

SON OF GOD AND ANCIENT COINS

ROMAN COIN WITH OCTAVIAN

Roman Coin (31 BCE – 14 CE)

The front has the head of Octavian (Augustus Caesar) with **DIVINI FILIUS** (= “Son of the Divine”).

The back inscription has **DIVOS IVLIVS** (= “Divine Julius”) surrounded by a wreath.



Relevance for the Gospels: The coin refers to both a God (Julius Caesar) and to God’s Son (Octavian), just as the Gospels refer to God (the Father) and to God’s Son (Jesus Christ).

ROMAN DENARIUS: JULIUS CAESAR (GOD) AND OCTAVIAN (SON OF GOD)

Roman Silver Denarius (38 BCE).

The front has the wreathed head of Julius Caesar and head of Octavian (Julius Caesar’s adopted son) facing each other. The left inscription has **DIVOS IVLIVS** (= “Divine Julius”) and the right has **DIVI F** (= “Divine Son”).



The back has the inscription M. AGRIPPA \ COS DESIG RSC 5.

Relevance for the Gospels: The coin refers to both a **God** (Julius Caesar) and to **God’s Son** (Octavian), just as the Gospels refer to God (the Father) and to God’s Son (Jesus Christ).

ROMAN DENARIUS: OCTAVIAN AS SON OF GOD

Roman Silver Denarius minted between 31 BCE – 14 CE.

The front has Venus. The back has **CAESAR DIVINI FILIUS** (= “Caesar, Son of the Divine”) with Octavian in military dress. Since the father of Tiberius (Octavian, Augustus Caesar) had been declared a god by the Roman Senate, Tiberius claimed to be the Son of God.



ROMAN DENARIUS: TIBERIUS AS SON OF GOD

Roman Denarius (14-37 CE).

The front has Tiberius Caesar with the inscription **T**iberius **CAESAR DIVI**ni **AUG**usti **F**ilius **AUGUSTUS** (= “Tiberius, Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus, Augustus”).



The back has Livia with the inscription, **PONTIFEX**

MAXIMus (high priest). Since the father of Tiberius (Octavian, Augustus Caesar) had been declared a god by the Roman Senate, Tiberius claimed to be the Son of God.

Relevance to the Gospels: When early Christians claimed that Jesus as the *Son of God*, they were not only comparing Jesus to Tiberius (the Emperor during the time of Jesus), but also denying Tiberius that status. Jesus also referred to this coins such as this in Matt 22:15-22: “Jesus said, ‘Let me see the money you pay the tax with.’ They handed him a denarius, and he said, ‘Whose head is this? Whose name?’ ‘Caesar’, they replied. He then said to them, ‘Very well, give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.’”

JEWISH HALF SHEKEL

A Silver Half Shekel (68 - 54 BCE). It weighs 7.00g and is 23.6 mm in diameter.

The front has the laureate head of beardless Melqarth. The back has **TYROU IERAS KAI ASULOU**, “from [the city] of Tyre the holy and inviolable.” On the back is an eagle standing on beak of ship



carrying palm frond under wing. In the left field is a club and date DN (= year 54 = 73/72 B.C.) or possibly AN (= year 69/68 B.C.). A delta (Δ) or D is in the right field.

Relevance for the Gospels: At the Temple in Jerusalem the annual tax levied on Jews was a half shekel per male. The half shekel and shekel were not always used in everyday commerce, but were the only coins accepted by the Temple. Moneychangers set up in the Temple court exchanged other money for the Half Shekel. Jesus found this business and their shouting (advertising rates) offensive, so he overturned their tables (Jn 2:15). Shekels of Tyre were the only currency accepted at the Jerusalem Temple and are probably the coinage with which Judas was paid for the betrayal of Christ. Matt 26:14-15: “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, ‘What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?’ And they covenanted with him for 30 pieces of silver.”

Source: FORVM ANCIENT COINS (<http://www.forumancientcoins.com/>).