

The Bible, the Constitution and the Christian's Responsibility

Introduction

2 Pet 1:3 according as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue,

"In ancient times, God, in an especial manner, on many occasions appointed the individual who was to govern; and he accordingly governed by a Divine right, as in the case of Moses, Joshua, the Hebrew judges, and several of the Israelite kings. In after times, and to the present day, he does that by a general superintending providence, which he did before by especial designation. In all nations of the earth there is what may be called a constitution – a plan by which a particular country or state is governed; and this constitution is more or less calculated to promote the interests of the community.

The civil governor, whether he be elected or hereditary, agrees to govern according to that constitution. Thus we may consider that there is a compact and consent between the governor and the governed, and in such a case, the potentate may be considered as coming to the supreme authority in the direct way of God's providence; and as civil government is of God, who is the fountain of law, order, and regularity, the civil governor, who administers the laws of a state according to its constitution, is the minister of God. But it has been asked: If the ruler be an immoral or profligate man, does he not prove himself thereby to be unworthy of his high office, and should he not be deposed?

I answer, No:

1 Cor 5:9-13: I wrote to you in the letter not to associate intimately with fornicators; yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then you must go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to associate intimately, if any man called a brother and is either a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or

an extortioner; with such a one not to eat. For what is it to me to also judge those who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But God judges those who are outside. Therefore put out from you the evil one.

If a ruler rules according to the constitution, nothing can justify rebellion against his authority. He may be irregular in his own private life; he may be an immoral man, and disgrace himself by an improper conduct: but if he rule according to the law; if he make no attempt to change the constitution, nor break the compact between him and the people; there is, therefore, no legal ground of opposition to his civil authority, and every act against him is not only rebellion in the worst sense of the word, but is unlawful and absolutely sinful. Nothing can justify the opposition of the subjects to the ruler but overt attempts on his part to change the constitution, or to rule contrary to law.

When the ruler acts thus he dissolves the compact between him and his people; his authority is no longer binding, because illegal; and it is illegal because he is acting contrary to the laws of that constitution, according to which, on being raised to the supreme power, he promised to govern.

This conduct justifies opposition to his government; but I contend that no personal misconduct in the ruler, no immorality in his own life, while he governs according to law, can justify either rebellion against him or contempt of his authority. For his political conduct he is accountable to his people; for his moral conduct he is accountable to God, his conscience, and the ministers of religion.

A king may be a good moral man, and yet a weak, and indeed a bad and dangerous prince. He may be a bad man, and stained with vice in his private life, and yet be a good prince. SAUL was a good moral man, but a bad prince, because he endeavored to act contrary to the Israel constitution: he changed some essential parts of that constitution and was therefore lawfully deposed. King James the Second was a good moral man, as far as one can learn, but he was a bad and dangerous prince; he endeavored to alter, and essentially change the British constitution, both in Church and state, therefore he was lawfully deposed.

It would be easy, in running over the list of our own leaders, to point out several who were deservedly reputed as good, who in their private life were

very immoral. However, as bad as they might have been in their private lives, the constitution was in their hands and they faithfully preserved it, took care of it while they held the reins of government, impartially and effectually administered it, and thus transmitted it unimpaired to their successors.

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE SAINTS AT ROME

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Verses 1-2: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

In the preceding section the apostle has denied to individuals the right of exercising vengeance against those who are wrong doers. In these and the immediately following verses he assigns to civil powers these rights and the responsibility that goes with them. God is supremely the God of order, and where there is no law there can be no order in society. Civil powers exist as ordained by God. No particular form of government is ordained by God, but government or civil power is ordained by God. Therefore, anarchy is contrary to the divine will, and anarchists are resisting God in their resistance to duly constituted authority in civil society. Hence, the expressed views of some religionists in our times are in direct conflict with Paul's teaching in this chapter. The recent contention that a citizen, by reason of his professed religion particularly, is obligated to obey only such laws as he approves, and not only is not obligated to obey others, but really obligated to disobey them is found to be condemned here. Many in recent years are thus to be found guilty of contempt for the law of God when they advocated and acted in disobedience to the constituted authority of the state. The very fact that inspiration here puts the stamp of divine approval on civil government necessarily implies that the purpose of such is good, and not evil. To take the position that some have that civil government both in origin and in existence is of Satan is manifestly in error.

Verses 3-4: For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; For he is a minister of God

to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

In this passage the Holy Spirit presents the proper attitude of the citizen toward the powers that be, and such is predicated on the just character of these powers. To assume, therefore, that submission to existing powers, however tyrannical they are, is herein demanded is to err. Rulers such as God enjoins submission to are those who are not a terror to good works, but justly a, terror to evil works. That is, the terror is to be directed toward those who do evil, and praise or approval toward those that do good. Hence, as here identified, civil powers or governments are divinely sanctioned, and thus to resist them is to resist the ordinance of God, which is equal to resisting God. Should this language omit any identification of the proper character and function of government, then one might conclude with some show of reason that unconditional submission to any character of civil power is required. But with the allusion to the province of government as being a terror to the evil doer, and an approver, and thus a protector, of those who do good, the obligation of the citizen to his government is qualified by virtue of the character of the particular government.

It does not follow that God has ordained any particular form of government, whether democratic, republican or monarchical. Nor has he ordained the monarchical either an absolute or limited monarchy. Perhaps the best form of government is an absolute monarchy, provided, of course, we have a wise and good monarch. Certainly, in the spiritual realm that is the form of government under which the citizens of the kingdom of Heaven live and are governed. But returning to the point of distinction, when the civil power functions as God ordains it to function, then justice is maintained; protection of the lives, and rights of its citizens is afforded, and they, in turn, are obligated to sustain and support the government. But when civil powers are transmuted into organs of tyranny over the lives and rights of its citizens, there is a decided alteration in the prescribed obligations of the citizen to such powers.

The reason for the suggested thought of an absolute monarchy being the best form of government exists in the observation that many peoples are incompetent of self- government. In this day we witness many little countries, released from colonialism, displaying a decided incompetency of self- government; they become the pawns of designing men and of other nations

with world-wide aspirations to dominate. Too, a paternalistic government is the inevitable victim of corruption and deception by those who are in power. The righteous powers of civil government are severely limited. This limitation is restricted to the area of doing for its citizens only that which they in their individual capacity are unable to do for themselves. But when such governments undertake to do for the people that which they can do for themselves when left to their own resources, as protected in their rights by the government, the results are those we witness today in our own land! God has placed in the hands of duly constituted civil powers the sword, and Paul affirms that the ruler bears not the sword in vain. Counter to this position, we behold today the decision of the supreme court of California, and, expectantly and fearfully, a like decision by the United States Supreme Court, that he must bear the sword in vain!, The sword must not be used to execute wrath upon the evil doer! Hence, human courts are impeaching the validity of God's word. In religion, human courts have for centuries been impeaching the will of God as revealed to man, and now secular powers are moving into this area of acting as bodies of impeachment of God's will.

There is no truth more clearly taught within the scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, than the requirement enjoining the exercise of capital punishment against those who do things worthy of death.

Verse 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Here is stated two reasons for subjection to the powers that be: first, for, or on account of wrath; that is, lest by not being obedient to the laws of the land one incurs the just penalty for such violation, the visitation of wrath by the minister of God, authorized to invoke such law. Further, should there be no fear of apprehension and penalty for doing wrong, the added incentive is for the sake of having an approving conscience. It is highly likely more are restrained by the first than the second incentive, and the lack of swift and just punishment today is constantly eroding the first.

Verse 6. For this cause pray ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

To pay tribute is equivalent to paying taxes. When Jesus was asked if it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, His reply was, "Render to Caesar the thing's

that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's", thus showing that a Christian sustains a relation to each. That is, in his citizen capacity as a citizen of two kingdoms, he has dual responsibilities. The duty to one does not negate the duty to the other. Further, it shows that in becoming a citizen of the kingdom of Christ, we do not cease to be a citizen of the kingdom or government where we live here. A citizen of this country remains a citizen, though he becomes a Christian; otherwise, every Christian becomes an alien and an anarchist.

But in any relation where there are reciprocal blessings, correspondingly, there are reciprocal duties. The citizen has duties to the government by reason of the duties the government owes its citizens. What is the duty of each is a blessing to the other. Hence, when either party fails or violates its duty to the other, it has a decided bearing on the subsequent duty of the other party to the relationship. This obtains in all relationships. Consequently, we see here the expressed recognition of the duty to pay tribute to the government because the rulers are attending continually upon this very thing. What thing? The thing of protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty. To establish and maintain law and order to these ends is the basic and divinely ordained function of civil government, and when it fails here, any citizen is justified in resenting the oppression of paying tribute. I do not say he is justified in evading, and therefore escaping such payment; but rather he is paying for something for which he isn't getting value in return. Our forefathers rebelled against a tyrannical and insensitive government, and established in this land a government dedicated to the proposition that its citizens would be secure in their lives, liberties and the pursuit of happiness. In guaranteeing the first two they secured and protected the pursuit of the latter. And when these are not provided by an alert, diligent and honest administration of the state, the happiness of a people is subverted. The administration of government needs to be changed to bring- it to its just and proper functions. Unhappily, politicians are prolific with promises, but generally exceedingly deficient in performance.

Verse 7: Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Generally, tribute and custom would denote the same thing, and any distinction here would be unimportant. The point involved in rendering fear

and honor is associated in the relative superiority of the rulers over the ruled, a matter of authority. It isn't that, intrinsically, the ruler is superior, but a superiority inherent in the office occupied. In our day we observe a widespread disregard for the one who occupies the highest office in our government, the Presidency, that reflects discreditably on those so acting and speaking. The dignity attaching to the position forbids the disrespect that is reflected in the conduct and words of some dissident citizens. One may justly hold in contempt the character of a given occupant of the office, but the office he holds forbids withholding the fear and honor due him.

Verse 8: Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

To owe no man is equal to rendering that which is due, to perform the obligations duty imposes on one in the many relations of life. The obligation to love one another is a continuing obligation that can never be fulfilled in the sense that it is finished and therefore ceases. Many specific obligations cease with their fulfillment, but not this one. But love here is said to so influence and direct one that he thereby fulfills the law. The verses following set forth the practical application of the truth here stated. This love, then, is basically a becoming recognition and appreciation of the object loved, and therefore dictates the proper action toward such ones as we love.

Verse 9: For this. Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus, when asked which was the greatest commandment in the law, replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." In this language here of Paul's we see the force of the statement that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. That is, all the teaching of the prophets, and the several laws by Moses, including the Ten Commandments, hang on or are upheld by these two; that is, these comprehend and embody all others, and constitute the basis of every duty of

man to God and his fellowman. Mark records the express approval of this teaching of Jesus by a scribe who heard him answer the question propounded by this scribe. His clear perception of this sublime truth, and forthright expression of his appreciation, brought forth from Jesus the observation that he was not far from the Kingdom of God. This implies that the reign of Christ is one which recognizes and enforces these two great commandments upon His subjects. If to recognize and accept this teaching is necessary to appreciating and being prepared for citizenship in the Kingdom of Christ, how exceedingly vital that those in the Kingdom respect and obey these commandments in all their ramifications and applications in their lives. A just appreciation of the essential worth of one's neighbor is to love him as one loves himself, and consequently such a recognition impels us to treat him as we would have him treat us. Implicit here is the rightful existence of self-love, for we could not love our neighbor as ourselves, except as we loved ourselves. But if we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, we are lovers of self in the sense condemned in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. We aren't justified in loving ourselves above our true worth, nor in loving others less than theirs. And in loving them as ourselves we shall never, as thereby controlled, violate the prohibitions here cited by Paul from the law. These are moral restrictions imposed on human conduct arising from the law that requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. No person was ever prompted to commit adultery where there was a becoming regard or love for the injured party or parties. Such is always the outgrowth of a selfish and shortsighted regard for the desires of self rather than for either the proper respect for one's own best interest or that of another. Also, the prohibition against murder is founded in the essential dignity of man as created in the image of God, and the true worth of the creature as attested thereby. Hence, the required execution of the murderer rests on this fact of man being made in the image of God. (Gen. 9:6)

To steal is to take by stealth that which belongs to another. and certainly such an act is a denial of the love . for the one against whom the crime is committed. However wrong the act of stealing of material property is, that of bearing false witness is to perpetrate a greater injury against one's neighbor than that. Even as this is being written there is before me the knowledge of some men of rather prominent influence among brethren who stand guilty of this base and detestable sin. To bear false witness or testimony is to convey and express to others that which is false as to the facts alleged, and designed initially to injure or ruin the one against whom it is borne. We may unwittingly take up a false report and carry it forward to others and thereby

do grave harm to the subject of the report. But love for our neighbor requires that we know the truth of that which we relate, and then do so if and only when some higher end of good requires its being told. To covet is to desire, and when used in an adverse sense it carries the thought of either desiring inordinately, or desiring that which under no conditions we can justly secure. It involves, then, wanting something which in its attainment would react injuriously on him to whom the object desired belongs.

To love our neighbor is second in the order of its importance to that of loving God. Hence, we are to love God more than we love ourselves, because His worth is infinitely greater than ours. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves, because, as touching his origin and nature his worth equals ours.

Verse 10: Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

To fulfill law is to obey its requirements. Jesus said He could bid angels to His rescue, but if He did so, "How then would the scriptures be fulfilled?" That is, the scriptures taught that He should die for the sins of mankind, and should He not die the scriptures so teaching would be unfulfilled. Every command addressed to responsible men finds fulfillment when obeyed. But back of each command, either enjoining or forbidding a given action, there is design. The design of all God's directions is the good of man and the glory of God; hence, when we love our neighbor we only act as promotive of his good and never his ill. The law of loving our neighbor looks to the ultimate well-being of the one so loved.

Verse 11: And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

This passage brings into sharp focus the sobering thought that time is passing, and as opportunity is couched in time, with the passing of time there is a continuing diminution of opportunity. The time to be about the Father's business is present; the time past cannot be recalled. To awake out of sleep is to be aroused out of the lethargy of indifference, and to busily engage in doing good. We read of the Savior's saying that He must work the works of the Father, for the night comes when none can work, Peter tells those to whom he wrote, and equally those who are the elect today, that the times past must

suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. There is no time allotted on time's calendar for the child of God to do the works of the evil one, or to indolently pass his days in doing nothing for the betterment of the cause for which Christ died.

Salvation from sin occurs at the moment forgiveness is extended by God to the sinner; therefore there is a present salvation. But this verse teaches there is a future salvation. What is it, and what is its nature? The very fact we are here told these Roman saints were nearer its attainment than when they believed shows it to be future. But in the future it is nearer than when they were initially saved. It must, then, be a salvation from the body of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. So long as we live here we are subject to all the frailties of the flesh and the inevitable erosion of our physical powers. In the resurrection the redemption of man shall be consummated.

Verse 12: The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Here he extends the figure by contrasting light and darkness. The night is the time for sleep; the daytime is for active work. Hence, when he speaks of the night being far spent, he says, in effect, what he suggests in the preceding verse: awake out of sleep. It isn't, however, a night of sleep in the sense of inactivity and passive repose; rather it is the night wherein the time has been employed in the works of darkness. These are evil works. We are told that men love darkness because their deeds are evil. Dropping the imagery, the lesson is, cease doing evil and begin doing good. The armour of light is a figure denoting the protective quality that doing good provides as a shield. It is thus referable to the teaching in the forepart of the chapter bearing on the dutiful obedience of citizens, who for their good shall receive praise, whereas the evil doer shall be subjected to the avenging agency of civil government. Here, of course, it extends to all the relations of life. Darkness has always been identified with evil and light with good, and also, respectively, with ignorance and understanding. To walk in the light is to walk in the enlightened understanding of the truth, and doing so we have fellowship with God the Father, 'the Lord Jesus Christ, and all other saints who so walk.

Verse 13: Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

The previous passage expresses anticipation of the approaching day, and thus to walk as in the day enjoins an honest course of conduct. Deception is an essential tool and element of dishonesty, therefore to walk honestly involves an openness of life subject to the sight and observation of others. Nothing is to be done in a corner under the cover of deception. If at all times we acted with the assurance that in beholding us God approved, there certainly would be no occasion to seek the cover of darkness in which to perform our deeds.

The things proscribed here are of such a character as to be identified with darkness as the time and condition under which normally they are expected to be done. To violate the restriction against rioting certainly has no reference to the type of riots recently witnessed by mobs across America, however wicked and tragic they are. Here the thought of reveling is in mind, and as expressed in the A.S.V. it is a concomitant of drunkenness, and therefore joined with it here. Wantonness is lasciviousness, a licentiousness of thought and interest which gratifies itself in the chambering linked with it here. Chambering has to do with the bed as the place of illicit intercourse, and thus is here forbidden as equivalent in import to unlawful cohabitation. Strife and envying are joined here, the latter leading in relation to the former. Envy expresses itself and seeks satisfaction through strife. Therefore they are both forbidden. There may be strife where envying does not immediately stand as the cause, but where envying exists strife will almost invariably develop.

*Verse 14: But put ye **on** the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

The prohibition against making provisions for the flesh is qualified as relating to the purpose of fulfilling the lusts Chapter Thirteen thereof. Therefore striving to secure the means and arranging- the time for such indulgences is what is forbidden. To provide for our needs and those who are rightly dependent on us is not only allowable but a very vital duty. (Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8.) Contrasted therewith, however, is the need of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. One does this initially when he is baptized into the name of Christ. (Gal. 3:27.) Therefore it must convey here the thought of a progressive effort to put Him on in following His example in our life. To grow more like Him in character and conduct should be the highest ambition and most laudable endeavor of every Christian. However many and serious be our failings in such efforts, the effort should always be made, and by the grace of God success can be attained.

Why do Nations Fall

Why do Nations Fall?

Why Rome Fell

According to Edward Gibbon, author of: THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

- Rapid increase of divorce; undermining of the sanctity of home
- Higher & higher taxes; leading to the welfare system
- Decay of religion
- Mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming focus and progressively more brutal
- Armament build-up; ignoring internal decadence

Why America is on the brink of falling

- Truth suppressed
- Rejection of God
- Idolatry
- Sexual immorality
- Violent behavior
- Know better, but approve/encourage sinners

Luther Martin, a delegate of Federal Constitution Convention, 1788:

“It was said, it ought to be considered, that national crimes can only be, and frequently are, punished in this world by national punishments.”

George Mason, the “father of Bill of Rights”, 1788:

“As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, so they must be in this by inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities.”

Samual Adams, s. of Declaration of Independence:

“Revelation assures us that ‘Righteousness exalteth a nation.’ Communities are dealt with in this world by the wise and just Ruler of the Universe. He rewards or punishes them according to their general character.”

Why do Nations Fall

Thomas Jefferson, 1794

“I likewise tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that His justice cannot sleep forever”

Daniel Webster, 1903

“If we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”

McAlvany Intelligence Advisor, April, 1999. (newsletter)

The decline of America should be obvious to any thinking American. The explosion of crime, gang warfare and drive-by shootings in our cities; the disintegration of the American family, with proliferating divorce, infidelity, child abuse, single parent families, and teenage rebellion; the explosion of drug usage (the highest in the world); the killing of 40 million babies in their mothers' wombs, over 26 years; the rampant spread of promiscuity, pornography, homosexuality, and sexually transmitted diseases; the dumbing down of American children in the public school system; gross immorality and corruption in the highest levels of the U.S. government are all irrefutable evidence of a country whose culture, morality, tradition, and spiritual life are in free-fall.

Sins of Leaders are transmuted as Sins of a Nation

- [2 Kings 21:10-15](#) –[10](#) And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, [11](#) Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, doing more wickedly than all that the Amorites did, who were before him, and has made Judah also to sin with his idols, [12](#) therefore, so says the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing evil on Jerusalem and Judah, so that whoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle.[13](#) And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the measuring line of the house of Ahab. And I will wipe Jerusalem like a dish is wiped, wiping and turning *it* upside down. [14](#) And I will forsake

Why do Nations Fall

the remnant of My inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies. And they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies, [15](#) because they have done the evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt even until this day.

- [Matt 23:31-38](#) – the [31](#) Therefore you are witnesses to yourselves, that you are the sons of those who killed the prophets; [32](#) and you fill up the measure of your fathers. [33](#) Serpents! Offspring of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? [34](#) Therefore, behold, I send prophets and wise men and scribes to you. And you will kill and crucify *some* of them. And some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city; [35](#) so that on you may come all *the* righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. [36](#) Truly I say to you, All these things shall come on this generation. [37](#) O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the *one* killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to her, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, and you would not! [38](#) Behold, your house is left to you desolate.

Sins of the People are Sins of the Nation

Correcting Leaders and Government Employees

- Ex 22:28 – You shall not revile God, nor curse the ruler of your people
- Acts 23:5 – Then Paul said, I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest; for it is written, "You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people."

1 Kings 11:25

Ecc 10:5

Power of the Sword

The POWER OF THE SWORD refers to the power given governments to raise the sword against evildoers as a form of punishment and against enemies in the case of war.

- Job 5:20 – In famine He shall redeem you from death; and in war from the power of the sword.
- Proverbs 29:
 - 2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people mourn.
 - 4 The king establishes the land by judgment; but he taking bribes tears it down.
 - 7 The righteous knows the plea of the poor; the wicked cares not to know it.
 - 8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare, but the wise turn away wrath.
 - 10 Men of blood hate the upright; but the just seek his soul.
 - 12 If a ruler listens to lies, all his servants are wicked.
 - 14 A king who truly judges the weak, his throne shall be established forever.
 - 15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a boy sent off causes shame to his mother.
 - 16 When the wicked are multiplied, sin increases; but the righteous shall see their fall.
 - 18 Where there is no wisdom, the people perish; but he who keeps the law, he is blessed.
 - 25 The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever puts his trust in the LORD shall be safe.
 - 26 Many seek the ruler's favor; but each man's judgment comes from the LORD.
 - 27 An unjust man is a hateful thing to the just; and he who is upright in the way is hateful to the wicked.

Power of the Sword

There are only three enumerated crimes listed in the Constitution of the United States of America.

1. Counterfeiting – Article 1 Section 8 Clause 6
2. Piracy and Offences against the Law of Nations – Article 1 Section 8 Clause 10
3. Treason – Article 3 Section 3 Clause 1

Congress has the right to enact laws related to:

- Enumeration of each States' citizens for Representatives and direct Taxes – Article 1 Section 2 Clause 3
- Time and manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives – Article 1 Section 4 Clause 1
- When Congress shall convene – Article 1 Section 4 Clause 2
- Compensation for serving as a Representative or Senator – Article 1 Section 6 Clause 1
- Bankruptcies - Article 1 Section 8 Clause 4
- Calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions – Article 1 Section 8 Clause 10

But Congress only has the right to enact Punishment for the following:

- Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States
- Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason
- To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations
- Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behavior, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people. *Hence the silence of the Constitution is Authoritative; just as silence of the scripture is authoritative.*

Power of the Purse

The POWER OF THE PURSE refers to the power given governments to raise and spend money.

MONEY

mun'-i: Various terms are used for money in the Bible, but the most common are the Hebrew keceph, and Greek argurion, both meaning silver. We find also qesiTah, rendered by Septuagint "lambs," probably referring to money in a particular form; chalkos, is used for money in Mt 10:9; Mk 6:8; 12:41. It was the name of a small coin of Agrippa II (Madden, Coins of the Jews); chrema, "price," is rendered money in Acts 4:37; 8:18,20; 24:26; kerma, "piece," i.e. piece of money (Jn 2:15); didrachmon, "tribute money" (Mt 17:24 the King James Version, the Revised Version (British and American) "half-shekel"); kensos, "census," "tribute money" (Mt 22:19).

1. Material and Form:

Gold and silver were the common medium of exchange in Syria and Palestine in the earliest times of which we have any historical record. The period of mere barter had passed before Abraham. The close connection of the country with the two great civilized centers of antiquity, Egypt and Babylonia, had led to the introduction of a currency for the purposes of trade. We have abundant evidence of the use of these metals in the Biblical records, and we know from the monuments that they were used as money before the time of Abraham. The patriarch came back from his visit to Egypt "rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Gen 13:2). There was no system of coinage, but they had these metals cast in a convenient form for use in exchange, such as bars or rings, the latter being a common form and often represented or mentioned on the monuments of Egypt. In Babylonia the more common form seems to have been the former, such as the bar, or wedge, that Achan found in the sack of Jericho (Josh 7:21). This might indicate that the pieces were too large for ordinary use, but we have indications of the use of small portions also (2 Ki 12:9; Job 42:11). But the pieces were not so accurately divided as to pass for money without weighing, as we see in the case of the transaction between Abraham and the children of Heth for the purchase of the field of Machpelah (Gen 23). This transaction indicates also the common use of silver as currency, for it was "current money with the merchant," and earlier than this we have mention of

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the use of silver by Abraham as money: "He that is born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money" (Gen 17:13).

Jewels of silver and gold were probably made to conform to the shekel weight, so that they might be used for money in case of necessity. Thus Abraham's servant gave to Rebecca a gold ring of half a shekel weight and bracelets of ten shekels weight (Gen 24:22). The bundles of money carried by the sons of Jacob to Egypt for the purchase of grain (Gen 42:35) were probably silver rings tied together in bundles. The Hebrew for "talent," *kikkar*, signifies something round or circular, suggesting a ring of this weight to be used as money. The ordinary term for money was *keceph*, "silver," and this word preceded by a numeral always refers to money, either with or without "shekel," which we are probably to supply where it is not expressed after the numeral, at least wherever value is involved, as the shekel (*sheqel*) was the standard of value as well as of weight (see WEIGHTS AND MEASURES). Thus the value of the field of Ephron was in shekels, as was also the estimation of offerings for sacred purposes (Lev 5:15; 27, *passim*). Solomon purchased chariots at 600 (shekels) each and horses at 150 (1 Ki 10:29). Large sums were expressed in talents, which were a multiple of the shekel. Thus Menahem gave Pul 1,000 talents of silver (2 Ki 15:19), which was made up by the exaction of 50 shekels from each rich man. Hezekiah paid the war indemnity to Sennacherib with 300 talents of silver and 30 of gold (2 Ki 18:14). The Assyrian account gives 800 talents of silver, and the discrepancy may not be an error in the Hebrew text, as some would explain it, but probably a different kind of talent (see Madden, *Coins of the Jews*, 4). Solomon's revenue is stated in talents (1 Ki 10:14), and the amount (666 of gold) indicates that money was abundant, for this was in addition to what he obtained from the vassal states and by trade. His partnership with the Phoenicians in commerce brought him large amounts of the precious metals, so that silver was said to have been as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones (1 Ki 10:27).

Besides the forms of rings and bars, in which the precious metals were cast for commercial use, some other forms were perhaps current. Thus the term *qesiTah* has been referred to as used for money, and the Septuagint translation has "lamb." It is used in Gen 33:19; Josh 24:32; Job 42:11, and the Septuagint rendering is supposed to indicate a piece in the form of a lamb or stamped with a lamb, used at first as a weight, later the same weight of the

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precious metals being used for money. We are familiar with lion weights and weights in the form of bulls and geese from the monuments, and it would not be strange to find them in the form of sheep. QesiTah is cognate with the Arabic qasaT, which means "to divide exactly" or "justly," and the noun qist means "a portion" or "a measure."

Another word joined with silver in monetary use is 'aghorah, the term being translated "a piece of silver" in 1 Sam 2:36. 'Aghorah is cognate with the Arabic ujrāt, "a wage," and it would seem that the piece of silver in this passage might refer to the same usage.

Another word used in a similar way is rats, from ratsats, "to break in pieces," hence, rats is "a piece" or "fragment of silver" used as money. These terms were in use before the introduction of coined money and continued after coins became common.

2. Coined Money:

After the exile we begin to find references to coined money. It was invented in Lydia or perhaps in Aegina. Herodotus assigns the invention to the Lydians (i.94). The earliest Lydian coins were struck by Gyges in the 7th century BC. These coins were of electrum and elliptical in form, smooth on the reverse but deeply stamped with incuse impressions on the obverse. They were called staters, but were of two standards; one for commercial use with the Babylonians, weighing about 164,4 grains, and the other of 224 grains (see Madden, *op. cit.*). Later, gold was coined, and, by the time of Croesus, gold and silver. The Persians adopted the Lydian type, and coined both gold and silver darics, the name being derived from Darius Hystaspis (521-485 BC) who is reputed to have introduced the system into his empire. But the staters of Lydia were current there under Cyrus (Madden, *op. cit.*), and it was perhaps with these that the Jews first became acquainted in Babylon. Ezra states (2:69) that "they (the Jews) gave after their ability into the treasury of the work threescore and one thousand darics (the Revised Version (British and American)) of gold, and five thousand pounds of silver." The term here rendered "daric" is darkemonim, and this word is used in three passages in Neh (7:70-72), and 'adharkonim occurs in 1 Ch 29:7 and Ezr 8:27. Both are of the same origin as the Greek drachma, probably, though some derive both from Darius (a Phoenician inscription from the Piraeus tells us that darkemon

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corresponds to drachma). At all events they refer to the gold coins which we know as darics. The weight of the daric was 130 grains, though double darics were struck.

Besides the gold daric there was a silver coin circulating in Persia that must have been known to the Jews. This was the siglos, supposed to be referred to in Neh 5:15, where it is translated "shekel." These were the so-called silver darics, 20 of which were equivalent to the gold daric. Besides these Persian coins the Jews must have used others derived from their intercourse with the Phoenician cities, which were allowed to strike coins under the suzerainty of the Persians. These coins were of both silver and bronze, the suzerain not permitting them to coin gold. We have abundant examples of these coins and trade must have made them familiar to the Jews.

The issues of Aradus, Sidon and Tyre were especially noteworthy, and were of various types and sizes suited to the commercial transactions of the Phoenicians. The Tyrian traders were established in Jerusalem as early as the time of Nehemiah (13:16), and their coins date back to about that period. Among the finest specimens we have of early coinage are the tetradrachms of Tyre and the double shekels or staters of Sidon. The latter represent the Persian king, on the obverse, as he rides in his chariot, driven by his charioteer and followed by an attendant. On the reverse is a Phoenician galley. The weight of these coins is from 380 to 430 grains, and they are assigned to the 4th and 5th centuries BC. From Tyre we have a tetradrachm which corresponds to the shekel of the Phoenician standard of about 220 grains, which represents, on the obverse, the god Melkarth, the Tyrian Hercules, tiding on a seahorse, and, beneath, a dolphin. The reverse bears an owl with the Egyptian crook and a flail, symbols of Osiris. The early coins of Aradus bear, on the obverse, the head of Baal or Dagon, and on the reverse a galley. The inscription has "M.A." in Phoenician letters, followed by a date. The inscription signifies "Melek Aradus," i.e. "king of Aradus."

When Alexander overthrew the Persian empire in 331 BC, a new coinage, on the Attic standard, was introduced, and the silver drachms and tetradrachms struck by him circulated in large numbers, as is attested by the large number of examples still in existence. After his death, these coins, the tetradrachms especially, continued to be struck in the provinces, with his name and type, in his honor. We have examples of these struck at Aradus, Tyre, Sidon, Damascus

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and Acre, bearing the mint marks of these towns. They bear on the obverse the head of Alexander as Hercules, and, on the reverse, Zeus seated on his throne holding an eagle in the extended right hand and a scepter in the left. The legend is BASILEOS ALEXANDROU, or ALEXANDROU, only, with various symbols of the towns or districts where they were struck, together with mint marks.

The successors of Alexander established kingdoms with a coinage of their own, such as the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria, and these coins, as well as those of Alexander, circulated among the Jews. The Ptolemies of Egypt controlled Palestine for about a century after Alexander, and struck coins, not only in Egypt, but in some of the Phoenician towns, especially at Acre, which was, from that time, known as Ptolemais. Their coins were based upon the Phoenician standard. But the Seleucid kings of Syria had the most influence in Phoenicia and Palestine, and their monetary issues are very various and widely distributed, bearing the names and types of the kings, and the symbols and mint marks of the different towns where they were struck, and are on the Alexandrine or Attic standard in contrast to those of the Ptolemies. They are both silver and bronze, gold being struck in the capital, Antioch, usually. The coins of Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, are especially interesting on account of his connection with Jewish affairs. It was he who made the futile attempt to hellenize the Jews, which led to the revolt that resulted, under his successors, in the independence of the country of Syrian control, and the institution of a native coinage in the time of the Maccabees.

The struggle caused by the persecution of Antiochus commenced in 165 BC and continued more than 20 years. Judas, the son of Mattathias, defeated Antiochus, who died in 164, but the war was continued by his successors until dynastic dissensions among them led to treaties with the Jews to gain their support. At last Simon, who espoused the cause of Demetrius II, obtained from him, as a reward, the right to rule Judea under the title of high priest, with practical independence, 142-143 BC. Later Antiochus VII, his successor, confirmed Simon in his position and added some privileges, and among them the right to coin money (138-139 BC). Both silver and bronze coins exist ascribed to Simon, but some numismatists have recently doubted this, and have assigned them to another Simon in the time of the first revolt of the Jews under the Romans. The coins in question are the shekels and half-shekels with the legends, in Hebrew, sheqel yisra'el and yerushalem qedhoshah

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("Jerusalem the holy"), bearing dates ranging from the 1st to the 5th year, as well as bronze pieces of the 4th.

The reason for denying the ascription of these coins to Simon the Maccabee is the difficulty in finding room for the years indicated in his reign which closed in 135 BC. He received the commission to coin in 139-138, which would allow only 4 years for his coinage, whereas we have coins of the 5th year. Moreover, no shekels and half-shekels of any of the Maccabees later than Simon have come to light, which is, at least, singular since we should have supposed that all would have coined them as long as they remained independent, especially since they coined in bronze, examples of the latter being quite abundant. The fact also that they bore the title of king, while Simon was high priest only, would seem to have furnished an additional reason for claiming the prerogative of coinage in silver as well as bronze. But this argument is negative only, and such coins may have existed but have not come to light, and there are reasons which seem to the present writer sufficient to assign them to Simon the Maccabee. In the first place, the chronological difficulty is removed if we consider that Simon was practically independent for three or four years before he obtained the explicit commission to coin money. We learn from Josephus (*Ant.*, XIII, vi, 7) and from 1 Macc (13:41,42) that in the 170th year of the Seleucid era, that is, 143-142 BC, the Jews began to use the era of Simon in their contracts and public records. Now it would not have been strange if Simon, seeing the anarchy that prevailed in the kingdom of Syria, should have assumed some prerogatives of an independent ruler before they were distinctly granted to him, and among them that of coining money. If he had commenced in the latter part of 139 BC, he would have been able to strike coins of the 5th year before he died, and this would satisfy the conditions (see Madden's *Jewish Coinage*). There is a difficulty quite as great in attributing these coins to Simon of the first revolt under the Romans. That broke out in 66 AD, and was suppressed by the taking of Jerusalem in 70. This would allow a date of the 5th year, but it is hardly supposable that in the terrible distress and anarchy that prevailed in the city during that last year any silver coins would have been struck. There is another fact bearing upon this question which is worthy of notice. The coins of the first revolt bear personal appellations, such as "Eleazar the priest," and "Simon," while those assigned to Simon the Maccabee bear no personal designation whatever. This is significant, for it is not likely that Eleazar and Simon would have commenced coining silver shekels and half-shekels with their names inscribed

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upon them in the 1st year of their reign and then have omitted them on later issues. Another point which has some force is this: We find mention, in the New Testament, of money-changers in connection with the temple, whose business it was to change the current coin, which was Roman or Greek, and bore heathen types and legends, for Jewish coins, which the strict Pharisaic rules then in force required from worshippers paying money into the temple treasury. It is inferred that they could furnish the shekels and half-shekels required for the yearly dues from every adult male (compare Mt 17:24-27). Now the only shekels and half-shekels bearing Jewish emblems and legends, at that time, must have been those issued by the Maccabean princes, that is, such as we have under discussion. In view of these facts the Maccabean origin of these pieces seems probable.

The shekels under discussion have on one side a cup, or chalice (supposed to represent the pot of manna), with the legend in Hebrew around the margin, sheqel yisra'el, with a letter above the cup indicating the year of the reign. The reverse bears the sprig of a plant (conjectured to be Aaron's rod) having three buds or fruits, and on the margin the legend, yerushalem ha-qedhoshah, "Jerusalem the holy." The half-shekel has the same type, but the reverse bears the inscription, chatsi sheqel (half-shekel). The letters indicating the year have the letter called "shin" (Shenath, "year") prefixed, except for the first. This also omits the Hebrew letter "waw" (w) from qedhoshah and the second letter, "yodh" (y) from yerushalem. The term "holy" for Jerusalem is found in Isa 48:2 and other passages of the Old Testament, and is still preserved in the Arabic qudus by which the city is known today in Syria.

Copper, or bronze, half-and quarter-shekels are also attributed to Simon, bearing date of the 4th year. The obverse of the half-shekel has two bundles of thick-leaved branches with a citron between, and on the reverse a palm tree with two baskets filled with fruit. The legend on the obverse is shenath 'arba` chatsi, "the fourth year a half," and on the reverse, li-ghe'ullath tsiyon, "the redemption of Zion." The quarter-shekel has a similar type, except that the obverse lacks the baskets and the reverse has the citron only. The legend has rebhia`, "quarter," instead of "half." Another type is a cup with a margin of jewels on the obverse and a single bunch of branches with two citrons on the reverse.

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The palm is a very common type on the coins of Judea and a very appropriate one, since it is grown there. Jericho was called the city of palms. The branches of trees in bundles illustrate the custom of carrying branches at the Feast of Tabernacles and the erection of booths made of branches for use during this feast (see Lev 23:40). The baskets of fruit may refer to the offerings of first-fruits (Dt 26:2). One of the above series of coins published by Madden bears the countermark of an elephant, which was a symbol adopted by the Seleucid kings, and this is an evidence of its early date. But whatever doubts there may be as to the coins of Simon, there can be none as to those of his successor, John Hyrcanus, who reigned 135-106 BC, since they bear his name. They are all of bronze and bear the following inscription with a great number of variations, Yehochanan hacoheh hagadel wachabar heyhudim, "Johanan the high priest and senate of the Jews." The reverse has a two-branched cornucopia with a poppy head rising from the center. There is some doubt as to the meaning of the word hebher in the above. It is commonly rendered "senate," taking it in the sense it seems to bear in Hos 6:9, "a company" or "band," here the company of elders representing the people. Judas Aristobulus (106-105 BC) issued similar coins with Hebrew legends, but with the accession of Alexander Jannaeus (105-78 BC) we find bilingual inscriptions on the coins, Hebrew and Greek. The obverse bears the words yehonathan ha-melekh, "Jehonathan the king," and the reverse, BASILEOS ALEXANDROU, "King Alexander." Most of his coins, however, bear Hebrew inscriptions only. All are of copper or bronze, like those of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, and are of the denomination known to us in the New Testament as "mites" weighing from 25 to 35 grains.

When the Romans took possession of Palestine in 63 BC, the independent rule of the Hasmoneans came to an end, but Pompey confirmed John Hyrcanus as governor of Judea under the title of high priest. Dissensions between him and other members of his family called for interference several times on the part of the Romans. Hyrcanus was again confirmed by Julius Caesar in 47 and continued in authority until 40. It is uncertain what coins he issued, but whatever they were, they bore the type found on those of Alexander Jannaeus. In 40 BC, the Parthians temporarily overthrew the Roman authority in Syria and Palestine, and set Antigonus on the throne of the latter, and he reigned until 37. The coins he issued bore bilingual inscriptions like the bilinguals of Alexander. He calls himself Antigonus in Greek, and Mattathias in Hebrew, the type being a wreath on the obverse and a double cornucopia on the reverse, though some have it single. They are much heavier coins than the preceding

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issues. The legends are: obverse, BASILEOS ANTIGONOU, "of King Antigonos"; reverse (mattithyah ha-kohen gadhol ha-yeh(udhim), "Mattathias the high priest of the Jews."

The Hasmonean dynasty ended with Antigonos and that of the Herods followed. Herod the Great was the first to attain the title of king, and his coins are numerous and bear only Greek legends and are all of bronze. The earliest have the type of a helmet with cheek pieces on the obverse and the legend: BASILEOS HRODOU, and in the field to the left gamma (year 3), and on the right, a monogram. The reverse has a Macedonian shield with rays. The coin here illustrated is another type: a rude tripod on the obverse, and a cross within a wreath on the reverse, the legend being the same as given above.

Herod Archelaus, who reigned from 4 BC to 6 AD, issued coins with the title of ethnarch, the only coins of Palestine to bear this title. They are all of small size and some of them have the type of a galley, indicating his sovereignty over some of the coast cities, such as Caesarea and Joppa.

The coins of Herod Antipas (4 BC-40 AD) bear the title of tetrarch, many of them being struck at Tiberias, which he founded on the Sea of Galilee and named after the emperor Tiberius. The following is an example: obverse HER. TETR. (HERODOU TETRACHOU), with the type of a palm branch; reverse, TIBERIAS, within a wreath. Others have a palm tree entire with the date lambda-gamma (LG) and lambda-delta (LD): 33 and 34 of his reign, 29-30 AD. There are coins of Herod Philip, 4 BC-34 AD, though somewhat rare, but those of Agrippa, 37-44 AD, are numerous, considering the shortness of his reign. The most common type is a small coin ("mite") with an umbrella having a tassel-like border, on the obverse, and three ears of wheat on one stalk on the reverse. The legend reads: Basileos Agrippa, and the date is LS (year 6). Larger coins of Agrippa bear the head of the emperor (Caligula or Claudius) with the title of Sebastos (Augustus) in Greek.

Agrippa II was the last of the Herodian line to strike coins (48-100 AD). They were issued under Nero, whose head they sometimes bear with his name as well as that of Agrippa. They are all of the denomination of the mite (lepton).

In 6 AD, Judea was made a Roman province and was governed by procurators, and their coins are numerous, being issued during the reigns of Augustus,

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Tiberius, Claudius and Nero. They are all small and bear on the obverse the legends: KAISAROS (Caesar), or IOULIA (Julia), or the emperor's name joined with Caesar. The coins of the Jews struck during the first and second revolts, 66-70 AD, and 132-135 AD, have already been alluded to with the difficulty of distinguishing them, and some have been described. They all have the types common to the purely Jewish issues; the date palm, the vine, bunches of fruit, the laurel or olive wreath, the cup or chalice, the lyre and a temple with columns. Types of animals or men they regarded as forbidden by their law. Most of them are bronze, but some are silver shekels and half-shekels, dated in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years, if we assign those of higher date to Simon the Maccabee. Those of the 1st year bear the name of Eleazar the priest, on the obverse, and on the reverse the date "first year of the redemption of Israel," shenath 'achath li-ghe'ullath yisra'el. Others bear the name of Simon and some that of "Simon Nesi' Israel" ("Simon Prince of Israel"). The coins of the 2nd and 3rd years are rare. They have the type of the cup and vine leaf, or temple and lulabh. Those supposed to belong to the second revolt bear the name of Simon without Nesi' Israel, and are therefore assigned to Simon Bar-Cochba. The example here given has the type of the temple on the obverse with what is thought to be a representation of the "beautiful gate," between the columns, and a star above. The name Simon is on the margin, the first two letters on the right of the temple and the others on the left. The legend of the reverse is: lecheruth yerushalem ("the deliverance of Jerusalem").

Some of the coins struck by the Romans to commemorate their victory over the Jews were struck in Palestine and some at Rome, and all bear the head of the Roman emperor on the obverse, but the reverse often exhibits Judea as a weeping captive woman, seated at the foot of a palm tree or of a Roman standard bearing a trophy. The legend is sometimes Judea capta and sometimes Judea devicta. The example given has the inscription in Greek: IOUDIAS EALOKUIAS, Judea capta.

There are coins of Agrippa II (the "king Agrippa" of Acts 25: 26, struck in the reign of Vespasian, with his name and title on the obverse and with a deity on the reverse, holding ears of wheat in the right hand and a cornucopia in the left. The inscription reads: ETOU KSBA AGRI PPA (year 26, King Agrippa) in two lines.

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After the revolt of Bar-Cochba and the final subjugation of the Jews by Hadrian, Jerusalem was made a Roman colony and the name was changed to Aelia Capitolina. A series of coins was struck, having this title, which continued until the reign of Valerianus, 253-260 AD. These coins were all of copper or bronze, but silver pieces were in circulation, struck at Rome or at some of the more favored towns in Syria, such as Antioch. These were denarii and tetradrachms, the former being about one-fourth the weight of the latter which were known as staters (Mt 17:27). The piece referred to was the amount of tribute for two persons, and as the amount paid by one was the half-shekel (Mt 17:24), this piece must have been the equivalent of the shekel or tetradrachm.

Prayer offered to the Kansas State Senate, January 21, 2002

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance.

We know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that is exactly what we have done.

We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We confess that:

- We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism,
- We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery,
- We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare,
- We have killed our unborn and called it choice,
- We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable,
- We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem,
- We have abused power and called it politics,
- We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition,
- We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of speech,
- We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.

Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of Your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen!