

An Authority Like No Other

Mark 12:35-37

Halifax: 16 August 2020

Introduction:

For the last few weeks, we have been in Mark 12.

- We have seen how Christ's enemies from the Jewish church leaders have tested Him with hard questions, hoping to entrap Him or at least to stump Him.
- They have miserably failed.
 - He has answered each question they have put to Him with such wisdom that rather than making Him look bad, they have made Him look good.
 - They have concluded that trying to trap Him with questions is not a good idea.

But now, after a day of questions *from* them, Jesus has a powerful question *for* them.

- It is a very helpful question.
- It is about the Messiah whom they were seeking. It is a question that exposes one of the deficiencies in their understanding about the Messiah.
- Jesus does not here claim to be the Messiah—He simply asks them a question to get them thinking about something huge that they had missed about the Messiah as the Messiah had been promised in the Scriptures.

Listen now as I ready this passage to you.

- It is Mark 12:35-37. This is not the word of men. It is the word of God that effectively works in all who believe.

Mark 12:35-37: Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, “How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? ³⁶ For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ’ ³⁷ Therefore David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?” And the common people heard Him gladly.

May the Lord bless these words to your understanding.

You can see here that Jesus' question is something like a riddle.

- The scribes called this a Haggada question—one where you had to reconcile two seemingly contradictory points of view expressed in the scriptures.
- The Haggada question was essentially this: If it is true that Christ (or the Messiah) is the Son of David, how can David call Him his Lord?
 - Jesus wants them to think about this.
 - Kings don't ordinarily call their sons “my lord” or “my master,” yet that is what David does.
- The Jewish leaders all affirmed that the Christ was to be the Son of David, but they had ignored how the Scripture affirm that He is also David's Lord—

- in fact, they have not considered how great a person the Messiah was going to be, according to the Scriptures.
- It was something they needed to think about a lot more.

In preaching about this to you,

- I want to begin with the assertion that Jesus makes that the Christ is the Son of David.
 - His hearers affirmed this and we need to affirm it too.
- Then I want to show you how Jesus exposes the fact that they had overlooked the overall teaching of the Old Testament about the divinity of the Christ.
- And thirdly, I want to urge you to see how good it is to have a Messiah (a Christ) who is both the Son of David and the Son of God.

Let's get on with it then.

I. Jesus asserts what He knew they rightly affirmed; that the Messiah would be the Son of David.

A. God had long promised that a son would be born to them who would deliver them.

1. The promise began before they were even identified as a nation.
 - Right after the fall, in Genesis 3:15, God had promised that the woman would bring forth a seed who would smash the head of the serpent who had deceived her and led her and Adam—and the whole world—into rebellion.
 - From this early time, the promise of a son born of woman stood.
2. After many years, the promise was given to Abraham and to his sons.
 - The Lord comes to him and establishes a covenant, promising to bless him and to multiply him into a great nation.
 - And the promise is made that from a son born to Sarah, Abraham's wife, a son will come who will would bring blessing to all the families of the earth.
 - In Genesis 22:18, the Lord says: **"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,"**
 - The promise is repeated to Abraham's son Isaac in Genesis 26:4 with these words: **Gen 26:4 "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed [an individual son] all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;"**
 - The same promise is again repeated to Isaac's son, Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, the one from whom this nation was named.
 - The hope of this great nation that God promised to Abraham was that God would keep them as a people for Himself and that they would bring forth this Son that would bless them and bless the other nations.
 - They were given circumcision to seal the promise.
3. After many more years, God in faithfulness calls this nation out of Egypt to serve Him.

- He gives them the land that He had promised, a land where they could live under His government as their God, following His commandments.
- In time, He brings forth a king named David, who has a heart to rule as God's king, upholding God's laws and doing God's will.
 - To him, David, God again renews the promise of this Son as the one who will fully establish and maintain God's kingdom forever.
 - In 2 Samuel 7:12-13, the Lord said to David: **“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.”**

B. Israel deeply cherished this promise, and well they should.

1. God had chosen them to bring forth this Son who would finally bring them to their destiny as His own people.
 - By Him they would be delivered from their enemies and given dominion so that they could serve God instead of idols like the nations.
 - When He took His throne, He would rule them for God so that they would wander away no more and so that the nations would be blessed.
2. As those having this promise of Messiah's coming, God had uniquely preserved them and He continued to do so.
 - He had redeemed them from Egypt and given them His law and a land where they could obey that law—though they had constantly strayed and turned to idols and to the other nations.
 - In faithfulness to His promise to preserve them, God had chastened them.
 - He raised up one prophet after another to rebuke them and to warn them and to declare to them the punishments that God would send to them so that they would know that these punishments were from Him.
 - Sometimes it was a drought, sometimes a pestilence, sometimes enemy nations—but all with a purpose of restoring them so that they could be His people and bring forth the promised Son.
 - The prophets were faithful to continue to renew the promise, to remind Israel of God's faithfulness to them, and to set before them their hope.
 - In this way, God kept them from ceasing to be His people.
 - Israel could not doubt that they were uniquely chosen and cared for as God's own people.
 - They took pride in their relationship with Him—sometimes in a wrong way, for the truth was that if God had not relentlessly worked to preserve them as His people,
 - They would have departed from Him just like all the other nations did after the Great Flood when the human race had begun again with one family that knew God.
 - Israel existed as God's people because God kept them as His people.

C. And now that the time was hand for the Messiah to come, their expectations were higher than ever—as well they should have been.

1. They knew from God’s promises that the Messiah was to be the Son of David.

- There was no debate about that.
- We have seen how they asked if Jesus was the Christ, and how those like blind Bartimaeus called Him the Son of David.
 - And how when Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem, they said “Blessed is the kingdom of our father David.”
- In their worship liturgy, they had eighteen benedictions. The fourteenth was one that expressed their hope in David’s Son as the promised Christ:
 - “Have mercy, Lord our God, over the kingdom of the house of David, the Messiah of your righteousness.”
- And in the apocryphal book called the Psalms of Solomon, there was this expression of their hope:
 - **Psalm of Solomon 17:21-26: See, Lord, and raise up for them their king, the son of David, to rule over Israel, your servant, in the time which you chose, o God, ²² Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers, to cleanse Jerusalem from gentiles who trample her to destruction; ²³ to drive out in wisdom and in righteousness the sinners from the inheritance; to crash the arrogance of sinners like a potter’s jar; ²⁴ to smash all their substance with an iron rod; to destroy the lawless nations with the word of his mouth; ²⁵ to make the nations flee from his presence at his threat and to put sinners ²⁵ to shame by the word of their heart; ²⁶ And he will bring together a holy people whom he will lead in righteousness. And he will judge the tribes of the people that have been made holy by the Lord their God.**
- If anyone were to claim to be the Messiah, the claim would not stand unless they could show that they were descended from David.
 - It was universally accepted.

2. Jesus knew that they had a proper understanding of this.

- He knew that He could take it for granted that no one would dispute that the Messiah was the Son of David and that Psalm 110 was about that Messiah.
 - He made this the premise of His Haggada question because He knew that nobody would challenge it.
 - It is always helpful when you can use some truth that people who are in need of instruction hold to build an argument with them.

TRANS> So now let’s look at the deficiency in their understanding of the coming Messiah that Jesus endeavours to correct.

II. Jesus wants to show them that they have missed God’s testimony about the transcendent superiority of Christ.

A. They were correct that He was David’s Son.

- That truth had been given much attention.
 - But they had missed that He was also David’s Lord.

- Somehow, they had missed that and had failed to consider it.
1. Jesus quotes from Psalm 110, a passage they knew to be about the Messiah.
 - He says (Mark 12:35): **“How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? ³⁶ For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” ’ ³⁷ Therefore David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?”**
 - a. He points out that David wasn’t just talking off the cuff here—he was speaking by the Holy Spirit.
 - This is holy Scripture which cannot be broken—it was by the Spirit that David called his son “my lord,” or “my master!”
 - A royal father might indeed call his son a prince or a lord, but it is another thing for him to call him “*my lord*.”
 - Perhaps if David were not a king and his son were, he might, but not when David was himself the king.
 - b. The clear implication is that King David’s Son is David’s superior.
 - He is no mere descendant.
 - The designation “Son of David” does not capture His full identity.
 - His is not just a political sovereignty such as David had, but a much higher level of authority unique to Him as the Messiah.
 - As Lane says, “Jesus is exposing the simplistic nature of the scribal interpretation of a political-nationalistic messianic mission.”
 - A greater than David is here!
 2. Jesus quotes from the Psalm where the LORD calls David’s Son to sit at His right hand—something not said to David but to David’s Son who is also David’s Lord.
 - There is an elevation to a place of vast superiority to David and his dominion.
 - David’s Son, the Christ, is to reign until all His enemies are made His footstool.
 - There is an absolute finality here.
 - His enemies are brought under Him as fully as they are brought under Jehovah God.
 - There is an equality with God represented here.
 - A co-equal reign so that we may speak of being servants of God the Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Lord of David and all other kings and rulers.
- B. Backing up what Jesus quotes here is the rest of Psalm 110. The entire Psalm points to the unparalleled authority of Christ.
1. After declaring that the Messiah will reign until all are brought under His feet, the Psalm explains that some will be made volunteers and others will be executed.
 - And among those executed will be kings and heads of many countries.

- In Psalm 89 we sang of Messiah's reign and of how no one will be able to oppose Him or collect taxes from Him.
 - It is an impossible picture to see some leader of our world trying to impose taxes or some silly ordinance on Christ in His glory!
 - They would not dream of even suggesting such a thing.
 - The great emperors and magistrates of this world who did not submit to our Lord while here will melt before Him in silence on the great day of judgment when His glory is fully revealed.
 - Opposition to Him will be unthinkable.
 - It is by and through Him that Jehovah crushes all His enemies.
- 2. Psalm 110 also speaks of His divine authority in verse 4 where the LORD swears to David's Lord that He is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
 - David was not a priest, and much more, neither was David either a king or a priest *forever*.
 - The promise of an eternal reign was to his Son who is also his Lord.
 - There is again a note of finality here.
 - He does not serve as a priest for a time with sacrifices that can never take away sin—
 - He offers one sacrifice that completes all priestly service forever.
 - A sacrifice by which God and man are reconciled.
 - A sacrifice that only a Divine Messiah can offer.
 - Then He lives forever to intercede by the blood of the new covenant.
 - Never will His blood lose its power to save.
 - He has an eternal unchangeable priesthood that replaces the priesthood of Aaron by succession where one generation after another served and then was replaced because of death.

TRANS> The whole of Psalm 110 backs up the fact that David's Son is David's Lord.

- But there is something else that backs up the divine authority of the Son of David.
 - There is something more that the scribes had not taken into account.

C. The whole Old Testament points to the Christ as one possessing divine authority.

1. From the very first promise in Genesis 3:15, the Son who is promised is described as the one who crushes the head of Satan, the serpent.
 - We know that the serpent is Satan, because Revelation 12 speaks of Christ's handling of him.
 - It speaks of the male Child born who was born to rule the nations with a rod of iron who was caught up to God and to His throne... and then Rev. 12:9 says: **So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**
 - Here again is divine authority exercised.

- David, with God's help, killed Goliath and many other enemies, but he certainly did not and could not go against the serpent of old.
 - That task was one that none but David's Son could fulfill.
 - All the way back to Genesis 3:15, we see testimony to His divinity as the one who was to crush the serpent's head.
 - The Jews did not consider these testimonies that showed that David's Son was transcendentally superior to David.
2. Further testimony to the supremacy of David's Son is given in the books of Moses.
- First, that the son that would come to Abraham was brought forth by divine power—to a barren woman—showing that it was by God's hand.
 - Then that it was said that this Son would bless not only the people of Abraham (who would be preserved to bring Him forth), but all the families of the earth.
 - Jacob sees Him in his dream as the ladder who opens the portal of heaven to us so that by Him we can come to the Father—no mere man is He.
 - With Moses, He is the one who sends the plagues on Egypt, the one who calls them, the one who speaks to them from Mt. Sinai, the one who gives oracles from heaven, who chastens them, who brings them into Canaan.
 - He is the star that Balaam speaks of who crushes Moab: Numbers 24:17-18: **“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult. ¹⁸ And Edom shall be a possession; Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession, while Israel does valiantly.”**
3. There are so many other testimonies to His supremacy in the Psalms and the prophets.
- Psalm 2 which we have as our Psalm of focus speaks of Christ as God's Son who is begotten of God the Father to reign.
 - The futility of resistance against Him is emphasised, for the Father says (Ps 2:8-9): **“Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. , You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.”**
 - In Psalm 45:6, it is not to David, but to his Son that the Father says: **“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.”**
 - David died and was buried, but the throne of Christ is everlasting.
 - In Psalm 72:17, He is the one who reigns from sea to sea and of whom it is said: **“His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed.”**
 - In Psalm 118, He is the rejected stone who becomes the chief cornerstone on whom the whole church is built.

- Isaiah speaks of Him as much more than a mere man...
 - In Isaiah 7:14, He is the One born of a virgin who is called Immanuel, which means “God with us.”
 - In Isaiah 9:6 this Son born to us is clearly also divine: **For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”**

TRANS> We could go on and on.

- The Jews missed the testimony of scripture that David’s Son was David’s Lord.
 - They did not consider this.
 - Jesus’ question, “**Therefore David himself calls Him ‘Lord’; how is He then his Son?**” forces the point upon them.
- Paul sums up the answer to Jesus’ question quite sufficiently in Romans 1:3-4 where He speaks of Him as:
 - Rom 1:3-4: **His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, ⁴ and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**

III. My dear friends, I would urge you not to miss what the Scriptures reveal about the supremacy of David’s Son.

- You will do so at your own peril.

A. Recognise Him as both the Son of David and the Son of God.

1. He is one who is drawn from the people whose goings forth are from everlasting.
 - He is one of us—having come in true human flesh—yet in possession of divine authority and power.
 - He is a man with divine authority who can be fully trusted with divine authority.
 - He is the Son of God in human flesh who has come to dwell among us that He might bring us to God.
2. One with less than full humanity and full deity could never bring us from our sinful fallen estate to the Father of glory.
 - If less than human,
 - He could not represent us,
 - He could not be our priest to make offerings for us,
 - He could not die for us to atone for our sins,
 - He could not relate to us or speak to us so that we could hear and understand,
 - He could not understand our weakness.
 - He could not be our true example in love and service.

- He could not lead us in our worship.
 - Yet, if less than God,
 - How could He crush the serpent for us?
 - How could He deliver us from the dominion of sin and bondage to Satan?
 - How could His atonement be sufficient to take away the sins of the world?
 - How could His intercession reach heaven?
 - How could He hear all our prayers?
 - How could He conquer death and raise us up again?
 - How could He give us immortality?
 - How could He lead us into all truth and enlighten our minds?
 - How could He judge the world and destroy all who oppose God?
 - How could He bring us to repentance?
3. I tell you, He is the one and only Saviour.
- David's Son who is also David's Lord.
 - You can have no peace with God expect for a peace that is superficial and inadequate apart from this One who is one of us, yet in possession of divine authority.
 - Without Him, you have no real Saviour who can deal with your spiritual enemies, deliver you from all your sin, secure your pardon, and bring you to God.
 - Without Him, we are all doomed without recourse—doomed to destruction and eternal ruin.
- B. Do you know what Satan's great weapon is against us?
1. It is the same weapon He used against the Jews.
- Give them a Son of David with no more than mere human power.
 - Yes, one that is helped by God and can kill Goliath, but not one that can conquer death and hell.
 - One that can take an earthly throne and wield an earthly scepter for a season, but not one with divine power who can crush all His enemies forever and ever.
 - Calvin said:
 - "For from the very commencement, Satan endeavored, by all the arts which he could devise, to put forward some pretended Christ, who was not the true Mediator between God and men. God having so frequently promised that Christ would proceed from the seed, or from the loins of David, this conviction was so deeply rooted in their minds, that they could not endure to have him stripped of human nature. Satan therefore permitted Christ to be acknowledged as a true man and a son of David, for he would in vain have attempted to overturn this article of faith; but--what was worse--he stripped him of his Divinity, as if he had been only one of the ordinary descendants of Adam. But in this manner the hope of future

and eternal life, as well as spiritual righteousness, was abolished. And ever since Christ was manifested to the world, heretics have attempted by various contrivances--and as it were under ground--to overturn sometimes his human, and sometimes his Divine nature, that either he might not have full power to save us, or we might not have ready access to him. Now as the hour of his death was already approaching, the Lord himself intended to attest his divinity, that all the godly might boldly rely on him; for if he had been only man, we would have had no right either to glory in him, or to expect salvation from him.”

- Jesus exposed the inadequate views of the scribes with His question.
- 2. And I tell you that there are millions of men who claim to be ministers of the gospel today who share in the same deception.
 - They are not unintelligent men—some of them are brilliant men with advanced decrees to their name.
 - But Satan has blinded them so that all they see in Jesus as a man drawn from the people—not one whose goings forth are from everlasting.
 - They see one who is David’s Son, but they do not see one who is David’s Lord.
 - He is an example like David, but he had no power to save us in any ultimate way.
 - These men have a political agenda—they do not consider eternity.
 - Their God is an idol—He is not the true God because the true God is the Father of Jesus Christ.
 - For them, the virgin birth and the resurrection are all just symbols to inspire us to live better in this world.
 - They preach a gospel that is only a form of godliness, entirely devoid of power, because they are without this One who is not only David’s Son, but also David’s Lord.
 - They suppose that Psalm 110 is nothing more than a coronation Psalm of any random son of David.
 - There is a veil over their eyes and they cannot see the King of glory who sought to point the scribes to His supreme majesty after they had tried in vain to stump Him.

C. Will you have Him as He is revealed in His holy book?

- Will you have Him as the Son of David who is also David’s Lord?
 - Will you have Him as a man who possesses full divinity?
- I tell you, if you will not have Him, you can never be redeemed, you can never be put right, you can never be reconciled to God.
 - But if you will have Him, He will save you to the uttermost.
 - He saves to the uttermost all who come to God by Him.

- You see here in our text that the common people heard Him gladly.
 - The proud scribes could not answer His question, but they would not humble themselves and come to Him.
 - Hear Him. Hear Him gladly, for He is one of us and He is the Lord of all.
 - He is an authority like no other authority.
 - He is the only human authority to worshipped and trusted in.