



Sermon Notes: Cameron Webber,

18 February 2024

David's Son / David's Lord

Readings: Matt 22: 41 – 46. Ps 110: 1 – 7 Rom 1: 1 - 7

Introduction

We are now up to the fourth Sunday in our series working through Matthew 22-28 where we are looking at, **“Famous Last Words – the final words of Jesus in his final week.”**

Over the last three Sundays, it's been the Pharisees and the Herodians and then the Sadducees asking Jesus questions, to trap him. But today it's different - Jesus asks the question and ends up silencing them... 'No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions'. (22:46)

We have seen some big questions in the exchanges between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, and the internet is home to some really big questions...

- When does it stop being partly sunny and become partly cloudy?
- Why do we cook bacon and bake cookies?

Apart from the humorous, there are serious lists of important questions they say we should each be answering...

- Where do I want to be in five years?
- How much money will I need to retire?
- What am I willing to struggle for?
- Am I happy? – What makes me happy?

But what really is the single most important question we all must answer? I'm sure there are a number of correct answers, but I want to suggest that the most important question everyone must answer is, **“Who is Jesus?”**

It's a question Jesus has asked his disciples just a few chapters earlier... 'Who do you say I am?' (16:15) Do remember Simon Peter's answer? 'You are the Messiah/Christ, the Son of the living God.' 16: 16

1. The Messiah

Traditionally English translations have 'Christ' which is simply anglicisation of the Greek translation of the Hebrew word 'Masiah.' (The New Testament was written in Greek and the Old Testament was primarily in Hebrew)

These days the newer English translations tend to use the anglicisation of the Hebrew directly and hence 'Messiah.' But either way, both Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) mean 'anointed,' particularly 'anointed with oil.'

The term carries special significance because of the Israelite practice of anointing with oil a person being installed to a special office, particularly the kings. And so there is a real sense in which every king is 'a messiah.'

When the line of Davidic kings faded into the sands of the Babylonian Exile, the prophets began looking forward to the coming of not just a messiah, but The Messiah, The Anointed One, The Saviour King in the line of David who would come and restore Israel to its former glory.

2. The Messiah is David's Son

Who is Jesus? Peter declared Jesus to be the Messiah/Christ, and now, in Jerusalem, the question is flipped as Jesus asks the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Messiah/Christ? Whose son is he?" And the pharisees reply, "The son of David."

And their answer is correct. The Messiah / Christ, was expected to be a son. a descendant of David. And it wasn't some arbitrary thought floating in the ether but based in Scripture - God's Word - God's promises in the Old Testament.

There was the promise to David of an everlasting dynasty... "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." (2 Samuel 7:13,16)

Even before the exile many of the kings fell short, some well short, of the expectations of them as anointed ones, they fell short of the ideal rule described in some of the so-called royal Psalms, some of which were likely sung at the coronation of the kings.

For example Psalm 72...

Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.

May he judge your people in righteousness.

May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him....

He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

But as king after king fell well short of the ideal portrayed and then with the Exile to Babylon seemingly ending everything some of these royal coronation Psalms were understood not to refer to any and every king, but to be "Messianic" - referring to The Messiah. And this was backed up by what God was saying through the prophets about The coming King.

"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land." (Jeremiah 23:5) The branch from David – poetically a descendant of David.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, ...

And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

And we move from the promise of an everlasting dynasty in 2 Samuel, to the promise of the One who will himself reign forever.

"Whose son is the Christ / Messiah?" "The son of David." The Pharisees are right! That is the clear message of the OT promises and prophecies.

And so when on Palm Sunday the crowds shout, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they are using a messianic title, they are ascribing to Jesus messianic status, they are calling him The Messiah, to the great indignation of the Pharisees. (Matthew 21:9-16)

None of this should come as any surprise to us as readers of Matthew's gospel. Already on three other occasions, the messianic title, Son of David, has been used for Jesus. And Matthew had identified Jesus this way in the opening of his Gospel...

A record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham.
(Matthew 1:1)

"Whose son is the Christ / Messiah?" "The son of David." The Pharisees are right! The expected Messiah would be a son of David and indeed, Jesus is a son of David.

The Pharisees aren't wrong, but rather inadequate. They are not wrong, but they are far too simplistic. And so Jesus poses a further question, 'How come then...?'

It's not a trick question, it's a probing question. Jesus wants them to know there is more going on than their correct answer allows for. He wants them to see what the Scripture says, and in particular he wants them to see who he is,

We know that all of Old Testament Scripture, points to The Messiah, The Christ – to Jesus. As Paul writes, For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Some parts of the OT point very clearly to Jesus, and Psalm 110 is the most quoted chapter of the OT in the NT. And Psalm 110:1 – quoted here by Jesus – is the OT verse that is the most quoted and alluded to in the NT.

Psalm 110 was agreed to be Messianic, to be referring to The Messiah who was to come. So Jesus uses it to expand their inadequate understanding of The Messiah, because although the Messiah, humanly speaking, is David's son, he is far, far more. He is David's Lord.

3. The Messiah is David's Lord

So Jesus says to them, 'How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? (22:43) And then he quotes from Psalm 110.

*'The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet." [Psalm 110:1]*

Who are all these Lords? It's clearer in Psalm 110 than in the NT quote because there the two 'Lords' are written differently: The LORD [*capitals*] says to my Lord [*lowercase*].

'Lord' in lowercase carries the obvious meaning of lord or master or boss or ruler, but in the Old Testament when whenever we see LORD in capitals it is the way the Divine Name is translated. LORD is the translation or 'Yahweh' (or traditionally it was sometimes pronounced 'Jehovah'), the Name by which God revealed himself to his people. (See Exodus 34:5-7 where God proclaims his Name to Moses: 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness...')

An in Psalm 110:1 we have The LORD [*capitals*] says to my Lord [*lowercase*] which means *we have God saying to David's Master*, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

The one who sits at the right hand of God, The LORD, Yahweh, was understood to be The Messiah. And indeed the ideal picture painted in the rest of Psalm 110 goes beyond what any of the regular kings in David's line achieved, and so it is The Messiah that David calls his Lord. This means that this Messiah is greater than David.

But how does that line up with the fact that Messiah is David's Son? In the thought of the time, the Father was always great than the Son; the ancestor greater than their descendants. The son would defer to the father as their lord, but never the other way around. So how is it, says Jesus, that David in Psalm 110 can call The Messiah his Lord? If David calls him Lord he must be more than his son / descendant.

And he is more than David's Son, because The Messiah is uniquely God's Son.

3. The Messiah is God's Son

To be sure, there was a sense in which all the kings were considered to be a son of God. But Jesus takes the OT promises, types, expectations, and fulfils them far more than could be imagined. And in calling Jesus The Son of God, we are saying more about him than could be said about any king - even King David because Jesus The Messiah really is The Son of God.

It's just a couple of months since Christmas when we heard these words (in Luke 1)
The angel said to Mary ... 'You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High [*the Son of God*]. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David [*as the Son of David*] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.'

'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?'

The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'

Every other king was conceived in the normal way but this King, this Son of David, this Messiah, this Jesus is truly divine... 'conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary' as we say in the Apostles' Creed.

So this Christ, this Messiah, this Jesus is not only David's Son he is also God's Son and therefore must be David's Lord.

John puts it well in the beginning of his gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 14)

4. The Messiah is Human & Divine

The Pharisees should have understood that The Messiah would be David's Lord and well as his Son because it is clear, not only in Psalm 110, but other Old Testament prophecies also contain this apparent paradox of a Messiah who is both human and divine.

In Jeremiah 23:5 we read earlier, 'The days are coming, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King...' And it goes on in verse 6, 'This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD (Yahweh) Our Righteousness. There's more going with this Messiah than just being a son of David.'

You get the double sided impact in Ezekiel 34 where God is condemning the shepherds (the leaders) of Israel when he says, "I myself will search for my sheep and look after them" (verse 11) and then a few verses later he says, "I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David" (verse 23) in the sense of a new David, a descendant of David. Will it be a son of David, or God himself? Yes, both, at the same time – The Messiah – truly human and divine.

Or in Isaiah 11 we are told that, 'A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse (David's father); from his roots a Branch will bear fruit' (verse 1). And then just a few verses later, of this same one, it is said, 'In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples' (verse 11). The root and the shoot are one and the same; the descendant from Jesse and David, is also their Origin.

In the Old Testament this is a dilemma, a tension awaiting resolution, but in the New Testament we find it all come together in Jesus The Messiah, The Christ who proclaims, 'I, Jesus, am the Root and the Offspring of David.' (Revelation 22:16a)

Paul sums it up well in Romans 1:1-4 speaking of Jesus of whom he says, 'who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.' Here we are on the first Sunday in Lent, looking towards Easter, but it's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas as we have already read from Luke 1 and the words of the carols speak the same truth:

*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King*

But why a human and divine Messiah? The human problem of human sin, our rejection of God, our Creator, really should be dealt with by a human, but the biblical record through the Old Testament shows the inability of people to get it right, and when God calls his people and gives them law, they still get it wrong, individually and collectively as a nation. Their leaders and kings fall short. It's something we should be fixing but it is something only God can fix, so he enters his creation, he becomes human and not only shows us how to do right, but then takes the punishment for our doing wrong, 'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things ... by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.' (Colossians 1:19-20)

And it wasn't long after this exchange with the Pharisees, that that's exactly what happened. Jesus was crucified, raised to life, and then ascended to the right hand of his Father and he will come again in judgment – his enemies will be under his feet, they will be his footstool.

Jesus' quote from Psalm 110 might have been fresh in Peter's mind when just ten days after Jesus' ascension, on the day of Pentecost, Peter uses it the same verse in his 'sermon' in Acts 2 (verses 22-24 and 32b-39 in particular)...

Jesus was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him and we are all witnesses of the fact.

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."'

Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ / Messiah.

Conclusion

If Jesus were just David's Son we could leave him in the manger at Christmas. If he were only human he would be just another figure on the stage of world history and we could study him like any other but no more.

But because he is also David's Lord, because he is also God's Son - and God himself; because God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:19-20), it won't do to leave him the manger.

What do we do with all this theological information? We've covered a lot of ground this morning and there is more that could be said and unpacked and explored, but how do we respond?

We started with a question: "**Who is Jesus?**" I said it was the single most important question we must answer. Not just theologically, but personally, so let me reframe that question: "**Is David's Son; Is David's Lord Your Lord?**" Is Jesus your Lord?

In a room like this on a day like this, I'm sure many, most of us have accepted Jesus as our Saviour, relying on, trusting in his death in our place for the forgiveness of our sin and seeking to live with him as our Lord. And that's the challenge that is ever before us because we can slip into taking for granted all Jesus has done for us and drift in to asking all those other questions – How much do we need to retire? Where do we want to be in five years? – almost forgetting that Jesus is Lord. And we need that constant reminder as we read God's Word, as we pray, as we meet together... Are we living with Jesus as our Lord? As we grow in knowledge, we don't just want to be able to quote verses and give theological explanations about who Jesus is and what he has done, we want to grow in living out the reality that Jesus is our Lord in our daily life in loving response to the God who first loved us.

And if you were here for our January series on engaging with a sceptical world, you know, that if we know this good news about Jesus, we want others to know about him too, and so part of our response is sharing the good news of who Jesus is and what he has done.

And let us never lose the wonder of all that God has done in Jesus, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.