking a life regardless of whose life has been taken or how vile the person was. It is never appropriate to cheer the death of an enemy as if administering long delayed justice were a victory in a football game.

So understand, you who cheer the death of Osama bin Laden will cheer the death of the two witnesses that will shut American skies so drought strikes the

land for the three and a half years of their prophesying—and they will turn American waters into blood and will strike this nation with every kind of plague because of the arrogance of the people, because Americans cheered instead of appearing humbly before God to give thanks when Osama bin Laden was slain. Yes, the two witness will bring plagues upon the United States because of national arrogance, said with the authority that comes from knowing what will occur.

The two witnesses are the two olives trees that stand beside the Lord, the glorified Jesus, throughout their ministry. And not just America but the world will cheer, will exchange presents (again, Rev 11:10) when these two men of God are slain by Apollyon; so what does celebrating the death of an enemy say about a person or about a nation in this present age?

During the Affliction, the power of God and of Caesar rests with Caesar for Caesar to use as he decrees—

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