

FAITH AND POLITICS

A FIVE-WEEK SERMON SERIES

#1: WAS JESUS POLITICAL?

"RENDER UNTO CAESAR" MAY PROVIDE A SURPRISING ANSWER

Definition of terms:

Politics. Derived from *Polis*, City (Greek). Pertaining to governance of a people, and the ordering of human community.

The Coin:



The inscription is "TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F AVGVSTVS," an abbreviation of "TIBERIVS CAESAR DIVI AVGVSTI FILIVS AVGVSTVS" — "Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus, Augustus." (© Trustees of the British Museum)

Sermon 1 Main Points

1. Jesus' message isn't just about individual, private spirituality; it's about public, social ethics. Jesus *was* political. But *how*?
2. Herodians and Pharisees were *parties*, and had opposing ideas about involvement with Rome.
3. The question they ask is meant to box Jesus in: to be unpopular with the people, or an enemy of Rome.
 - a. It has more to do with whether Jesus was a *revolutionary*.
4. Other possible religious responses to politics at the time
 - a. Overthrow Rome; establish theocracy, God as King (Zealots)
 - b. Escape politics and wait for God to fix things (Essenes, desert sect)
5. Jesus answer is clever, and "fuzzy"
 - a. Caesar claims to be son of god. His image is in on the coin, and everyone has it in their pockets.
 - i. What really does belong to Caesar?
 - b. Whose images is stamped in you? To whom do *you* belong and where is your ultimate loyalty in this life?
 - c. Does this call all Christians to be *political*? With clarity about our ultimate loyalty and values?