

Jesus the Messiah Is Lord

Mark 12:35–37 (Psalm 110:1)

The trio of question traps has ended. The hostile Pharisees and Herodians, the Sadducees, and the scribe, with all their varying attempts at a “gotcha” moment with Jesus in the temple courts have been completely dismantled, and they have left humiliated. As v 34 concludes the section, “no one dared to ask him any more questions.” While no one dares ask Jesus any more questions, it’s as though he says, “Now I’ve got a question for you.”

And it is an absolutely remarkable question and a **turn** in his public teaching that we have been looking for since Ch 1. You recall that in the opening days of his ministry that when he cast out demons he forbid them to speak because they knew him — the demons knew Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. He told people he healed, “Do not say anything about this; do not tell anyone.” This prohibition about telling who he was may have seemed odd to us in the beginning, but you will recall that we referred to it as the **Messianic Secret**. Don’t reveal who he is yet. Why was that?

People had notions about the Messiah; they were looking for a political king. There was **no way** that they could understand that Jesus had not come just to free them from an oppressive government — as though that would fix everything — but to break the chains of sin and death and deliver them from the dominion of darkness. There was no way, that is, without seeing his atoning sacrifice on the cross and his life-giving resurrection from the dead. Ultimate freedom of the soul brings eternal life through the defeat of sin and death. **That** is what the Messiah comes to do. He does it by offering himself, a suffering servant, as a substitute. We are now days away, hours really, from the fulfillment of his earthly ministry. The secret is over, and he begins to make clear who he is: Christ, the Messiah.

Mark 12:35–37 — ³⁵ And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶ David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet.”

³⁷ David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?” And the great throng heard him gladly.

PRAY

The Inspired, Unchanging Word of God

As Jesus begins his turn at questioning, he quotes from Psalm 110, an oft-quoted Messianic Psalm, to reveal truths about who he is. The scribes, expert theologians and scholars, are obviously well-versed in the Psalms, the hymnbook of Israel. We will get to the central theme of his question in a moment, but let's first see how Jesus views and interprets the Psalms, the books of Moses, and as we see other places, the whole of what we call the Old Testament.

How **does** Jesus regard this Psalm in particular from which he quotes, and the writings of the Old Testament in general? What does he understand them to be? When he earlier responded to the religious leaders, he quoted the Torah (the books of Moses), underscoring that they are inspired, authoritative, and prophetic. Jesus regards what we call the Old Testament as being authoritative, divinely inspired scripture, breathed out by God. He, as the incarnate word of God, shows us that the God-breathed scriptures point to him as the Messiah.

In a day, when people are going wobbly in their conviction and confidence in the Word of God, let us see and be braced by Jesus's certainty that All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.¹ Because it is unchanging, forever fixed in the heavens,² in a hostile and disoriented world we can be confident that we are walking in ways that please God when we obey it and have our minds formed by it. As it is God's revelation of himself (as we see here as Jesus is revealed as Messiah), we should study it and cherish it as being more precious than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.³

If every voice, every influencer, every politician, every educator stands together against the Word of God, ask yourself: Who is going to be around in 100 years, or whom will ultimately give account to? Will you believe those people who will have returned to the dust from whence they came, or will you believe Jesus, the incarnate Word and eternal King, who is seated at the right hand of God?⁴ Let God be true, and everyone a liar.⁵ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.⁶ Who are you going to believe?

¹ 2 Timothy 3:16–17

² Psalm 119:89

³ Psalm 119:72

⁴ Colossians 3:1

⁵ Romans 3:4

⁶ Isaiah 40:8

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Now let's see how Psalm 110:1 points to Jesus the Messiah.

It almost sounds like a riddle. "The Lord says to my Lord." Though the New Testament Greek does not delineate between the two different words that are translated, Lord, we are greatly helped by simply looking at Psalm 110:1 and noting the Hebrew, which anyone can do with a good study bible. The LORD, **YHWH**, says, to my Lord, **Adonai** — Master, or Lord.

David is referencing a conversation with the Godhead between the Father and the Son.

The Father, who is Eternal God, says to the Son, who is Eternal God,

Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.

Jesus points out that the scribes teach this in their classes, but they don't understand what it means. The hard part comes next: David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?

Here's the conundrum: In the honor cultures of the Middle East elders are highly regarded and respected. A father would never call one of his descendants "Lord." That's completely upside down.

Here's the big picture: This is how Jesus is beginning to make clear that he is the Messiah: The Messiah was promised from the line of David. We see from the careful genealogies of both sides of his earthly family in Matthew and Luke that Jesus is of the house and lineage of David. He is King David's son in every way that Jews would know. Yet King David, the highest and greatest King in the history of Israel, would never refer to one of his descendants as Lord — a term of deity. How does he, then, refer to his son as Lord? Because his son is the promised Messiah, the Son of God.

The kingdom of heaven is breaking forth on the earth through Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He is Lord. He is David's son, as the one who took on flesh and came in human form. He is greater than David, and his works are greater than all David's accomplishments, as significant as those were.

- Where David expanded the kingdom of Israel, Jesus has purchased people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation, and made them to be a kingdom and priests to God.
- Worship up to that point had been highest under King David. But it was a system that required repeated animal sacrifices which reminded of sin, but could not take away sin. Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God has come offering himself up once for all, bearing away and forgiving the sin of all who come to him in faith. Through Christ worship is no longer performed through human efforts and bound to a particular geography, it is Spirit-led, and in truth.
- David conquered territorial enemies that were existential threats to Israel. Jesus the Messiah raids the domain of darkness, delivering captives from the ultimate and inescapable enemy, Death. He crushes Satan, the prince of this world under his feet and takes captivity captive. He

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does not do this through military conquest, but as the Suffering Servant. *Wounds which mar the chosen One bring many sons to glory.*⁷ He gives his life to destroy the sin that destroys us. He obediently becomes the substitute for all who put their faith in him, taking away their sins and wrapping them in his righteousness.

- David died an old man and is now in the presence of the Lord bowed in worship. Jesus conquered death and lives forever, seated at the right hand of God, and is receiving worship from David who calls him, Lord.

The Messiah has come! Open your eyes to see this Israel! Disciples, where you had a private discussion about who Jesus was, now it is time for the whole world to come to grips with the Good News that Jesus, the Son of God, has come to crush sin and death, opening a new and living way through the curtain of his body.

Because he has come, giving himself a ransom for many, God the Father has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name. “Sit at my right hand,” says the Father. Reign in your session while all your enemies are brought down and put under your feet.

Oh! What rich application from this short, but massive passage!

It is on this victorious basis that the Apostle Paul calls us to orient the totality of lives to living for our King. He opens Colossians 3, saying, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.⁸

Here there is sin-conquering power and depression-devouring joy. Look away from yourself and your circumstances and lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely... run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.⁹

⁷ From *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*, Stuart Townend

⁸ Colossians 3:1b-3

⁹ Hebrews 12:1b-2

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Here there is assurance of the forgiveness of sins! Jesus is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.¹⁰ We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.¹¹

Here is the call to turn from your death-producing ways and walk in his ways for his glory. You are made for this!

Have you come under his rule and reign? It seems common to find those who gladly come under the reign of Christ — that is, they desire and appreciate the benefits of his kingdom — but to come under his **rule** is another story. They prefer a hybrid structure to life that audits and evaluates the rule of Christ revealed in his living word, his commands and precepts, and cook a life-stew that adds 2 portions of the wisdom of God with 3 portions of their own wisdom and experience to create a concoction that makes practical sense to them in the real world. They appreciate God's theoretical and aspirational commands and wisdom, but "he's not here living in the real world." This is where I live and love; I'm the expert here. He is Lord then; But I'll exercise a co-rule now... Are you lord, or is he Lord? In his words in Mark 8, are you denying yourself, dying to yourself in order to live and serve in his kingdom? He is not negotiating treaties concerning those who come into his kingdom to determine what level of sovereignty over their life they can maintain. We do not get to determine what of the King's commands we will obey.

Beloved, the practice of dividing or governing our love and strength between what we reason to manageable leaves us defeated and drained, ineffective in our walk. Because God has not designed it to be this way. When we give him our all we experience his resurrection power and joy. Does this mark your walk with Christ? We cannot **moderately submit** to the One who is seated at the right hand the Majesty and call ourselves Christian. That's not a thing. When we do that it is not the Lord Christ's kingdom we are serving, but ours, thinking we will still gain the reward of his kingdom while pursuing ours. Why do we think this?

He is sovereign. He is King. He dictates what is required of the world. The Father has exalted him to the highest place. He is sovereign. Every knee well must. He will brook no challenges to his throne.

¹⁰ Hebrews 7:25

¹¹ Hebrews 8:1b–2

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Do you understand that his kingdom is one of life and peace? He does not take any good thing away from us. His rule and reign is one of benevolence, and peace, and life eternal. Apart from his is death. Submit to this King and live!

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹²

PRAY

¹² Philippians 2:5–11