

Mark 12:35-37 David's Son Taught David's Psalm Falls Ch. PM 9/10/2023

As we have seen in our study of chapters 11 and 12, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes had been taking turns asking Jesus tricky questions. Jesus the great Teacher and Our Savior, was concerned for the crowd to get the true teaching that they needed. That brings us to the main point...

**Jesus invited thought and decision when He taught provocatively about His own two natures, both God and man, showing this in the Word of God through both David and The Spirit.**

**1. Since no one dared ask Jesus any more questions (v.34), now it was Jesus' turn to ask a question in order to teach them two essential truths! (v.35)**

Remember when Jesus was teaching. Jesus was talking with the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes for the very last time, since Jesus would be crucified that Friday. Jesus had cleared the temple on Monday, not it was Tuesday.

Remember where Jesus was teaching. Verse 35, Jesus taught in the temple. Jesus will remain in the temple until His dramatic exit in chapter 13:1, when Jesus will declare that one stone of the temple will not be left on another. Jesus came as a replacement for the temple!

Remember to whom Jesus was teaching. Crowds and opponents. Previously, here in chapter 12 of Mark's Gospel, the enemies of Jesus in verse 13 tried "*to trap [Jesus] in His talk.*" But in verse 15, Jesus knew "*their hypocrisy.*" In fact, Jesus confronted the scribes openly when He said in verse 24, "*Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God?*" And again in verse 27 Jesus said to them, "*You are quite wrong.*"

The verbal showdown between Jesus and His enemies reached a point in verse 34 that "*...no one dared ask [Jesus] any more questions.*"

Remember what Jesus was teaching. Jesus brought the discussion back to the Scriptures, and specifically, what the Scriptures teach about Himself. How can we get more important than Jesus Himself, teaching from the Word of God about Himself! This is why Mark recorded this passage for us.

So, in verse 35, here comes the question of Jesus, "*How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?*"

The scribes had been teaching that the Christ is the Son of David. No problem there. The Old Testament made it very clear that the coming Messiah was to be born from David's royal line. For example, in 2 Samuel 7:13, God said about David, "*I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*"

So, what was Jesus asking? This is important. Listen carefully. Jesus was not questioning the accuracy of the statement of the scribes, but rather Jesus was questioning the adequacy of their statement. In other words, the question of Jesus was not whether the Messiah is the son of David, because Messiah certainly is the

Son of David, but rather the question of Jesus is whether the Messiah is ONLY the son of David. To say it another way - is the Messiah more than the Son of David?

This truth about the Messiah should have been clear to the scribes from their own study of the Bible. These Bible professionals did not know how to interpret their Bibles! These scribes missed it. And this was not some Bible trivia, and not some small topic at the periphery. This topic was a matter of their core and blessed hope: the identity of the Messiah! By asking this question, Jesus was pointing out that, it ought not to be surprising that the scribes cannot identify the Messiah – even when I am standing right in front of them!

Jesus was exposing the scribes for their lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, resulting in a lack of understanding! The Scriptures were given in order to teach people about Christ by types and figures and prophecy, until Christ Himself would appear on earth. The experience of Christ on earth and sufferings of Christ during His first coming into the world were recorded in the Old Testament. For example, we can read in the Old Testament about Jesus - His death, His resurrection, His future glory, and his final triumph yet to come at His second coming. These are the topics of many Psalms. The scribe should have looked for Christ as much as they looked for David, when they were studying the Psalms. The two essential truths that they should have learned about the Messiah is that he is both David's Son and David's Lord, both God and man. That brings us to our second point.

**2. Jesus taught from David's writing in Psalm 110:1 how to harmonize two seemingly contradictory Bible truths, that Jesus is actually both David's Son and David's Lord/Christ, leading to an essential and profound understanding. (v.36)**

Jesus did not start with the content of Psalm 110. Jesus started instead with teaching who it is that was writing this Psalm. That's easy. The title of Psalm 110 correctly informs us all, when we read "*A Psalm of David.*" Everyone agreed that David was the one who wrote Psalm 110. But it was important for Jesus to teach the crowd that David was not writing on his own. Again Jesus was questioning not their accuracy, but their adequacy. Isn't there another author too? Note carefully what Jesus taught next in verse 36, that David was speaking and writing "...*in the Holy Spirit...*" Both David and the Holy Spirit wrote Psalm 110. Scripture has a human author and a divine author. As the apostle Peter later wrote in 2 Peter 1:21, "...*no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" The Spirit ensured that what the human author wrote was exactly what and how God wanted each of them to write.

Why not just teach that the Spirit wrote Psalm 110? Why is it also so important to say that David wrote it? Because what is key for proper interpretation is the fact that the content was written from David's perspective. Listen carefully

to Mark 12:36, where Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1, “*The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.’*”

The answer to the puzzle of interpretation of this verse is centered on identifying the author. David was the one who wrote this.

The first ‘Lord’ must be a reference to the LORD God of Israel, who is God the Father. Since the LORD is God the Father, then who is the second Lord? Because it was David who is writing, we must ask: whom would David refer to as “my Lord.”? It can only be a reference to the coming king, the coming anointed one, and anointed is Christ in English, or Messiah in Hebrew.

David understood who was his Lord. David understood that the statement “*sit at my right hand*” meant to receive authority and power to rule in the name of the higher King. It means complete triumph and victory. The conqueror’s feet can be placed on the neck of the defeated one. Joshua 10:24, “*when they brought those kings out to Joshua, Joshua summoned all the men of Israel and said to the chiefs of the men of war who had gone with him, “Come near; put your feet on the necks of these kings.” Then they came near and put their feet on their necks.”* SI - it is just like little boys who wrestle their brothers....If you were still able to fight, you would say “get your feet off of me,” and you would push the feet away. But if you were no longer able to fight, you would just lay there with the other person’s feet on you. It was a symbol that means that God the Father would appoint Jesus Christ to serve as The King over the Kingdom of God. Jesus was commanded to enter the world, enter the battle against God that happens here, to secure the victory for God’s team, and then come back to heaven to take the victor’s seat of honor. At that point, Jesus would wait until God the Father would bring an end to world history and bring all of God’s enemies in full subjection to Jesus.

Psalm 110 later became the most-quoted Psalm in the New Testament. The apostles take a cue from Jesus, and use well the gift of this Psalm. It is quoted or alluded to 27 times in the New Testament. And every generation of the church since then has celebrated this Psalm. In the 1500s, the Reformer Pastor Martin Luther wrote 120 pages on Psalm 110. It all started when Jesus taught in the temple, and the great teacher Jesus wanted to draw our attention to Psalm 110.

Within the Gospel of Mark, this title ‘Son of David’ was first stated by the blind man Bartimaeus in chapter 10:47-48. We remember from our careful study of chapter 10, that Jesus did not suppress the statement made by the blind man Bartimaeus. Then again it was stated by the crowd in 11:10. ‘Son of David’ is officially the term that shows which man in this generation now possesses the right to the ancient throne of David. Remember the context - those listeners of the teaching of Jesus that day were all aware of Jesus’ recent ostentatiously-royal ride to the city on the colt, replete with shouts of Hosanna, and the statement about the coming kingdom of David. We remember from our careful study of chapter 11,

that Jesus did not curb the crowd when they used Messianic language to refer to Him. Jesus found the references acceptable and appropriate. In fact, the manner of the approach of Jesus toward the city seemed to have actively encouraged such language and references. However, the main point is very clear...the Christ is to be understood as David's 'Lord' AND David's 'Son.'

**3. Jesus showed that the scribes should have but did not understand, believe, or teach this crucial truth from the Word of God and the Spirit of God, regarding who Jesus truly is. (v.37)**

Listen to it in verse 37, Jesus said, "*David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?...*"

Here is a problem no one had seen until Jesus raised it. Jesus answered all of their unanswerable questions. Now Jesus asked them a question that they found unanswerable. The Bible presents the clear answer that Jesus is both David's Son and David's Lord at the same time. It seems to the scribes to be a mistake, which is why Jesus is bringing up this issue in order to challenge them to reflect and think and learn. Think about any father calling his son or grandson His Lord! How could the great King David speak of his future grandson Jesus as David's Lord? David's words in Psalm 110 will not work if the Messiah is just a human being. He must be more. This is what the scribes and the crowds had failed to see. This is what Jesus was teaching them. Jesus never studied at their schools, and yet Jesus confounded all of them.

The title 'Son of David' will not occur again in Mark's Gospel from here to the end of the Gospel of Mark.

Every Christian, both Jewish Christians and also Gentile Christians, ever since the middle of the first century, would have assumed that Jesus is the son of David. If it was Mark's intention in this passage to challenge this belief, then Mark would have needed a much more direct approach than these verses offer, and Mark would have had to re-write 10:47-48 and 11:10, because they clearly teach that Jesus is the Son of David.

Rather, there are two other reasons Mark has for ceasing to use the title Son of David here, and what title should be used instead. 1) the title Son of Man is true, but too liable to misunderstandings about Jesus becoming a political leader 2) to fill the gap left by not using the title Son of David for the rest of the book of Mark, our author seems to suggest the title Lord! Look what Jesus said in verse 37 - that David Himself refers to Jesus as Lord. That suggests that we should do the same as David, namely, that we should refer to Jesus as Lord.

Verse 37 ended with the statement, "And the great throng heard [Jesus] gladly." Hearing Jesus gladly is not faith. Glad hearing does not get them into the kingdom of God any more than in the previous passage, the scribe acknowledging Jesus would get him into the kingdom. The scribe was "not far from the

kingdom,” but not IN the kingdom. It was not enough to say that Jesus was right and correct, the scribe needed to confess that Jesus is Lord.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Be comforted to know that Jesus, just a few days before His most bitter agony, was fully aware that the cross would lead him to the crown.

Jesus is more than the man who took our sins upon Himself on the cross. Jesus is also the Great and Victorious King who exercised control over all aspects of the hill on which the cross stood on Friday, including the audiences on Tuesday. It is this magnificent Lord of David, who is also the Sovereign Savior. The Lord, the Messiah, the Christ, came to fulfill the task which God the Father had assigned to Him. Some in the great throng of verse 37 who heard Jesus gladly on Tuesday, would in just a couple of days, join their voices in the refrain with the words, “Crucify Him!” Though the crucifixion was necessary for our salvation, our devotion to Him requires us to repent of hypocritical flip-flopping. We are called to worship Him as the King over all. He is greater than David. He is David’s Son, yet David’s Lord. He is God yet man. This is the most important topic of all time. Who is Jesus? Jesus had raised it in chapter 8:27 with his disciples, when Jesus said, “Who do people say that I am?” They got it wrong. So Jesus asked again in Mark 8:29, “*But who do you say that I am?*” Peter answered Him, ‘*You are the Christ.*’ Then Jesus strictly charged them to tell no one about this. But now in the last week, it was time for Jesus to bring it up publicly. Jesus knew that this would raise the stakes. With the cross just three days away, the time had arrived for the truth to be made clear.

2. Consider Jesus as Your Lord as a part of your identity.

We can read the Bible about who Jesus is or listen to preaching about the identity of Jesus and we could hear truth gladly without ever surrendering to it fully and absorbing it as defining who we are. So many people are raised in the church and attend worship, and accept this truth that Jesus is Lord as a point of teaching instead of a point of identity. Either Jesus is Lord over us, or he is nothing at all to us.

Jesus tasted death for you, and that defines who you are in your core identity – you are alive in Christ by faith! Hebrews 2:9, “*...we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*” Consider Jesus as Your Lord as a part of your identity.