

Introduction

No one can be correct about everything, but there are some matters about which we simply must be determined not to be wrong. I think for example of the trial that went on in Kenosha for the last couple weeks. The lawyers, judge, and jury held justice and the life of a young man in their hands. Rittenhouse was either going to be sentenced to life in prison or he was going to be set free. The jury had to get it right. The price of being mistaken was incredibly great. That is probably why it took 4 days for them to deliberate. While you and I were not on that jury, we face matters in regard to which we too must be ultra determined not to be wrong. We cannot afford it; the price of being mistaken is too great. There is no matter about which we should be more certain that we are correct than the one we encounter this morning. This is the matter of the identity of the Messiah and for that matter the identity of Jesus. It is a matter that Jesus himself raised to the Pharisees who had become his fiercest enemies. We turn to Matthew 22:41-46 and see how Jesus raised the issue of the identity of the Messiah.

[Read Text and Pray]

In the course of Matthew 22, the enemies of Jesus put him to the test with what they believed were tricky issues. They asked him questions about taxes, the nature of the resurrection, and which is the greatest commandment. Now Jesus takes his turn and poses a question to the Pharisees. By this question Jesus zeroes in on what has to be the most urgent question at that particular time. The time is urgent because Messiah is standing right there before these people, yet they do not identify him as such. Rather than accepting and affirming Jesus as Messiah, they are testing him in a foolish attempt to discredit him and form a basis upon which to condemn him. So HE asks THEM about the identity of the Messiah. It is a question that goes unanswered in this text, yet it is clear Jesus had an answer in mind. The identity of the Messiah is the main point here: Whose son is he? He is the son of David and so much more. Jesus quotes from Psalm 110 to pose the question that silenced the questioners.

I. Messiah is the Son of David.

A. The word in our translations is Christ. Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew Messiah. When we refer to our Savior as Jesus Christ; it is not his first and last names to which we are referring. His name is Jesus and his title is Christ—meaning “anointed one”—the same as the Hebrew word Messiah. From as early as Genesis 3:15, the scriptures of the Old Testament were looking ahead to a descendant who would crush the foe of God’s people. God’s promise in Genesis came on the heels of the fall. A human offspring was coming who would bruise the serpent’s head. Deuteronomy 18 promised a prophet greater than Moses to whom God’s people should listen. Daniel 9 speaks of a coming anointed one who would be a prince. Psalm 110 indicates that the coming lord of whom David speaks would also be a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were each anointed for their office. It was an indication of God’s consecration of them to the role of service. In the office of Messiah, THE ANOINTED ONE, these three positions were combined. But whose descendant would he be? From all the tribes of Israel, from whom would he descend? Another way of saying it is, “whose son is he?”

B. Everybody in Israel knew that Messiah was to descend in the line of King David. We are inching closer and closer to the Christmas season and one of the prophecies we will be reminded of at this time comes from Micah indicating that the birthplace of the one who would come forth to be ruler in

Israel would be Bethlehem, the city of David. Moreover, God had made a covenant with King David in which He promised that a descendant of his would reign forever. Sproul says this question, posed to the most scholarly people of the land in terms of the scriptures, "was like asking someone with a PhD the kind of question even a kindergartner could answer." It was with great confidence and without hesitation that the Pharisees answered Jesus's initial question, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They replied, "The son of David."

And they were correct, in part. Messiah was indeed to be the great and coming king in the line of David. One of the central points Matthew makes in the writing of the good news of Jesus is that he is the son of David. Matthew 1:1 announces, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David." Both Jesus's parents according to the flesh traced their ancestry back to David. So legally through Joseph and actually through Mary, Jesus the Messiah, is the son of David. But he is more!

II. Messiah is the Lord of David.

A. The Messiah, the Christ, is more than just a descendant of David. The SCRIPTURES indicate it. Here is where Jesus refers to Psalm 110:1. Before we get into it, I want us to pay close attention to how Jesus introduces Psalm 110:1. He asks the Pharisees, "How is it that David, IN THE SPIRIT, calls him, [the Christ], Lord?" David, IN THE SPIRIT. Jesus right here sets forth his understanding of the transmission of the scripture. He says that when David wrote the 110th psalm, he was "in the Spirit." In just these few words, Jesus makes clear that he already holds to the doctrine that Paul espoused in his second epistle to Timothy that "all scripture is breathed out by God." It is also what Peter wrote that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The doctrine of the inspiration of the scriptures from God and therefore their corresponding authority and inerrancy are expressed by Christ Jesus himself. There is no questioning here of what the text says, only the quoting of it as possessing full authority.

B. Now, what the scriptures declare through the speech of King David, as he was moved along by the Spirit, is that the Christ is David's Lord. David's words are, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.'" The original language of the New Testament is Greek, and in the Greek both instances here of the word LORD are the same word. However, in the Hebrew version, the original language of Psalm 110:1, the first Lord is Yahweh and the second is Adonai. In explicit terms then the Hebrew text says, "Yahweh, the Lord, said to Adonai, my Lord." Yahweh is the name which God gave to Moses when Moses asked him, "Whom shall I say sent me?" It is God's name which means "I AM." Yahweh is having a conversation with a person other than himself. David says that person is his Lord, his Adonai. Adonai means "the Sovereign One." It is the supreme TITLE given exclusively to God. So what we have is I Am is speaking to God but with a distinction of persons. And the person of God to whom Yahweh is addressing himself is one David identifies as his Adonai, his sovereign one, the one who rules over even him.

David, the greatest king in the history of Israel, bows to Messiah. The coming Messiah is greater than David himself, with whom God made a covenant that his descendant would reign forever. As significant as David is, he has a Lord who is far greater still. He is worthy of being called the Lord of David. It is imperative that we know and recognize exactly who this is because whoever it is deserves our allegiance as well. He is our Lord too. We owe to him devotion and submission and awe and loyalty as well.

III. Messiah is the Son of God.

Jesus's insinuation that Messiah is David's Lord is stunning. In Jewish thinking a son is never greater than his father. The descendant is always secondary to the older. The son of a king is never greater

than the king. And this point is precisely what lies at the heart of Jesus's question. How can this be? How can he who will descend from David be king OVER David? How can it be that a descendant of David is a king who is GREATER than David, who in fact is David's sovereign ruler? "How is it," Jesus asks, "that the King, the Messiah, the Christ, and a DESCENDANT of David, might be one to whom David himself bows the knee?"

The Spirit-inspired words uttered by David answer the question. It is because he is Adonai. He bears a title which is only ascribed to God. And yet this one who is God is spoken to by Yahweh. How can the "I AM" speak to another who is himself "ADONAI." God can speak to God without merely talking to himself because although God is one, he is more than one. He is multi-personal. Jesus has just mentioned the Spirit of God by whom David was speaking. Now he is emphasizing that there is a third person that composes the one being of God. He is the Adonai to whom Yahweh speaks. And the answer is given to Jesus's initial question. "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" He IS in fact the son of David, but you will miss him if you do not grasp that just as importantly, he IS the Son of God.

These Pharisees were silenced that day by Jesus. No one was able to answer him a word. Did they not know? Could they not grasp it from Isaiah 9 that Messiah, the child who would be born, upon whose shoulders the government would rest, would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace? But they were speechless.

There WAS a Pharisee, however, sometime later, who provided in writing an answer to the question. He was a converted Pharisee. He had been given eyes to see, and at the outset of a letter to other believers, he wrote about God's good news in this way: that good news concerned God's "Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." The former Pharisee's name was Paul. And he inscribed these words at the opening of his epistle to the Romans.

Messiah Jesus, King Jesus, Jesus Christ, he is the Son of God. And it was always essential that Messiah would be simultaneously the son of David and the Son of God. And Jesus is the only one who could ever fit that bill. The Son of God alone could ever be both the son of David and the Lord of David. And, as Paul wrote to the Romans, he is Jesus Christ OUR LORD. If we truly follow Jesus, we will follow him as Lord.

When you think of Jesus, how do you conceive of him? Do you think of him as the little baby in the manger? As a carpenter? As a healer or a teacher? Or perhaps as the creator? Well, above all you should think of him as Messiah. You should think of him as king. You should think of him as Lord. That is who the Son of God is. He is to be obeyed. You cannot come to Jesus to be saved without coming to him as your Lord. He did not relinquish lordship to be a savior. There would be no salvation if it was not Jesus as Lord who laid down his life for us. Jesus warned us in his great sermon that not everyone who says to him Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. There are those who call him Lord who do not submit to him as Lord; they do not do the will of his Father. And if that is so, how much more will those be excluded who are unwilling to even call him Lord.

If Jesus is not your Lord, he is not your Savior. If you look at salvation merely as an insurance policy to protect you from hell, you have missed what salvation is all about. God has designed to save a people whose faith submits in obedience to their king for his glory. Repentance is the first command of the gospel. Repentance is all about turning from resistance against God to submission to his

Lordship. If a person believes they can be genuine recipients of God's grace but maintain a disposition of resistance to his will, they are gravely mistaken. Do not be one of those.

IV. Messiah Is Currently in Heaven.

Psalm 110 is THE MOST quoted Old Testament text in the New Testament. It tells us more than that Jesus is the Messiah, the son of David, and the Son of God. It also tells us where Jesus is right now. The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet."

The disciples heard Jesus speak parting words to them and they witnessed Jesus ascend into the clouds. The angels explained that Jesus was taken up into heaven. When the Spirit came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, Peter preached his great Pentecostal sermon. He declared that God had raised up from the dead Jesus whom the men of Israel crucified. He further stated that Jesus was presently exalted at the right hand of God in keeping with what David said. "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.'" He concluded in a flourish. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Jesus was crucified. He died. He was buried. But God raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand. That is where he is until his rule is fully consummated. RIGHT NOW Jesus is at the right hand of the Father.

It is a position of honor. It is a place of exaltation. He is lifted up. In the ancient world, to sit at the right hand of a host was a place of honor. And yet, to sit at the right hand of a king is more than honor. It is also exaltation. It is to share in his authority and rule and majesty. It is depicted by Paul in Philippians 2:

Jesus Christ "being found in human form, . . . humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross. Therefore, God has HIGHLY EXALTED HIM and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

This exaltation is also depicted in Revelation 4 and 5. Here the living creatures cry out day and night. They never cease to say, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come. And they say, "Worthy are you, Our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." Then in the RIGHT HAND of the one who sat upon the throne, there was a scroll. And a mighty angel spoke with a loud voice, asking "Who is worthy to take the scroll and break its seals?" No one anywhere was found worthy and John began to weep until he was told that there was one who was worthy. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, had conquered so that he might open the scroll and its seven seals. He appeared as a lamb looking as though he had been slain. He went and took the scroll from the RIGHT HAND of him who sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb . . . And they sang a new song, saying,

Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on earth.

Myriads and myriads and thousands of thousands said with a loud voice.

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!

And John heard every creature everywhere saying,

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!

And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Brothers and sisters, this is where Jesus is right now. He is exalted and he is worshiped. What a difference from the way he was treated when he was on earth! In heaven at the right hand of God, He is treated to chorus after chorus of praise. And he is WORTHY. When you think of Jesus, how do you imagine him? How do you typically conceive of Christ? He is not in a manger. He is not on a cross. He is not in a tomb. He is in glory at the right hand of God, and I encourage you to let your mind be filled with this reality day by day until he returns. He is holy and exalted. He is at the right hand of God in heaven. Saints and angels declare his praise. We should be doing no less here on earth as it is in heaven.

V. Messiah's Enemies Will Be Vanquished.

Jesus will remain there at the right hand of I Am until it is the Father's pleasure to bring it all to a close with ALL the enemies of the Lord vanquished under his feet. This reference from Psalm 110 was a warning to the Pharisees of what would become of them if they did not repent. They and all his other enemies would be subdued.

Which do you want to be? Christ's enemy or his subject? He shares his rule with his subjects and grants them to see his glory, but he vanquishes his enemies underfoot. Under his feet is the image of the crushing and lethal blow Christ will deliver to the devil. Sooner or later every knee will bow, whether by grace or by force. By grace could not be better and by force could not be worse. Bend your knees today to the Lamb who alone is worthy, to the Messiah who is Jesus.

Conclusion

The Pharisees were gravely mistaken about the identity of Jesus and yet they were determined to persist in their error. Their hardness of heart kept them from seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus. It is a tragedy repeated over and over among humans, but one about which we cannot afford to be wrong. Many, many people approach matters of eternal importance with an attitude of nonchalance. They trust that their superficial assumptions are right and hardly stop at all to think deeply about life's most important questions. Often they assume that because they hear a cacophony of answers in the world, being certain does not really matter. But nothing could matter more than who Jesus is and what he has done. Thankfully most of us here have come to realize that by God's grace. But if there is one who is taking this matter lightly, please realize nothing matters more.

Prayer

Benediction

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Today He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. A day is coming when his enemies will be vanquished beneath his feet. May he empower us by his Spirit to live in the joyful conviction of who he is—the Lamb who was slain, who did ransom for God people from every tribe and tongue and nation, who is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing! A-men.