

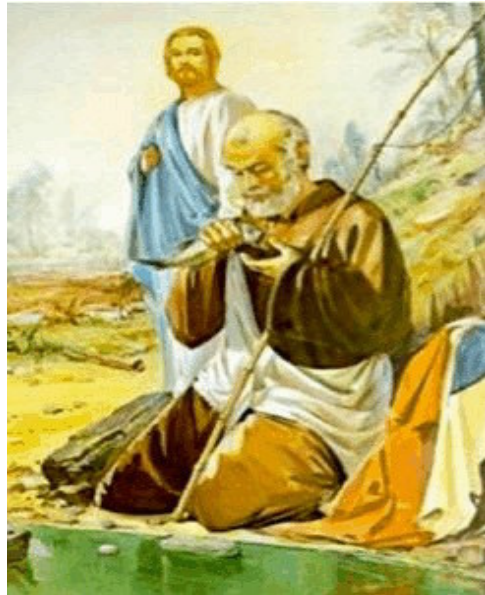
Church of God Sunday School

PETER FINDS MONEY IN A FISH'S MOUTH

Matthew 17:24-27

Have you ever heard your parents or other adults talk about paying taxes? Many times people struggle to have enough money for taxes. Did you know that Jesus also paid taxes? In this story, Jesus did not have the tax money, but God provided in a very special way.

All Jewish men twenty years and older were required to pay the tribute (a temple tax) for the expenses of the temple in Jerusalem. In the month of Adar (March), tollbooths were set up in each town and village to collect this tax. Each man was to pay one half-shekel (Exodus 30:13).



offend them" (become a stumbling block or a hindrance to them).

Jesus told Peter to go to the sea and "cast an hook." Peter knew how to fish, but this was a strange way to find the tribute money. Jesus told Peter to take the "fish that first cometh up." Peter was to open the fish's mouth, and Jesus said that he would "find a piece of money" in that fish. Peter was to use that money (or the coin) to pay the tax for Jesus and for himself.

How did Jesus know Peter would find money in the mouth of a fish? Fish are often attracted to shiny objects. It could be that the fish had found a dropped coin and

tried to eat it. Or it could be that God put the coin in the fish's mouth. Either way, God directed that special fish to Peter's hook!

Can you imagine how surprised Peter must have been to find the money, just as Jesus said he would? God supplied the tax money. Can you think of other stories in the Bible when God provided for someone's needs?

When the Israelites were hungry, God sent manna and quail to feed them. When a widow and her son were starving, God put meal in her barrel and oil in her cruse. Did you know that while Israel wandered in the wilderness, their clothes and shoes didn't wear out (Deuteronomy 29:5)?

Do you need God to help you? It does not matter what that need is, God will provide. Why not ask for His help today?

When Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum (*kuh-PUHR-nee-uhm*), publicans (Jewish tax collectors) came to Peter and asked him, "Doth not your master [Jesus] pay tribute?" (No doubt, they were trying to find fault with Jesus.) Peter answered, "Yes."

But where was Peter going to find the tribute money? Jesus was poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). Could God take care of this need?

Peter entered the house where Jesus was, but before he could say anything, Jesus began to ask Peter questions about the tribute money. (How did Jesus know that the publicans had been talking to Peter?)

Jesus asked Peter if earthly kings taxed their own children or strangers? Peter knew that when kings required a tax, it was not from family members. So Peter answered, "Of strangers." Jesus said, "Then are the children free."

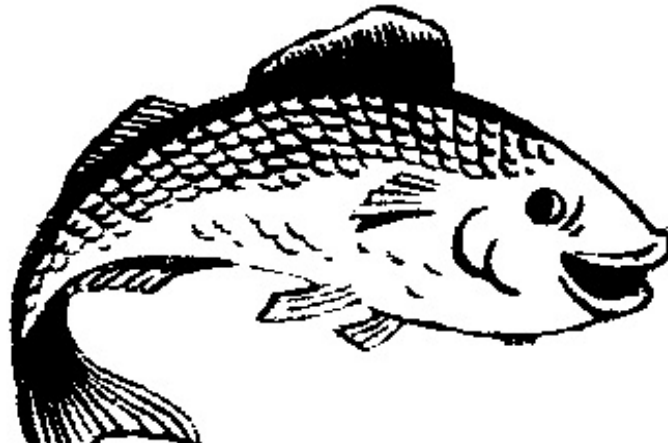
Jesus wanted Peter to understand that He was God's Son. (The temple tax was for God's house. Should God's Son have to pay it?) Also, the priests and some rabbis (teachers) did not have to pay the tax. However, the publicans did not believe Jesus was either of these.

Jesus should not have been required to pay this tax, but He did not refuse to pay it, "lest we should

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

—Philippians 4:19



# What Was Found in the Fish's Mouth?

