

David's Lord

Call to Worship: Psalm 110

1st Scripture: John 8:12-59

2nd Scripture: Matthew 22:41-46

Introduction

One of the ways, in which, the religious leaders sought to destroy our Lord was by seeking to trick Him into saying something that would get Him into trouble with the Jews or the Herodians. To this end, they would ask Him questions about whether or not they should pay taxes, what is the greatest commandment, by what authority did He throw the Money-changers out of the temple...etc. However, He always answered their questions perfectly, and shut them down. The truth has a way of doing that, especially when dealing with ill-motivated deceivers.

Well, after they had their turn, and gave up trying to deceptively trap Him anymore, He had a question for them, which if they had answered correctly, could very well have led them to the truth, which they had, out of their pride and jealousy, hardened themselves against. This morning, we will consider the question that our Lord had asked His enemies, and the profound answer to this question. In doing so, I hope that we will get a greater appreciation for the glory of what our Lord reveals here.

I. David's Lord

We are told in verses 41-42, "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" (vs. 41-42a).

Now, right from the outset, before we move on, it is important for us to realize that when the Lord asks the Pharisees this question, He is not doing so, merely to stump them, as they attempted to do to Him. In other words, unlike the natural man (and unlike what I would be tempted to do, if I am honest), the Lord didn't say to Himself, "You know, these characters want to play games with Me? They want to attempt to deceive Me and to catch Me in some trap. Well, I have a question that I will nail them on. Let them have a taste of their own medicine. Only, unlike Me, they will be stumped." This is not the way the Lord operated. His purposes

were always pure and good, and not motivated by revenge of any kind. Now, of course, He does stump them really good, but that is not His intention. And, in fact, had they really wrestled through what He reveals to them here; had they humbled themselves and sought His help even, in seeking to grasp what was profoundly being revealed to them here, they could have greatly benefitted their own souls in the process.

And secondly, notice as well, how our Lord fearlessly enters *their* comfort zone, as it were, to question them. In other words, He never feared these men. Indeed, He saw right through them, and was never afraid to address them collectively or individually. Even though they *always* plotted together, concerning how they might destroy Him; even though they were very calculated and crafty in their approach toward Him, putting all of their minds together unto the task, the Lord was so grounded in the Word of God, and so reliant upon His Father and the power of the Holy Spirit, that He never, for even a single moment, feared them. And here, He walks right into their den, and single handedly addresses and dismantles them. And had they humbled themselves, this could have been a tremendous benefit and blessing to them, because again, our Lord never took any action for the sake of exacting some sort of revenge, or for simply showing that He was more intelligent and smarter than others. Such designs did not bring Him any pleasure. And may we have such a heart, brethren, when we deal with those who would strive to contend with us. May we speak humbly and wisely, unto the motive of seeking to bring about the conversion and edification of those, with whom, we interact.

And so, as they had refused to embrace Jesus as the Christ (knowing that others were embracing Him as such), the Lord then asks them a few questions about the Christ, the first being very basic, but serving primarily as a means of leading into a second and much more profound question. “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

There was probably not a single soul in all of Israel that would not have known the answer to this question. But again, the Lord is going to use this as a lead into His next question, getting them to think and to reason within themselves, so that, they might logically be led to the truth that He is trying to reveal to them. Our Lord was a Master at doing this! And I believe that there is a broader context that this spills into, found in our first Scripture reading from John’s

Gospel, which will help us appreciate why our Lord brings up this particular issue. We will get to this in a few moments.

Suffice it to say for now, that they correctly answer, “The Son of David.” And again, everyone would have known this. In fact, the terms “Son of David,” and “Messiah” would have been virtually synonymous during this time period. That is why those who were afflicted with serious illnesses shouted aloud to the Lord, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” By calling Him the “Son of David,” they were not merely identifying the Lord’s genealogical connection to King David. Rather, they were connecting Him to the well-known promise that the Messiah would actually spring forth from David’s seed. It was an expression of faith, confessing that this Jesus was the actual Messiah, who was to come to deliver and save God’s people.

Following this then, the Lord poses the main question that He wants them to think about, in accordance with David’s prophetic words given in Psalm 110. We are then told, “He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?’ If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” (vs. 43-45).

Now, before we get to the bottom of the content and purpose of this question, there are three important things that we must note, which are critical to grasping the weight of what our Lord is asking here:

1) From an historical standpoint, it is important that we recognize that the Jews were thoroughly convinced that Psalm 110, which was written by David, was a “Messianic Psalm,” and that the verse that Jesus here quotes is specifically a reference to the prophetic exaltation of the Messiah. No one would have denied this. This is what the Jews had been taught from the time that they were first given this Psalm, as a song, right up to the present day. It was an undeniable fact. And this is why the Pharisees do not challenge this possibility, in their response to Jesus. It would have been the equivalent of denying that Abraham was the father of their faith. And so, coming to the text from a non-historical standpoint, we might not realize this, but it is important for us to understand this, or we will be left pondering why the Pharisees did not simply deny that this text was Messianic in nature, which would have removed all of the weight from what our Lord was saying here. That was simply not an option. As certain as they were that

David was the author of this Psalm, and that it was part of divine, holy writ, they were likewise certain that this was indeed addressing the Messiah. Now, this leads into our second critical point.

2) From the standpoint of divine inspiration, the Lord further tacks down His point here, by reminding them of what they, of course, also already knew, namely, that this was indeed a quote taken from a Messianic Psalm, which was written not merely by David, but by a “Holy Spirit” inspired David. In other words, it is God-breathed, and therefore, has the divine stamp of authority pressed upon it. And so, pointing this out, the Lord establishes both the Messianic relevance and the divine authority of the text that He brings forth. Notice, He states, “How then does David *in the Spirit* call Him (that is, the Messiah) Lord...” Again, this eliminates any possibility of alleging that some form of mistake might have been made here. To question the Messianic authority of the text would put the Pharisees at odds with their fathers and forebears, and to question the validity of David’s comments would put them at odds with God Himself, neither of which was an option.

3) Finally, from the standpoint of the immediate context, the Lord is bringing up a matter that directly relates to an ongoing contention that has existed between Him and the Pharisees. We saw this very clearly in the Gospel of John, when our Lord had made a statement that had nearly gotten Him stoned. There, we found that Jesus was not only seeking to authenticate His Messianic authority, but furthermore, He was very clearly declaring that His existence pre-dated even Abraham’s, whom the Jews looked to as their spiritual father. Listen again, to a short segment of what we read there earlier:

John 8:48-59, “Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.” Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?” Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors

Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

What was the Lord telling the Pharisees here, when upon seeking to affirm that Abraham, whom they allegedly trusted in, had actually looked to His day with joy, and "before Abraham was, Ego Eimi!" ("Before Abraham was, I AM"). The Lord was taking the Greek translation (from the Septuagint) of the Name that God had used to identify Himself to Moses, "The I AM," and here applying it to Himself. In fact, He does this in several other places in the Gospel of John, as well. And they knew what He meant by these words. He was taking the divine Name and applying it to Himself, making Himself to be God! Seeing this as blasphemy, they then picked up stones and sought to stone Him. That was the capital punishment for blasphemy. But, He slipped through the midst of them and got away.

And so, clearly the Pharisees had not understood what was profoundly revealed in Psalm 110, which actually affirmed about the Messiah, what Jesus was claiming about Himself. They had no conceptual understanding of the eternal existence and nature of the Messiah, and the fact that He would become incarnate. And so, within this context, they would have significantly discussed and denied Jesus's claims, with the stern conviction that He could not have been the Messiah even based on His alleged "blasphemous" claims to deity. The Messiah would never make such a claim. As important as the Messiah was, He would still be a mere mortal, never to be associated with God, as this Jesus so associates Himself with divinity. And so, when our Lord poses this question to the Pharisees, it is important to recognize that this contention about whether or not the Messiah was of divine origin, was already in the air.

Having considered the Messianic and divine relevance of the text, along with the general context within which this question takes place, let us now consider the content and purpose of our Lord's question.

The argument goes like this, “If the Christ (the Messiah) is the Son of David, as you correctly have answered, then why does David call Him “Lord” in Psalm 110?” How does David, prophetically, in the Spirit, as a third party, view a scene where he speaks of YHWH speaking to the Messiah, referring to the Messiah as “(my) David’s Lord,” concerning the great privileged position that He was to be given (at the right hand of God), until His enemies were conquered by God and made His footstool?” Why would David refer to His *Son* in this way? Hence, the Lord’s concluding question, “If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?”

Now, the significance of this question comes back to what we had just gone over about the present, historical context, within which, the Pharisees took issue with Jesus’s claims to divinity. Here, the Lord wants them to see that their major objection to His claim of being the Messiah, on the basis of His claims to divinity, is biblically and utterly dismantled by what David had, by the Spirit, stated in Psalm 110. The obvious answer then to Jesus’s question to the Pharisees here is, “David called the Messiah Lord, because the coming Messiah had preceded David, even as He had preceded Abraham, because the coming Messiah is of divine origin. And He can be called both David’s son, and David’s Lord, because the pre-incarnate Son of God became flesh, being born through David’s lineage. God became man.” This is the only way to make sense of what David had said in Psalm 110, by the Spirit. And in the ultimate sense, David’s Messianic Son then, supersedes David, both, with regard to His divine nature (because He precedes, and in fact, created David), and His human nature, being exalted to the highest position over all realms, because of the success of His earthly ministry. He... not David, sits at the right hand of God, and He... not David, is given authority over all things, until His enemies are made His footstool.

Sadly, rather than humbly process what the Lord had said, potentially leading to their own salvation, the Pharisees simply hardened themselves, incapable of answering the question. And in this case, even their natural propensity toward saying anything to shield them from the truth, could not help them. Collectively, they were shut down, and that, to the point that they dared not question Him any further. They were not going to defeat the Lord by this means; by getting Him to stumble over the truth. And so, they then resorted to simply take Him by force

and kill Him. Notice verse 46, “And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”

II. Concluding Thoughts

1) We would do well to make good use of our Lord’s apologetic methodology of asking questions. For me, it is so much easier to just tell people what I believe to be right and true, rather than ask good questions that could cause them to reason within themselves, with the hope that they will come to the proper conclusions via their own reasoning. My own pride, and my desire to get right to the point, often compel me to just want to get the information out there, and sadly, this is not always as effective as reasoning with people and causing them to think, and to see through their own irrational or wrong thinking. It takes great patience and humility to work with people, and to strive to lead them to come to the proper conclusions in their own thinking, but our Lord had often done this, showing us that it is well worth the investment. I am not saying that every conversation that we have, should be limited to us asking questions, without directly stating the facts, but our Lord was definitely on to something, and He had a way of preventing things from escalating, while giving His listeners a lot to think about, based upon the questions that He had put to their consciences. They were well sown seeds. And while people did harden themselves and walk away from Him, often times, it was only with a willingness to accept contradiction, exposing the unjustified hardness of their hearts. Suffice it to say, that we should, at the very least, seek to put in practice the habit of leading others to reason toward the truth, rather than just always, immediately putting it before them. This is very affective when seeking to counsel others.

In fact, it would be a good practice to make it a habit to be a good “questioner,” in general, as this will lead us to understand what others are thinking, so that, we can better interact with, and address their needs. In this sense, I believe that questions are critical components for fostering and cultivating edification in the church.

2) I want to ask everyone here this morning, what are your thoughts about the Lord Jesus Christ? You have heard of Him frequently, haven’t you, especially if you have spent any amount of time within the context of a church, but what do you think about Him? Who is He, to you?

How do you view Him or relate to Him, if you relate to Him at all, even? Friends, it is so important that you think about what I am asking here, not simply because *I* am the one asking, but because there is no more important question that you will ever be asked in this life.

Children... yes, children, from the youngest child in this room, who can hear and understand my voice, to the oldest among you, what do you think of Jesus Christ? Have you asked yourself that question? Have you thought about that, with any sense of sincerity of purpose?

Is He some mythical figure to you... sort of like the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus? Or is He someone who may have been a real historical figure, who walked this earth... perhaps, a good teacher, and a miracle worker, at best? Or, maybe He is someone important, but you can look into that later, because you have other things in your life that you would like to give your attention to now.

Friends, please hear me out. You must understand this. There is no more urgent matter that will ever exist in your entire life than this. This Jesus is relevant to the eternal destination of your never dying soul. He is God, but He became man, so as to redeem sinners from the curse of their sin. And that is a problem that you and I, and every other human being that has walked, and ever will walk, the face of this earth, has. We are all sinners, who have broken God's Law, and we are now enemies of the very God who created us for His glory. And God sent His Son, Jesus, into this world to die for sinners. But, only those who truly believe into this Jesus; only those who call upon His Name for salvation, in truth, will be saved from their sins. And if you reject Him, you presently stand under His judgment, and you will be the object of His fierce wrath, when He returns. You see, this same Jesus who saves sinners, will also be the very Judge, before whom, you will stand and give an account. Yes, He came and humbled Himself, and died for sinners, but He will return in glory and power, to gather His people to Him, and to pour out His wrath on all who have rejected and opposed Him. And this earth is His footstool, beneath which, all of His enemies will be trampled. Will you be joined to this glorious Christ by faith, to reign with Him now and forever, or will you be put under His feet forever, with His enemies? Those are your only two options. God has determined to make everyone of His Son's enemies, His footstool. And you are either with Him or you are against Him! Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25

[This account is given in the three Synoptics]